

Bryan Cussen

Pope Paul III and the Cultural Politics of Reform

1534-1549

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and the Cultural Politics of Reform



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Cover image: Titian, *Pope Paul III*. Museo di Capodimonte, Naples, Italy / Bridgeman Images.

Cover design: Coördesign, Leiden

Lay-out: Crius Group, Hulshout

ISBN 978 94 6372 252 0

e-ISBN 978 90 4855 025 8

DOI 10.5117/9789463722520

NUR 685

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For Jane, for everything.



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Acknowledgements

The cultural dimensions of the Renaissance papacy first drew me in during a year spent in Rome over three decades ago. To pick up that interest in recent years and develop it into a substantial project would not have been possible without the stimulation and support of colleagues and friends.

I am particularly indebted to the community of scholars who form the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (CMRS) at Monash University. My special thanks go to the previous Director of the Centre, Professor Peter Howard, for his accompaniment through the project, offering inspirational expertise, unflinching affirmation and judicious challenge. The current Director, Associate Professor Carolyn James, has been a generous sounding board, a constant resource in Italian language issues, and an expert guide in archival research.

Fellow CMRS travellers who have given feedback on draft chapters, shared in workshops, and offered collegial support include Dr Luke Bancroft, Sam Baudinette, Dr Jill Cox, Lisa Di Crescenzo, Dr Sally Fisher, Hannah Fulton, Roslyn Halliday, Michaela Hill, Dr Anne Holloway, Dr Diana Jeske, Dr Steve Joyce, Dr Stephanie Jury, Dr Rebecca Lobel, Rosa Martorana, Emma Nicholls, Jessica O'Leary, Jenny Smith, Matt Topp, Kyly Walker, and Dr Gordon Whyte. For encouragement and critique, my appreciation goes to Professor Constant Mews, Dr Kathleen Neal and Associate Professor Jacob Ladegaard. Craig Thomas has been an indispensable, expert guide in Latin translation.

Among other sixteenth century scholars, I am grateful for the advice of Professors William Hudon and Roberto Zapperi regarding correspondence of Paul III. I am also indebted to Professors Elizabeth S. Cohen, Simon Ditchfield, and Catherine Fletcher for their invaluable feedback and recommendations for conceptual refinement.

I was able to undertake one of my research trips thanks to the Bill Kent Prato Research Fellowship. In Italy, I was warmly received and patiently guided by the expert staff of the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana and the Archivi di Stato of Bologna, Florence, Modena, Naples, Parma and Venice. Of great value, was the orientation to the structure and indices of the Venetian archives kindly provided by Dr Ersie Burke.

My great thanks to the team at Amsterdam University Press and especially to Erika Gaffney for her guidance in critical structural and stylistic considerations and for her sure hand in facilitation of the publication process. Dr Diane Heath has been a remarkable gatekeeper, offering pathways for improvement of issues that I had missed time and again.



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Finally, I offer my loving appreciation to my sons, Michael and Jeremy, for regularly checking in with me on how my life in the sixteenth century has been proceeding and to my life partner, Jane, for whom in truth the Renaissance is somewhat soporific, but who has talked through the research process time and again, read my chapters, and enhanced each of them with her editorial skill.



List of Abbreviations

ASBo	Archivio di Stato di Bologna
ASF	Archivio di Stato di Firenze
ASMo	Archivio di Stato di Modena
ASN	Archivio di Stato di Napoli
ASPr	Archivio di Stato di Parma
ASV	Archivio Segreto Vaticano
ASVe	Archivio di Stato di Venetia
C.T.	<i>Concilium Tridentinum: diariorum, actorum, epistularum, tractatum nova collectio</i>
BAV	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
DBI	Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani





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Note on Transcriptions

Original orthography has largely been retained despite regional variations. Modern accents and punctuation have been introduced. Abbreviations have been generally expanded. Marginal insertions have been silently incorporated into the text.



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Note on Money

Giving a concise and lucid statement of monetary values in Renaissance Italy is no easy matter, given that the Italian states had their own individual currencies and that the value between gold and silver fluctuated. For simplicity's sake, I have restricted money references to the two principal gold coins of the Papal States in the 1530s and 40s: the scudo d'oro in oro and the gold cameral ducat. The value of the ducat was slightly more than the scudo which was worth around 100 baiocchi, the currency for everyday purchases in Rome. In this period, an unskilled worker earned about 48 scudi a year, rent in the poorer areas of Rome was around 12 scudi a year, and annual grain consumption for an adult cost around 5 scudi.





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Introduction

Abstract

Throughout Europe the election of Alessandro Farnese as Paul III in 1534 prompted new hope of Church reform. In considering his fifteen-year reign, some scholars have seen Paul as a champion of reform, others as two-faced in his actions, and others as hampered by character weakness. This book offers a new perspective by taking a cultural approach. Drawing on texts of the time, it explores how the fate of reform was determined by cultural values of honour and tradition, and how honour intersected with politics. The book shows how honour led Paul to pursue reform, and how it prompted him to pull back from a reform program that would have undermined codes of honour and threatened the safety of Rome.

Keywords: Paul III; curia; reform; cultural history; textual style; correspondence

It was late morning on 13 October 1534 when Cardinal Innocenzo Cibo stepped up to the open window at the Vatican Palace. Looking out over the assembled crowd below, he raised his voice in proclamation of the time-honoured formula: 'I announce to you tidings of great joy: we have a pope! The Most Reverend Lord Alessandro, Bishop of Ostia, Cardinal Farnese, who has taken the name of Paul III.'¹ The crowd erupted. This was the first time in over a hundred years that one of their own, a Roman, had claimed the papal tiara. Soon after, the cheering rose higher as the familiar figure of Farnese was carried high through the crowd on the portable throne, the *sedia gestatoria*, to give his first blessing as pope. Church bells rang across the city and canons fired in salute.

Having been a cardinal for forty-one years, Alessandro Farnese was known throughout Rome and was regarded highly for his nobility and magnificence,

1 'Annuncio vobis gaudium magnum, papam habemus. Reverendissimum Dominum Alexandrum Episcopum Hostiensem, Cardinalem de Farnesio nuncupatum et imposuit sibi nomen Paulus III', From the Diary of Blasius de Martinellis, in *Acta Selecta Caeremonialia Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae*, ed. by P.D. Joanne Baptista Gattico, Vol. 1, p. 328.

for his learning and elegance, and for his patronage and generosity. As Dean of the College of Cardinals he was well-respected by his peers among whom he had crafted broad alliances. These had served him well going into the conclave which saw his election within two days, one of the shortest conclaves in the Renaissance. This outcome of the election had been widely anticipated and now that it had been swiftly confirmed, the excitement about the coming pontificate spread rapidly. A leader of one of the local city districts, Marcello Alberini, wrote in his diary that: 'Since he was Roman and of illustrious blood, so great was the expectation of this pontiff that the people were at a loss as to how to do him sufficient honour'.² So Romans pulled out all stops with celebrations and rituals of homage continuing for many days. They reached their high point at the papal coronation on 3 November. The ambassador for Bologna wrote that: 'The coronation of Our Lord was held last Tuesday with the greatest pomp and triumph as ever could be found. There were magnificent festivals, bonfires and fireworks throughout the whole of Rome'.³

As couriers rode out from Rome with the news, the election was received with broader approbation as Farnese was held in esteem by Italian and European rulers, had performed proficiently in high Church offices, and had publicly supported the holding of a General Council to address the ills of Christendom. Even Erasmus, a persistent and biting critic of the papacy, wrote a letter of congratulations to Farnese praising his virtues and expressing confidence that health and tranquillity would now be restored to the Church.⁴ Erasmus was one of many whose hopes of reform now rose.

Calls for Reform

Since the scandal of the Avignon Schism in the late fourteenth century, when three popes contended for the allegiance of Christendom, voices had been rising throughout Europe for reform of the Church.⁵ Although

2 'Era così grande la aspettazione di questo pontefice per essere romano e di sangue illustre che il popolo non sapeva con che poterlo tanto honorare che satisfacesse a se stesso', Marcello Alberini, *I Ricordi*, pp. 429-430.

3 'la corronatione di Nostro Signore si fece Martedi passato con grandissima pompa et trionffo come una tal cosa si ricerca, così si sono fatti per tutta Roma grandissime feste, fuochi et girandolle', Report of Antonio Maria Papazzoni to the Senate of Bologna, 5 November 1534, ASBo, Senato Lettere, Serie VII, Vol. 12, unpaginated.

4 Letter of Erasmus to Paul III, 23 January 1535, in Erasmus, *Opus Epistolarum Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami*, Vol. 11, Letter 2988, pp. 61-63.

5 See John W. O'Malley, 'Historical Thought and the Reform Crisis of the Early Sixteenth Century', pp. 531-548 and Brad S. Gregory, 'Christian Reform and its Discontents', pp. 590-592.



reform was much talked about as the Schism was resolved and the papacy reasserted itself in Rome, no practical reform measures were enacted. In fact, clerical abuses grew in scope and sophistication. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, there was a view throughout much of Europe that the spiritual and pastoral goals of the Church had been overtaken by goals of social advancement and personal enrichment. The three main sources of complaint against the clergy were simony (the sale of Church offices or spiritual graces), pluralism (the holding of multiple benefices to gain multiple incomes), and absenteeism (the failure to be resident in a benefice that had the *cura animarum*, the care of souls.) This last complaint was made especially of bishops who typically held many such benefices and often resided in none of them.

There was also widespread dissatisfaction with the quality of the men who were admitted to the clergy and religious orders: friars, monks, priests, bishops, abbots, cardinals and the pope himself. A lack of education of parish clergy meant that many barely knew how to say Mass or to carry out other sacramental and pastoral duties.⁶ Because offices were sold or given to relatives who had no sense of religious calling, the duties of an office were often given only perfunctory attention and incumbency was exercised mainly in self-interest. So, while belief and practice among the faithful remained fairly stable, a strain of anti-clericalism rose throughout Christendom. The common theme in contemporary critique was that the flock had been given to the care of the wolves.⁷

The locus of most scandal was the perceived degeneracy at the centre of the Church, the papal court. The blatant excess and venal behaviour of the Borgia, della Rovere, and Medici popes provoked both censure and satire. A popular work from the new European printing presses was Erasmus' *Julius Exclusus*, a dialogue showing the recently deceased Pope Julius II (Giuliano della Rovere) arriving at the gates of heaven only to find them locked, then berating St Peter for not recognising the papal dignity and opening up, but ultimately being sent on his way as unfit to enter.⁸ From within Rome the venomous epigrams on the statue *Pasquino* flayed and lampooned the pope and the curia on a daily basis. These epigrams were put up in the dark of

6 Denys Hay, *The Church in Italy in the Fifteenth Century*, p. 98.

7 See Ottavia Niccoli, 'Anticlericalismo italiano e rituali dell' infamia da Alessandro VI a Pio V', p. 923 and Robert W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation*, pp. 52-57.

8 Erasmus Desiderius, *Julius Exclusus*. Note there have been claims that the work was written by Richard Pace, but the attribution to Erasmus is still held widely by scholars. See Aysha Pollnitz, *Princely Education in Early Modern Britain*, p. 71.

night on the base of the statue, then read eagerly by crowds in the morning, quickly copied down and sent off to printers for distribution throughout the city and beyond.⁹

It was not just clerical behaviour that provoked this critique, so did the curia's labyrinthine system of financial imposts, crafted to garner funds from benefices and from papal warrants in relation to sacramental and pastoral practices. The benefice system arose from initially justifiable practices in the Middle Ages, such as allowing clerics to hold more than one benefice when the original benefice was so small that its income was insufficient to sustain the cleric.¹⁰ By the Renaissance, however, these practices had multiplied into a series of financial devices that enabled benefices to be sold not only as whole property lots but in parts, with portions of their income bundled for investment with an annual interest rate. The income could also be used to fund pensions which were usually distributed to relatives of the benefice holder.¹¹ The sales were made not only when the benefices were vacant but also in prospect of their future vacancy by a system called *reservation*. This prompted Martin Luther's observation that: 'the Romanists traffic in livings more disgracefully than the Gentiles under the cross trafficked with Christ's garments'.¹²

Throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries a steady stream of prominent Churchmen produced documents, called memorials, that catalogued these abuses and offered advice on how they should be corrected. Among these were Domenico de Domenichi's *Tractatus de reformationibus Romanae Curiae* (1458), Nicholas of Cusa's *Reformatio Generalibus* (1459), Rodrigo Sanchez de Arevalo's *Libellus de remediis afflictiae ecclesiae* (1469), Tommaso Giustiniani and Vincenzo Querini's *Libellus ad Leonem X* (1513), Zaccaria Ferreri's *De Reformatione Ecclesiae Suasoria* (1522) and Lorenzo Campeggio's *De depravato statu ecclesiae* (1522). Most of these memorials pleaded for the restriction of priestly and episcopal ordination to men of proven worthy character and the rigorous application of existing laws which regulated clerical behaviour, particularly the practices of the Roman curia.¹³

9 See Valerio Marucci, Antonio Marzo, and Angelo Romano (eds.), *Pasquinate Romane del Cinquecento*, Vol.1.

10 See Kirsi Salonen and Jussi Hanska, *Entering a Clerical Career at the Roman Curia 1458-1471*, pp. 42-44.

11 See Barbara Hallman, *Italian Cardinals, Reform, and the Church as Property 1492-1563*, pp. 17-21. More detail on the benefice system will be given in Chapter 1.

12 Martin Luther, 'An Appeal to the Ruling Class', p. 428.

13 The reform efforts of these clerics are treated in Chapter 6 of Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, Vol. 1.

The plea of Ferreri to Pope Adrian VI resonated far and wide: 'Purga Romam, purgatur mundus!' ('Cleanse Rome and the world will be cleansed!').¹⁴

Occasionally the pressure rose to the extent that popes or Councils also produced such reform documents, but they were either not published or not put into effect in any meaningful way. Examples of these were Pius II's *Pastor Aeternus* (1464), Sixtus IV's Bull *Quoniam regnatum cura* (c.1482), and Alexander VI's *In apostolicae sedis specula* (c.1496), none of which were published. One document that had some effect was the Fifth Lateran Council's *Si summus rerum opifex* (1513) which prohibited simony in papal elections. This decree was actually implemented and prevented outright exchange of money.¹⁵ But in enduring effect it meant merely that papal aspirants had to be more adroit in promises to their potential electors.

In 1517, Luther's Ninety-Five Theses opened a cleft in the Church that gradually became a chasm. But the abuses continued. It was not until after the devastating Sack of Rome by imperial troops in 1527 that a systemic and moral response was seriously entertained within the Roman curia. The murder, rape and pillage of the Sack that went on for months was widely seen as divine retribution for the decadence at the core of the Church.¹⁶

The word reform by this time, then, predominantly meant action to address the institutionalised malpractice and unworthy behaviour of the clergy, especially clergy of the curia. This represented a shift in meaning over the centuries. For the early Church Fathers, like Irenaeus (c.130-c.202), the concept of reform was one of the personal renewal of each Christian. This stemmed from the theology of St Paul which saw baptism as the beginning of lifelong acts of renewal to conform oneself progressively to the image and likeness of God.¹⁷ That concept persisted throughout the Middle Ages but alongside it, especially from the time of Gregory VII (1073-1085), grew ideas of reform of the structure and discipline of the Church. These ideas became widespread after the Council of Constance (1414-1418) which, although it

14 Zaccaria Ferreri, 'De Reformatione Ecclesiae Suasoria', in Societas Goerresiana, *Concilium Tridentinum diariorum, actorum, epistolarum, tractatum nova collectio*, Vol. XII, p. 27. (Hereafter cited as C.T.)

15 For the history of this decree, originally a Bull of Julius II, see Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, Vol. VI, p. 440.

16 Cardinal Gonzaga, for example, said: 'All this did not happen by chance, but through divine justice', quoted in Marjorie Reeves, *Prophetic Rome in the High Renaissance Period*, p. 276. See also Kenneth Gouwens, *Remembering the Renaissance: Humanist Narratives of the Sack of Rome*, pp. 170-172.

17 There were however significant differences in emphasis between the Fathers of the East and West. See the landmark work of Gerhart Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers*.



ended the Avignon Schism, left many of the structural and disciplinary issues in the Church unresolved. Personal renewal as part of the faith journey retained a niche in the growth of lay spiritual movements like the *Devotio Moderna* which was popular in the Netherlands and Germany in the fifteenth century.¹⁸ But the renewal that most reform writers and preachers called for was one that would address the moral collapse spreading from Rome. The principal targets of reform, then, were the clergy and clerical structures. During the pontificate of Paul III this was encapsulated in a letter from the papal legates at the Council of Trent to the pope's grandson, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, conveying through him to the pope the areas being discussed by the prelates who had gathered for the Council:

in order that this be the reform that is universally desired and waited for [...] which can be seen as addressing these principal points: collation of benefices with the care of souls, ordination of clerics without proper authorisation, exemptions from punishment, as much as for chapters as for individuals and religious, who can preach and confess in relation to who has the care of souls; to which can be added trade in indulgences for the building of Saint Peter's and for the crusades. As for the Roman court, there are two things that scandalise the world and diminish trust: one is avarice and the other is pomp and luxury, both of which need to be effectively engaged with genuine reform of the penitentiary, the chancery and the rota. Finally, what is most important in the whole of reform is that churches are conferred on persons who are able and willing to serve for service itself and not for mercenary reasons, for without this every attempt at reform would be rendered vain.¹⁹

These aspirations of the prelates are a useful summary of the agenda for reform that will be considered throughout this book.

18 See Lewis Spitz, *The Renaissance and Reformation Movements*, Vol. 1, pp. 41-43.

19 'che questa sia quella reformatione o simile a quella che hoggi universalmente si desidera e aspetta [...] il che par che consista in questi punti principali: collatione de benefici curati, ordinazione de clerici senza licenza, punir esenti, tanto capitoli quanto persone private et religiosi, circa il predicare et confessare et quel che concerne la cura dell'anime; vi si aggiungono le queste et indulgentie per la fabrica di San Pietro et cruciata. Quanto alla corte di Roma, par che due cose scandalezino il mondo et li levino il credito: una l'avaritia, l'altra le pompe et il luxu, alle quali due cose quando si provedesse effeualmente verria reformata la penententaria, la cancellaria et la rota, et non restaria altro che quel che è capo principale di tutta la reformatione, cioè che le chiese si conferissero a persone che le possino et vogliono servire per se medesime et non per mercenarii, perchè senza questo ogni conato di riformatione riuscirebbe vano', Letter of the Council Legates to Cardinal Farnese, 7 March 1546, *C.T.*, Vol. IV, pp. 501-502.

Scholarship on Paul III and Reform

Paul III's pontificate was one of the longest in the Renaissance, he oversaw the most serious attempt at reform in nearly 120 years, he called the Council of Trent, approved foundation of new religious orders such as the Jesuits, and encouraged missions to the New World. Yet most historians of the sixteenth century have only given passing attention to him. There is no biography of Paul III written in English. The only full biography was published in Italian by Carlo Capasso in 1924 and has never been translated.²⁰ A little earlier, the great German historian Ludwig Pastor had given a substantial treatment of Paul III's pontificate in his *Geschichte der Päpste*.²¹ This was later translated into two English volumes.²² Since Capasso and Pastor, most accounts of Paul III and the movement for Church reform have been limited to contextual considerations in studies whose main focus has been clerics who were reformers during his reign, such as the so-called *spirituali*,²³ or biographies of contemporary cardinals,²⁴ or in considerations of the Council of Trent.²⁵

20 Carlo Capasso, *Paolo III 1534-49*, Vols. 1 & 2. Capasso earlier wrote *La politica di Papa Paolo III*, Vols. 1 & 2.

21 Ludwig Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste*, Vol. V.

22 Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, Vols. XI and XII. When Pastor is cited throughout this book, the English volumes are intended.

23 The *spirituali* were a loose-knit group of elite intellectual clerics and lay people who, through study and dialogue, explored inner renewal through faith and grace and institutional renewal through correction of abuses. Their group dynamics and theological positions attracted significant attention in the 1960s and 70s prompted by the work of Delio Cantimori, for example, his *Eretici italiani Del Cinquecento: Ricerche storiche* and *Prospettive di storia Ereticale Italiana del Cinquecento*. There have also been some new explorations in recent times: Gigliola Fragnito, *Cinquecento italiano: religione, cultura e potere dal Rinascimento alla Controriforma*; Camilla Russell, 'Religious Reforming Currents in Sixteenth-Century Italy: The *Spirituali* and the Tridentine Debates over Church Reform'; and chapters in Philip Benedict, Silvana Seidel Menchi and Alain Tallon, *La Réforme en France et en Italie*. The *spirituali* will be considered here principally in Chapter 4.

24 See Elisabeth Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini: Venice, Rome, and Reform*; Francesco Cesareo, *Humanism and Catholic Reform: The Life and Work of Gregorio Cortese (1483-1548)*; Richard M. Douglas, *Jacopo Sadoletto, 1477-1547: Humanist and Reformer*; Thomas Mayer, *Reginald Pole: Prince and Prophet*; Kate J.P. Lowe, *Church and Politics in Renaissance Italy: The Life and Career of Cardinal Francesco Soderini*; William V. Hudon, *Marcello Cervini and Ecclesiastical Government in Tridentine Italy*; Paul V. Murphy, *Ruling Peacefully: Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga and Patrician Reform in Sixteenth-century Italy*.

25 See Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*; John O'Malley, *Trent: What happened at the Council*; Simon Ditchfield, *Liturgy, Sanctity and History in Tridentine Italy: Pietro Maria Campi and the Preservation of the Particular*; Paolo Prodi, 'Riforma interiori e disciplinamento sociale in San Carlo Borromeo'. The substantial biographical entry in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 'Paolo III, papa', Vol. 81 (2014), by Gigliola Fragnito is also a useful resource.



Outside of reform scholarship there have been a few works about Farnese politics, art and architecture that have provided some biographical context on members of the family.²⁶ There has been little in depth about Paul III with the exception of two excellent monographs by the art historian Roberto Zapperi.²⁷ The output of shorter contributions in scholarly articles specifically on Paul III and his pontificate has been similarly modest, again most in Italian or German a century or more ago and, in recent times, a few in English and a handful in Italian by art historians.²⁸

Of the scholars who have written on Paul III's role in Church reform, most credit him with initiatives that went beyond those of any other Renaissance pope saying, though, that these initiatives would have had greater impact but for his complex character that also restrained reform at critical points. In his supposed contradictory actions, some historians see Paul juggling spiritual and worldly motivations, others posit a personality enigma that is difficult to unravel, and others see him as weak in character, particularly in indulging his family, and thus two-faced on reform.²⁹

The contention of this book is that Paul III is not so difficult to understand if greater attention is given to the culture of the time, the culture that shaped Alessandro Farnese on his way to the papacy and that surrounded him as pope, both in Rome and on the wider European stage. Most scholars acknowledge his humanist education as a young man, but there is little attention to how his humanist orientation developed over the years, nor of

26 See for example Helge Gamrath, *Farnese: Pomp, Power and Politics in Renaissance Italy* and Clare Robertson, *Il Gran Cardinale: Alessandro Farnese, Patron of the Arts*.

27 Roberto Zapperi, *La leggenda del papa Paolo III: Arte e censura nella Roma pontificia and Tiziano, Paolo III e i suoi nipoti*.

28 Recent examples are Guido Rebecchini, 'After the Medici: The New Rome of Pope Paul III Farnese'; Bernice Davidson, 'The Decoration of the Sala Regia under Pope Paul III'; Antonella de Michelis, '*Villeggiatura* in the urban context of Renaissance Rome: Paul III Farnese's villa-tower on the Campidoglio'; Richard Harprath, 'La formazione umanistica di papa Paolo III e le sue conseguenze nell'arte romana della metà del Cinquecento'.

29 Pastor says of Paul that: 'during the whole of his pontificate he was the moving spirit in Catholic reform and the pioneer of Catholic restoration', Vol. XI, p. 40, yet: 'Things old and new contended within him so that to his contemporaries his character was always somewhat of an enigma', p. 50. Elisabeth Gleason says: 'He alternated between support of spokesmen for reform of the papal court and marked foot-dragging and even stone-walling. Not only modern historians have been puzzled by his inconsistent behaviour, but even contemporaries were at a loss how to understand it', 'Who Was the First Counter-Reformation Pope?', p. 183. Jedin says: 'The sharp ear of this superior man heard the call for Council and reform, but the delicate, aristocratic hands of the old prelate which we admire in Titian's painting of 1543, lacked the strength to cut the threads which linked his whole being as well as the interests of the Curia with the Renaissance period of the papacy', Vol. 1, p. 445.

how the humanist ascendancy at the Roman court influenced his aspirations for the papacy and his governance of Rome. Humanist intersections with the culture of honour, long integral to Italian social transactions, and its intersections with the ecclesiastical culture and theology of tradition have hardly featured in the literature at all.³⁰ Paul III's actions in regard to reform have also too often been considered in isolation from relevant political events that confronted him, particularly the conflict between the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, and the French King, Francis I, which threatened Rome.

The Cultural Approach

Looking at history from a cultural perspective necessarily turns the field of enquiry away from the quest for hard facts to interpretations of collective modes of thought and areas such as meanings in symbols, human subjectivity and agency.³¹ Peter Burke has been at the forefront of research in cultural history and in drawing history into dialogue with other disciplines.³² Burke says that culture is 'essentially attitudes and values and their expressions or embodiments in texts, artefacts and performances'.³³

The texts and other symbols are part of a socializing process that acts on us from our earliest days. Burke calls on the anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, who says that we are born 'unfinished animals', inserted into a pre-existing culture that enables us to complete ourselves and provides us with a shared compass with which to navigate everyday life.³⁴ Inherent in the system is an expectation that we conform; in fact culture can be seen as a set of control mechanisms or rules for governing of behaviour.³⁵ The literary historian, Stephen Greenblatt, picks up this thread saying that culture 'creates specific individuals by governing the passage from abstract potential to concrete historical embodiment'.³⁶ Both Geertz and Greenblatt have a tight conception of the governing process, saying that we are 'cultural artefacts'.³⁷ Burke

30 A notable exception in regard to a contemporary cardinal is Paul V. Murphy's study, *Ruling Peacefully: Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga and Patrician Reform in Sixteenth-century Italy*, in which he explores Gonzaga's understanding and pursuit of honour in management of his diocese.

31 See Anna Green, *Cultural History*, p. 6.

32 Among Burke's many works are: *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy*, *The Italian Renaissance: Culture and Society in Italy* and *What is Cultural History?*

33 Burke, *The Italian Renaissance: Culture and Society in Italy*, p. 2.

34 Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 49.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 44.

36 Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, p. 3.

37 Geertz, p. 51; Greenblatt, p. 3.



sees more agency. While he admits the constraining potency of culture, he adds an important qualification. Taking Botticelli as an example, Burke says that: 'Romantic notions of the spontaneous expression of individuality were not available to him. The role of the painter which he played was the one defined by (or at any rate in) his own culture.' But Burke goes on to say: 'At the same time, there are societies, and Renaissance Italy was one of them, where alternative definitions of the artist's role – and of much else – were available'.³⁸ Dialogues in Renaissance works like Leon Alberti's *Libri della Famiglia* or Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* show indeed that many cultural values were contested. The interlocutors in Alberti's work, for example, spend much time debating idealised concepts of virtue or friendship over against more pragmatic, self-interested responses to everyday life situations.³⁹ Cultural contestations meant that most people had to make some choices. They also created spaces for creative individuals to push the cultural boundaries, albeit while weighing up the limits of social safety so as not to go too far. That is generally the way culture develops. To break way beyond the cultural boundaries, as Martin Luther did, is rare and one needs powerful social (and in the Renaissance physical) protection to do so. Overall most people do not take that path, they make modest choices within the surrounding suite of cultural codes and leave them largely intact after navigating life with them.⁴⁰

Burke sums up the culture of early modern Italy as being that of a "theatre society" where it was necessary to play one's social role with style, *fare bella figura*, to work hard at creating and maintaining as well as saving "face".⁴¹ Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* is an example of the popularity of literature that resonated with lives played out on the stage. A humanist work, it is a dialogue on how a gentleman should craft his behaviour in a way that will maximise admiration and thus advancement at court. It gives ample advice about designing one's social performance to manage people's impressions: 'so you see how important are first impressions and how hard a man must strive to give a good impression at the beginning if he is ambitious to win the rank and name of a good courtier'.⁴² One of the most effective impression management devices Castiglione offers is the famous *sprezzatura*, the appearance of nonchalant spontaneity that needs to be rehearsed.⁴³

38 Burke, *The Italian Renaissance: Culture and Society in Italy*, p. 3.

39 See for example, Alberti, *I Libri della Famiglia*, pp. 43-44, 247-254.

40 Geertz, p. 45.

41 Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy*, p. 10.

42 Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, p. 57.

43 Castiglione, p. 67.



The theatre metaphor has particular currency for the central city of Italy where the ritual of the papal court, the grand processions on feast days, the *possesso* of a new pope, solemn entries of dignitaries, displays of *Carnevale*, ceremonies of guilds and confraternities, and street performances in the Campo de' Fiori were woven through daily life in what Peter Partner calls the 'great Roman Show'.⁴⁴ This theatre not only entertained the populace but shaped and maintained the social order, framing personal identity within that order.

Drawing on these understandings of the dynamics of culture, then, this book explores the cultural context and contemporaneous events that shaped Paul III and his engagement with reform. To do so I examine the way Paul and those around him expressed themselves, the attitudes and values they espoused, and the symbols they used in projecting themselves socially. In this, I principally examine letters of the time and orations at the Roman court. The letters include the dispatches of ambassadors who were privileged observers of the papal court, the correspondence of cardinals who were protagonists in reform activity, and letters of Paul III himself.⁴⁵ The value of letters is that they record events, reveal attitudes and, through their textual style, point to cultural codes. The other principal body of texts I call upon are those of orations at the funeral of a pope, at the liturgy prior to the subsequent conclave, and at the Fifth Lateran Council. The orations chosen are ones which Alessandro Farnese would have

44 Peter Partner, *The Pope's Men: The Papal Civil Service in the Renaissance*, p. 112.

45 While there are thousands of Briefs, Bulls and letters that bear the name of Paul III, it is curiously difficult to find personal letters to family and friends that he wrote himself during his time as cardinal and pope. I have found only few such letters in the Farnese collections which are housed in each of the Secret Archives of the Vatican and the State Archives of Naples and of Parma. In fact, there are more autograph letters of Paul in collections other than the Farnese archives. Of significance, in the Royal Library of Copenhagen, there is a manuscript book in which Farnese copied fifty-three letters to and from himself when he was in his twenties. These were published by the Italian scholar, Arsenio Frugoni, in 1950. A handful of correspondence to and from the young cardinal, regarding his sister Giulia, is in the Archivum Arcis, Arm. I-XVIII of the Vatican Archives, rather than in its Carte Farnesiane. There is also a series of letters regarding everyday matters, mainly from Farnese to members of the Pucci family, in the Carte Strozziiane of the State Archives of Florence (Carte Strozziiane, Series 1, No. 340). It seems that, if there are other remaining letters of Farnese, they are likely to be in the collections of those who received them. It could be that, if there were once other collections of his letters, they were lost when the Parma archive was broken up by King Charles VII of Naples, son of Elizabeth Farnese and King Philip V of Spain, who inherited the Duchy of Parma and transferred the majority of the archive, art and library to Naples in the mid-1730s. It could also be that some of Paul's correspondence was destroyed in the Nazi burning of some of the Naples' collection in 1943 (see Riccardo Filangieri, 'Report on the Destruction by the Germans, September 30, 1943, of the Depository of Priceless Historical Records of the Naples State Archives'). Nevertheless, the letters discovered so far provide valuable insights into how cultural codes impinged on Farnese and how he willingly appropriated them.

heard during his time as a cardinal and which express expectations in the curial culture of the role of the pope in this period, in particular his role in regard to reform. A scholar of these texts, John McManamon, says that the funeral and pre-conclave orations help 'delineate the relationship between the cultural ideals of the papal court and the broader cultural movements of the era'.⁴⁶

When Paul III set up his first reform Commission in 1535, he called all the cardinals together in consistory and, along with urging the Commissioners to be diligent, he exhorted them to 'consider well the circumstances of the times'.⁴⁷ It was a caution to them to take a clear-eyed view of present realities and of the limits those realities imposed on change. This book explores the cultural and political realities of the time and how those realities both promoted reform and constrained it. At its core, this is an exploration of the Renaissance culture of honour, how it shaped Paul III, how it led him to pursue reform, and how it prompted him to pull back from a reform program that he believed would undermine codes of honour and threaten the safety of Rome. Far from showing weakness of character or internal vacillation, Paul conducted his papacy with astuteness, resolution and strength, qualities that enabled him to save Rome and the Church from significant social and political peril. He had the perspicacity to see that the time for sweeping reform was simply not right. Nevertheless, he prepared the ground for seeds of reform that eventually grew and became central to the Counter-Reformation.

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46 John M. McManamon, 'The Ideal Renaissance Pope: Funeral Oratory from the Papal Court', p. 33.

47 'renuntiavit Dominis Reverendissimis quae egerat in congregatione Dominorum quibus datum erat negotium morum ac reformationis ut temporis conditioni consuleretur', Consistory of 3 March 1535, ASV, Arch. Concist., Acta Misc., Reg. 8, fol. 14r.



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1. Humanism and Honour in the Making of Alessandro Farnese

Abstract

Born into a noble family on the rise in Roman society, Alessandro Farnese's development was framed by cultural expectations in humanism and in the code of honour. Humanism provided the script and the classical skills for elite males to perform on the social stage of Rome, a 'theatre society'. Honour, the foundation of social worth, was the prize that performance continually sought. The pervasive yet contested nature of honour is illustrated in texts that unfold an episode between the young Cardinal Farnese, Pope Alexander VI and his mistress, Giulia Farnese, the cardinal's sister. The episode shows how Alessandro Farnese understood honour and how it became a touchstone throughout his years as cardinal and pope.

Keywords: Farnese family; humanist court; social performance; contested values

Born on 28 February 1468, Alessandro Farnese entered a patrician family in the region of Lazio of which Rome had long been the capital. Over the course of the fifteenth century the Farnese family were rapidly on the rise in status and wealth. Originally small landowners around Lake Bolsena, they also held positions as *condottieri* (military leaders) in the revitalisation of the Papal States that followed the end of the Avignon Schism. In recognition of his service to the papacy, in the 1430s Ranuccio Farnese, Alessandro's grandfather, was invested with six local fiefs, including Montalto, Gradoli and Latera.¹ His growing income and territorial lordship prompted Ranuccio to stake a greater claim of status among the Roman nobility by building a palace in Viterbo. This claim was consolidated when his son, Pierluigi, married

1 Helge Gamrath, 'The History of a Success in the Italian Renaissance: The Farnese family c. 1400-1600', p. 95.

Giovannella Caetani, daughter of one of Rome's oldest baronial families whose members had included six cardinals, one of whom, Benedetto Caetani, had become Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303). Pierluigi and Giovannella's aspirations for their son, Alessandro, his brother, Angelo, and two sisters, Geroloma and Giulia were that they would continue the family's rise in Roman society. Core to Alessandro's formation were humanism and honour.

Humanism

In common with many noble families, the Farnese parents covered the bases for advancement by steering their older son, Angelo, toward the military and the younger Alessandro toward a career at the centre of the Church. At this time the best preparation for positions in the Roman curia was to be trained in the *studia humanitatis*, the study of classical languages and literature and ancient disciplines such as grammar, poetry, rhetoric, history, and moral philosophy. The aim of the humanists was not only to provide skills in these areas, but to 'perfect and ornament'² the person in society's eyes through oratorical and literary elegance and by conducting present-day life through application of classical models.³

At the age of sixteen, therefore, Alessandro's education was entrusted to the renowned humanist Pomponio Leto and the *Accademia Romana* that gathered round him. The Academy was not a formal institute, rather a network of like-minded scholars and students who gathered in each other's homes for dialogue, lectures, orations, and readings of their works.⁴ At his home, Leto conducted a private school for young men of elite families. He also taught at the Sapienza University where he himself had studied under Lorenzo Valla. Leto rode the crest of the wave of humanism gaining

2 'in cognitione earum rerum quae pertinent ad vitam et mores, quae propterea humanitatis studia nuncupantur, quod hominem perficiant atque exornent', Leonardo Bruni, in *Arretini Epistolarum Libri VIII*, p. 49.

3 The seminal work of Paul Oskar Kristeller, on whom this brief description of humanism relies, has recently been expanded and challenged, particularly prompted by the work of Brian Maxson. Alessandro Farnese became more of what Maxson calls a 'social humanist' rather than a 'literary humanist', in that, while he pursued reading, speaking and dialogue grounded in the classics and their languages, he did not produce a substantial literary output of his own. See Kristeller and Randall, 'General Introduction', in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, pp. 1-20; Maxson, *The Humanist World of Renaissance Florence*.

4 See Maria Accame Lanzillotta, *Pomponio Leto: Vita e insegnamento* and Anna Modigliani, Patricia Osmond, Marianne Pade, and Johann Ramming, eds., *Pomponio Leto tra identità locale e cultura internazionale*.

renown for his work in Latin literature, Roman history and archaeology.⁵ A charismatic figure, he led his colleagues and students in walks of discovery through the ancient ruins of Rome and gathered them for re-enactments of ancient festivals and rituals like the *Palilia*, the 'birthday' of the foundation of Rome on 21 April.⁶ For the Academy there was always the dual impulse defined by Flavio Biondo in his *Roma instaurata* of 1446: the uncovering – which could literally be unearthing of statues, manuscripts, coins, buildings, inscriptions – and revivifying, bringing ancient Rome into the present and taking it to new heights, the inauguration of a Golden Age.⁷

As Leto's Academy was exclusively grounded in Latin, in his nineteenth year, Alessandro went to Florence to study Greek under the tutelage of Demetrio Calcondila.⁸ This he did with others in the circle of Lorenzo de' Medici where he became friends with Lorenzo's son, Giovanni, later Pope Leo X. Alessandro returned to Rome at age twenty-one with letters from Lorenzo to his ambassador, Giovanni Lanfredini, asking him to seek a secretarial position for Farnese from Pope Innocent VIII. One of these letters praised Farnese thus: 'over and above being born into the house he is from, he has many and singular gifts, among which he is abundantly lettered and of good habits, since he is most learned and an example of a good and praiseworthy life'.⁹

From letters that Alessandro wrote in his early twenties, we can see how he had imbibed the humanist milieu. The archives of the Royal Library of Copenhagen hold a rare manuscript copy book of fifty-three letters both from and to Farnese.¹⁰ In his elegant hand, the young Farnese wrote to family

5 This was despite Leto being imprisoned for a time in Venice for sodomy and in Rome for a supposed conspiracy to kill Pope Paul II; he was eventually acquitted of the latter charge. See Anthony F. D'Elia, *A Sudden Terror: The Plot to Murder the Pope in Renaissance Rome*.

6 Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome*, pp. 69-72.

7 Paul III provided an elegant preface and his imprimatur to a vernacular edition of both *Roma instaurata* and *Italia illustrata* in a volume called *Roma ristaurata et Italia illustrata da Biondo da Forli*. On the dual impulse see also Stinger, pp. 62-63.

8 It was also wise for Farnese to get out of Rome for a while as he had been caught up on the wrong side of a political battle between Pope Innocent VIII and Ferrante d'Aragona and had found himself locked up in the Castel Sant'Angelo for a short time. The difficulty with Innocent had been smoothed over by the time Farnese returned to Rome a couple of years later. See Gigliola Fragnito, 'Paolo III, papa'.

9 'Oltre allo essere nato della casa che è, ha molte et singolari parte in sé, tra le quali sono molto abundanate le lettere et buoni costume, perchè è doctissimo et uno exemplo di buona et laudabile vita'. Letter of Lorenzo de' Medici to Giovanni Lanfredini, 10 April 1489, in *Lorenzo de' Medici Lettere*, Vol. XV, p. 79.

10 Arsenio Frugoni, ed., *Carteggio Umanistico Di Alessandro Farnese: Dal Cod. Gl. Kgl. S. 2125, Copenhagen*. According to Helge Gamrath, this book 'is thought to have been acquired by the

members, to Leto and Calcondila, and to friends of his youth like Alessandro Cortesi, Stefano Aquilano, and Giovanni de' Medici. The letters show his facility with Latin and Greek and his familiarity with and admiration for writers such as Cicero, Ovid, Quintillian, and Lucretius.¹¹ He was similarly fond of the Greek classical writers, saying to his brother-in-law, Puccio Pucci, that after a busy time he was about to take a break on the family island of Bisentina where he would be 'accompanied by the divine Homer'.¹² Earlier, writing from Florence about his Greek studies, Farnese indicated his dedication to student life, saying to his cousin, Paolo Farnese, that day and night he and his fellow students were going over Greek texts to such an extent that he scarcely had time to break away to write to him.¹³ He did not let this newfound interest, though, distract him from his roots. In a reply to Cortesi, who had apparently been chiding him for neglecting his Latin studies in favour of Greek, Farnese expressed a fundamental note of his identity construction: 'Don't worry, I pray, my Cortesi, I am Alexander the Roman'.¹⁴ In a letter to Lorenzo de' Medici he also showed his pleasure at being able to associate himself with Alexander the Great, a role model to Roman leaders such as Pompey, Caesar, Augustus, and Trajan.¹⁵ Core to his Roman identity, of course, was his family. Writing again to Pucci, he declared that: 'as long as I am alive, following in the footsteps of our ancestors, I will never cease to advance the concerns of the house of Farnese'.¹⁶

Alessandro achieved his first stable rung on the ladder for his family in 1490, with appointment to the curial post of Apostolic Scriptor.¹⁷ In the largely humanist court, he became a dedicated member of the humanist group led by the brothers Paolo and Alessandro Cortesi.¹⁸ With his rapid

Danish scholar Frederik Rostgaard who was in Italy in the 1690s. It was incorporated into the Royal Library collections in c. 1730', *Farnese: Pomp, Power and Politics in Renaissance Italy*, p. 235.

11 See, for example, Letters X and XIV in Frugoni, pp. 28 and 31.

12 'Ibi compositis rebus in insula illa amenissima abstergam omnem animi mucorem remittamque ambitioni nuntium ac divino comitatus Homero', Letter of Alessandro Farnese to Puccio Pucci, undated, Letter L in Frugoni, p. 61.

13 'nocturna diurna que manu exemplaria Graeca versamus adeo ut vix hoc exiguum temporis quo ad te scripsimus impune studiis nostris eripere potuerimus', Letter of Alessandro Farnese to Paolo Pietro Farnese, undated, Letter VIII in Frugoni, p. 26.

14 'Ne vereare, obsecro, mi Cortesi, ille ego sum Alexander Romanus', Letter of Alessandro Farnese to Alessandro Cortesi, 20 December 1488, Letter XXIV in Frugoni, p. 39.

15 Letter of Alessandro Farnese to Lorenzo de Medici, undated, Letter V in Frugoni, p. 25.

16 'ut donec vixero maiorum innixus vestigiis rem Farnetiam non desinam augere', Letter of Alessandro Farnese to Puccio Pucci, 19 January 1490, Letter XLV in Frugoni p. 58.

17 Farnese had been granted this title at an earlier age, in 1482, but had lost it when he fell out of favour with Innocent VIII. See Gino Benzoni, 'Paolo III'.

18 John F. D'Amico, *Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome*, p. 76.



rise in the curia, Treasurer General by 1492 and cardinal by 1493, Farnese himself became a focal point for humanist encounters.¹⁹ His circle was given prominence by the poet Ariosto in a verse of *Orlando Furioso*:

Lo! Alexander of Farnese, and O
 Learned company that follows in his train!
 Phaetro, Capella, Maddalen', Portio
 Surnamed the Bolognese, the Volteranne.
 Blossi, Piero, Vida, famed for flow
 Of lofty eloquence of exhaustless vein;
 Mussuro, Lascaro, and Navagero
 And Andrew Maro and the monk Severo.²⁰

These men congregated often in the academies of Angelo Colocci and Johannes Goritz, the latter of which was the peak humanist group in the city from the time of Leo X to the Sack of Rome in 1527, particularly excelling in neo-Latin poetry.²¹ In contrast to Leto's Academy, which gave little attention to religion, Goritz promoted discourse and writing about Christian topics and this was reflected in poetry generated by the group.

19 Like most of his peers, Farnese aimed to achieve ever more prestigious and lucrative offices within the Church. Some of his significant appointments were: 16 August 1490 – Apostolic Scriptor; 8 July 1491 – Apostolic Protonotary; 6 September 1492 – Treasurer General; 10 July 1493 – Canon of the church of San Lorenzo of Viterbo; 20 September 1493 – Cardinal Deacon of Saints Cosmas and Damian; 14 November 1494 – Legate of the Papal Patrimony; 28 April 1501 – Bishop of Corneto and Montefiascone; 28 November 1502 – Legate of the March of Ancona; Cardinal Deacon of Sant Eustachio 29 November 1503; 18 February 1508 – Administrator diocese of Venice, France; 28 March 1509 – Bishop of Parma; 6 March 1514 – Bishop of Benevento; 28 July 1514 – Bishop of San Poms de Tomieres; 15 June 1519 – Cardinal Bishop of Frascati; 9 December 1523 – Bishop of Palestrina; 18 December 1523 – Bishop of Sabina; 20 May 1524 – Bishop of Porto and San Rufina; 15 June 1524 – Cardinal Bishop of Ostia; 24 January 1530 – Administrator diocese of Bitonto. See Konrad Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica Medii et Recentioris Aevi: sive Summorum Pontificum, S.R.E. Cardinalium, Ecclesiarum antistitum serie*, Vol. 3, pp. 22, 56, 138; also Fragnito, 'Paolo III, papa'.

20 'Ecco Alessandro, il mio signor, Farnese:
 O dotta compagnia che seco mena!
 Fedro, Capella, Porzio, il Bolognese
 Filippo, il Volterano, il Madalena,
 Blossio, Pierio, il Vida Cremonese,
 D'alta facondia inessicabil vena,
 E Lascari e Mussuro e Navagero,
 E Andrea Marone e 'l monaco Severo'.
 Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, p. 173.

21 D'Amico, pp. 108 and 115.

Throughout his life Farnese augmented his learning, spoke with elegance and erudition in Latin and Greek, and was both a friend and patron to a wide range of humanists.

Honour

Among many of its influences on him, humanism confirmed for Farnese the priority of honour in constructing himself on the social stage. Throughout Italy and most of Europe honour was central to the way people were shaped by cultural concepts that surrounded them. The concept of honour warrants some exploration, because of its power and pervasiveness, before outlining its influence on Farnese.

The sway of honour, especially for humanists, had its origins in Greek and Roman antiquity. Aristotle, for example, said 'Honour [...] is surely the greatest of external goods [...] It is with honour that proud men appear to be concerned, for it is honour that they chiefly claim [...] honour is the prize of excellence'.²² Homer's *Iliad* is a narrative of the pursuit of honour and glory among one's peers played out on an epic scale.²³ Cicero linked honour and glory as values in social life throughout his *De Officiis*, for example, 'the peak and perfection of glory lies in the following three things: if the masses love you, if they have faith in you, if they think you worthy of some honour combined with admiration'.²⁴ By the Middle Ages, the quest for honour among one's peers had spread throughout society, even to the peasantry. Once acknowledged, honour was to be rigorously defended and violent reprisal against besmirched honour was often accepted as justifiable in judicial proceedings.²⁵ Among the elite, honour was tied to martial behaviour and dominated codes of chivalry.²⁶ For the medieval knight, the external nature of honour was most revealed when he rode out to battle in full regalia. In a world of honour, his identity *was* the sum of his armour, his bearing, and the social symbols emblazoned on his shield.²⁷

22 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle* ed. by Jonathan Barnes, Book IV.3, pp. 1773-1774.

23 See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 125.

24 Marcus Tullius Cicero, *On Duties (De Officiis)*, ed. by M. T. Griffin and E. M. Atkins, 2.30, p. 74.

25 Chris Wickham, *Medieval Europe*, pp. 16-17.

26 Paul D. McLean, *The Art of the Network: Strategic Interaction and Patronage in Renaissance Florence*, p. 65.

27 See Peter Berger, 'On the obsolescence of the concept of honor', p. 343.



By the Renaissance, honour was not necessarily tied to militarist codes, it could include ancestry, public role and wealth. It was frequently paired with profit – *honore e utile* – particularly when a person was trying to recommend himself or another to a patron. So, Pier Francesco Ricci wrote to Cosimo I de' Medici recommending a mining expert saying: 'it is my judgement that everything goes easily for this man and I pray that God will keep him healthy for I hope that he will be the source of much honour and profit for Your Excellency'.²⁸ Material advantage and the accrual of honour were seen as going hand-in-hand on the social stage.²⁹

Seeking honour was crucial because it represented the sum of your social worth. How much honour you were credited with determined the script by which you played out your life. It defined your social place, social roles, and the protocols of social behaviour you were to conform to.³⁰ Indicative of honour's place in Italian humanist culture, Francesco Guicciardini said: 'Whoever prizes honour will succeed in everything'³¹ and Leon Alberti proclaimed it the highest aspiration:

Let honour alone claim first place in your desires. Let fame stand first and never subordinate reputation to riches. In the attainment of honour and reputation nothing, no matter how arduous or laborious, will seem too much for you to attempt and to carry through. You will be satisfied with the sole reward of public appreciation and high reputation.³²

Words like 'fame', 'reputation', 'good name', 'dignity', 'glory' and 'grandeur' all reflected the preoccupation with honour and the lifelong tasks of its maintenance, accrual and defence.

Although honour was an integral dimension of all social interactions, it is difficult to describe precisely, partly because it was so taken for granted. It was experienced as an almost tangible personal possession that, ironically, remained in the gift of others. In line with the humanist preoccupation with 'ornamenting' oneself, it was a sort of social aura that glowed more

28 'a mio giuditio ogni cosa viene facile a questo homo, et io prego Dio che lo tenga sano perchè spero molto honore et molto utile per Vostra Eccellenza', Letter of Pier Francesco Ricci to Cosimo de' Medici, 7 August 1545, ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 613, fol. 45.

29 McLean, p. 60.

30 This summary description draws on one by Thomas V. Cohen, 'The Lay Liturgy of Affront in Sixteenth-Century Italy', p. 862.

31 'A chi stima l'onore assai, succede ogni cosa', Francesco Guicciardini, *Ricordi*, no.118.

32 Leon Battista Alberti, *The Family in Renaissance Florence (I Libri della Famiglia)*, Book 1, p. 43.

brilliantly the higher up the social scale a person was. As such, it always needed to be acknowledged. Thus social interactions began with cultural protocols like doffing the hat, bowing, kissing the hand and, at the highest level, kissing the feet of the pope. Some of the protocols which were deemed to be essential in the acknowledgement of high honour are evident in the instructions of Duke Ercole d'Este of Ferrara to the ambassadors he was sending to the newly elected Paul III. The Duke required that, once in Rome, the ambassadors should:

seek admission to the presence of His Holiness and present our credential letters to His Beatitude [...] [informing him] that in our place we have sent you, our ambassadors, so that you will do him reverence and, having prostrated yourselves at his holy feet and kissed them, adore him and display to him our intimate joy and satisfaction in such a well-deserved election as his, a greater one we could not conceive of, and that we hold the desire to display the same in person. Also relay to His Holiness that, given that we are his most devoted servant and the faithful subject of Holy Church and in particular of him, [...] we have sent you ambassadors to His Holiness so that you might be a sign of the respect and servitude for him that we hold and this in such manner that should it happen that he may wish to command of us or have us serve him in any way, let him know with assurance that we will always stand ready to obey him.³³

As in the Middle Ages, the codes of honour were not just for the elite, they functioned throughout the social scale. Studies by Elizabeth Cohen and Thomas Cohen have shown that *honore* and its opposite *vergogna* (shame) shaped the everyday interactions of people across the classes of Rome, all

33 'studierete d'essere adnesso al conspetto della Santità di Nostro Signore et presentate c'haverete le nostre lettere credentiali a Sua Beatitudine [...] che in loco nostro habbiamo mandate voi nostri oratori acciochè facciate reverentia a Sua Santità et prostrati alli suoi santi piedi et quelli baciati, l'adorate, et le dimostrate la intima nostra allegrezza et contento nel quale si troviamo per tale ben merita elettione; perche certo è tale che in noi non puo capire maggiore, et teniamo disiderio di far questo ancho noi con la propria nostra persona; et direte ancho a Sua Beatitudine che essendo noi devotissimo servitore et fedelissimo suddito di santa chiesa, et in particolare di lui, [...] habbiamo mandati voi oratori a Sua Beatitudine affinché siate segno de l'osservantia et servitudine che le portiamo et acciochè accadendole ancho di volerci comandare o servirsi di noi in cosa alcuna ella ci lo possa far intendere per lo nostro mezzo, certificandola che noi muovera sempre pronti ad ubidirla', Instructions of Ercole II d' Este, Duke of Ferrara, to Marco Pio and Matteo Casella, 1 November 1534, ASMò, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 35, c. 229, fol. 2, 1.

the way through to labourers and prostitutes.³⁴ For everyone the avoidance of shame was just as much a preoccupation as the pursuit of honour, for imputed shameful behaviour of oneself or one's family or friends meant loss of social standing and thus diminished capacity to negotiate social transactions. The autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini is a fascinating contemporary account of a Florentine artisan enmeshed in Roman society and the demands of honour that shaped his construction of identity and his pursuit of social advancement. Like all in Rome, Cellini's honour was never a given, it always needed to be defended and embellished.³⁵

Honour derived more than anything from the perceived status of the social groups to which one was connected. The Spanish proverb 'Dime con quién andas y te diré quién eres' ('Tell me whom you associate with and I will tell you who you are') applied in Italy as well.³⁶ So the family one belonged to was a benchmark, also one's peer families, the connections that came with one's public role, the guilds or confraternities to which one belonged and, on the macro level, one's commune and the state. Pre-eminent among these was the status of one's family: its rank among families of the city or state, its lineage, the public roles of its members, its connections by marriage or alliance, its wealth and the way that was displayed in property and lifestyle all contributed to the degree of honour in societal perception. Thus, the degree of honour in life's journey was initially inherited. Obligations came with the inheritance: first to ensure that the family honour was not diminished and second to seek every opportunity to enhance the level of honour. Male family members had an active responsibility with regard to honour, to seek it, to display it and to defend it. Female responsibility was largely passive, above all in preserving chastity but also, relatedly, in behaving with decorum, restraint and modesty.³⁷ The failure of a woman in any of these areas, again most especially in chastity, led to shame for the males in the family who were perceived as too weak to keep their women in check.³⁸

Although the honour system was pervasive, the fundamentals of honour's attribution were by no means universally agreed. This is reflected in the divide among humanist writers over whether honour flowed from social rank or virtuous conduct. Lapo da Castiglionchio, for example, maintained that

34 See Elizabeth S. Cohen, 'Honor and Gender in the Streets of Early Modern Rome', pp. 597-625 and Thomas V. Cohen, 'The Lay Liturgy of Affront in Sixteenth-Century Italy', pp. 857-877.

35 Benvenuto Cellini, *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini*.

36 Julian Pitt-Rivers, 'Honour and Social Status', p. 35.

37 Thomas Kuehn, *Illegitimacy in Renaissance Florence*, p. 88.

38 Elizabeth S. Cohen and Thomas V. Cohen, *Daily Life in Renaissance Italy*, pp. 91-92.

nobility and honour came entirely from lineage.³⁹ Whereas Poggio Bracciolini held that nobility and honour derived from virtue: 'We call *nobiles* those who have performed virtuous deeds and who achieve honour and glory through their own character'.⁴⁰ Other writers, like Alberti and Castiglione, had the speakers in their dialogues argue with equal weight leaving the matter unresolved. Thus, Alberti has his Lionardo claim that honour is most sustainable when grounded in virtue, while his Giannozzo maintains that, when confronted with the vagaries of fortune, one needs to respond with pragmatic action to maintain honour.⁴¹ Clinging firmly to the wholly external attribution, some claimed that one was dishonoured by non-virtuous conduct only if the conduct became publicly known and condemned.⁴² Most admitted that there were at least gradations of virtuous conduct, for example the accrual of honour being assured much more in aiding one's family than a stranger. Thus, Alberti's Giannozzo says: 'Remember this, I keep repeating it because it is something you should always keep in mind, there is more honour and value in helping your own family than outsiders'.⁴³

The dimensions of honour were not only contested within humanist discourse, they were also contested by much of the long-standing moral code of Christianity. The model of the good Christian was far from the glory, fame, and superiority proposed by the code of honour. Rather, the Christian was to seek a life of self-sacrifice, self-abnegation, and humility. As Jesus said in the Gospels: 'Whoever wants to be first, must be last of all and servant of all' (Mark 9:35), 'For those who want to save their life will lose it' (Matthew 16:25) and 'Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also' (Matthew 5:39). Though there were intersections in the values of honour and Christianity – in liberality, prudence, magnanimity, honesty and chastity among others – the emphasis in honour was always on the positive public regard that virtue attracted, whereas in Christian morality the emphasis was on virtue exercised in secret solely for the benefit of the other.⁴⁴

Humanist writers and preachers tended to play up the positive intersections between honour and the Christian code, often synthesising the two.

39 See the examples and discussion in McLean, *The Art of the Network*, pp. 71-72.

40 Poggio Bracciolini, *On Nobility*, p. 81.

41 Alberti, Book 2, pp. 149-150 and Book 3, pp. 174-175. See also Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of The Courtier*, p. 59.

42 Alison Sinclair, *The Deceived Husband*, p. 102.

43 Alberti, Book 3, p. 200. For the priority of family honour see McLean, pp. 65-68.

44 For a broader treatment of the tensions between Christian morality and honour see Cohen and Cohen, pp. 100-105.



An influential statement of the exercise of a life of honour and its harmony with Christian virtue is the *De Cardinalatu*, a work of the long-time friend of Alessandro Farnese, Paolo Cortesi.⁴⁵ In it Cortesi presents the role of a cardinal in humanistic terms, especially as a major patron of cultural projects that will encourage virtue.⁴⁶ In this the cardinal fulfils his role's high demands of honour and Christian duty. Thus, for example, the display of wealth can combine with fostering religious life and charity through the building of churches, monasteries, institutes of learning, and hospitals.⁴⁷

Syntheses of the honour code and the Christian code were only moderately successful, though, leaving the two sitting uneasily together.

Benefices and honour

In concluding this contextual exploration of the dimensions of honour, it is important to note that, for clergy, benefices had long been both sources of honour and the means to exercise honour. In the early thirteenth century Pope Honorius III said: 'Since those who faithfully serve the Apostolic See, as the head of the universal Church, are held to give useful service as it were to all members, it is right that they should be honoured with suitable benefices'.⁴⁸ While generally prohibiting pluralism of benefices, both the Third Lateran Council of 1179 and the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 spoke of benefices being dignities and made exceptions for the honour of multiple benefices to be bestowed on 'exalted and lettered persons'.⁴⁹ From the thirteenth century on, the bestowal of benefices by the pope developed into a European wide system with the growth of 'papal provisions', the right of the pope to reserve to himself appointment to any Church office.⁵⁰

45 Paolo Cortesi, *Pauli Cortesii protonotarii apostolici in libros de Cardinalatu ad Iulium secundum pont. max.*

46 See Kathleen Weil-Garris and John F. D'Amico, 'The Renaissance Cardinal's Ideal Palace: A Chapter from Cortesi's "De Cardinalatu"', pp. 50 and 60.

47 Cortesi, *De Cardinalatu*, Book 2, Chapter 11, 'De erogatione pecuniarum', fols. c-cviii.

48 Letter of Pope Honorius III to Archbishop Gray of York, 12 March 1220, in Surtees Society, *The Register, or Rolls, of Walter Gray* p. 138; translation in W.A. Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century*, p. 41.

49 See the decrees of Lateran III and Lateran IV in Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 1, pp. 218 and 249.

50 This system arose initially from competing claimants seeking papal adjudication of the claim to a benefice, rather than the pope actively seeking to arrogate power to himself. But the system gained momentum and gradually became one whereby the pope rewarded his familiars and servants and forged political bonds with Italian and other European rulers who, in their own role as patrons, wished to satisfy their subjects' petitions. See Geoffrey Barraclough, *Papal Provisions*, pp. 153-168.

Appointment to office at the Roman curia was a much sought after papal gift as it provided inside access to further available benefices. From the mid-fifteenth century, entry to the curia became easier with the sale of offices like scriptor and abbreviator and of the new colleges of venal offices established by Sixtus IV (1471-1484) and Innocent VIII (1484-1492). Once inside the curia, a taken for granted task was to secure multiple benefices for oneself and one's family.⁵¹

The honour from a benefice was earned through the rank that came with the office and through its income. When considering the income, it is easy to lump the accrual of benefices in with the trope of avarice and luxury that many contemporaries and commentators since have exclusively focused on. But we should remember that the main goal of honour was the increase of social estimation. Thus wealth was employed to exercise, to whatever extent possible, grandeur and largesse on the social stage. This served not only the interests of the clerics who held benefices, but of the Church as a whole which aimed to proclaim its place and glory in a hierarchical universe. What Massimo Firpo says of cardinal nephews applies proportionally throughout the clerical benefice system:

We need to look beyond the obsessive spending and the princely pomp of such men to grasp the political significance of their magnificence. The scenario of display at their courts and of the power and wealth on parade there were expressions not only of a cardinal nephew's personal aims and family grandeur but also of the dignity of the Church and its triumphal exaltation. A princely *train de vie* was an ineluctable social necessity.⁵²

In the early sixteenth century this princely lifestyle was fostered even more so by the popes as they worked to turn the College of Cardinals away from participation in governance towards being a body of courtiers whose role would be to reflect the honour and glory of a monarchical papacy, one that was intent on leaving the conciliarism of the fifteenth century in its wake.⁵³ As the model for courtiers was principally that of European lay courts, the means for seeking honour for curial clerics was pushed further towards lay materialistic forms.⁵⁴

51 Peter Partner, *The Pope's Men*, pp. 13-14.

52 Massimo Firpo, 'The Cardinal', p. 64.

53 See Jennifer Mara DeSilva, 'Senators or courtiers: negotiating models for the College of Cardinals under Julius II and Leo X', pp. 154-173.

54 As the sixteenth century proceeded, a striking example of honour for clerics being pursued in lay materialistic forms emerged in the possession and passage of carriages. In his fascinating

Overall, while greed and avarice may have been part of the mix for some, the fact that the benefice system was a sure way to honour for the cleric, his family, and the hierarchy of the Church made it part of the bedrock of Renaissance culture and brought both the accumulation and granting of benefices within the bounds of the moral obligation that characterised the pervasive system of *clientelismo*.⁵⁵ As will be seen in Chapter 4, this obligation was so strong that even the most ardent reformers of Paul III's time actively participated in the system.

Alessandro Farnese and honour

In Alessandro Farnese's scattered letters and formal documents it is clear that, like his friends and contemporaries, he was highly conscious of his personal honour, that of his *casa*, and the honour of the Apostolic See over which he presided as pope. The letters of his youth show him presenting himself as a noble with accomplishments befitting his rank. As seen already, his knowledge of antiquity, of languages, and elite social protocols is put on show throughout those early letters to family, friends and mentors. In one of the letters he writes to a friend expressing his pleasure that Giovanni Nanni, a humanist scholar, had traced the Farnese lineage back to antiquity.⁵⁶ This was one of the fashionable ways of demonstrating the honour of one's house. Later, as a cardinal, he referred to the need for his directions for reform of a convent in Parma to be undertaken out of respect for 'l'honore nostro'.⁵⁷ As pope, references to his honour or dignity and that of the Apostolic See were common in pontifical documents. In his Bull convoking the Council

article, 'Carriages, Violence and Masculinity in Early Modern Rome', John Hunt says that carriages became a daily feature of Rome's theatre culture: 'When elites rode about in carriages, even for quotidian outings, they were preceded by fanfare and a gaggle of grooms and were followed by a train of followers', p. 176. Notables attempted to outdo each other in the number and quality of their carriages and street rules of etiquette and precedence gave ample opportunity for asserting honour and defending against slights. Hunt concludes that: 'Elite Romans represented their individual honor as well as the prestige of their families and state. Ecclesiastics – especially powerful cardinals – shared these honorific concerns of family and state but also represented their offices and the Church as they rode about the city. As a consequence, the streets of Rome became an agonistic area for the display and defense of honor', p. 195.

55 For treatments of *clientelismo* (political patronage or 'clientage') see the essays in F.W. Kent and Patricia Simons, eds., *Patronage, Art and Society in Renaissance Italy*.

56 Letter of Alessandro Farnese to Lorenzo Pucci, undated, Letter LI in Frugoni, p. 62.

57 Letter of Alessandro Farnese to Bartolomeo Guidiccioni, 13 January 1525, ASPr, Comune, b. 4397, fasc. 7, unpaginated.



of Trent, for example, Paul spoke of the conditions imposed by the Duke of Mantua which had prevented the Council being held in the Duke's city as: 'completely alien to the institutes of our predecessors, the state of our times, to our own dignity and liberty, that of this Holy See and of the ecclesiastical name'.⁵⁸ Towards the end of his life, Paul wrote to his grandson, the young Cardinal Alessandro, saying: 'It would be of great honour to us if one of our creatures could succeed us, because the world would see the zeal with which we have been moved to appoint worthy persons'.⁵⁹

An early indication of honour as a touchstone in Paul III's life is to be found in an episode in the relationship between his sister, Giulia, and Pope Alexander VI, Rodrigo Borgia. This episode is worth examining in some depth as it indicates not only the centrality of honour in Paul's self-perception and self-construction, but some of the nuances of his concept of honour. In the Secret Archives of the Vatican there is a series of letters between Giulia Farnese, Pope Alexander, the then Cardinal Farnese and relatives and confidantes of both that enable the twists and turns of the episode to be followed on an almost daily basis. It all happened late in 1494 when Italy was under the threat of imminent invasion by the French forces of Charles VIII.

Giulia Farnese had been Rodrigo Borgia's mistress since the early 1490s. The relationship may have started while Borgia was still a cardinal. He had certainly known Giulia since 1489 when, at the age of 15, she had married Orsino Orsini in the Borgia Palace with the cardinal himself blessing the marriage. Their affair was clearly common knowledge in 1493, by which time Borgia had been pope for a year.⁶⁰ The relationship had been brokered by Borgia's cousin, Adriana de Mila, who was also Orsini's mother and it seems that Orsini was complicit, or at least accepting of it. The relationship brought social and financial benefits to both the Orsini and Farnese. There is little doubt that Alessandro Farnese was appointed a cardinal at Giulia's request, the Venetian ambassador Soriano being one of many who held that the appointment sprang from 'the love and intimacy' that Alexander shared with Giulia.⁶¹

58 'ab institutis maiorum nostrorum et conditione temporum nostraque ac huius Sanctae Sedis ac nominis ecclesiastici dignitate libertateque prorsus alienas', Paul III, 'Initio nostri huius Pontificatus', 11 June 1542, *C.T.*, Vol. IV, p. 227.

59 'Sarà di molto onore nostro che succeda a noi una delle nostre creature, perchè il mondo vederà il zelo col quale ci siamo mossi all' elettione di persone degne', Pope Paul III, *Ricordi* to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, c.1546, BAV, Barb. lat., 5366, fol. 134r.

60 Zapperi, *La leggenda del papa Paolo III*, p. 63.

61 'Ne anco Sua Santità (Paul III) manca di opposizione; che la sua promozione al cardinalato non fu molto onesta, essendo proceduta per causa oscena; cioè dall' amore e dalla familiarità

Farnese's rise produced in him a lifelong sense of gratitude and devotion to the Borgia. The first demonstration of this was within a few weeks of his elevation in September 1493 when he held a great banquet and festivities for the pope at the Farnese seat of Capodimonte.⁶² He rode out from Rome to Capodimonte with the pope's son, Cesare Borgia, himself a cardinal at that time. During the rest of Alexander VI's pontificate, Cardinal Farnese was a frequent visitor to the Apostolic Palace and was given steadily more responsibility within the group of cardinals. After Alexander's death, with the succession to the papacy of Alexander's arch foe, Giuliano della Rovere, it quickly became socially and politically expedient to distance oneself from the Borgia.⁶³ But Farnese did not hide his indebtedness to the pope or his family. Throughout his whole life, on each anniversary of Alexander's death, he arranged for a Mass to be said and twelve candles lit around Alexander's tomb.⁶⁴ As pope, Farnese took the opportunity to return the honour that had been done to him and created two of Alexander's *nipoti* cardinal: Lodovico Borgia in 1537 and Enrique de Borja y Aragon in 1540.⁶⁵ Writing to another of the Borgia *nipoti*, the Jesuit Francesco Borgia, Paul made it clear that all these years later he still felt a strong link to Alexander VI 'from whom is the source of our dignity'.⁶⁶ These actions say something about the steadfastness of Farnese's values and they also need to be kept in mind in weighing the stance he took in relation to his honour in the episode with Giulia and Alexander described below.⁶⁷

che avea papa Alessandro VI con la signora Giulia sua sorella', Antonio Soriano, 'Relazione di Roma 1535' in Eugenio Alberi, ed., *Relazioni degli ambasciatori Veneti al Senato*, Serie II, Vol. III, p. 314. See also Zapperi, *La leggenda del papa Paolo III*, p. 62.

62 Cardinal Farnese's letters to members of the Pucci family, in late October 1493, making arrangements for these festivities, are in the ASF, Carte Stroziane, series I, No. 340, c. 33, 35, 36, 37.

63 This began even before Julius' election with the oration of Alexis Celadoni to the cardinals assembled for the conclave. In an unheard-of departure from convention, Celadoni gave an expansive enumeration of the ways Alexander had abused his office. For a discussion of this oration see John M. McManamon, 'The Ideal Renaissance Pope: Funeral Oratory from the Papal Court', pp. 54-59.

64 See Zapperi, *La Leggenda del papa Paolo III*, p. 71.

65 Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica*, Vol. 3, pp. 25 and 27.

66 From a Brief of 6 March 1543 to the Duke of Gandia, Francesco Borgia, 'Valde enim eum et tamquam nepotem foelicis recordationis Alexandri Papae sexti, praedecessoris nostri (a quo origo nostrae dignitatis est)', quoted in Society of Jesus, *Sanctus Franciscus Borgia quartus Gandiae dux et Societatis Jesu Praepositus Generalis Tertius*, Tom. II, fasc. IV, p. 454.

67 In contrast to the emphasis on honour that I am about to offer here, a few historians have maintained that this episode was a purely mercenary attempt by Farnese to blackmail Alexander VI into appointing him Legate of the Papal Patrimony, the motivation of Farnese being that he was an 'impoverished' Cardinal (see Zapperi, 'Giulia Farnese' and G.B. Picotti, 'Nuovi studi e

Orsino Orsini, a member of one of the most ancient Roman noble families, lived on the family estate of Bassanello about 80 kilometres from Rome. However, his wife Giulia Farnese spent most of her time in Rome living with Lucrezia Borgia and Adriana de Mila and discreetly coming and going from the Apostolic Palace at the pleasure of the pope. In July 1494, though, Giulia was on a trip to Pesaro with Lucrezia and Adriana, when her brother the cardinal called her to the family seat at Capodimonte as their brother, Angelo, had fallen mortally ill. Adriana went with her. After Angelo died, Giulia and Adriana stayed on to be with the family. Orsini saw this as an opportunity to assert himself and play the patrician husband. He summoned Giulia from Capodimonte to Bassanello rather than have her return to Rome and to the pope. He made it known to one of the pope's agents that he required Giulia to return to the marital domicile and, if not, the whole world would hear of her refusal and why, even if it should cost him a thousand lives.⁶⁸ This placed Cardinal Farnese in a difficult position. With Angelo gone, he was now head of his *casa* and what was publicly attributed to his sister reflected on the honour of the Farnese which was inextricable from his personal honour.

The cardinal's inclusion in the inner circle of the pope and the accompanying opportunities for advancement of his house clearly weighed more heavily on him than did any religious concerns about his sister being an adulteress or a papal concubine. The honour that he accrued in the papal

documenti intorno a papa Alessandro VI, pp. 220-221 & 234). My assessment is that the evidence does not sustain that reading. Farnese's income as a new cardinal may have been modest but, as both Helge Gamrath and Loek Luiten detail, the Farnese family had considerable and growing wealth and were regarded as part of 'the high aristocracy' (Gamrath, 'The History of a Success in the Italian Renaissance: The Farnese family c. 1400-1600', pp. 95-96; Luiten, 'Friends and family, fruit and fish: the gift in Quattrocento Farnese politics' pp. 350-355). This wealth was demonstrated by the extensive building they undertook in their domains and by Cardinal Farnese's purchase of the Palazzo Albergati in one of the most prestigious areas of Rome, negotiations for which were being concluded at the same time as this episode, late 1494 (Ferdinand de Navenne, *Le palais farnèse et les Farnèse*, pp. 101-102). The purchase was the first step in the cardinal's plan also to acquire surrounding properties for construction of the Palazzo Farnese. While Farnese did prompt his sister Giulia to seek further benefices for him, the withholding of her from the pope as a bargaining chip for the office of Legate would have been so transparent a ploy as to permanently alienate him from Alexander. It would also have been inconsistent with the loyalty he displayed to the Borgia throughout his life. Finally, it would have involved persuading the pope's cousin, Adriana, to be duplicitous towards the head of her own house thereby placing her own close relationship with the pope at risk.

68 'che se tale errore per voi (Giulia) fosse fatto lui e per non comportarlo et per mettere mille vite se tante ne havesse [...] non basto per nienti per che lui tene deliberato se tutto el mondo ce venisse con sua intemcione voi non andiate a Roma', Letter of Fra Teseo Seripando to Giulia Farnese, 18 October 1494, ASV, A.A., Arm. I-XVIII, 5027, c. 40r.



court also outweighed any gossip or salacious remarks about his sister as the 'sposa di Cristo' or himself as 'the petticoat cardinal'.⁶⁹ But the public proclamation of Orsini that a Farnese woman and her brother were willing participants in Orsini being cuckolded by the pope, and then the marriage potentially splitting in the full glare of the Roman spotlight, would be a bridge too far for all concerned in the culture of the time.⁷⁰ Adultery, if it were publicly acknowledged, brought shame on all the participants because it was considered to undermine the conjugal bond.⁷¹ This would be especially so if it involved a cardinal and the pope. Thus, Adriana said in a letter to the pope: 'This great defect would leave a stain on your honour and would end in a break with Orsino, for a thing of this kind and so public'.⁷²

Cardinal Alessandro sent Adriana to Rome to try and convince the pope of the damage that would be done to the house of Borgia, the Holy See, and the Farnese. At the same time he wrote a brief letter to Alexander which, given his degree of devotion and debt to the pope, is quite remarkable. In full it reads:

Most Blessed Father, after having kissed your blessed feet. To a letter I have received from Your Holiness I cannot go beyond the response of Madama Adriana who is more well-informed than anyone. I thank Your Beatitude as much as I can for the confidence you have in me your most devoted servant who, in things that are possible, will always find me the most prompt and obedient son and so at your most holy feet I offer every best wish.⁷³

This short text put Farnese's future prospects on the line for the sake of his honour. His familial, social, and ecclesial ties and gratitude to the pope

69 Picotti, p. 220; Zapperi, *La leggenda del papa Paolo III*, p. 62.

70 In her study of infidelity in European literature, Alison Sinclair says: 'When there is a "challenge" to honour, it is always understood to come from the outside. The situation which stimulates the challenge may come from the individual's private life, but the only real dishonour consists in that fact coming to light publicly.' *The Deceived Husband*, p. 102.

71 See Michael Rocke, 'Gender and Sexual Culture in Renaissance Italy', p. 158.

72 '...et che non lo laxa se non per vergogna del honore che par li sia grandissimo mancamento venire en roptura con Orsino per simile cosa così scupertamente', Letter of Adriana de Mila to Alexander VI, 15 October 1494, ASV, A.A., Arm. I-XVIII, 5027, c. 27r.

73 'Beatissime Pater, post pedum oscula beatorum. Ad una lettera ho receputa da Vostra Santità non mi occorre fare altra risposta perchè Madama (Adriana de Mila) vene da quella ben informata del tutto. Ringratio la Vostra Beatitudine quanto posso della confidentia ha in nel suo devotissimo servitore laquale in nelle cose possibili sempre me trovara promptissimo bon figliolo de obedientia et cussi alli sui santissimi pedi me recommando', Letter of Alessandro Farnese to Alexander VI, 9 October 1494, ASV, A.A., Arm. I-XVIII, 5021, c. 12r.

could not induce him to accede to the papal bidding in such a matter. The degree of risk he was taking is evident in the fury that Alexander unleashed against Giulia and Adriana. After receiving another letter from Giulia, still resisting a return to Rome, Alexander wrote back jettisoning all epistolary conventions:

Ungrateful and treacherous Giulia, we have received a letter from you via Navarrico in which you signify and declare your intention of not coming here without Orsino's agreement. Though we understand well enough the evil of your soul and that of the one who counsels you (Adriana), when we consider your past oaths and similar assurances we could hardly be persuaded that you would act with such ingratitude and perfidy towards us; and having so often sworn faithfully that you would abide by our command and not go near Orsino, that now you would do the contrary and go to Bassanello, risking your life no doubt with the aim of impregnating yourself there once more. We hope that you and the ungrateful Adriana realise your error and make suitable penance. Nonetheless, by the terms herewith, under the pain of excommunication *latae sententiae* and eternal damnation, we command that you shall not leave Capodimonte or Marta and still less go to Bassanello, this for reasons concerning our State.⁷⁴

Reading the original, a mix of Italian and Alexander's native Catalan, one is struck by the lack of greeting, the haste of the hand, and the way it goes back to add extra lines in the margin. Three brief letters are all written on one page.⁷⁵ Alexander immediately turned his ire, in a second letter, to Adriana: 'Madama Adriana finally your wicked soul and malignity have

74 'Iulia ingrata et perfida una tua lettera havemo receputa per Navarrico per la quale se significui et deciari como la intention tua non è de venir qui senza voluntà de Ursino et benchè fin qui asai comprendesemo l'animo tuo cativo et de chi te consiglia però considerando le tue fecte simulate parole non se 'l possevamo in tucto persuadere che usate tanta ingratitude et perfidia verso de noi havendo si tante volte jurato et data la fede de star al commando nostro et non acostarte ad Ursino che adesso vogli far el contrario et andar ad Basanello con expreso pericolo dela vita tua nol podero credere lo fachi per altro si non per enprenyar te un altra volta da quella ajra de Basanello et speramo in brevi tu et la ingratisima madama Adriana ve acogerite del vostro errore et ne portarite la penitentia condigna et niente de meno per tenore dela presente sub pena excommunicationis late sententie et maledictionis eterne te comandamo che non te debi partire de Capo de monte o de marta ni manco andar a Basanello per cose concernente le stato nostro', Letter of Alexander VI to Giulia Farnese, 22 October 1494, ASV, A.A., Arm. I-XVIII, 5027, c. 28r.

75 These are likely to have been rewritten by a scribe into separate letters.



been revealed by your letter' and he went on to command her repentance and obedience under threat of excommunication and confiscation of all her goods.⁷⁶

Last, the pope wrote to Cardinal Alessandro. This time he was more measured. As he had written the other two letters already, perhaps he had vented his anger. Perhaps he recognised that he was writing to a person of rank and not mere women. His displeasure was clear, but there were no explicit threats. Instead he reminded Farnese of the real demands of honour:

Lord Cardinal you know how much we have done for you and with what love. We would never have been persuaded that so soon you would have forgotten all this and put Orsino before us. Once more we ask and exhort you to refrain from supporting this behaviour because it is not consistent with the fidelity that many times you have given nor with the honour that is rightfully yours. So that you might not assent to Orsino and so that Giulia may not go to Bassanello we are giving you another Brief exhorting you to conform generously to our will.⁷⁷

The comparative restraint of the letter may also suggest that Alexander did recognise that Farnese's stand would have merit in the court of public opinion. As mentioned in the letter, the pope appended a document which gave the cardinal a way out. It was a formal Brief forbidding Giulia from going to Bassanello for reasons of State as he had said to her.

There is more to this story that is not relevant to the exploration here. But the denouement came within a couple of weeks with Orsini submitting to the pope and allowing Giulia to return to Rome. In a somewhat bizarre turn of events, hardly had Giulia set off, along with her sister Geroloma, Adriana de Mila and a company of thirty cavalry, than they were all captured by forces of the invading French and taken off to Montefiascone from where the women had to be ransomed by the pope. This was paid within a few

76 'Madama Adriana finalmente el vostro cativo animo et malignita havite scoperto per questa lettera...'; Letter of Alexander VI to Adriana de Mila, 22 October 1494, ASV, A.A., Arm. I-XVIII, 5027, c. 28r.

77 'Domine Cardinalis, Sapite quanto habiamo fato per voi et con quanto amore. Non se haverissemo mai persuasso che cosi presto ve ne devesate escordare et preponere Ursino ad noi iterum ve pregamo et exhortamo che non se vogliate pagar de simil moneta perchè non satisfarete ala fede che molte volte se havete dato né manco al honor et ben vostro. Noi perchè ve possiate excusar apresso de Ursino et afinchè Iulia non habia de andar ad Basanello ve faremo un' altro breve come vederite exhortandove conformate liberamente al voler nostro', Letter of Alexander VI to Alessandro Farnese, 22 October 1494, ASV, A.A., Arm. I-XVIII, 5027, c. 28r.

days and, to his great relief and satisfaction, the pope once again had his mistress at his disposal.

But there was a post-script to the episode. The French were marching on Rome and Cardinal Alessandro felt his sister was not adequately protected. Under instruction from the cardinal, the Bishop of Allatri, Jacopello Silvestri, wrote to a Farnese relative in the French forces asking him to supply Giulia with horses and an escort to get her out of Rome:

I pray your lordship to hurry in sending someone to assist her, for in truth it seems to me amiss that she should remain here, and things might happen that would bring small honour to all, as the most reverend monsignor [Cardinal Farnese] advises me, for he is consumed with concern while she stays in Rome. For the love of God let your lordship send her the means to get away from here.⁷⁸

One cannot help but wonder if there was some extra satisfaction for Farnese in getting Giulia out of Rome again so soon for the sake of honour.

This episode, then, is an interesting example of nuance and negotiation that were part of the cultural construction of honour. In it we can see that, for Alessandro Farnese, honour was an admixture of social expectation and internal obligation, with the obligation deriving from demands he sifted from the way he believed certain behaviours would be socially perceived. His elevation to the College of Cardinals took him to the highest echelon of the Church, thereby elevating his personal honour and the honour of his house. The obligation he felt in response to this was socially oriented but was internally real and principled, not feigned or put on for social consumption. He and his honour had benefited from the Borgia and clearly it was a demand of honour to show allegiance to them. His elevation was lifelong and so his allegiance was lifelong. As mentioned earlier, when Alexander VI died the Borgia quickly fell from public grace. But Farnese worked around this and remained loyal. Some of what motivated him may be seen in a letter he wrote to Sebastiano di Costantino of Montefiascone shortly after Giulia was freed from French imprisonment there: 'Ingratitude does not just reign among gentlemen, although it has never been known in our house.

78 'per tanto prego Vostra Signoria se acceleri ad mandarne et satisfareli che in vero me pare male stia qui ponria accasare delle cose che seria poco honore di tucti secondo me advisa monsignore reverendissimo quale se consuma che stia in Roma. Per lo amore di Dio Vostra Signoria li mandi il modo se leve di qui', Letter of Jacopello Silvestri to Mariano Savelli, 16 December 1494, ASV, A.A., Arm. I-XVIII, 5022, c. 114r.

But often we marvel that supposed heartfelt fidelity can so quickly be lacking in appropriate remembrance; indeed, *it is not he that begins, but he who perseveres all the way to the end who will achieve salvation*.⁷⁹ This last phrase, written in Latin, is from the Gospel of Matthew 24:13 and a common expression in the Church then and now. The observation to Costantino is a neat encapsulation of the place that loyalty and constancy as demands of honour held for Farnese throughout his life.

At the same time, his gratitude and the allegiance that went with it had its limits. The honour of his *casa* and his personal honour had a greater purchase. Had he acceded to Alexander, he would have lost honour as he perceived it. He was not prepared to do that or to be seen as a mere lackey of the pope, rather he would do ‘things that are possible’. It is also a notable dimension that he saw that having Giulia return to the sexual embrace of the pope would bring him no significant dishonour since the relationship was not publicly acknowledged by his peers and her husband remained quiescent. While there may have been plenty of gossip and jibes from commoners about Farnese and his sister, especially from the ‘talking statue’ Pasquino, it seems Farnese, like others in his class, regarded them as beneath his dignity to notice. The occasional pasquinade against Farnese while he was a cardinal became a steady stream of satire of him and his family during his pontificate, regardless of his overall popularity. Yet he made no move against the statue of Pasquino or the authors who placed the *cartelli* on its pedestal.⁸⁰

As he did with humanism, then, so did Alessandro Farnese with regard to honour, constructing himself from the outside in. He appropriated values, attitudes and behaviours from the socially objectified concepts around him, crafting a coherent persona that fitted him for the elite social stage. In facing contestations among social concepts, like honour, loyalty, family obligation, he chose according to what he believed was most consistent with the expectation of his social class and he remained firm in those choices.

79 ‘La ingratitude non sole regnare in gentilhomini et in casa nostra non fu mai. Ben ce maravigliamo della vostra sviscerata fede che cussi presto manchi in nel meglio recordandove che non qui inciperit sed qui perseveraverit usque in finem salvus erit’, Letter of Alessandro Farnese to Sebastiano di Costantino, 16 December 1494, ASV, A.A., Arm. I-XVIII, 5021, c. 13r.

80 On the linkage of honour to social hierarchy and the ability of upper classes to regard insults from those below with indifference, see Elizabeth S. Cohen and Thomas V. Cohen, p. 99. For a thorough exploration of the role of Pasquino in the social and political life of Rome and beyond, see the collection of papers from a 2005 international symposium, Chrysa Damianaki, Paolo Procaccioli, and Angelo Romano, eds., *Ex Marmore. Pasquini, Pasquinisti, Pasquinate Nell’Europa Moderna*.

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2. Pathways to Honour

Abstract

In his pursuit of honour, Alessandro Farnese prioritised his family. His strategies included securing Church offices, advantageous marriages, and Italian territories for his children and grandchildren. As he rose towards the papacy, Farnese was also influenced by the curial culture in which humanist concepts of the papal role intersected with the code of honour. These concepts, evident in court sermons, reflected a curial script that impelled the pope to project himself as the leading man in the coming of a new *Imperium* and the dawn of a Golden Age. As pope, Farnese wove this narrative through the magnificent display of festivals, art, and architecture. His pursuit of reform needs to be considered against the backdrop of this narrative.

Keywords: social status, curia; papal primacy; magnificence; ritual; symbols; carnival

Honour was embedded in Alessandro Farnese's moral framework and foremost was family honour. His primary duty, of course, was to ensure that the family continued. Following the death of his brother Angelo, the pool of candidates for continuing the family line significantly narrowed: Angelo had one young son, Gabriello, who died in 1496; of two male cousins one, Ranuccio, was killed in battle in 1495 and the other, Pietropaolo, a cleric, died soon after. This left only one other close male relative, Federico, a sickly twelve-year-old second cousin whose life chances in the 1490s were looking poor.¹ Although Farnese's rank of cardinal required celibacy of him, there was no question for him of the duty he was to follow.² By 1500 he had formed a relationship with a

1 Zapperi, *La leggenda del papa Paolo III*, p. 19.

2 Admittedly, the moral claim of celibacy had no great social force at this time, given the commonality of cardinals with mistresses and children. See Christine Shaw, *Julius II: The Warrior Pope*, p. 168.

Roman noble woman, Silvia Ruffini, and together they had four children: Costanza in 1500, Pierluigi in 1503, Paolo in 1504, and Ranuccio in 1509. Cardinal Farnese had Pierluigi and Paolo legitimised by Julius II in 1505 with the Bull of Legitimation specifically referring to the duty of noble males to continue their line.³

There is no reliable evidence that Farnese had any mistress other than Silvia.⁴ The duration and nature of their relationship is uncertain. Pastor maintains that the cardinal severed the relationship with her in 1513.⁵ But that may not be the case. There is no doubt that, consistent with Farnese's fidelity of obligation mentioned earlier, he continued to support her financially until his death.⁶ He also regularly socialized with her family and stayed with them at their properties in Bolsena and Frascati.⁷ It is quite likely, then, that Farnese at least saw Silvia from time to time over the years.

Both contemporaries and scholars since are agreed that Alessandro Farnese cared deeply for his children.⁸ It was a great sadness for him that all four predeceased him, beginning with Paolo who died as an infant. Indeed, in the absence of any convincing explanation in previous scholarship as to why Farnese took the name Paul for his papacy, I suggest

3 'Bulla Legitimationis Ill. D. P. Aloisii et Pauli de Farnesio per Iulium Papam Secundum', 8 July 1505, ASN, Archivio Farnesiano, b.1871, fols. 1-4.

4 Both Pastor and Capasso suggest that Farnese did have more than one mistress, but they rely on groundless rumours and a misunderstanding of a poem from the court of Farnese by Baldassare Molosso, *Ad Lolam*, an ode to a woman called Lola, which was in fact a cover name for Silvia. See Pastor, Vol. XI, pp. 19 & 20; Capasso, *La politica di Papa Paolo III*, Vol. I, p. 10. More recently, Zapperi has examined all the available evidence and concluded that Farnese was 'substantially monogamous': 'Paolo III aveva vissuto da cardinale in concubinato ma, per quanto si riesca a documentare, sempre con una sola donna. Egli fu sostanzialmente monogamo', *La leggenda del papa Paolo III*, p. 34.

5 Pastor, Vol. XI, p. 20.

6 From at least October 1535, the registers of the Secret Treasury of the pope show monthly payments of 25 scudi to Costanza Farnese 'per la provisione che mano sua Nostro Signore paga a madonna Silvia'. See Leon Dorez, *La cour du pape Paul III: D'après les registres de la trésorerie secrète*, Vol. 2, pp. 8, 10, 21, 42, 53 and monthly for the volume. There are also occasional other entries which seem to be ex gratia payments to Silvia for specific needs, for example in September 1537 there is a payment of 'seicento d'oro in oro per commissione di Sua Santità alla Illustrissima Signora Constantia Farnesia per darli ad una gentildonna Romana per conto de una certa casa', (*Ibid.*, p. 148).

7 Zapperi, *La leggenda del papa Paolo III*, p. 29.

8 The Venetian ambassador, Soriano, wrote of Paul's 'great affection' for his children and members of his family: 'è verissimo che Sua Santità ha tanta tenerezza verso li suoi ed il sangue suo', report to the Venetian Senate in Alberi, 1535, p. 319. See also Zapperi, *La leggenda del papa Paolo III*, pp. 53-58.

it could well have been in honour of his son.⁹ As pope, Paul provided liberally for his children and a wide range of other relatives as can be seen from the registers of the Secret Treasury which list an abundance of payments that supported and indulged their lifestyles. Typical are the following: ‘three scudi paid to the Most Reverend Cardinal Farnese (the pope’s grandson) to play at the card game *primiera*’; ‘thirty paid twice for the gold and embroidery on several coats and doublets for the Signori Ranuccio and Orazio Farnese’; ‘two for Master Raphael for having repaired the harpsichord of Signora Vittoria and Signora Francesca, grandchildren of His Holiness’.¹⁰ There were also at least thirty Farnese relatives who received monthly pension payments from the Datary for between one and fourteen years of the pontificate.¹¹

Aware of the many strands to securing his house, Farnese was diligent in arranging advantageous marriages for his children, the first being the betrothal of Pierluigi to Geroloma Orsini in 1513, then Costanza to Bosio Sforza in 1517.¹² As pope, he was able to reach higher, arranging the marriage of Pierluigi and Geroloma’s son Ottavio to Margaret of Austria, the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, in 1538. Another of Pierluigi and Geroloma’s sons, Orazio, was betrothed to Diane of France, daughter of King Henry II, in 1547.

A significant pathway to honour for the Farnese children was provided by office in the Church. The first of Farnese’s family to benefit from Church office was his son Ranuccio who was granted the diocese of Corneto and Montefiascone in 1519.¹³ Again, once pope, the horizons opened up and Paul’s first nomination of cardinals was of two of his grandsons, Alessandro aged 14,

9 Capasso, for example, gives three possibilities for the name: that it recalled certain people dear to the family, that it referred to Paul II who was pope when Farnese was born, or that it was perhaps simply in honour of Saint Paul, *Paolo III*, Vol. 1, p. 43.

10 In Dorez, Vol. 2, ‘Et più tre pagati al R.mo Cardinale Farnese (Paul’s grandson) per giocare a primiera’ (p. 57), ‘Et più trenta pagati in due volte a Mariano per pagare l’oro et la recamatura de alcuni sai et giuoponi per li signori Ranuccio et Horatio (Farnese)’ (p. 33), ‘Et più a dì 6 Novembre 1537 doi pagati a mastro Rafaele per havere conciatì più volte lo clavimbolo della signora Vittoria et signora Francesca, nepoti di Sua Santità’ (p. 160).

11 Hallman p. 150. The expenditures lead Hallman to conclude that Paul III was: ‘the most generous pope of the period in his use of the dataria’, p. 149. Peter Partner says that: ‘The costs to the Church of Paul III’s nepotism were certainly enormous, but no calculation can be made’, ‘Papal Financial Policy’, p. 55.

12 Pierluigi and Geroloma had five children: Vittoria (b. 1519), Alessandro (b. 1520), Ottavio (b. 1524), Ranuccio (b. 1530), and Orazio (b. 1532). Costanza and Bosio had nine children: Guido Ascanio (b. 1518), Sforza (b. 1520), Francesca (b. 1520), Alessandro (b. 1534), and Faustina, Giulia, Paolo, Muzio and Carlo whose birth dates are uncertain.

13 Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica*, Vol. 3, p. 248.

and Guido Ascanio Sforza aged 16, who were elevated on 18 December 1534.¹⁴ Although entirely consistent with recent papal practice, the elevations caused murmuring – ‘mormorio grande’ – in the College and in the *piazze*, especially due to the age of the boys.¹⁵ Over the course of his pontificate Paul raised two other family members to the College, Niccolò Caetani in 1536 and Ranuccio Farnese in 1545. In 1544, Paul also raised Tiberio Crispo, a son of Silvia Ruffini supposedly from her marriage prior to the relationship with the cardinal but perhaps the first issue of that relationship.¹⁶

In keeping with prior practice, Church offices also went to lay relatives, the most notable of which was the promotion of Pierluigi to Captain General of the Church.¹⁷ This appointment showed that Paul had moved on from earlier concerns he had about Pierluigi bringing dishonour to the house of Farnese and to the Apostolic See. Pierluigi’s sexual associations with young men were well-known but, of course, not uncommon. However, comment in elite circles was raised when he took several young Perugians with him on a visit to the imperial court in 1535. This behaviour drew stern reproof from the pope.¹⁸ Pierluigi’s proclivities continued to be the subject of satire by Pasquino,¹⁹ but, as mentioned earlier, slings and arrows from the lower classes seemed not to count for Paul.²⁰ The same papal disregard also applied to the rumours in 1537 that Pierluigi had raped and caused the death of the young Bishop of Fano. The rumours were never substantiated

14 As both Paul III and one of his grandsons were born Alessandro Farnese and both became cardinals, where there may be confusion, I will indicate if I am referring to his grandson. Where I use the name without explanation, I am referring to the older man.

15 The Venetian ambassador, Soriano, said: ‘E perchè Sua Santità ha voluto creare i nepoti cardinali d’età molto tenera [...] di che ha pur acquistato nota al mondo, ed ha causato mormorio grande’, Report to the Venetian Senate, 1535, in Alberi, p. 313. For the career of Paul’s grandson, Alessandro, see Clare Robertson, *Il Gran Cardinale*.

16 Zapperi, *La leggenda del papa Paolo III*, p. 33.

17 For the life of Pierluigi see Ireneo Affò, *Vita di Pierluigi Farnese, prima duca di Parma, Piacenza e Guastalla*, and Gamrath, *Farnese: Pomp, Power and Politics in Renaissance Italy*, pp. 49–61.

18 See the letter from Pope Paul’s secretary to Pierluigi of 17 October 1535, reproduced in Pastor, Vol. XI, p. 317, n. 2, which warns Pierluigi of the dangers of affronting the Imperial Court and bringing dishonour to his *casa* and the pope.

19 See, for example, the pasquinades 438, 449, 450, 467, 495, and 527 in Valerio Marucci, Antonio Marzo, and Angelo Romano (eds.), *Pasquinate Romane del Cinquecento*, Vol. 1.

20 Pope Paul was not alone among the pontiffs in paying scant attention to the invective that came his way. Alessandro Pallantieri, magistrate and diplomat under Paul, observed years later that, as far as he knew, the popes of his era simply did not care about those who maligned them: ‘non si è visto in questa corte (che io sappia) che i pontefici habbino curato queste genti che dicono o scrivono male di loro [...] a Roma non se n’è mai fatto troppo gran conto’, transcript in Angelo Mercati, *I costituti di Niccolò Franco (1568-1570) dinanzi l’Inquisizione di Roma*, pp. 73 and 89.

but were fodder to Pasquino's invective against the Farnese.²¹ Among other appointments of relatives, military and naval posts went to Sforza Sforza and Carlo Sforza, Paul's grandsons, to Pier Bertoldo Farnese, his nephew, and to Sforza Pallavicino, his grandson-in-law.²²

Having strategically placed his progeny in high-ranking Italian and European houses and ecclesiastical posts, there remained two other challenges for Paul to secure his house beyond his death and the inevitable fall from pre-eminence afforded by the pontificate. The first of these challenges was to raise the place of the Farnese among the ruling nobility of Italy with hereditary lands. Paul was more successful in meeting this challenge than any other Renaissance pope. To put this long and difficult achievement very briefly, he first carved out from the Papal States the Duchy of Castro and bestowed it on Pierluigi in 1537, then the much larger Duchy of Parma and Piacenza in 1545 again for Pierluigi and his descendants.²³ This almost all came undone in 1547 when, to Paul's shock and grief, Pierluigi was murdered by agents of the Imperial Viceroy, Ferrante Gonzaga, with the cognizance of the Emperor Charles V, and Gonzaga took hold of Piacenza on behalf of Charles. For a time then, it seemed that Paul would lose all the Farnese possessions. But his grandson Ottavio managed to hold on to Parma and in 1556 it was rejoined to Piacenza and remained so under the Farnese until 1731.²⁴

The second challenge was to link the Farnese to a wide range of other powerful and high status families by means of favours to them which would induce an enduring sense of obligation. This Paul did, as with his own family, through the bestowal of Church offices, benefices and titles. Some of these could be listed but his intentions are made clear in the letter, known as the *Ricordi*, to his grandson, Cardinal Alessandro, in which he explains why he made cardinals of a number of Romans, though he adds a caution to Alessandro about fostering a Roman in the conclave:

21 See, for example, the pasquinades 456 and 490, Marucci et al., Vol. 1. For a consideration and rejection of the rumours about Pierluigi's violation of the Bishop of Fano and alternative evidence of the Bishop's death due to fever, see George B. Parks, 'The Pierluigi Farnese Scandal: An English Report', pp. 193-200.

22 Hallman, pp. 140-146.

23 For Castro see 'Bulla erectionis Ducatus Castrensis et Primogeniture Consistorialiter confirmate pro eodem Illustrissimo Domino Pietroaloisio Duce et Octavio eius filio ac successive primogenitis', 14 January 1537, ASN, Archivio Farnesiano, b. 1871, fols. 29r-38v. For a discussion of the cardinals' reactions to the investiture of Pierluigi with the Duchy of Parma and Piacenza, their understandings of the extent of papal power, and of the Church's relationship to property, see Gigliola Fragnito, 'Il nepotismo farnesiano tra ragioni di Stato e ragioni di Chiesa', pp. 117-125.

24 More will be said about the murder of Pierluigi and subsequent events in Chapter 8.

We have promoted many Roman subjects to the cardinalate because we have judged that, as you must live in the city, it will be to your benefit to have many families obligated to you. But beware that any one of them might ascend to the papacy, because the climate of this native soil is such as to make desirable an emulation that would see a Roman house emerge grander than ours. This would not occur without your loss.²⁵

The Script for Papal Honour

The script for the papal role and honour as pope was imparted to Alessandro Farnese in the milieu of the Roman court. The protocol of the court, its round of liturgical, festival and diplomatic events, its solemn occasions of oratory and debate and its lighter occasions of theatre and popular performance, all carried cultural codes related to the papal role. The script was presented most clearly in the rhetorical art of the preacher at court liturgies. The preachers' orations were directed not just at those present, they had significance for the whole of Roman society. Roman culture was very much one of the spoken word and public orations were pre-eminent ways of defining and reinforcing cultural values.²⁶ The timing of papal funeral and pre-conclave orations, in particular, made them critical restatements and reinforcements of values in the ongoing drama of the early cinquecento Church. The period between the death of a pope and election of a successor, the *sede vacante*, was a time of uncertainty and vulnerability at the Roman court and usually a time of civil unrest in the city, with rioting and looting almost the norm. A variety of religious rituals and urban customs, all of long tradition, were used to bridge the gap and attempt to restrain the populace.²⁷ The role of the preacher at this time, then, was more than religious, it was vital to the institutional order of the Church and city. The preacher was somewhat like a narrator in a play who summarises the previous acts and interprets them for the audience, then foreshadows what is to come in the following acts.

25 'Noi habbiamo promossi al cardinalato molti soggetti romani, perchè l'habbiamo giudicato che dovendo voi habitare in questa città vi convenga d' havervi molte famiglie obligate, ma guardatevi che alcuno di loro ascenda al papato, perchè la temperie di questa patria lo farà desideroso d'inalzare con emulatione una casa romana più grande della nostra, il che non puol succedere senza vostra perdita', Pope Paul III, *Ricordi* to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, c. 1546, BAV, Barb. lat., 5366, fol. 135r.

26 Frederick McGinness, *Right Thinking and Sacred Oratory in Counter-Reformation Rome*, p. 66.

27 See Laurie Nussdorfer, 'The Vacant See: Ritual and Protest in Early Modern Rome', pp. 173-189.



Integral to the preacher's role in the ecclesiastical and Roman theatre was to assure the audience that the show would go on and that there was a new leading man in the wings whose role would be the same as those who had gone before him. That the orations took place within a liturgical setting, surrounded by sacred ritual and symbols, gave maximum potency to what was essentially a reiteration and reaffirmation of the institutional order.²⁸

Accessing funeral and pre-conclave orations has been facilitated in recent times by the exceptional scholarship of John O'Malley and John McManamon. Also of importance are orations at the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517) which have been studied extensively by Nelson Minnich.²⁹ While the research of O'Malley and McManamon covers preachers from throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the preachers who are of most interest here are those whom Alessandro Farnese would have heard at the funeral of a pope and the liturgy prior to the subsequent conclave. They are listed below with an asterisk indicating that texts of their orations are extant:

Death of Pope	Eulogy	Conclave
Alexander VI	Ottaviano Arcimboldi	Alexis Celadoni*
Pius III	Domenico Crispi	Tito Veltro da Viterbo
Julius II	Tomasso Inghirami*	Pedro Flores*
Leo X	Antonio da Spello	Julius Pimpinella*
Adrian VI	Conrad Vecerius*	Rodrigo Carvajal*
Clement VII	Lorenzo Grana*	Giovanni Pietro de' Grassi

Farnese is also known to have attended the sessions of the Lateran Council and was in fact called upon to deliver the pope's opening address to the Council, as Julius, although present, was weakened by illness.³⁰ This Farnese followed with a short address of his own. More about both in the next chapter.

28 For the most thorough consideration of the *sede vacante* and the social, political, and religious functions of its rituals in the early modern era, see Maria Antonietta Visceglia, *Morte e elezione del papa: Norme, riti e conflitti. L'Età moderna*.

29 John W. O'Malley, *Giles of Viterbo on Church and Reform: a Study in Renaissance Thought*; John W. O'Malley, *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome: Rhetoric, Doctrine, and Reform in the Sacred Orators of the Papal Court, c. 1450-1521*; John M. McManamon, 'The Ideal Renaissance Pope: Funeral Oratory from the Papal Court', pp. 9-70; Nelson H. Minnich, 'Concepts of Reform Proposed at the Fifth Lateran Council', pp. 163-251. The works of these scholars have pointed me to particular texts and to relevant passages within them.

30 Minnich has shown that Farnese attended all twelve sessions of the Council. Nelson H. Minnich, 'The Participants at the Fifth Lateran Council', p. 186.

As humanists, the model for most of these preachers, especially the funeral preachers, was the epideictic oratory defined by Aristotle in his *Rhetoric*.³¹ This was a form of display most appropriate for ceremonial occasions, being designed in form and sound to appeal to the ear in ways that were close to poetry and song.³² It was meant to touch the hearer emotionally and persuasively.³³ Throughout the oration, as part of the humanist *concordia* that brought together Christian and classical truths, the preacher quoted the scriptures and Church Fathers along with authors of antiquity.³⁴

In eulogies the epideictic framework required that the deceased was to be portrayed above all as a person of virtue. For the court preachers there was no one more virtuous than the pope, thus they called on all the virtues that Aristotle had laid out: justice, courage, temperance, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality, gentleness, prudence, and wisdom.³⁵ Sitting among the cardinals at the funeral of Julius II, Alessandro Farnese would have heard Tommaso Inghirami, famed orator, Canon of the Lateran and former student with Farnese at the Roman Academy, proclaim that a preacher would be worn out if he were to recount all the virtues of the late pope. Rather, he said, he would put before them ‘those great and lofty virtues (of Julius), which are beneficial to others, but for himself are laborious and unrewarded, of which kind are counted justice, strength, and greatness of heart’.³⁶ In future years, Conrad Vecerius, secretary to the Emperor Charles V, praised Adrian VI for encouraging Charles as his pupil to embrace the virtues of justice, piety, and mercy³⁷ and Lorenzo Grana, Bishop of Segni, extolled Clement VII in a lengthy inventory which included his integrity, justice, faith, modesty, and decorum in solemn liturgies.³⁸ The popes were also praised as men of wisdom, the practical wisdom required for princely governance that would also lead others to virtue: ‘for a prudent prince is an impregnable wall and

31 Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1.9, pp. 2174-2178.

32 O'Malley, *Praise and Blame*, p. 40.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 71.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 57.

35 Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1.9, p. 2174; O'Malley, *Praise and Blame*, p. 174.

36 ‘Has autem magnas et excelsas, quae fructuosae sint aliis, ipsi vero laboriosae et gratuitaee, quo in genere iustitia, fortitudo, animique magnitudine numerantur’, Tommaso Inghirami, ‘Pro Julio II Pont. Max. Funeris Oratio’, p. 81.

37 ‘Tum deinde iustitiae, pietatis, clementiae ceterarumque Regiarum virtutum amorem ac studium amplecti inciperet’, Conrad Vecerius, *Funeris oratio in mortem divi Hadriani VI Pontificis Maximi habita Romae in Reverendissimorum Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae Cardinalium consessu*, p. 4. See also McManamon, p. 34.

38 Lorenzo Grana, ‘Oratio in Funere Clementis VII’, pp. 279-80; McManamon, p. 34.

directs the examples of others'.³⁹ These same virtues were also proposed by the pre-conclave orators with, for example, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Rodrigo Carvajal, urging the cardinals, for the sake of the flock, to follow the same path as they had with Adrian VI and elect on the basis of virtue and learning rather than ambition or trickery.⁴⁰ Similarly, Pedro Flores, Bishop of Castellammare, in his pre-conclave oration following the death of Julius, reminded the cardinals that the supreme Petrine office warranted someone of the highest virtue, one who would shine on the public stage:

And so a vessel in which such power, such jurisdiction in heaven and on earth, and so many services are combined ought to be splendid, and of such a type that its splendour may be seen, its character understood and approved of, its authority not vulgar, so that nothing in it is missing which pertains to the Supreme Pontiff. For blessed Peter handed down to posterity the perennial gift of his merits along with the inheritance of his virtuousness.⁴¹

With the humanist's consciousness of accruing honour, Flores also noted that public admiration of the pope's virtuousness would redound to the cardinals as well: 'If he does anything admirably, anything splendidly, anything divinely, you who are the instigators will obtain grace and glory'.⁴²

Turning from papal qualities to what the pope was to do in his role, the preachers once again fused ancient Roman and Christian ideals. The first among papal tasks was public service. Flores stressed that the pope must give precedence to what is in the public interest and beneficial for all, rather than what serves himself.⁴³ Indeed, in a court sermon while Julius was still alive, Nicolaus Schomberg, a professor of theology, stressed that the use of private

39 'nam princeps prudens est murus inexpugnabilis et per aliorum exempla dirigit', Pedro Flores, *Oratio de summo pontifice eligendo Iulii II Pontific. Maxi. successore*, p. 7.

40 'In creatione Adriani Pont. Maximi [...] quem non ambitu nec malis artibus sed sola fama virtutum et eruditionis', Rodrigo Carvajal, *Oratio de eligendo Summo Pontifice Adriano VI vita functo ad sacrum patrum collegium habita*, p. 7.

41 'Vas ergo in quo talis potestas tanta in caelo et in terra iurisdictione ac tot misteria concurrunt splendidum esse oportet et tale cuius sit integritas spectata mores cogniti et probati auctoritas non vulgaris ita ut nihil in eo desideretur quod ad summum pontificem pertineat beatus noster Petrus perennis meritoris dotem cum hereditate innocentie transmisit ad posteros', Pedro Flores, *Oratio de summo pontifice eligendo Iulii II Pontific. Maxi. Successore*, p. 6.

42 'si quid praeclare, si quid magnifice, si quid divine, facit vobis qui auctores estis gratia et gloria', Flores, p. 9.

43 'Penset quod omnibus non quod sibi soli expediat, quod publice rei intersit non quod private', *Ibid.*, p. 5.

wealth in public service was a way of fortifying oneself against the temptation to avarice.⁴⁴ The public service the preachers had in mind was largely the patronage common to princes: commissioning art and architecture, fostering learning and literature, improving the urban landscape and amenities. The preachers gave special attention to the sacred duty of restoring and building churches, a way of glorifying God and of enabling Rome to display her true self as *caput mundi*.⁴⁵ The pope should also be involved in diplomatic and political relations for the sake of Rome and the world. One of his highest duties was to establish *pax et concordia* among the Christian nations, an area that will be given more detailed attention in Chapter 5.⁴⁶

The papacy and its present or past incumbents were praised as head of the Mystical Body. With its basis in St Paul's metaphor of the body in his epistles, this was a favoured enunciation of the ecclesiastical interrelationships and the necessity of a hierarchical structure.⁴⁷ At the Lateran Council the Master of the Dominicans, Thomas de Vio (Cajetan), said that those who belong to the Church are no longer citizens or foreigners, but citizens of the saints, servants of God, members of Christ and thus members of the Mystical Body.⁴⁸ At a later session of the Council, Bernard II Zanni, a former curial official and now Archbishop in Dalmatia, decried heresy as a disruption of the Body, the heretic being, as St Paul said, 'puffed up by the sense of his own flesh and not holding fast to the head' who on earth is the Vicar of Christ.⁴⁹ The papal headship and supremacy of power were reiterated time and again by the orators. In the pre-conclave oration following Julius II's funeral, Pedro Flores declared that the cardinals were called on to give the Church not a priest but the highest of priests, not a pope but the pope of popes, not a chief of priests but the chief of the chief of priests, and that man upon whom the governing of the whole Church militant relies.⁵⁰ Like

44 O'Malley, *Praise and Blame*, p. 174.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 171.

46 McManamon, p. 54.

47 O'Malley, *Praise and Blame*, p. 229.

48 'Quod ii non iam cives sunt aut advenae sed cives sanctorum, sed domestici Dei, sed membra Christi et ita unius eiusdemque mystici corporis membra', Oration of Thomas de Vio in Johannes Dominicus Mansi, ed., *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, Vol. 32, 721B (hereafter referred to as Mansi). See also Minnich, 'Concepts of Reform', p. 176.

49 'in eorundem ordine ad unum caput Christi scilicet vicarium, sanctitatem tuam, sanctissime Juli, iuxta apostoli dictum ad Colossenses *inflatus sensu carnis sua et non tenens caput*', Bernard II Zanni in Mansi, 704D.

50 'non sacerdotem eligere sed sacerdotum summum sacerdotem, non pontificem, sed pontificum pontificem; non principem sacerdotum sed principem principum sacerdotum et illum cui gubernatio totius ecclesiae militantis incumbit', Flores, p. 5. McManamon, p. 40.

many others, Carvajal rested the power of the pope in Christ's bestowal of the keys on Saint Peter, saying that just as the plenitude of power of the keys perfected Peter for the sake of the Church, so the same Petrine power and authority continued on in his successors, the Roman Pontiffs.⁵¹

The orators embellished traditional claims of the pope's *plenitudo potestatis* by including succession to the Roman *Imperium*. At the Council, Cajetan addressed Pope Julius directly saying: 'after God, yours is the greatest power, yours is the *Imperium*, yours government of the Republic, and defence of the Christian faith'.⁵² This added to what Giles of Viterbo, head of the Augustinian order, had already said in the opening session when he urged Julius to: 'raise up the most magnificent temple of all that has ever been seen, make of the militia an army of the Church to be feared by great kings (which no one was able to do before this), so that at length you may produce an empire'.⁵³ At Julius' funeral, Inghirami praised the pope for restoring the ancient *Imperium* to its former grandeur.⁵⁴ Then, prior to the subsequent conclave, Flores urged the cardinals to pause and reflect that they were not involved in a consular or tribunitian election, but were about to confer on one among them a perpetual *Imperium* that covered the entire world.⁵⁵

The frequency and consistency of the tropes utilised in these orations indicates that the papal narrative proclaimed by the orators heard by Alessandro Farnese was normative in the curial culture in which he was immersed. Having emerged from that culture to become pope, Farnese strove to project an image that was largely in accord with the narrative.

Magnificence

The rhetoric of the curial orators was integral to reinforcing the social narrative of the renewed *Imperium* and the Golden Age. But the narrative also needed to be played out by the actors who were centre stage. Honour

51 'quemadmodum Christus generis humani reparator plenitudinem potestatis clavium Petro tradiderit illumque universae ecclesiae perfecit, utque illa eadem potestas et auctoritas Petro concessa in Romanis Pontificibus eius successoribus continuetur', Carvajal, p. 3.

52 'tua enim post Deum maxima est potestas, tuum est imperium, tua reipub. gubernatio, Christianae fidei defensio', from a section of Cajetan's speech missing from Mansi but reproduced in an appendix in Minnich, 'Concepts of Reform', p. 241.

53 Giles of Viterbo, 'Inaugural Oration of the Fifth Lateran Council', p. 291.

54 'imperium hoc vestrum antiquum in statum restituerit', Inghirami, p. 98.

55 'Non sunt hec comitia consularia aut tribunitia non estis delaturi imperium universum urbis aut provincie sed principatum totius orbis perpetuum imperium', Flores, p. 9.

also needed to be displayed and *la bella figura* needed to be seen to be believed: hence magnificence.

Magnificenza, outward splendour through lavish spending, particularly on art and architecture, was linked to glory and reputation by humanist writers throughout the Renaissance, with Giovanni Pontano's *De Magnificentia* (1498) perhaps the most well-known work. In preaching, Archbishop Antoninus of Florence had linked wealth, honour and power in a theology of magnificence as a virtue that expressed the moral worth of citizens.⁵⁶ As Alessandro Farnese's rank and honour grew so did his magnificence. This was not only in charitable works and patronage of religious art and buildings but also in his everyday lifestyle. An essential dimension of this was his palace, the most visible 'face' of a noble or cardinal.⁵⁷ The palace represented the cardinal to society not only in its architecture but also in the number of the *familia* which it housed. Having sealed the acquisition of the Palazzo Albergati in 1494, Cardinal Farnese gradually acquired a series of properties around it in the Campus Martius area and, from 1514, employed the architect Antonio da Sangallo the Younger to build the most splendid palace in Rome, the Palazzo Farnese.⁵⁸ In the Roman census taken in 1527, just a few months before the Sack, ten of the twenty-one cardinals' palaces had 150 or more *bocche* (mouths) and only four cardinals had less than 100. Cardinal Farnese's household had 306, the largest *familia* in the census.⁵⁹

While more could be said about Farnese's magnificence as a cardinal, it is during his time as pope that his magnificence relates most clearly to the *Imperium* and the Golden Age. Also the honour that he displayed was now that of the Vicar of Christ. Three of Paul III's many projects show the way he used magnificence: the *Carnevale* of 1536, the reconstruction of the Campidoglio, and the decoration of the *Sala Paolina* in the Castel Sant'Angelo. Each of them identifies the pope with ancient figures and portrays him at the forefront of the *renovatio Romae* and the revitalised *Imperium*. These, of course, are to be understood as projects of propaganda. There is no evidence that Paul had delusions about his connection to the past or the extent of his power in the present. For much of his reign he experienced frustration

56 Peter Howard, *Creating Magnificence in Renaissance Florence*, pp. 33-52 and Gigliola Fragnito, 'Cardinals' Courts in Sixteenth-Century Rome', p. 40.

57 Weil-Garris and D'Amico, 'The Renaissance Cardinal's Ideal Palace', p. 52.

58 See Christoph L. Frommel, 'Papal Policy: The Planning of Rome during the Renaissance', pp. 56, 62-63.

59 This remarkably detailed document has most recently been published as *Descriptio Urbis: The Roman Census of 1527*, ed. by Egmont Lee. The listing for Cardinal Farnese's household is on p. 93.

and impotence in the face of the intractable struggle between Charles V and Francis I.⁶⁰ Paul was aware that the days of Alexander III and Innocent III deposing monarchs were long over. The claim to universal sovereignty, though, had become part of papal tradition, one most comprehensively made by Paul's ancestor Boniface VIII.⁶¹ Roman humanism embellished that claim by linking it to the Roman Empire. Significantly, Paul did not express the claim in diplomatic relations, rather he was content to express it in symbolic forms for it was more a claim of honour.

Carnevale 1536

In terms of symbolism, sacred ritual and secular pageantry were high points of Roman theatricality and constantly layered theological and mythic reality onto the daily social and economic realities of the Roman *popolo*. The streets and *piazze* of Rome saw an ongoing progress of ceremonies and processions: cardinals and barons riding out to meet new ambassadors, clergy and lay folk processing on the feast day of their patron saint, annual celebrations of guilds and confraternities, and processions with the pope on major feast days. Ritual, pageantry and festival were brought back to extravagance by Paul III who took to a new level the liberality and magnificence for which he was widely known. The events were also opportunities to place in the public domain the images through which he wished to be defined. Further, the images which expressed the culture shaping Paul were used by him to, in turn, shape others. He attended to solemn religious rituals, like that of Corpus Christi, when columns of lay and clergy, in strict hierarchical order, processed through the streets as a vanguard for the Vicar of Christ who symbolically held the monstrance with the consecrated host, the Body of Christ.⁶² But undoubtedly the pageantry and festivities to which most Romans were attached occurred in *Carnevale*. The ten days before Lent of excess and apparent freedom from social restraints were eagerly awaited each year.⁶³ Wearing masks and costumes, common people paraded the streets pretending to be nobles, priests or nuns. Nobles also dressed in different guises and hosted banquets and comedies marked by indulgence and parody. There were also startling displays of fireworks at the Castel Sant'Angelo.

60 This struggle will be treated in Chapter 5.

61 In the Bull *Unam Sanctam* of 1302 Boniface said: 'We declare, we proclaim, we define that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff, translation from Internet Medieval Sourcebook, Fordham University.

62 Stinger, p. 40.

63 Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, p. 256.



There were three main events where everyone came together: a parade through the streets from the Campidoglio to the Piazza Navona, races along the Corso with the winner receiving the prized *pallio*, a cloth of gold, and contests between men and animals at Testaccio, in the Aventine area. At Testaccio, carts of buffalo and pigs were pushed over the rim of a hill, down a slope and then slaughtered by teams of men who fought over the portions to take away.

What had traditionally been a time of 'popular mis-rule' was, by the reign of Paul III, in fact quite tightly controlled and co-opted for papal ends. This had been a significant shift in culture in which the use of classical themes and revival of an ancient sense of *Romanitas* were integral.⁶⁴ Paul used the *Carnevale* period in several ways: to allow the *popolo Romano* to feel that they could enjoy the traditional festivities and liberties while drawing them in to support of papal rule; to display a pageant that extended the papal myth and submerged the roles of Roman barons and their families as players within the drama; and to project a narrative of an essentially Roman *Respublica Christiana* and a papal *Imperium* that extended world-wide.

There was much excitement about the coming carnival of 1536 because it was the first full restoration of the festivities since the Sack of 1527. The parade was organised by Latino Giovenale Manetti, a dedicated humanist like Paul who had long served him in administration and diplomatic roles.⁶⁵ He was now Papal Commissary for Antiquities and *Maestro delle Strade* responsible for the urban streetscape. Manetti was an intimate of Pope Paul and it is reasonable to assume that he both knew the mind of the pope and planned the pageant with him.⁶⁶

Thus, the carnival procession displayed the broad themes of the Roman myth that Paul wove throughout his pontificate. These themes were shown particularly in the allegorised floats that were the focal points of the procession. The floats were all designed around the triumph of the Roman consul Paulus Aemilius who, already renowned for his administrative justice, patronage and erudition, gained his greatest glory in defeating Perseus, King of Macedonia in 168 BCE. This was a story well-known to humanists as it featured in Plutarch's lives and it was also commonly read to Roman youth. The procession was to be a homage to Paul III who carried the same name and stood in the same line of *Romanitas* and *auctoritas*.

64 See Maria Antonietta Visceglia, 'Papal Sovereignty and Civic Ritual in the Early Modern Age', p. 277 and Fabrizio Cruciani, *Teatro nel Rinascimento Roma 1450-1550*, p. 116.

65 Guido Rebecchini, 'After the Medici: The New Rome of Pope Paul III Farnese', p. 163.

66 For an account of Manetti's career and relationship to Paul III, see Angela Quattrocchi, 'Latino Giovenale de' Manetti: un diplomatico "umanista" nella Curia pontificia', pp. 829-840.

We are fortunate to have a number of eyewitness accounts of the procession from ambassadors and diarists, plus there is a detailed anonymous summary prepared for Girolamo Orsini, one of the Roman barons.⁶⁷ The procession gathered at the Campidoglio on 24 February 1536. Under Manetti's supervision, each of the thirteen districts (*rioni*) of Rome had prepared a float which represented an aspect of the triumph. The floats, drawn by four white horses, were interspersed with squads of cavalry and soldiers, bands of musicians, ranks of guilds and confraternities, municipal magistrates, and nobles. Each float was led by the *caporione*, the head of the particular district.

One of the floats showed Paulus Aemilius crowned while beneath him a row of poets recited verses praising his victory. Another showed him dressed in gold astride a beautifully caparisoned horse, stepping forth as leader of his troops to cross a dangerous river on his way to battle in Macedonia. There was a wagon full of weapons representing those captured from the defeated Macedonians and a float full of treasure, basins of gold, silver, vases, gold bars, and jewels representing the treasure of all the provinces of Macedonia. One float had King Perseus at the portico of a temple standing humbly before Paulus Aemilius asking pardon which Paulus benignly granted. Another showed Perseus bound and being led as a prisoner tied to a cart full of the spoils of war. Liberally adorning livery, carriages, and shields was the coat of arms of the Farnese pope.⁶⁸

The overall impression made by these floats and rank upon rank of musicians, cavalry and other players was one of the return of magnificence and power. The number of floats laden with golden treasure was a clear symbol of the return of the Golden Age. The Sack was history, Rome was once again *caput mundi*, the city that outshines all others, eternal in destiny and universal in dominion, with its authority crystallised in the *princeps*, Paul. It is significant that the procession met the pope and received his blessing at the Mons Vaticanus, the seat of oracles and the Temple of Cybele, the *Magna Mater*, symbol of imperial order and religious authority throughout the Empire.⁶⁹

The procession also reasserted Rome's traditional vanquishing of its enemies. The lands of the enemy had been invaded, dominated and stripped

67 The account for Orsini entitled 'L'ordine della festa in Agone e di Testaccio fatta per carnevale sotto Paolo III, l'anno 1536' is in Vincenzo Forcella, ed., *Tornei e giostre: Ingressi trionfali e feste carnevalesche in Roma sotto Paolo III*, pp. 19-31. The ambassadors' accounts are briefer. See, for example, Lorenzo Bragadin's report, 24 February 1536, ASVe, Senato Secreta, Archivio Proprio Roma, b. 4, fol. 46v.

68 Forcella, pp. 22-26.

69 For the cultic importance of the Vatican Hill in antiquity, see Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans in Rome*, p. 142.

of their property, and the symbol of the nation, the king, was also captured, bound and stripped of his royal status. This imagery can be juxtaposed with the fact that within forty days of the procession the emperor Charles V was due to visit Rome, that monarch whose troops had the temerity to attack, invade and sack the city. Although everyone knew the emperor would be received with honour, here in the procession there was a none too subtle reassertion of the proper order of the world with Rome the vanquisher.

On the local level, the images conveyed the message that the Roman *rioni* were to find their identity, individually and collectively, as an ordered retinue of the *princeps*. The same went for the Roman barons who once were the directors of the theatre of life in Rome but over the course of the sixteenth century, in the words of Irene Fosi, were 'relegated to a walk-on role'.⁷⁰ For the rest, this was no mere spectacle that passed them by. Perhaps the foremost analyst of carnival, Mikhail Bakhtin, says that 'carnival does not know footlights, in the sense that it does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators'.⁷¹ Rome had around 50,000 inhabitants at this time. As the parade made its way through the streets, just about everybody was in costume and masks, all the houses were decorated, people leaned from balconies draped with carpets and tapestries, while those on the road threw flowers and branches and cried out their support. So people, space, clothing, gestures, music, scenery and props all came together in the one theatrical event, an event that framed identity and bespoke honour, both individual and communal.

The Campidoglio

The range of Paul III's architectural endeavours was indicative of his breadth of vision and ambition. Two of the earliest projects after his coronation were the fortification of Rome against another Sack and the reconstruction and re-staffing with eminent scholars of *La Sapienza* university which had been destroyed in the Sack. Among a host of other projects, he commissioned extensions to the Farnese palace and its piazza, resumption of work on St Peter's Basilica, widening of streets such as the Via Lata and the Via del Corso, and restoration of the Castel Sant'Angelo.⁷²

70 Irene Fosi, 'Court and City in the Ceremony of the *Possesso* in the Sixteenth Century', p. 34.

71 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 7.

72 For treatments of the broad range of Paul III's urban projects and their symbolic intent, see Giorgio Simoncini, *Roma: Le trasformazioni urbane nel cinquecento*, Vol. 1, pp. 97-148 and Christoph L. Frommel, 'Papal Policy: The Planning of Rome during the Renaissance', pp. 60-64.

Paul also transformed the Campidoglio. Long the symbolic centre of ancient Rome, site of the temples of the gods, by the Renaissance the Campidoglio had become a ramshackle collection of faded buildings and a place of executions. Paul had already established a summer residence in a tower nearby, an imposing construction through which Paul could literally oversee the whole of the city.⁷³ He extended this statement of Farnese and papal oversight by relocating the statue of Marcus Aurelius to the Campidoglio. This was in the face of strong opposition, not least from the Chapter of St John Lateran in whose piazza the emperor astride his horse had stood for centuries.⁷⁴ There was debate at the time about the proper identification of the rider, with some saying it was Constantine, others Antoninus Pius, and others Marcus Aurelius. This was of no great consequence as humanists regarded the latter two, in particular, as pre-eminent among emperors each being, 'the *exemplum virtutis*: peacemaker, dispenser of justice and maecenas'.⁷⁵ The grandeur of the figure and its graceful, outstretched arm conveyed supreme authority and the bestowal of peace.⁷⁶ Paul commissioned Michelangelo to make a new pedestal of fitting grandeur for the statue. The Farnese coat of arms on the front of the pedestal left no doubt who was being proclaimed as heir to the Roman *Imperium*.

The design of the piazza extended this theme. The curvilinear grid divided into twelve compartments harks back to ancient architectural decoration that used the twelve signs of the zodiac. Their location within an oval represents the legendary oval shield of Achilles which bore the zodiac signs. Alexander the Great took up this shield design including on it the epithet *Kosmokrator*, ruler of the universe.⁷⁷ The shield and title were later adopted by Roman emperors in whose footsteps the Farnese pope now symbolically claimed to tread.

The Sala Paolina

The literary topoi expressed in the pageantry and architecture of Paul's pontificate were also features of its art.⁷⁸ The *Sala Regia* and the Belvedere

73 Antonella de Michelis, 'Villeggiatura in the urban context of Renaissance Rome: Paul III Farnese's villa-tower on the Campidoglio', p. 38.

74 James S. Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, p. 161.

75 Ackerman, p. 162.

76 See Stinger, p. 258.

77 Ackerman, p. 169.

78 Bernice Davidson says: 'To an exceptional degree, Paul possessed an instinct for manipulating the arts to achieve political or ecclesiastical ends, and he seldom commissioned any art that

corridor at the Vatican, apartments in the Villa Farnese and the Palazzo San Marco all included iconography related to the ancient *Romanitas* of the Farnese, *Roma instaurata* and the *Renovatio imperii*.⁷⁹

In the Castel Sant'Angelo, the grandest fortress of Rome and tomb of the emperor Hadrian, double homage was paid to the pope in frescoes of Alexander the Great and Saint Paul. In what became known as the *Sala Paolina*, Perino del Vaga and his assistants worked between 1545 and 1547 on scenes from both these heroic lives, painting in red-brown monochrome to simulate ancient bronze reliefs. The castellan at the time was Cardinal Tiberio Crispo, son of Paul's former mistress who may even have been the pope's son.⁸⁰ He oversaw the work and, given also that Paul regularly stayed in the *Sala* apartments, the design would have been done in close consultation with the pope.

In the *Sala*, the scenes of Alexander's life have prominence: making peace between two of his soldiers, consecrating twelve altars, preserving the writings of Homer, burning his booty, entering in triumph into Babylonia, cutting the Gordian knot. These images all denote features of a revived *Imperium* under the papacy.⁸¹ Thus, one can see in the central scene of Alexander cutting the Gordian knot a prophecy of the pope's dominion over the world. Similarly, the scene of the legendary encounter of Alexander with the High Priest at the temple in Jerusalem, with Alexander kneeling before the High Priest, can be seen as the right relationship between the spiritual and temporal ruler.⁸² It represents the ancient Alexander giving way to the new Alexander (Farnese) who holds both spiritual and temporal supremacy and thus is worthy of the submission of all others.

Around the top of the four walls of the *Sala Paolina* is an inscription that is a humanist leitmotif in the narrative of Paul's reign, one that shows how vital is the social estimation of the way things look in the public domain: 'Everything within this castle that was once decaying, inaccessible and defaced can now be seen restored, adorned and consolidated

did not serve a public function', in 'Pope Paul III's Additions to Raphael's Logge: His Imprese in the Logge', p. 395.

79 See Gamrath, *Farnese: Pomp, Power and Politics in Renaissance Italy*, pp. 85–91.

80 Zapperi, *La leggenda del papa Paolo III*, p. 26.

81 Loren Partridge, 'Review of Papst Paul III. als Alexander der Grosse. Das Freskenprogramm der Sala Paolina in der Engelsburg by Richard Harprath', p. 662.

82 This was a favourite scene of Paul's, one he reproduced on a medal with his portrait on the other side. See Davidson, p. 418.

in comfortable utility and exquisite elegance, through the merits of Pope Paul III'.⁸³

When Alessandro Farnese found himself centre stage as pope he strove to exercise strong and constant leadership of the Body of Christ, his humanist orientation leading him to live out the papal role as it was portrayed by the humanist preachers of his time. Thus, he endeavoured to be seen as a model of the virtues of justice, courage, temperance, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality, gentleness, prudence and wisdom. He spoke with calm and elegance, his decisions were considered, he consulted before acting, he offered patronage to many, provided alms to the poor and dowries to young women in need. He was a restorer and builder of churches and displayed the magnificence of his office and of his city.

Having a mistress as a cardinal was socially unremarkable and the product of the relationship, children and grandchildren, brought honour to his house and enabled him to exercise papal policy with people he could trust. He provided for his family with the liberality and constancy that honour required. Overall, Farnese was contentedly enmeshed in a curialised Rome, a fusion of Church and city. The Roman Church was attempting to reassert itself after the Sack, indeed attempting to display itself as at the dawn of a Golden Age. As pope, Farnese portrayed himself at the vanguard of that process, restoring and adorning both the physical and social fabric. Of the humanist culture of Rome and the Church, then, he was a product, a perpetuator, and an enhancer.

Farnese could not deny though what everyone knew, that there were abuses within the Roman curial system and, as we will see in the next chapter, as pope he knew that it would bring him honour to address those abuses. But there was no incentive for him to take steps that would deconstruct the system itself. He had been there when Adrian VI had attempted such a thing in the early 1520s. He had seen the flight of humanists from the court, the unrest among the citizens and the resulting lack of

83 The inscription appears on the walls thus: 'QVAE OLIM INTRA HANC ARCEM COLLAPSA IMPEDITA FOEDATA ERANT EA NVNC A PAVLO TERTIO PONTIFICE MAXIMO AD SOLIDAM FIRMITATEM COMMODAM VTILITATEM SVBTILEMQVE VENVSTATEM EXTRVCTA DISPOSITA ORNATA CONSPICIVNTVR', Personal transcription, translation from the guide notes in the *Sala Paolina*.

honour accorded to that pope.⁸⁴ So reform was to be undertaken with great care. In the private apartments that Paul had redesigned and then occupied at the Castel Sant'Angelo, there is another inscription that he had placed in the ceiling in capital letters where it can be seen today: *FESTINA LENTE*.⁸⁵

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84 For an account of Adrian VI's attempts at reform during his brief pontificate, see Robert E. McNally, 'Pope Adrian VI (1522-1523) and Church Reform' and for the humanist reaction to these attempts, see John F. D'Amico, *Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome*, p. 11.

85 Hasten slowly.



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3. Tradition and Reform

Abstract

Tradition has been a central formative principle of the Church from its earliest years, continually orienting its theology, structure, and discipline to preservation of the past. Humanism gilded that orientation with its attachment to the classical world. The humanist preachers of Paul III's time framed the papal role in reform in terms of tradition. As a cardinal, Alessandro Farnese played a minimal role in reform but, as pope, papal honour moved him to commit to reform and the calling of a Council. His understandings of reform and those of the eminent men he called to Rome to frame a comprehensive reform program were guided by tradition and the maintenance of papal honour.

Keywords: apostolic succession; heresy; papal role; Lateran Council; curial culture

The Catholic Church has long moved forward by looking backwards. What was needed in the time of Paul III was a plan to reshape, by degrees, the administrative and financial structures of the Church and to reshape the cultural expectations that underpinned those structures. A plan with gradual pathways, starting with modest but symbolic change, would have avoided pulling the cultural and economic rug from under Roman society and endangering the safety of Rome. However, the sociology and theology of the Church, welded to the humanist intellectual framework, were severe constraints on such a plan emerging and then being accepted.

In a letter to Cardinal Gasparo Contarini, Jacopo Sadoletto, former curialist and now Bishop of Carpentras in southern France, responded to the news that Paul III was on the point of summoning him and a number of others to Rome to work with Contarini in a reform Commission. The pessimistic letter touches on a number of obstacles to reform and gives a perceptive summation of the course needed:

Cussen, B., *Pope Paul III and the Cultural Politics of Reform, 1534-1549*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020

DOI 10.5117/9789463722520_CH03



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O most learned and excellent Contarini, if only your hopes would never deceive you. Your exceptional goodness, prudence and integrity give you confidence that what ought be a course of action for the best outcome is indeed already in train. Would that that were the case. Do you not believe that, if there were any hope of achieving some admirable and salutary change, I would offer and dedicate myself, I do not say for the sake of honour [...] but, in the words of the chief apostle, even unto death and the cross; that if to my own disadvantage and loss I could bring some advantage to the Christian Commonwealth, I should consider it my greatest gain? But believe me the vices and corrupt pursuits of our time are not open to probity and wisdom. We have in this pope an outstanding head who only thinks and desires what is worthy of him. But he is not stronger than the perversity of the times. For the body of Christendom is sick with the type of disease which is impervious to the current medicine. It would be better, through long and circuitous means, to effect a partial remedy, just as the disease developed by degrees over the course of time. I say there will need to be many vigils, many medicines and frequent secret counsels in order to restore the Christian Commonwealth to health and dignity.¹

Sadoletto was close to the mark in identifying some of the complex factors around reform: that most reform proposals were based in an over-optimistic, even naïve, assessment of what could be achieved, that pursuit of reform had risks for one's honour, that Paul III was supportive of reform but that its achievement was beyond him, and that what at most was worth a try was a multi-faceted, incremental approach that began with modest steps.

1 'O doctissime et optime Contarene utinam te ista spes nunquam deceptura sit. Tu eximia adhuc quadam bonitate veraque prudentia et integritate ad hoc sperandum adducis cum quod optimum factu esse intelligis et illis ipsis salutare quorum causa es sollicitus id iam factum iri confidis et existimas. Quod secus longe est atque utinam ne esset. An tu arbitrare si esset spes aliquid praeclare salutariterque agendi quin ego memetipsum essem expositurus atque oblaturus, non dico ad honores [...] sed in mortem atque crucem ut caput Apostolorum dixit cum quicquid meo incommodo et damno Reipublicae paretur ego maximum meum lucrum existimaturus essem? Sed (crede mihi) temporum horum vitia et corrupta studia istam probitatem sapientiamque non recipiunt. Caput (ut spero) egregie probum habemus hoc est Pontificem ipsum cogitantem et cupientem ea quae se digna sunt. Sed non plus ille potest quam temporum perversitas. Aegrotat enim corpus Reipublicae et eo morbi genere aegrotat quod praesentem medicinam respuit magisque esset longo circuitu ad partem aliquam sanitatis revocandum sicut ipsum paulatim curriculo temporum in hanc tabem delapsus est. Multis inquam vigilis plurimis remediis, dissimulatisque saepe numero consiliis salus esset et dignitas Christianae Reipublicae restituenda'. Letter of Jacopo Sadoletto to Gasparo Contarini, 13 March 1536, in Jacobi Sadoleti, *Opera quae extant omnia*, Tom. I, pp. 218-219.

The passage also shows that Sadoletto himself, as one would expect, was speaking from within the cultural webs of his own time, particularly in seeing the Church as subject to unprecedented perversity which rendered the Mystical Body grievously diseased and that the aim of reform was to restore the Body to its pristine state. As we shall see, despite his reluctance, Sadoletto did accede to the summons of Paul to come to Rome and serve on the Commission, but his insights and curial experience were not sufficient to assist his colleagues in charting an acceptable way forward. In fact, the greatest restraint for nearly all who contemplated reform was that they could only conceive of pathways to an idealised past.

A Church of Tradition

From early in its history through to the Renaissance and beyond, the structure of the Church and the theology that legitimated that structure, indeed sanctified it, were oriented to preservation of the past. Underlying the theological and canonical thread throughout the centuries was a sociological imperative: the quest for stability as an institution amidst the vicissitudes of history. Under the threat of division and heresy from its earliest days, the Church attempted to preserve unity and truth by clinging to what was perceived as its original message and by structuring itself around offices that would authenticate what was genuinely original. From the second century onwards, the Church gradually established itself as an institution on the basis of what Max Weber called ‘traditional authority’. This structuring principle is grounded in ‘an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them’.² Thus, the early office of bishop, with local authority, and gradually that of pope, with supreme authority, developed to guarantee what was part of tradition. Through the notion of apostolic succession the bishop came to be seen as the reliable link with Jesus, the only member of the community who could authoritatively teach the ‘deposit of faith’ as it had been given to the apostles and handed on (*tradere*) by them.³ Around 180CE, Irenaeus of Lyons, writing against the heretics said:

² Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, p. 328.

³ One of the best treatments of the foundational nature of tradition in the Church remains Yves M.-J. Congar, *Tradition and Traditions: An historical essay and a theological essay*. See also James F. McCue, ‘Apostles and Apostolic Succession in the Patristic Era’, pp. 138-171.

Anyone who wishes to discern the truth may see in every church in the whole world the apostolic tradition clear and manifest. We can enumerate those who were appointed as bishops by the apostles and their successors down to our own day, who never knew and never taught anything resembling their (the heretics') foolish doctrine.⁴

The placing of a bishop at the head of each community and the gathering of bishops in synods was, for a time, effective in stemming the tide of false doctrine. However, it was not sufficient for a religion whose communities were rapidly expanding in number throughout the Empire. Among them arose ever new variations of heresy and in response, especially in combating Arianism, conflicting decrees by synods diminished the potency of the episcopal voice.⁵ A further narrowing of the source of authentication was needed.

As the seat of both Peter and Paul, Rome had long been regarded with a unique esteem when giving an opinion or acting as a mediator in a dispute. Around this gradually emerged the notion that the Roman bishop had succeeded to the leadership of Peter. Theological claims of Petrine succession were articulated by Popes Damasus (366-384) and Celestine I (422-432) and comprehensively developed by Leo the Great (440-461). Leo claimed the *plenitudo potestatis* in the Church, the fullness of teaching and legislative authority, since it was Peter alone whom Jesus called the rock on which he would build his Church and to whom he said: 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven' (Matthew 16:19). According to Leo, Peter lived on in the Bishop of Rome: 'Regard him as present in the lowliness of my person. Honour him'.⁶ Critical to the way the papal role in reform would later be conceived was Leo's use of St Paul's theology of the Mystical Body. For Leo, all Christian life was to flow downwards from the head of the Body to the members. In the temporal world, the pope was the head and thus the channel of doctrine, grace and organisation.⁷ Leo and his successors acted according to this role – publishing laws, passing judgements, intervening in local affairs, appointing bishops, governing sacramental life – so gradually the pope became the pre-eminent authenticator and ruler, the certain bulwark who could shield the Church

4 Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus Haereses*, trans. by F.R. Montgomery Hitchcock as *The Treatise of Irenaeus of Lugdunum Against the Heresies*, 3:3.1, p. 84.

5 See Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church*, p. 238.

6 Saint Leo the Great, *Sermons*, 3:4, p. 23.

7 *Ibid.*, 4:2, pp. 26 and 27.



from history.⁸ Tradition, authenticated by the pope, enabled the Church to weave webs of conviction that it existed in what Weber called ‘the eternal yesterday’.⁹

The sociological and theological orientation to tradition was well entrenched by the Renaissance. The flowering of humanism only gilded that orientation as humanists wished to suffuse the present with a more splendid past. Humanism, indeed, reinforced the medieval patrimony that shaped the traditional nature of the Church by reviving its classical origins. Aspects of Roman and Greek philosophy, as well as mythology, were layered upon oft cited theology always with the aim of welding the Church to an idealised past. Humanists maintained that the pope could not only restore the Church but also Rome to its eternal destiny, a destiny begun in ancient times and transformed by the blood of the martyrs and especially that of Saint Peter. Pomponio Leto and Andrea Fulvio traced the religious past of Rome back beyond the Empire to Etruscan times and saw linkages with the Vatican as a seat of oracles and cult and thus a fitting shrine for Peter and locus for his authority to be dispensed.¹⁰ In his writing, Giles of Viterbo also traced a divine link to Etruscan times by confirming a tradition that the teachings of Noah were brought into Etruria after the flood.¹¹ He was one of many humanists who pursued this Roman ‘topographical mystique’ drawing many sites into his oratorical image of Rome as the font of salvific government for the world.¹² For him the blood of Peter sacralised Rome and Peter’s tomb at the Mons Vaticanus stood as a safeguard of tradition and source of grace.¹³

Tradition in Curial Preaching

As noted earlier, the trope of Peter as head of the Body was prominent in the orations that took place in Rome at papal funerals, at pre-conclave assemblies of cardinals, and at the Fifth Lateran Council. All the orators were conscious of the calls for reform and felt obliged to add their own voices, particularly casting the pope in the role of the ecclesial saviour. Most began by venturing a diagnosis of the state of the Mystical Body. In this they were

8 See Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, p. 227.

9 Max Weber, ‘Politics as a Vocation’, p. 78.

10 See Stinger, p. 184.

11 John W. O’Malley, *Giles of Viterbo on Church and Reform*, p. 31.

12 Stinger, p. 170.

13 O’Malley, *Giles of Viterbo*, p. 124.



influenced by what has been called a 'historical framework of decline'.¹⁴ Partly under the influence of pessimistic theologians like Joachim of Flora and apocalyptic preachers like Savonarola, many reformers reached back to ancient Roman and Greek concepts of cosmic senescence to propose that, even if doctrine remained guaranteed and secure, the further the Church moved in history from its source the more its moral discipline would suffer decline and thus need renewal.¹⁵ Foremost among these was Giles of Viterbo. In his celebrated oration at the opening of Lateran V, Giles adduced a host of present evils that were unsurpassed in history:

For when will ambition be more forward?
 When will avarice be more inflamed?
 When will the licentiousness of sin be more brazen?
 When will the audacity of speaking, disputing, and writing against piety be either more frequent or more secure?
 When will not only negligence, but contempt of sacred things among the people, of the sacraments, of both keys and sacred precepts, be greater?
 When will our faith and religion be more open to ridicule (or common abuse)?
 When – alas – will schism in the Church be more pernicious?
 When will the enemy be more powerful?
 When will the army be more truculent?
 When in passing have signs, portents, and prodigies of both the threatening heavens and the trembling earth seemed more frequent and horrible?¹⁶

As can be seen, in common with many reformers, the vices condemned by Giles were those of the classics, principally those of avarice, luxury and ambition. In the same session of the Lateran Council, Pope Julius, in the speech read by Cardinal Farnese, followed suit in declaring that: 'Not only has ecclesiastical discipline turned far from its proper course, but every institution of human life has collapsed and a great upheaval of morals has occurred in every age group and social class'.¹⁷ In a later session, Cajetan

14 O'Malley, 'Historical Thought and the Reform Crisis of the Early Sixteenth Century', p. 542.

15 O'Malley, *Giles of Viterbo*, pp. 103–112.

16 Giles of Viterbo, 'Inaugural Oration of the Fifth Lateran Council', pp. 293–294.

17 'Nam quum non solum disciplina ecclesiastica, sed omnis humanae vitae institutio colabefactata, a recta itineris orbita longe deflexerit atque in omni ordine aetatis et hominum magna actura morum sit facta', Pope Julius II, text of BAV, Mss. Chigiani, I, III, 89. Consistorialia Raph. Riarii, Tom. II.: De Concilio, fols. 44r–46r in Minnich, 'Concepts of Reform', pp. 237–238 and translation of this section p. 166.

lamented the depths of corruption, moral torpor, and schism into which the Church had fallen, leaving the flock dispersed and without example.¹⁸ Much later, when Leo X reconvened the Council, Simon Kozicic Begnius, a bishop from Dalmatia, said that the Church seemed to be weary and afflicted and that there were hardly traces of faith, piety, or religion remaining in her.¹⁹ Antonio Pucci, in future to become a major curial antagonist of Contarini, at this time stood before the Council and described the Church as the divine bride, the splendour of whose Mystical Body is now hidden, dressed as she is in mourning clothes, worn out in squalor and soaked in tears.²⁰

The funeral and pre-conclave preachers were also at one in decrying the miserable state into which the Church had fallen. A common image was the barque of Peter being battered by the most powerful storm and headed for shipwreck. Flores, for example, spoke of the barque 'bobbing on the high sea with its captain lost, tossed by the swell and storm'²¹ and Grana lamented the most holy ship of the Church being subject to the force of violent winds.²² Propelling the Church into this perilous state was particularly the decline in moral behaviour of curial clerics. So Carvajal berated the climate of the curia where ambition and trafficking in offices had so disgraced Rome that the city, once a common home and refuge for the nations, was such that many now wished to leave, preferring not to live amid the cultivation of such avarice.²³

The solutions the orators offered for rescuing the Church from this abyss were grounded in a return to the way tradition dictated the Church should be. In this they bundled doctrine, law and structure all together and proposed an about-face from present realities to rekindle ancient practice.

18 See the section of the oration which is missing from the Mansi text and is reprinted from BAV, Rac. I. IV. 2107: *Opuscula varia ad Concilium Lateranense V*, fols. 62r-63v in Minnich, 'Concepts of Reform', pp. 239-241.

19 'Taedet vero, pigetque, fidem, pietatem, religionem nostris temporibus ita tepuisse et paene dixerim contabuisse videri ut vix earum ulla vestigia sint reliqua', Simonem Begnium, Mansi, 803C.

20 'Ecce divinam illam sponsam Ierusalem supernam, mystici sui corporis splendore fulgentem, aut ipsius sponsi humanitatis fulgore splendentem, sed lugubri indutam veste totam squalore confectam lacrimisque perfusam ad infimum suum corpus', Antonio Pucci, Mansi, 895E.

21 'Naviculam petri gubernatore amisso alto pelago fluctuantem aestu turbineque iactatam', Flores, p. 2.

22 'ecclesiae navis sanctissima ventorum iniuriae obnoxia', Lorenzo Grana, 'Oratio in Funere Clementis VII', p. 264; McManamon, p. 43.

23 'Adeo ut hanc urbem, patriam communem, portum et refugium gentium atque nationum, iam multi relinquere vellent, et ubivis potius quam Romae vivere mallerent, tanta arant excogitata ad avaritiam', Rodrigo Carvajal, 'Oratio de eligendo summo pontifice', pp. 6 and 9; McManamon, p. 44.

Thus, at the Lateran Council, Giles of Viterbo called on God to: 'grant the restoration of our fallen religion to its former purity, its ancient light, its native splendour, and its sources'.²⁴ Bernard II Zanni spoke of the obligation of the pope to return the Church to 'perfection in observing the Catholic, apostolic, divine and most holy *instituta*',²⁵ the last word being a cover-all for ancient customs and laws.²⁶ At the funeral of Clement VII, Lorenzo Grana claimed that the pope had indeed aimed to restore the pristine honour of the Church's rites, customs and practices.²⁷ In his eulogy of Julius II, Inghirami said that Julius had actually been successful in restoring the ecclesial *Imperium* to its ancient standing.²⁸

The boundaries of this pristine period were left somewhat loose by most of the orators as was the content of it that they wished to see restored. Giles came the closest to a period definition when he said that 'changes made after the reign of Constantine [...] weakened the rigour of Christian morality and ascetical practices in no small measure', thereby pointing to an ideal time for the Church from Christ to Constantine.²⁹ Other orators spoke more generally of an age when the Church was guided by the Sacred Scriptures, the wisdom of the Church Fathers and the early canons.³⁰ Count Gian Francesco Pico della Mirandola, one of the few laymen to address the Council, reiterated the need to guard 'the most holy decrees of the ancient Fathers and the most honourable *instituta*'.³¹ Simon Kozicic Begnius urged the Council prelates to use as their yardstick 'the great zeal and vigilance of our forefathers, the *institutiones* of the

24 Giles of Viterbo, 'Inaugural Oration', p. 286.

25 'perfectio in contemplando catholica, apostolica, divina et sanctissima instituta', Bernard II Zanni, Mansi, 702E.

26 See Minnich, 'Concepts of Reform', p. 175.

27 'sic ritus, mores, habitus, pristinam honestatem redegit', Grana, p. 271.

28 'imperium hoc vestrum antiquum in statum restituerit', Tommaso Inghirami, 'Pro Julio II Pont. Max. Funerbris Oratio', p. 98; McManamon, p. 49.

29 Giles of Viterbo, 'Inaugural Oration', p. 286. Giles makes it clear in other writings that the temporal possessions that the Church was able to accrue from the time of Constantine led to a weakening of the ecclesial moral character. See O'Malley, *Giles of Viterbo*, p. 107. This did not mean that he had an entirely bleak perception of Church history subsequent to that era. Indeed, in the same Lateran oration, he described the Fathers of the Church as having 'filled the Christian treasury with books, writings, and monuments, the heavenly gold and silver of learning and discipline,' p. 289.

30 The period of the Church Fathers was generally held to have lasted from apostolic times through to the mid-eighth century.

31 'sanctissima antiquorum decreta patrum et honestissima instituta custodiantur', Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, 'Oratio de Reformandis Moribus ad Leonem Decimum Pontificem Maximum et Concilium Lateranen', p. 66.

evangelical law, and the actions of Christ our lawmaker'.³² Antonio Pucci said that self-serving clerics should be dealt with severely according to what has been learned from the early canons and inviolable decrees of the Fathers.³³

How this return was to occur was likewise given only a very general outline. It was painted largely in terms of a moral regeneration, one which was to be effected principally by the pope. So Flores exhorted the cardinals to elect a pope who: 'once he has been appointed over the people and kingdoms to uproot and to sow, will first uproot the dominant evils, the brambles and thistles of sins, since for as long as those pernicious roots hold the earth captive it cannot take up good and holy seeds. Therefore, let him plant those things which are provided to us to live well and holy'.³⁴ The pope would thus need to appoint men of virtue to ecclesial office and see to it that they followed his lead as a good shepherd. At the Council, Giles urged the pope and the Fathers to take up the true arms of the Church: 'piety, religion, probity, supplication, vows, "the breastplate of faith" and "the armour of light"'.³⁵ His only vaguely concrete suggestion was to ensure that bishops were men of sanctity.³⁶ Christopher Marcellus, scholar and Archbishop of Corcyra in Greece, said that it rested upon the pope to use his supreme power to reform, correct and illumine the morally depraved Church.³⁷ Pucci called on the pope to use his judgement and censure to restore pristine modes of living out faith, hope and charity, first in Rome, the House of the Lord, so that it would be an example for the whole world.³⁸ Gianfrancesco Pico

32 'Nobis vero majorum nostrorum studio atque vigiliis tantopere consultum est, nobis ex evangelicae legis institutionibus, et Christi legislatoris nostri actionibus', Simon Kozicic Begnius, Mansi, 799D. Minnich, 'Concepts of Reform', p. 187.

33 'nonne, inquam, huiusmodi omnes clericos, aut ad sacerdotium non promoveri, aut promotos partim ab ordine sacerdotali deponi, partim vero suspendi omnino debere, eorumdem sacrorum voluminum, scitorumque partum ac priscorum canonum summis auctoritate inviolabilique decreto didicimus', Antonio Pucci, Mansi, 895C.

34 'cum constitutus fuerit super gentes et regna erradicare et plantare, primum erradicet praecedentia mala, spinas, et tribulos vitiorum. Dum enim istae malae radices occupatam detinent terram, non potest semina bona et sancta suscipere. Deinde plantet ea que ad bene sancteque vivendum sunt nobis proposita', Flores, *Oratio de summo pontifice eligendo*, p. 10.

35 Giles of Viterbo, 'Inaugural Oration', p. 292.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 289.

37 'beatissime pontifex, cui summa data potestas, ac divinum iniunctum imperium tuum est, quemadmodum oppressam armis erexisti, amplificasti, ita moribus depravatam ecclesiam reformare, corrigere, illustrare', Christopher Marcellus, Mansi, 760D.

38 'Urbem primum, ut iudicium incipiat a domo domini: inde orbem disciplinae tuae censura in pristinum fidei, spei, caritatisque cultum restitue', Pucci, Mansi, 897D. Minnich, 'Concepts of Reform', p. 194.

della Mirandola, said that it fell to Leo X to heal the diseases and wounds of the Church and that his reform of the Christian Commonwealth should combine humanity, gentleness and ease with rigour and punishment.³⁹

The holding of Councils in themselves was proposed as an essential means of purifying the faith and returning the Church to its ancient standards, 'for if we review the achievements of Councils', said Giles, 'we will understand that there is nothing more powerful, consequential and secure than they'.⁴⁰ Of course, Lateran V had been convoked by Julius II so, at his funeral, he was praised for its achievements.⁴¹ When the Council reconvened under Leo X, Giovanni Battista de Gargiis, a Knight of St John of Jerusalem, said that Councils were the customary means of providing the Church with salutary remedies for its ills.⁴²

The orators were necessarily constrained in delineating the contours of the desired past and the nature of the Church's 'ancient way of being' since integral to the concept of ecclesial tradition was that it was enshrined in multiple sources and that its genuine components required ongoing authentication. In general, what was desired was a return to idealised concepts of the spirituality, morality, standards and discipline of the early Church. But the guides to these dimensions were voluminous and by no means consistent in their detail. There were not only the scriptures, the writings of the Fathers and the canons of early Church Councils, but ecclesial documents of every age since then that had authenticated what was true to that original patrimony. Thus, Giles of Viterbo approached reform of the whole Church in the same way as he did reform of the Augustinian order whereby 'papal documents, even relatively recent ones, are grouped among works representing the order's oldest traditions and placed on a par with them'.⁴³ Councils too, under the presidency of the pope, added to the documents which authenticated tradition. As Giles said at Lateran V: 'Through the illumination of Councils and the Holy Spirit, breezes blow, and the dead eyes of the Church revive and receive light'.⁴⁴ In this, Giles was articulating commonplace views. So,

39 'Hi tibi morbi, haec tibi vulnera sananda sunt, Maxime Pontifex [...] sed tua (ita mihi, ita non parum multis visum) gratissima humanitate fore aliquando, uti meliorem in statum reformaretur Christiana respublica sed nec omnino desperarim, si adniti volueris, et tuae isti humanitati, lenitati, facilitati, aliquid supercilii, aliquid rigoris, nonnihil poenarum admiscere', della Mirandola, pp. 68 and 69.

40 Giles of Viterbo, 'Inaugural Oration', p. 290.

41 Tommaso Inghirami, 'Pro Julio II Pont. Max. Funebris Oratio', p. 103; McManamon, p. 53.

42 'In synodis quoniam solita plerumque est mater ecclesiae salubria remedia providere', Giovanni Battista de Gargiis, Mansi, 853D.

43 O'Malley, *Giles of Viterbo*, p. 166.

44 Giles of Viterbo, 'Inaugural Oration', p. 287.



when it came to formulating their reform decrees, the prelates of Lateran V hearkened back not only to early Church documents but to the decrees of popes and Councils from across the centuries. The principal reform decrees of sessions 9 and 10 of the Council, for example, called on decrees of Popes Alexander III, John XXII, Boniface VIII and Clement V as well as those of the Councils of Lateran III, Vienne and Constance.⁴⁵ It was indeed incumbent on anyone proposing a reform program that they tie themselves to the threads of authenticated tradition over the centuries. The sources for doing so were so extensive, however, that contest over what constituted fidelity to tradition was almost inevitable even among those committed to reform. As will be seen below, such contests were part of the snares that entangled the principal reform document of Paul III's pontificate.

Farnese and Reform before his Pontificate

In the cultural milieu that surrounded Alessandro Farnese during his time as cardinal, therefore, reform was portrayed as integral to the papal role and it was to be achieved by restoring ancient Church practice. As I will indicate shortly, when he became pope, Farnese took this responsibility seriously. But how much of his reform action sprang from his own religious convictions, his own belief that to be authentic the Church needed reform? This is an important question in attempting to understand the conceptions he was bringing to reform planning and to his assessment of the program that was ultimately laid before him by his reform Commission.

Much of the historical work on Paul III to date has proposed that, in his early forties, while still a cardinal, there was a personal reform in Farnese's life that was followed by a commitment to institutional reform as demonstrated initially in his participation at the Lateran Council and then the implementation of that Council's reforms through a Synod in his diocese of Parma. Pastor, for example, said that Farnese ceased his relationship with his mistress in 1513 as part of a process of personal reform that had been underway for at least four years.⁴⁶ Pastor went on to say:

The first sign that a moral change had taken place in Farnese was disclosed by the way in which he administered the diocese of Parma, conferred upon him by Julius II at the end of March 1509. As his Vicar-General he

45 Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 1, pp. 614-634.

46 Pastor, Vol. XI, p. 20.



appointed a very conscientious man, Bartolomeo Guidiccioni, in whom, as in his superior, more serious principles had taken the place of the careless laxity. Cardinal Farnese threw himself heartily into the work of the Lateran Council at the opening of which he had the honour of representing the pope. In order to give effect to the decrees of that assembly, Farnese held in 1516 a visitation of his diocese, at that time a rare example of ecclesiastical energy. In 1519 he instituted a diocesan Synod at which new constitutions for reform of the clergy were introduced and some old ones made more stringent. In June 1519 the cardinal, hitherto only in deacon's orders, sought priestly ordination [...]. There is trustworthy evidence that from that time onwards his moral conduct was without reproach.⁴⁷

Pastor does not indicate what this evidence is, nor do other scholars who repeat the same assertions including, most recently and somewhat surprisingly, O'Malley who says:

In his younger days as a cardinal, Alessandro Farnese had behaved like many of his peers and begot three sons and a daughter. In 1512, however, he broke with his mistress, was ordained a priest six years later, and then undertook in his diocese of Parma an implementation of the reform decrees of the Fifth Lateran Council. From that point forward he became part of the small reform party in the curia.⁴⁸

A close look at the evidence available from this period in Farnese's life can lead to different conclusions about a change in his moral and religious behaviour. With regard to his mistress, as mentioned earlier, Farnese continued to have close ties with a number of Silvia Ruffini's family throughout his time as cardinal and pope, including visiting them and staying with them on breaks from Rome. He granted financial favours to some and bestowed Church office on others. He also financially supported Silvia throughout his pontificate. This is consistent with the loyalty and gratitude that marked Farnese's relationships. It is quite possible and even likely, therefore, that Farnese maintained at least a friendship with Silvia and saw her from time to time throughout his life. There is no evidence one way or another that

47 Pastor, Vol. XI, p. 21. Capasso lists the same events and makes the same connections, *Paolo III*, Vol. 1, p. 54, as does Giovanni Drei, *I Farnese: grandezza e decadenza di una dinastia italiana*, p. 13. Cantimori says that Farnese abandoned his 'worldly life' while still a cardinal and drew close to a Camaldolese like spirituality, Delio Cantimori, 'L'Italia e il Papato' in *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento e altri scritti*, p. 523.

48 O'Malley, *Trent: What happened at the Council*, p. 60.

he ceased his sexual relationship with her while he was a cardinal. It seems probable that that dimension of the relationship did not continue into his pontificate for if it had, the way Rome worked, there would have been references to it in contemporary letters or pasquinades and there seem to be none.

Farnese was ordained priest on 26 June 1519 and then ordained bishop on 2 July 1519. While noting the scholarship on a supposed spiritual and moral change, Cristina Cecchinelli has drawn attention to the fact that the ordinations enabled Farnese to take up the office of Cardinal-Bishop of Tusculum (Frascati), a post that was canonically only open to a cardinal who was a bishop.⁴⁹ Added to this, I note that the official appointment of Farnese to Tusculum was made on 15 June 1519, thirteen days after the death of the previous incumbent, Philippe de Luxembourg.⁵⁰ Given that it would have been at least nine days before news of the death reached Rome from France, there would have been four days at most between advice of the death and Farnese's subsequent appointment.⁵¹ While a mix of motivations is possible, then, it is evident that Farnese's ordinations enabled his swift appropriation of the vacant Tusculum office.⁵²

Turning to Farnese's attitude to institutional reform while a cardinal, the first indication we have is from his participation in the Lateran Council. On the opening day of the Council, 3 May 1512, immediately after reading the pope's address, Farnese gave an address of his own on how he saw the role of the Council. It is notable for its brevity, around 360 words, and for its generality.⁵³ After praising Pope Julius for calling the Council, Farnese exhorts the Fathers to work in harmony for the common good and for the Council to be a means for the extirpation of heresy, the calming of conflict among nations and laying the ground for a campaign against the infidels. In a typically humanist observation arising from a concern for the way things fare in public perception and historical estimation, he describes the Council as 'the greatest ornament of our times'.⁵⁴ He then joins the voices seeking a return to the past, saying that the Council 'will

49 Cristina Cecchinelli, 'Un sinodo del Cardinale Alessandro Farnese a Parma (1519)', *Cristianesimo nella Storia*, 24 (2003), p. 311.

50 Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica*, p. 58.

51 Of course the documents could have been drawn up in advance if it was known that de Luxembourg was dying. For courier journey times from France to Rome see E. John B. Allen, *Post and Courier Service in the Diplomacy of Early Modern Europe*, pp. 80-82.

52 As detailed in Chapter 1, n. 19, Farnese continued to accumulate prestigious and lucrative offices throughout his time as cardinal.

53 The Latin text of Farnese's address in BAV, Mss. Chigiani, I. III. 89; Consistorialia Raph. Riarii, Tom. II, De Concilio, fols. 46r-47r is reproduced in Minnich, 'Concepts of Reform', pp. 238-239.

54 'maximum ornamentum horum temporum nostrorum', *Ibid.*, p. 239.

also be an effective remedy for the correction of moral conduct and for the restoration of ancient beneficial traditions'.⁵⁵ He does not mention specific areas for reform, in fact he does not use the word reform at all. While he attended all sessions of the Council, it is not known if he made any other intervention.

In common with a number of other Lateran Fathers, both known reformers and some not regarded as such, Cardinal Farnese held a Synod in his principal diocese of Parma to implement the decrees of the Council.⁵⁶ Having been granted Parma in 1509, he did not visit the diocese until late 1515 when he stayed for around a month.⁵⁷ He did place an able Vicar there in Bartolomeo Guidiccioni and maintained regular contact with him. He also supported Guidiccioni in the reform of monasteries and convents.⁵⁸ Together they arranged a Synod which was held from 6 to 7 November 1519. This brief gathering of local clergy largely considered and approved pre-drafted constitutions governing clerical responsibilities, morals and public comportment.⁵⁹ The constitutions called on Lateran V and previous Councils in framing regulations around the examination of candidates for ordination, the recitation of the divine office, proper celebration of the sacraments, care of sacred vessels, appropriate clerical dress, and avoidance of frequenting public places that might give rise to scandal. Also reaffirmed were prohibitions on immoral behaviour such as blasphemy, concubinage and sodomy. Interestingly, while exhorting clerical diligence in benefices with the *cura animarum*, the Synod specifically allowed the accumulation of multiple benefices as long as celebration of the divine office in each was assured.⁶⁰ After a thorough analysis of the process and outcomes of the Synod, Cecchinelli concludes that among its primary motivations was the confirmation of the jurisdictional powers of the non-resident bishop,

55 'erit etiam efficacissimum remedium ad emendationem morum et ad restaurationem bonorum institutorum antiquorum', *Ibid.*, p. 239.

56 Of those not otherwise known to be reformers, the absentee bishop, Paris de Grassi, held a Synod in his diocese of Pesaro in 1519, see Jennifer Mara DeSilva, 'The Absentee Bishop in Residence', p. 98; Giulio de' Medici (later Pope Clement VII) held a synod in Florence in 1517 which he did not attend, see Richard C. Trexler, *Religion in Social Context in Europe and America 1200-1700*, p. 35; and Antonio Maria Del Monte held a Synod in his diocese of Pavia in 1518, see Cristina Cecchinelli, 'Un sinodo del Cardinale Alessandro Farnese a Parma (1519)', p. 306.

57 Cristina Cecchinelli, 'Agli esordi del potere Farnesiano a Parma: Il Cardinale Alessandro Farnese Vescovo-Amministratore della diocesi (1509-1534)', p. 99.

58 Cristina Cecchinelli, 'Bartolomeo Guidiccioni vicario del Cardinale Alessandro Farnese e il governo della diocesi Parmense (1509-1528)', pp. 527-564.

59 Cristina Cecchinelli, 'Un sinodo del Cardinale Alessandro Farnese a Parma (1519)', pp. 297-326.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 314.



Farnese.⁶¹ A letter of the cardinal to Guidiccioni in 1525 in relation to the reform of convents lends support to this assessment. In it Farnese refers to an attached Brief of Clement VII 'in regard to the reform of nuns in the city of Parma which it seems to our assessment that you must implement with such diligence that this form of religious life can be assured by us to be fully satisfactory in conduct but, above all, that you seek to uphold the jurisdiction of the altar and our honour'.⁶²

Overall, there is no reliable evidence to indicate that Alessandro Farnese underwent a spiritual and moral change during his time as cardinal or that he was actively a reformer. In addition to the matters considered above, there is no evidence that he was exploring the forms of spiritual renewal or the doctrinal and institutional questions that were occupying reformers like the *spirituali*. It seems more likely that he was sensitive to how the Church and its hierarchy appeared on the stage of Christendom and thus he saw it as a matter of the honour of the Church and himself as one of its princes to conform to certain standards and to be seen to be in favour of reforms which were, thanks to the rhetoric of reform, culturally mainstream.

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61 Ibid., p. 326.

62 'questo breve sopra la reformatione de le moniche de la città de Parma ne è parso per questa nostra significavi lo debiate exeguire con tal diligentia che quella vita resti di noi ben satisfacta ma sopra tutto cerchiate preservare la jurisdictione de la mensa et l'honore nostro', Letter of Alessandro Farnese to Bartolomeo Guidiccioni, 13 January 1525, ASPr, Comune, b. 4397, fasc. 7, unpaginated.

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4. The *Consilium* and Reform Constrained

Abstract

In 1535, Paul III set up a reform Commission composed of outstanding Churchmen and tasked them with producing a comprehensive reform program. Their program, the *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia*, was long on condemnatory rhetoric but, grounded in tradition, short on practical steps forward. It lacked engagement of cultural issues, especially those which promoted enhancement of Church and family honour through the accrual of benefices. Indeed, acting on the *Consilium* would have dismantled pathways to honour and created social unrest in a fragile period when Rome was under external threat. While Paul brought in other prelates to work with the Commissioners, overall no viable ways forward emerged.

Keywords: Reform Commission, *Consilium*; benefice system; practical rationality

On his ascent to the papal throne Alessandro Farnese began to play out the role according to the script that had been imparted to him. This included declaring himself for reform and a Council. Consistent with his usual inclination, he began with caution, seeking advice, consensus and support. While he was like his immediate predecessors in exercising a monarchic papacy, he valued advice and preferred to take people with him in his decisions. Thus, in late 1534, he sent out legates to consult the European princes and to bring them on board in holding a Council. Meantime, he set up a preliminary Commission for ‘the reform of morals’ consisting of three cardinals.¹ A little over three months later the new pope gave this group the admonition that in their reform work they should ‘consider well the circumstances of the

1 The Consistory record is: ‘Romae die veneris 20 novembris 1534 fuit consistorium in loco consueto [...]. Dedit negotium Sanctitas Sua tribus Reverendissimis Dominis quod morum reformationem: Senensi (Piccolomini), Sancti Severini (Sanseverini), et Cesis (Cesi)’, ASV, Arch. Concist., Acta Misc., Reg. 8, fol. 4r.

times'.² In other words, reform should match aspiration with what was actually doable given the present realities.³

Paul was also aware that attempting to achieve the reform advice he needed with a group of existing insiders was unlikely to be sufficient. So he began to bring upright, reform-minded men to Rome to advise him on how to chart the reform course in more depth. The men that Paul called to the task were logical choices: outstanding in reputation and intellect and most of them long experienced in ecclesial office or in relations with the curia. When fully gathered, the group consisted of Gasparo Contarini (Venetian patrician, diplomat and scholar), Gian Pietro Carafa (former Archbishop of Brindisi, papal diplomat and co-founder of the Theatines), Reginald Pole (English noble, diplomat and scholar), Jacopo Sadoletto (Bishop of Carpentras and former curialist), Gianmatteo Giberti (Bishop of Verona and former head of the Datary), Girolamo Aleandro (Archbishop of Brindisi and papal diplomat), Tommaso Badia (papal theologian, Master of the Sacred Palace), Federico Fregoso (Archbishop of Salerno), and Gregorio Cortese (Abbot of San Giorgio in Venice). Most of these men were linked through personal and mutual friendships that went back many years. Contarini, who had many friends from his days at the University of Padua, also became close to Pole who went to study there in the 1520s. Giberti and Sadoletto had become friends when they frequented the circle of Angelo Colocci in Rome of which Farnese had been part.⁴ During the Sack of Rome in 1527, Carafa fled to Venice and there got to know Contarini and Pole.⁵ They met with like-minded others in Cortese's Priory of San Giorgio. Both in Rome and in Venice, some had been part of the Oratory of Divine Love, a society which met for prayer, dialogue on the scriptures, frequent confession and communion, and outreach to the poor.⁶ Most were dedicated humanists who saw a congruence between classical concepts of *amicitia* as a means to deepening virtue and the Christian vocation to love one another.⁷ They

2 'renuntiavit Dominis Reverendissimis quae egerat in congregatione Dominorum quibus datum erat negotium morum ac reformationis ut temporis conditioni consuleretur', Consistory of 3 March 1535, ASV, Arch. Concist., Acta Misc., Reg. 8, fol. 14r.

3 On no cited grounds, Jedin has a harsher view, seeing the comment as a hint to the group that it did not need to accomplish much. Jedin, Vol. 1, p. 422.

4 M.A. Tucker, 'Gian Matteo Giberti, Papal Politician and Catholic Reformer', p. 26.

5 Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience*, p. 29.

6 Tucker, 'Gian Matteo Giberti, Papal Politician and Catholic Reformer [continued]', pp. 266-267; Adriano Prosperi, *Tra Evangelismo e Controriforma: G. M. Giberti (1495-1543)*, p. 46.

7 Constance Furey, 'The Communication of Friendship: Gasparo Contarini's Letters to Hermits at Camaldoli', p. 73.



regarded Aristotle's *philia* in the same light as the Christian *caritas*.⁸ The principal focus of their friendships, then, was attaining union together in God. This they pursued through conversation, letters and sharing of treatises, particularly seeking dialogue on their own literary products. Some of these treatises addressed reform or Protestant Reformation issues. Contarini had been strongly influenced in his youth by his friends Paolo Giustiniani and Vincenzo Querini who had written the reform treatise *Libellus ad Leonem X*. Among his own many works, Contarini had written *De officii episcopi* on the model of a good bishop.⁹ Carafa wrote a memorial on heresy and reform to Clement VII.¹⁰ Pole attempted to bolster the Church in a tract against the English Reformation, commonly known as *De Unitate*, in which he particularly addressed the proper role and primacy of the papacy.¹¹

Contarini, Pole, Sadoletto, Fregoso, Cortese and Giberti were also part of the loose association of *spirituali*, so they were bonded in their pursuit of an understanding of justification by faith that would be faithful to Church teaching but provide a bridge to the Protestants and a means for their irenic reintegration into the Church.¹² This was not so of Carafa who, in his memorial to Pope Clement, had shown harsh and uncompromising views on the means to reform and 'the infection of Lutheran heresy'.¹³ Nevertheless, Carafa's personal probity and commitment to reform were valued by the others and Giberti, who had undertaken many reform efforts in his diocese of Verona, had called on Carafa's collaboration in that process. Sadoletto was another who had practical reform efforts within his experience, although not as rigorous, in his diocese of Carpentras. Thus, the group of Commissioners had within it high intellectual capacity, practical experience in diplomacy and curial administration, as well as the experience of reform challenges at the diocesan level. One thing it did not have was expertise in canon law. Pope Paul had wanted to include his long-time friend and Vicar in

8 See J.B. Ross, 'Gasparo Contarini and his Friends', p. 197 and Stephen Bowd, 'Swarming with Hermits: Religious Friendship in Renaissance Italy, 1490-1540', p. 29.

9 Gasparo Contarini, 'De officio episcopi', pp. 401-31.

10 Gian Pietro Carafa, 'De Lutheranorum haeresi reprimenda et ecclesia reformanda ad Clementem VII', *C.T.*, Vol. XII, pp. 67-77 and English translation in Elisabeth Gleason, *Reform Thought in Sixteenth Century Italy*, pp. 57-80.

11 The full title is *Reginaldi Poli Cardinalis Brittanni pro ecclesiasticae unitatis defensione, Libri quattor*, (Rome: Antonium Bladum, c. 1537). English translation by J.G. Dwyer, *Pole's Defence of the Unity of the Church*.

12 For a useful summary of the *spirituali* positions and of the current state of scholarship into their network, see Camilla Russell, 'Religious Reforming Currents in Sixteenth-Century Italy: The *Spirituali* and the Tridentine Debates over Church Reform', pp. 457-475.

13 Carafa, 'De Lutheranorum haeresi', in Gleason, *Reform Thought*, p. 58.



Parma, Bartolomeo Guidiccioni, who had a strong canonical background, but Guidiccioni declined.

In fact, most of those who accepted the call had been tempted to decline and needed persuasion. This seems partly because they were enmeshed in satisfying roles and locales that they did not want to sacrifice and partly because they were aware of the difficulty of the task for outsiders to the current curia. Sadoletto's view of reform prospects has already been mentioned and he told Contarini that, despite the honour, the thought of coming to Rome was totally inimical to him when he weighed it against the freedom of mind and tranquillity of his current 'blessed life'.¹⁴ Contarini himself was initially quite confused and hesitant to accept the accompanying offer of a cardinal's hat until he was convinced that it was a call by God.¹⁵ Reginald Pole was hurting deeply over the course of events in his native England and anxious about the danger his family was in from Henry VIII.¹⁶ He much preferred the life in his country retreats where he could attempt to influence affairs at home, explore the interior journey of faith, and dialogue with his *spirituali* friends. His response to Paul's bestowal of the red hat was 'how did you find me hiding in a corner?'¹⁷ Giberti was concerned at being taken away from the reforming work he was already undertaking in Verona.¹⁸

Contarini arrived in Rome in September 1535 and the others in October and November 1536. Contarini was initially given the freedom to proceed at his own pace. He did so according to his own preference to study relevant literature and to prepare a reasoned, persuasive case. He did not spend time

14 'Hoc novum quod tu de honore meo atque ornamentis cogitans id agis ac moliris quo nil meis rationibus inveniri potest inimicitius. Ego enim vitam beatam in libertate animi et in tranquillitate eisque agendis et suscipiendis rebus quae e libera nostra voluntate dependant positam esse duco', Letter of Jacopo Sadoletto to Gasparo Contarini, 13 March 1536, in Jacobi Sadoleti, *Opera quae extant omnia*, p. 218. See also Douglas, *Jacopo Sadoletto 1477-1547: Humanist and Reformer*, p. 97.

15 'Io non so se per questa assumptione mia al cardinalato. Vostro Signore Reverendissima se debbi congratulare meco, over io cum essa: imperochè son certissimo che quella ne ha preso molto maggior apiacere che io, al quale in verità questa inexpecta nova ha aportato nelli primi giorni almeno più presto confusione di animo che allegrezza, per molte ragione, ma pur considerandi il tuto, io mi son risoluto che la sii stata una vocatione de Idio', Letter of Gasparo Contarini to Ercole Gonzaga, 29 May 1535, in the collection of Walter Friedensburg, ed., 'Der Briefwechsel Gasparo Contarini's mit Ercole Gonzaga nebst einem Briefe Giovanni Pietro Carafa's', p. 164.

16 Pole's mother and brother were eventually executed by Henry. Once Pole was in Rome he convinced the pope to back him in a legation to England that was secretly aimed at fomenting an uprising against Henry. See Thomas F. Mayer, *Reginald Pole: Prince and Prophet*, p. 62.

17 Letter of Reginald Pole to Paul III, c. 27 July 1536, in Mayer, *Correspondence of Reginald Pole*, no. 111, p. 107.

18 Douglas, p. 101.



building coalitions or testing out ideas among key players in the curia. After a year of study in Rome, he then fell into a period of melancholy, a condition he was subject to throughout his life.¹⁹ Characteristic of the mode of interaction between the *spirituali*, Pole intended to assist Contarini through this trying time by writing a tract he wanted to call *De animi tristitia*. But he never completed it, due to the heat.²⁰

The pace picked up late in 1536 as Paul had issued a Bull calling for the Council to convene at Mantua in May 1537.²¹ The Commission of Nine gathered in Rome and was urged by the pope to expedite the work of reform.²² In doing this Paul was following what he had seen effected before by Pope Julius prior to Lateran V.²³ Like his predecessor, Paul was intent on keeping reform firmly under his control, leaving the Council to matters of doctrine and concord.

The Commission began its meetings in November 1536 with a fire and brimstone address by Sadoletto about the depths to which the Church had sunk, the wickedness of men who had led her there, and the opportunity of the Commissioners to help her restore her ancient dignity.²⁴ The contents of the Commission's subsequent meetings have not been preserved but the timespan of the Commissioners' work, taking into account the distractions of Christmas and *Carnevale*, shows that the document they were composing was unlikely to have been the product of investigation or debate with curial officers, rather of study of theological and reform tracts and discussion between the members.²⁵ As noted earlier, there was an array of reform documents on which they could have drawn reaching back over the last century. The Commission's focus on tradition is consistent with these documents, but the only evidence of direct use of any of them is in the adoption of some of the strident language of the *Libellus ad Leonem X*. Contarini had been close to its authors, Querini and Giustiniani, and they were also known to most of the others. Some of the style of the Commission's document is also similar to Carafa's memorial to Pope Clement.

19 Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini*, p. 137.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 138.

21 The Bull *Ad Dominici Gregis Curam* was proclaimed on 2 June 1536, *C.T.*, Vol. IV, pp. 2-6.

22 Pastor, Vol. XI, p. 158.

23 Jedin, Vol. 1, p. 127.

24 For the text of this address see *C.T.*, Vol. IV, pp. 108-19. A summary is in Douglas, pp. 101-103.

25 That this was the case is supported by a report of Aleandro on the presentation of the document in which he said that it was drawn 'partly from theology and partly from the holy canons' ('*quas partim ex theologia, partim e sacris canonibus deprompteramus*'), transcription in Walter Friedensburg, ed., *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, p. 262. See below p. 110 for a fuller reference to this report.

In December 1536 Paul gave the Commission added status by making cardinals of Carafa, Pole and Sadoletto.²⁶ In another two months their report was ready. The Commission's *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia* was meant to give Paul the analysis and pathways needed to effect reform. It was presented to the pope and a congregation of twelve cardinals in the *Camera di Papagallo* on 9 March 1537.²⁷ Some historians have called it a remarkable document: Pastor says it was 'a notable landmark in the Church's history';²⁸ Jedin says that 'with unheard-of boldness the document opened the offensive for the reform movement with a blow against the citadel of the Roman curia' and contained 'incisive proposals for reform of the curial system';²⁹ and Olin says that the report 'provided an authoritative analysis and program, raised the banner of reform in Rome, and helped prepare the way for eventual correction and improvement'.³⁰ Rather, the *Consilium* can be better seen as largely traversing the same ground that so many reform orations and memorials had done before it. Constrained by 'the eternal yesterday' of tradition, the document, admittedly with a severity of language, takes the ancient track, trying to point the way backwards. In this it did not take the circuitous route recommended by Sadoletto even though he was a member of the Commission.³¹ In its first words the report identifies the parlous state of the Church, what the aim of reform is, and who is to undertake the major reform work. Addressing Paul directly the Commissioners say:

For the spirit of God, by whom the powers of heaven were made firm, as the prophet says, has decided to restore through you the Church of Christ, which is tottering, and in truth, about to collapse headlong into ruin, to support her ruinous fabric by your hand, to lift her to her former eminence and bring her back to her pristine beauty.³²

26 Pole's elevation was also aimed at raising his standing in his dealings with Henry VIII. Other requirements of honour and political obligation led Paul to raise seven others to the Sacred College at the same time, including a relative, Niccolò Caetani, the French Ambassador, Charles Hémard de Denonville, and one of the Borgia family, Lodovico.

27 The full title is 'Consilium delectorum cardinalium et aliorum praelatorum de emendanda ecclesia S.D.N. Paulo III iubente conscriptum et exhibitum'. The Latin text is in *C.T.*, Vol. XII, pp. 131-145. The English version quoted here is that in Elisabeth G. Gleason, ed., *Reform Thought in Sixteenth Century Italy*, pp. 85-100. Henceforth cited as *Consilium*.

28 Pastor, Vol. XI, p. 172.

29 Jedin, Vol. 1, pp. 426 and 425.

30 John C. Olin, *Catholic Reform: From Cardinal Ximenes to the Council of Trent 1495-1563*, p. 21.

31 A separate report by Sadoletto was also presented but its contents are regrettably unknown. See Douglas, p. 107.

32 *Consilium*, p. 85.



The themes of decline, the remedy of restoration and the absolute reliance on papal will and action are repeated throughout the report. But before they listed the various ills, the Commissioners made one departure from recent reform documents by laying the source of the ills at an exaggerated concept of papal power. They said that, out of cunning and flattery in the courts of previous popes:

teachers appeared who taught that the pope was lord of all benefices. Thus, since a lord legally can sell what is his own, it necessarily follows that the pope cannot be guilty of simony, because the will of the pope, whatever it may be, is the rule governing his decisions and actions [...]. From this source, just as from the Trojan horse, very many abuses and grave ills have invaded the Church of God.³³

This challenge to papal absolutism was part of the attempt by the Commissioners to point the Church back to a more pristine age. But it was a highly risky move in terms of the reception of the *Consilium* to which I will return later.

The document goes on to enumerate the ‘serious ills’ and ‘pernicious diseases’ afflicting Christ’s Body and especially the court of Rome. The list of these afflictions is extensive. It includes: a preponderance of ignorant and unworthy priests, the failure of clerics to take up residence where office requires the care of souls, the accumulation of incompatible benefices, trafficking in benefices and spiritual graces through all sorts of legalistic tricks and dispensations, turning the goods and revenues of the Church into private property, bishops appointing relatives as coadjutors who will thus become heirs, allowing monastic orders to fall into a deplorable condition, scandalous behaviour in convents, failing to deal with hate and enmity in Roman society, and teaching impiety to young men at universities.³⁴

The Commissioners’ language of condemnation is severe and uncompromising: ‘from this cause stem countless scandals and contempt of the clergy’; ‘for this reason respect for divine worship is not only diminished, but well-nigh extinct’; ‘may Your Holiness realise the results of the teaching of flatterers’; ‘another abuse was invented by the same cunning’; ‘another great and insufferable abuse by which the entire Christian people are scandalised’; ‘the usage which now prevails brings dishonour to the Holy See and confusion to the people’; ‘alas to such an extent does this destructive vice prevail in the Church of God’.³⁵

33 Ibid., pp. 85-86.

34 Ibid., pp. 88-95.

35 Ibid., pp. 88-97.

The fundamental remedy proposed for all these ills is for the Church to revive tradition and to follow its primary obligation to 'observe the laws which our ancestors wanted to be sacred and whose authority they called venerable and divine'.³⁶ The task and means of achieving this is given almost entirely to the fiat of the pope: 'Your Holiness should not permit [...]'; 'these abuses should be done away with'; 'another abuse which must be completely eradicated [...]'; 'we think that all these abuses must be corrected'; 'we beseech Your Holiness by the blood of Christ, through which he redeemed his Church, washing her with this same blood: do away with these stains'.³⁷ Of course, cardinals and bishops were enjoined to assist the pope in carrying out his will, for example worthy prelates were to oversee ordinations.³⁸ But most of these recommendations added little of practical weight.³⁹ Some even edged into the realm of the fanciful, thus the proposal that to address the hate and enmity in Rome 'some cardinals most suitable for this task, especially native Romans, should be appointed to settle all quarrels and reconcile citizens with each other'.⁴⁰

The only eyewitness testimony of what happened in the congregation after Contarini read the *Consilium* and part of Sadoletto's document is from a report by Girolamo Aleandro.⁴¹ According to Aleandro, the pope asked him to lead off in discussion of the document. But he respectfully declined, suggesting that the lead should be given to one of the cardinals present.⁴² Aleandro says that he went on to say: 'if the most reverend lords should notice in them (the *Consilium* articles) anything which should be changed, added, or shortened or even explained, or which in any way offended their ears, they should bring it up: for we were prepared to render an account of our words and opinions, which we had drawn partly from theology and partly from the holy canons'.⁴³ Aleandro tried to hand over to Cardinal

36 Ibid., p. 87.

37 Ibid., pp. 88-95.

38 Ibid., p. 88.

39 There was a recommendation which may at first sight seem to have had practical merit, namely for all cardinals to be given an equal income in order not to rely on benefices (ibid., p. 92). But this ignored the levels of ecclesial rank between the cardinals and the levels of rank in their lineage.

40 *Consilium*, p. 99.

41 A transcription of Aleandro's report is in Walter Friedensburg, ed., *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, pp. 260-263.

42 Jedin, Vol. 1, p. 426, says that this was because Aleandro was piqued at not being made a cardinal in the last creation. Douglas, p. 107, agrees saying that this had 'embittered' Aleandro who played up his own part in the consistory, thus his report is to be treated with caution.

43 'Quodsi Reverendissimi domini in illis animadverterent esse aliquod immutandum, addendum vel minuendum vel etiam aliquot pacto offenderet eorum aures,

Cesi but Cesi said he had nothing to offer. Not one of the cardinals spoke, silence hung in the air, and no discussion was held except as to whether the document should be copied.⁴⁴ Even if Aleandro is not to be relied upon, whatever happened it is clear that it was little. Paul directed that the report be printed, that the cardinals consult their advisers, and then they would return to the matters. There was a further discussion two weeks later which the Modense ambassador, Filippo Rodi, summed up this way: 'Today the 23rd a congregation was held in which there was much discussion of reform but no conclusion of any type was reached'.⁴⁵ By this time, resistance to the *Consilium* was in full swing.

The resistance of the cardinals and curia to the *Consilium* has long been seen as arising primarily from their financial attachments and entrenched privilege.⁴⁶ I suggest rather that these are relevant but subordinate to the overarching concept of honour. If the swathe of admonitions of the *Consilium* were heeded, the capacity of the pope and cardinals to live with honour would have evaporated: the honour of their rank in the Church, the honour of their houses, the honour of their home states, and the honour of all those connected and reliant on them. It was not only these aspects of honour for each of them that were threatened, but also their collective honour as a College and the collective honour of Rome, site of the new *Imperium* and the Golden Age.

Interestingly, the *Consilium*, for all its strident condemnation, did not say a word about the lifestyle of the pope, cardinals and bishops and, while it did condemn greed and turning Church office into private property, it did not directly challenge the principle of Church office bringing with it honour that needed to be maintained. Thus it recommended that the income

illud adducerent: nos enim esse paratos reddere rationem nostrorum dictorum et sententiarum, quas partim ex theologia, partim e sacris canonibus deprompseramus', Girolamo Aleandro, p. 262.

44 Jedin, Vol. 1, p. 426, accepts that there was silence and Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini*, p. 143, says there was no discussion.

45 'Hoggi che sono li xxiii s'è fatta una congregatione nella quale s'è parlata gran pezzo della reforma, ma non s'è però conchiuso cosa alcuna', Report of Filippo Rodi to Duke of Ferrara, 23 March 1537, ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 36, c. 233-VI, fol. 19, 1.

46 Thus Jedin, when talking about some of the privileges of the cardinals, says 'It was too much to expect them to forego of their own accord so great an advantage', Vol. 1, p. 443; Pastor, speaking of the work of the reformers, refers to their 'labours now so long retarded in consequence of the silent, unswerving, and persevering opposition of those whose interest it was to maintain the *status quo*', Vol. XI, p. 193; Gleason says 'Neither Pope Paul III nor the majority of cardinals contemplated giving up lucrative financial arrangements which benefited them and their families and dependents', 'Catholic Reformation, Counter-Reformation and Papal Reform in the Sixteenth Century', p. 325.



sources of cardinals be overhauled but in such a way that ‘the cardinals can live respectably in accordance with their dignity’ and that most should live in Rome since ‘in this way the cardinals, besides discharging their duties, would enhance the grandeur of your court’.⁴⁷ For the Commissioners the pope’s honour was integral to their endeavours: ‘we are deeply concerned with the honour and glory of Your Holiness and especially with the renewal of the Church of Christ’.⁴⁸

Yet almost everything the *Consilium* proposed undercut the means to honour. As indicated in Chapter 1, the system of trading in benefices and offices yielded prestigious titles, jurisdictions and social networks. As the benefices and offices accumulated, further possibilities for honour also accumulated. The finances that came from the benefices and offices enabled the magnificence which confirmed and enhanced the honour of rank. Magnificence also brought honour and income to one’s *familia* and to a host of artisans and merchants who were at the core of the Roman economy.⁴⁹

Pope Paul’s silence is not surprising. The *Consilium* gave him nowhere to go. It left reform measures almost entirely to his fiat and contained no recognition of how antithetical its ‘sweep all the ills away’ process would be to the culture of honour and to the financial state of the Church and that of Rome, finances which he literally could not afford to compromise given the clear and present threat of the Ottoman advance.

Moreover, the report questioned the extent of the pope’s power. In an age that still felt the shadow of conciliarism and with the pope therefore being exalted not only as the *Princeps Apostolorum* but as the *Princeps* of a renewed *Imperium*, this was a very risky tack to take and one that is revealing of the intellectual and cultural space from which the Commissioners were operating. It was a defensible argument as there had been debates about the pope’s power over benefices throughout the Middle Ages.⁵⁰ But it was

47 *Consilium*, p. 93.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 87.

49 Gigliola Fragnito emphasises this link: ‘The economy of the city of Rome depended in great measure on their [the cardinals’] magnificent lifestyle and their building activities, whether in palace construction, the upkeep and embellishment of religious buildings, or building new churches, schools, and oratories. The concentration of commerce in foodstuffs and textiles (leading sectors of the Roman economy) in the neighbourhoods of Ponte, Borgo, and Parione, where most members of the Curia lived, reflects this close dependence, further confirmed in papal constitutions aimed at protecting merchants and craftsmen from insolvent cardinals. Furthermore, the charitable activities in which the cardinals invested a sizeable part of their incomes played an important role in containing social tensions.’ ‘Cardinals Courts in Sixteenth-Century Rome’, p. 48.

50 See Kenneth Pennington, ‘The Canonists and Pluralism in the Thirteenth Century’, pp. 35–48.

an unnecessary move and one that opened the likelihood of attack on the very ground on which all reform documents had to stand, namely tradition. It was unnecessary because the Commissioners proposed quite a sufficient basis for reform in citing the divine authority of ancient laws. There was an array of such laws to be called upon.⁵¹ To bring in an extra ground of exaggerated papal power was simply not strategic in the midst of a culture of papal absolutism buttressed by a strong strand of theological tradition and a humanist fusion of ancient glory with papal eminence.

The key revelation in this is that the Commissioners were not trying to be strategic in any sense. As humanists they believed in the inherent power of rhetoric and sound argument to persuade. They also believed in their calling as part of a prophetic moment in the history of the Church, one often foreshadowed by the papal preachers, a moment that would move forward inexorably under the dynamic of grace if only the pope would put his hand to the plough that they were indicating to him. As Contarini said in a letter to a Benedictine friend: 'I think we should not lose hope that God's grace will overflow where transgression once abounded'.⁵² The ramifications they foresaw were in the spiritual domain, the impact on the temporal was not their concern, that impact would necessarily be beneficial as the spiritual remedies flowed over. Paul, however, was grounded in the temporal, he was looking for something that would directly consider the circumstances of the times.

But constancy was a characteristic of Paul III's honour. He had given the most ardent reformers their chance and found that they had not only come up short but were likely to fuel resistance. But he had said that he would undertake reform and, at that stage, the Council was also on the horizon so reform needed to be well in hand before it began. For all the elevation of papal authority, he had shown over many years that his preference was to take advice and move forward with the backing of key actors.⁵³ Thus, his

51 In regard to benefices, some of these rulings from popes and Councils, along with the conditions for dispensations, are mentioned in Chapter 1. Other rulings frequently called on were those of Pope Urban II and the Council of Piacenza in 1095 which forbade the holding of more than one benefice and the reaffirmation by Alexander III at the Third Lateran Council in 1179 which called on traditional understandings of the obligation of the care of souls. See Pennington, p. 37.

52 'quocirca non desperandum censeo ibi abundaturam esse dei gratiam ubi delictum abundavit', Letter of Gasparo Contarini to Isidoro Chiari, 23 July 1537, in *Regesten und Briefe des Cardinals Gasparo Contarini*, p. 278.

53 Richard Douglas goes even further in his observation that: 'Those who claim to find the principle and practice of despotism in the government of the Renaissance Church should reconsider the reign of Paul III and the debate over the issues of reform, reunion, and the Council.

next step was to bring the reformers into direct dialogue with a cross-section of cardinals, those who were willing to pursue reform and those resistant, and task them to sort things through in the hope that viable and broadly acceptable proposals might emerge.

Thus began a series of new Commissions whose tortuous and ultimately fruitless progress further illustrates the constraints which tradition placed on reform endeavour. In late April 1537 Paul established a Commission of four cardinals to examine the functioning of the Datary and how it might be reformed. The Datary had two main functions: the distribution of offices and the granting of papal favours or dispensations. Both involved the payment of fees called compositions. Some of these fees were fixed, others were negotiated according to the supplicant's capacity to pay.⁵⁴ The Cardinal Commissioners were Carafa and Contarini from the *Consilium* group and Girolamo Ghinucci and Jacopo Simonetta who were not supporters of the *Consilium*. The work of this group moved slowly, not least because its members were frequently in profound dispute, but also because the Council was twice prorogued. The Commission was eventually enlarged in early 1539 to include Tommaso Campeggio, Alessandro Cesarini, Domenico Cupis and Niccolò Ridolfi, none of whom were *Consilium* supporters. The group's scope was also broadened to consider other parts of the curia: the Penitentiary, the Courts of Justice, the Rota, and the Cancellaria. The Commission members and their assistants functioned largely as camps of the *Consilium* authors and those resistant to them. The resisters were by no means all opposed to reform but rather the *Consilium* version of it. Indeed, the most significant blows to the *Consilium* authors were laid by those who had credibility as supporting reform of some kind. These men took on the *Consilium* authors in their own field, writing tracts appealing to tradition as the *sine qua non* of any reform and accusing the *Consilium* authors of departing from tradition.

The tussle over the Datary's compositions was typical of the tract and counter-tract way of proceeding. Before the Commission's expansion, Contarini and Carafa brought in their *Consilium* colleagues Badia and Aleandro and together they submitted a new tract to the pope, basically saying that all compositions constituted simony and should be done away with.⁵⁵ Ghinucci and Simonetta brought in Tommaso Campeggio, Bishop of

The fortunes of the pope's second Commission and its memorial (the *Consilium*) offer a revealing instance not of papal absolutism but rather of its opposite', p. 109.

54 Peter Partner, *Renaissance Rome*, p. 59.

55 'Consilium quattor delectorum a Paulo III super reformatione S.R. ecclesiae', written by Contarini, Carafa, Badia and Aleandro, presented 24 September 1537, in *C.T.*, Vol. IV, pp. 208-215.



Feltre and canon lawyer, and Dionigi Loreri, General of the Servite Order. In Loreri's tract, he admitted that there were abuses of compositions and that these should be dealt with firmly.⁵⁶ Thus, a *pretium* or fee for a papal grant or dispensation was not permissible. But compositions in themselves were valid if they involved merely a *stipendium*, an offering for work done, namely the hearing of the petition and the processing of necessary documents. He said that this understanding was part of the tradition that stemmed from the early Fathers, had been approved by Pope Gregory the Great, and confirmed by recent authorities such as Scotus, Aquinas and Bonaventure. He noted instances where the Datary made no charges to the poor and where the rich had been denied requests if they were not in accord with the law. This was consistent with traditional teaching. For good measure, Loreri said that should Pope Paul find against the evident tradition underlying compositions, the Lutherans would trumpet his confirmation of their claims and history would record the matter thus: 'Holy Paul III, a most noble man, adorned with every type of virtue, with experience of all matters, renowned finally for his most holy mind [...] openly committed the crime of simony for three whole years, but after he had been advised by learned and holy men he, led by penitence, suppressed these payments as simoniacal; but, led by avarice, he did not deign to make restitution'.⁵⁷ So, as well as alerting Paul to the danger of feeding accusations of simony, Loreri also rounded off by neatly pointing to the accusations Paul would face from multiple benefice holders who were already raising the question of restitution: since they had paid money in good faith to obtain a benefice, if it was to be taken away from them would they be reimbursed for their initial outlay and compensated for their loss of income? Clearly this was a consideration for the pope in the light of his honour and already prevailing financial demands.

Campeggio offered two tracts, the second of which was at the request of the pope. It presented arguments for the legitimacy and reasonableness of compositions drawing on scripture, past Councils and the opinions of

56 Dionigi Loreri, 'Fratris Dionysii ord. Servorum postea cardinalis S. Marcelli ad Paulum III Optimum Pontificem Maximum compositionum defensio', *C.T.*, Vol. XII, pp. 215-226.

57 'Sanctus Paulus III vir nobilissimus, omnium virtutum genere undequaque decorus, cunctarum rerum experientia, mente denique sanctissima clarus,[...] annis tribus integris simoniae facinus palam commisit, verum a viris doctissimis sanctis simisque praeadamonitus poenitentia ductus compositiones ceu simoniacas est execratus; ductus avaritia tamen, quae tali subripuit via, restituere non curavit', Dionigi Loreri, 'Fratris Dionigi ord. Servorum postea cardinalis S. Marcelli ad Paulum III Optimum Pontificem Maximum compositionum defensio', 1537, *C.T.*, Vol. IV, p. 224.

Doctors of the Church.⁵⁸ While adeptly skating over the issue of the extent of papal power, he put forward the view that compositions did not constitute the provision of spiritual graces for temporal reward:

Your Holiness, though he is not the master of benefices, is nevertheless their dispenser and judge, and to these practices proceeds may be transferred, because of the fact that if, before he confers a benefice upon someone, he has arranged to subtract something from the profits for some just cause, it is not simony in the opinion of St. Thomas (II-II, Q. 100, Art. 4), as in the case of chapter [10], *Si propter* de rescript. [I 31] in the 6th. So when he gives someone the grace of regress and of reservation of proceeds, or something else which he does because of which composition has customarily been received, he will be able to keep the remaining part for himself for the support of his life, for helping the poor, for the repair of churches and for similar things, and he does not on that account make an exchange of spiritual matter with temporal; for he is not unaware that spiritual matter would be material unsuitable for buying and selling from the fact that it is not able to be matched to any earthly price, just as is said of wisdom, 'She is more precious than all riches: and all the things that are desired, are not to be compared with her' (Proverbs 3:15); but he bestows the spiritual at no cost, he receives temporal things (which even are owed by divine law) for the support of his life and for other necessities.⁵⁹

Campeggio further developed this line of the essential nature of offerings and the papal right to require them in sustaining the life of the Church by calling on statements of Augustine and Jerome and decrees of Lateran IV and the Council of Tours.⁶⁰

58 Tommaso Campeggio, 'De Compositionibus', *C.T.*, Vol. XII, pp. 157-159.

59 'Sanctitas Tua, etsi dominus non sit benefitorum, est tamen dispensator et arbiter, ad quos usus eorum proventus transferri possint; propter quod si, antequam alicui beneficitium conferat, ordinavit aliquid subtrahere de fructibus ex aliqua iusta causa, non est simonia ex sententia S. Thomae 2, 2, q. 100, art. 4, ut in casu c. [10] *Si propter* de rescript. [I 31] in VI°. Sic cum alicui facit gratiam regressus et reservationis fructuum aut aliud quid agit, propter quod compositio recipi consuevit, poterit partem reddituum sibi reservare pro vitae suae subsidio, pro subveniendi pauperibus, pro reparatione ecclesiarum et similibus, nec propterea facit commutationem rei spiritualis cum temporalis; nec enim ignorat, rem spiritualem materiam fore indebitam emptionis et venditionis ex eo, quod non potest terreno aliquo pretio compensari, sicut de sapientia dicitur *Proverb. 3 [15]: Pretiosior est cunctis opibus, et omnia, quae desiderantur, huic non valent comparari; sed gratis impartitur spirituale, pro subsidio vitae et aliis necessariis recipit temporalia, (quae etiam iure divino debentur)*, Campeggio, 'De Compositionibus', *C.T.*, Vol. XII, pp. 157-158.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 158.



On his own initiative, Bartolomeo Guidiccioni also weighed in with a memorial that, again, admitted abuses but said that the remedy was simply the application of existing canon law.⁶¹ He cited numerous canons that regulated the allocation of benefices, the granting of dispensations and punishment for abuses. He also pointed out some of the benefits of the system of limited plural holdings in terms of income for impoverished clerics and the fact that often a Vicar for a benefice holder may provide a better *cura animarum* than a holder who may be burdened with other duties or simply not be as gifted. He did not give the example of his own tenure in Parma on behalf of Cardinal Farnese, but this would not have been lost on his readers. Nor was the fact that Guidiccioni was long known as being on the side of reform as well as being held in high esteem and gratitude by the pope. Playing to his knowledge of Paul, Guidiccioni also sounded a warning about the dangers of trying to eradicate admitted evils in one fell swoop:

Sometimes it is more advantageous to tolerate transgression and abuse than to remove them, if greater transgressions are plausibly feared, as is clear in brothels and prostitutes. For, as Augustine says in his book *On Order*, ‘banish the prostitutes from human affairs and you upset everything with lust’ etc.; the wish to eradicate inveterate wickedness has ever been destructive and dangerous. And this plainly would result if the pope, wishing to cure those ills by which they say the Church is vexed, should revoke all the reservations and dispensations which have thus far been created and brought about, or if he should abstain from reservations and dispensations, wishing to take precautions so that they do not creep further and that the contagions do not pass to his successors [...]. These things must be properly considered, lest perhaps they, wishing to remove the bandage, tie a knot in it. Not easily are to be changed those things which have been preserved for so long a time.⁶²

61 ‘S.D.N. Paulo III Batholomaeus Guidiccionus de ecclesia et emendatione ministrorum eorumque abusu per generale Concilium facienda’, *C.T.*, Vol. XII, pp. 226-256.

62 ‘Quandoque tamen utilius scandalum et abusus toleratur quam tollitur, ut, si maiora scandala verisimiliter formidentur, patet in lupanaribus et meretricibus. Nam, ut inquit Augustinus in libro de ordine: ‘Et aufer meretrices de rebus humanis, turbaveris omnia libidinibus’ etc.; iniquitatem inveteratam velle evellere perniciosum et periculosum semper fuit. Quod sane eveniret, sive papa, curare volens morbos, quibus ecclesiam laborare dicunt, omnes reservationes et dispensationes hactenus factas et effectum sortitas revocaret, sive, precavere volens, ne ultra serperent, ne contagia in posteris transmitterent, a reservationibus et dispensationibus abstinere [...]. Mature consideranda sunt, ne forte volentes ansam solvere nodum ligarent. Non facile mutanda sunt, que tanto tempore servata fuerunt,’ Guidiccioni, *C.T.*, Vol. XII, p. 231.

One could wonder how the *Consilium* might have been different if Guidicioni had accepted the pope's invitation to be part of the Commission. He would undoubtedly have had an ally in Sadoletto. This and his intimate knowledge of Paul and his knowledge of the law would certainly have brought a different shape to the Commission's product. Even so, his memorial shows that his approach, while more cautious, was still, like other reformers, to address present issues with remedies from the past. In framing the *Consilium*, the Commissioners would at least have had to confront more forthrightly the contested nature of tradition.

Further memorials followed from the colleges of curial officials which also cited law and precedent in favour of the status quo, the latter forming part of 'immemorial custom'.⁶³ While both sides were wielding the same weapon of tradition, the *Consilium* authors were in a minority, lacked canonical ammunition and were less adroit.

The *Consilium* Authors' Participation in the Benefice System

Before taking a deeper look at the intellectual space from which the *Consilium* issued and why it was inadequate to stimulating a process of reform action, some further context can be added by looking at the *Consilium* authors' own participation in the benefice system. It is a significant indication of how embedded the use of benefices as property was in the ecclesiastical culture that the majority of the *Consilium* authors were active participants in the prevailing system either before or during their reform work. While none of them enriched themselves or lived lives of luxury, most were conscious of the social expectations of their rank and of the expectations of their relatives and used Church property and revenues to meet those expectations.

Perhaps most discordant with the reforms proposed in the *Consilium* was that some of the Commissioners held dioceses without residing in them and/or arranged for dioceses to be granted to relatives. This was so of Contarini, Fregoso, Cortese, Aleandro and Sadoletto. Contarini accepted the diocese of Belluno in October 1536 but never resided there. It was a small Venetian see that brought him 1000 ducats per year.⁶⁴ He appointed

63 For examples of these finely crafted objections to reform see 'Obiectiones abbreviatorum adversus reformationis articulos ipsos tangentes', *C.T.*, Vol. IV, pp. 471-475 which appeals to 'consuetudinem immemorabilem' (p. 474) and 'Obiectiones scriptorium Apostolicorum adversus reformationis articulos', *C.T.*, Vol. IV, pp. 476-479. The strength of curial resistance is outlined by Jedin, Vol. 1, pp. 436-438.

64 Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini*, p. 179.



an able Vicar with whom he kept in close contact, but only ever visited the diocese for two months in 1538. He ensured that, upon his death in 1542, Belluno passed to his nephew, Giulio, illegitimate son of his brother.⁶⁵ This inheritance required Contarini to obtain papal dispensations for both illegitimacy and youth.⁶⁶ In 1539 he also accepted administration of the see of Salisbury which, because of the political situation, he could not expect to reside in.⁶⁷ Fregoso held two dioceses, Salerno and Gubbio, simultaneously from 1508, but gave up Salerno in 1533.⁶⁸ Cortese accepted the diocese of Urbino in 1542 but never resided there.⁶⁹ Aleandro held only one diocese, Brindisi, from 1524 but lived there little and in 1541 resigned it in favour of his nephew, Francesco.⁷⁰ Sadoletto lived as much as possible in his single diocese of Carpentras but made his nephew, Paolo, coadjutor with the right of succession.⁷¹ In this arrangement, he sought Contarini's intercession on Paolo's behalf just three months after presentation of the *Consilium*.⁷²

Each of these men and several others of the *Consilium* authors held other benefices or incomes from benefices. From April 1536, Contarini drew a pension from the diocese of Pamplona worth 800 scudi per year and from other Spanish benefices he drew upwards of 700 ducats.⁷³ Cortese's early income is not clear but, in 1544, he obtained several benefices and later resigned them in favour of his relative Iacopo Cortese di Giovanni.⁷⁴ Aleandro had two benefices in Valencia worth 500 ducats per year and four lesser benefices.⁷⁵ Carafa rented out his Archdiocese of Chieti for at least two periods.⁷⁶ Sadoletto held ten benefices from 1513 and he also arranged

65 Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica*, p. 131.

66 Hallman, p. 119.

67 This was also a departure from the admonition in the *Consilium*: 'Thus a benefice in Spain or Britain should not be conferred on an Italian', p. 89. See below on the income Contarini drew from Spanish benefices.

68 Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica*, p. 289; Giampiero Brunelli, 'Federigo Fregoso'.

69 Marvin W. Anderson, 'Gregorio Cortese and Roman Catholic Reform', p. 91; Gigliola Fragnito, 'Gregorio Cortese', *DBI*, Vol. 29, 1983.

70 Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica*, p. 142; Giuseppe Alberigo, 'Girolamo Aleandro'.

71 Douglas, pp. 68-69.

72 See letter of Jacopo Sadoletto to Gasparo Contarini, 17 June 1537, in Giambattista Morandi, *Monumenti di varia letteratura tratti dai manoscritti di Monsignor Lodovico Beccadelli*, Vol. 1, Part 2, pp. 61-62.

73 Gigliola Fragnito, *Gasparo Contarini: Un Magistrato al servizio della Cristianità*, p. 40; Hallman, p. 57.

74 Fragnito, 'Gregorio Cortese'.

75 Hallman, pp. 17 and 41.

76 *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

benefices throughout Carpentras and beyond for his brothers, nephews and cousins.⁷⁷ Fregoso had two lesser benefices.⁷⁸

Both Contarini and Carafa also had pensions from the Datary, the body they were trying to overhaul for abusive practices. Contarini had a pension of 260 scudi per month from 1535 which rose to 500 scudi in 1541.⁷⁹ Carafa had a pension of 100 scudi from 1535.⁸⁰ The officials of the Datary were not backward in pointing out the effect of reforms on the Commissioners: 'Gentlemen see what you are doing. You have 700 scudi a month from this office and you want to ruin it, thus the damage will be yours'.⁸¹

The difference in practice among the *Consilium* authors is worth noting. During the reign of Paul III, Badia, Carafa and Pole held no dioceses or benefices and, in fact, Badia and Pole declined offers of dioceses.⁸² Giberti divested himself of benefices other than his diocese. It is not evident from the sources what their differences in perspectives were. For those who did utilise the benefice system, given their modest to frugal lifestyles, the most likely common denominator is the pressure from relatives and the driving force of honour to respond to that pressure.⁸³ In a letter to Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga about succession to the diocese of Fano to which Gonzaga held a *regressus*, Contarini shows how he conceived the obligations of nomination:

To me it seems that in filling this diocese Your Reverence ought to consider assigning it first of all to a person who will satisfy the honour of God and the needs of the city, after which, as much as possible, also to satisfy the family of the deceased bishop and his predecessor (the Gheri family) who committed it to your trust solely in the interests of the family.⁸⁴

77 Douglas, pp. 22 and 69-70; Hallman, p. 39.

78 Hallman, p. 41.

79 Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini*, p. 181.

80 Hallman, p. 187, n. 199.

81 'Signori, vedete quello che fate. Voi havete 700 scudi al mese sopra questo ufficio e lo volete rovinare, et il danno sarà il vostro', recounted in a letter of Giovan Girolamo de Rossi to the Duke of Ferrara, 2 December 1537, ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 36, c. 239-I, fol. 43, 2.

82 For Badia, see Giuseppe Alberigo, 'Tommaso Badia'. For Pole see Jedin, p. 440. Yet Pole cried poor and asked Contarini a number of times to intercede with Paul for greater allowances. See Pole's letter of 24 March 1537 in Rawdon Brown, ed., *Calendar of State papers and manuscripts existing in the archives and collections of Venice 1534-1554*, Vol. V, p. 56.

83 Douglas, for example, says that Jacopo Sadoletto was beset by 'a drove of kinsman whose needs in turn only increased Jacopo's dependency on papal provision', p. 215.

84 'A me pare che Vostra Reverendissima in el collocare questo episcopato deve advertire di darlo a persona nella quale sii prima satisfacto a l'honor de Dio et al bisogno di quella città, dopo che, quanto si può le, si satisfacti etiam alla familia dello episcopato morto et di quel primo,

Fulfilling that trust, then, would involve an assurance that the new incumbent would continue an income stream from the diocese to the Gheri family.

This is not to say that the *Consilium* authors had double standards or were hypocritical in relation to reform. Rather, they were acting in accord with cultural imperatives that were widely taken for granted and their perception of a lack of alternatives in conforming to them until reform came to fruition. The difference in practice among the authors, though, may indicate that a few may not have felt that the cultural imperatives were irresistible, that, in particular, there was some flexibility in the interpretation of the demands of honour.

The Intellectual Space of Reform Discourse

Despite their experience in diplomacy, curial administration and diocesan reform, the role that the *Consilium* authors saw for themselves was not one of detailed action planning. Rather it was to lay out the urgent need for restorative change, to identify the principal areas for change, and to indicate the overall shape of the restoration. Having done that, action then belonged to the pope. For them action was a phase that did not need great planning, partly because the primary task was to remove excrescences and partly because the one to act was the Vicar of Christ who would be aided by the power of Christ once he set out on the task. As mentioned earlier, the *Consilium* authors saw their work as giving voice to a prophetic moment in the history of the Church. This is evident in the way that the *Consilium* addresses the pope in its opening: 'For the spirit of God, by whom the powers of heaven were made firm, as the prophet says, has decided to restore through you the Church of Christ'⁸⁵ and in its conclusion:

These, then, Holy Father, are the points which we have drawn up at present as far as we are able and in which in our opinion must be changed. But you in your goodness and wisdom will judge everything better. If we did not do justice to these matters, which are much greater than our ability to deal with them, at least we have satisfied our consciences. We have the greatest hope that during your reign we shall see the Church of

il quale lo commise a la fede di Vostra Signore solamente per respecto della sua famiglia', Letter of Gasparo Contarini to Ercole Gonzaga, 31 October 1537, in Friedensburg, p. 179.

⁸⁵ *Consilium*, p. 85.

God purified, beautiful as a dove, at peace and in harmony with herself, united in one body, remembering your name for ever [...]. Our hope is that you are truly chosen to restore to our hearts and actions the name of Christ which is forgotten by the nations and by us, the clergy, to heal our diseases, to lead the sheep of Christ to one fold and to turn away from us the wrath of God and the vengeance we deserve which is hanging over our heads and ready to fall on us.⁸⁶

The destination of a sacred past and the reliance on God's powerful accompaniment of the pope as change agent indicate that the *Consilium* authors, like most reformers, were operating in an intellectual space that necessarily limited the application of rational strategic responses to the current system and the abuses it fostered. As the discussion on tradition so far has shown, the sacralisation of the past in theology was buttressed by the humanist reverence for antiquity. This meant that the change objective and the process for reaching it preferred concepts of faith and tradition over other modes of planning and problem-solving. For the historian, this ecclesial domain of thinking and discourse is placed in stark relief by other contemporary intellectual domains which were swinging away from reliance on traditional notions in favour of what Max Weber called 'practical rationality'. By this, Weber meant facing challenges with a purely pragmatic, means-end approach, accepting present realities just as they are and confronting them by calculating the most effective means of achieving desired ends.⁸⁷ Two of the increasingly practically rationalised domains were architecture and urban planning of which the two subfields of military architecture and urban fortification are of particular relevance in the time of Paul III and worth touching on for a moment. For military planners and architects the development of siege warfare had changed everything. The use of siege cannon during the French invasion of Italy in 1494 had been devastating against defensive installations.⁸⁸ Confronted by the harshest of evidence, it was ineluctably clear that long-standing means of fortification were redundant and new means would have to be found without regard to prescriptions from antiquity. Around 1500 the esteemed military architect, Francesco di

86 Ibid., p. 99.

87 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and that the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 77 and 'The Social Psychology of the World Religions', in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, p. 293.

88 See Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military innovation and the rise of the West, 1500-1800*, pp. 9-12.



Giorgio, put it succinctly: ‘the ancients did not know our artillery’.⁸⁹ Guided by scientific discourse, mathematical calculation and testing of designs, there emerged new forms of defence like the radial city plan and the angle bastion. These innovations were outcomes of the growing rationalisation within military planning.⁹⁰

This meant that Paul III was presiding over two processes of response to contemporary problems operating in two quite different intellectual spaces. As mentioned earlier, Paul III’s preferred approach in meeting significant challenges was to call the best minds available together. Within a few weeks of his election and with feelings running high about the threat of Ottoman invasion, Paul called together some of the finest military architects, engineers and soldiers for a conference. This was the first of many such gatherings well into the 1540s.⁹¹ Over these years, the expert participants included Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, Galasso Alghisi, Giacomo Castriotto, Giovanni Mangone, and Francesco de Marchi.⁹² Michelangelo was also a participant on some occasions.⁹³ As a result of their expertise and the focus solely on the dimensions of the challenges and the materials available to meet them, these experts came up with fortifications and strategies that enhanced the radial plan. Their designs drew universal acclaim and were utilised throughout Europe for the next three centuries.⁹⁴

Like most of his contemporaries, Paul III was quite capable of participating in these differing spaces of discourse and planning without feeling any dissonance. In the ecclesial space he would not have thought of proposals that could not be justified in terms of tradition. At the same time, he was a man closely attuned to the practicalities of the times. At the military conferences, he could see that the proposals would meet the present needs and thus he authorised significant construction and expenditure to implement

89 ‘gli antichi non conobbero le nostre artigliere’, Francesco di Giorgio, *Trattato di architettura civile e militare di Francesco di Giorgio Martini*, p. 129.

90 Horst de la Croix, ‘Military Architecture and the Radial City Plan in Sixteenth Century Italy’, pp. 279 and 289.

91 See the notes on the conferences of 1542 and 1545 by Francesco Paolo Fiore in Christoph L. Frommel and Nicholas Adams, eds., *The Architectural Drawings of Antonio da Sangallo the Younger and his Circle*, Vol.1, *Fortifications, Machines, and Festival Architecture*, pp. 182-183.

92 Alberto Guglielmotti, *Storia delle fortificazioni nella spiaggia romana*, p. 329; de la Croix, p. 277.

93 For the conference of 1545 and the heated debate on fortifications for the Borgo between Michelangelo and Antonio da Sangallo see Guglielmotti, pp. 338-339 and Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Most Excellent, Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, pp. 391-392.

94 de la Croix, pp. 266 and 278.

the conference recommendations.⁹⁵ He could not see that with the reform Commission. In fact, the only intersection between the two gatherings was that the *Consilium* threatened sources of funding for the fortification expenditure.

The rhetoric of reform had a set of theological tropes and a particular prophetic tone, both tied to tradition, that placed severe constraints on forward planning. In some dimensions of Renaissance culture, progress could be made virtually unfettered by the past: architecture, urban planning, military strategy, and urban defence are examples of areas that faced significant challenges during Paul III's pontificate and where such challenges were overcome with creative, strategic thinking that quickly gained papal, curial and civic support. There is a striking difference between the outcomes of the military and defensive Commissions Paul established and the outcomes of the reform Commissions. The latter were burdened by the weight of tradition that inherently turned the Commissioners away from seeking pathways through present challenges by engaging the present on its own terms. 'Non enim nova facimus' said Giles of Viterbo to a reforming colleague.⁹⁶ They were not innovators; their solutions lay in the past. Those solutions would have undermined the culture of honour and thereby the social and economic fabric of Rome.

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95 The military and defensive conferences and Pope Paul's subsequent expenditures will be considered in further detail in the next chapter.

96 Quoted in O'Malley, 'Historical Thought and the Reform Crisis', p. 536.



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5. *Pax et Concordia* – Politics and Reform

Abstract

The challenges to peace and concord throughout Christendom weighed heavily on Paul III throughout his reign and limited his focus on reform. The texts of curial sermons, once again, reveal how the pursuit of *Pax et Concordia* was viewed culturally as integral to the papal role and its honour. The conflict of 1535-1538 between the Holy Roman Emperor and the French King and a text of Pope Paul reflecting on those events illustrate how sorely tested Paul felt. A 1536 speech of the Emperor, Charles V, also indicates the depth of enmity between him and Francis I. This enmity was an ongoing obstacle to a Council and to reform.

Keywords: peace, concord, Charles V, Francis I, Renaissance wars, Clement VII

For Renaissance popes the achievement of peace and concord was among the heaviest responsibilities of their leadership of Christendom. Peace meant Europe without war, without dissension between states, and without the threat of Turkish invasion. Concord was related in that it implied harmony of relations, but this was to flow from the unity of the flock of Christ under its one Shepherd. It thus required the extirpation of heresy and the universal acknowledgement of the supremacy of papal authority.

Already we have seen how the *Consilium* and subsequent reform proposals of the *spirituali* and their colleagues were hamstrung by their undermining of pathways to honour and by an attachment to tradition which prevented incremental innovative initiatives. A third weakness of the reform proposals was the failure to take into account pressing political realities that impinged on the pope. His sense of obligation in the face of those realities issued, once again, from social and theological expectations embedded in the culture that surrounded him.

Pax et Concordia in Council and Curial Orations

John O'Malley says: 'It is impossible to exaggerate how often the *Pax et Concordia* formula recurs in the sermons and orations at the court'.¹ There were multiple spurs to the orators for such frequent reference to peace and concord. Above all, peace was central to the story and message of Jesus and was considered to be part of his lasting legacy to the Church. Thus Flores, before the conclave that elected Leo X, urged the cardinals:

O most great Fathers, bestow a peacemaker, a shepherd, this is what Our Lord Jesus Christ advises you when in his final testament he gave us peace and left it with us, saying 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you' [John 14:27]. This is the peace that prevailed as Christ our sun was born and the angel sang 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will' [Luke 2:14]. In peace and concord he rejoices on high and is glorified in a marvellous way. 'The peacemakers', says the Lord, 'shall be called children of God' [Matthew 5:9].²

For the orators, this gift of peace was a restorative, part of the broader reform process, bringing humankind back to the natural order and enabling creation to reveal its true glory. So Flores went on to quote the Church Father, Gregory of Nazianzus: 'For as long as the sky, earth, and sea are at peace with each other and restfully preserve the bounds of their nature, and one does not rise up against the other, the world persists and shines forth in its beauty and honour'.³ This sentiment was expanded at the Lateran Council, with Christopher Marcellus locating the achievement of peace among the signs of a Golden Age. Thus, he urged Pope Julius to focus his endeavours 'so that concord flourishes, discord recedes and peace flows: true peace, holy peace, communal and perpetual peace [...] so that the abundant fruits of celestial goodness

1 O'Malley, *Praise and Blame*, p. 228.

2 'Sed pacificum [...] patres amplissimi date pastorem hoc est quod vos monet dominus noster Ihesus Christus dum ultimo eius testamento nobis pacem dedit atque reliquit dicens pacem meam do vobis pacem relinquo vobis. Haec est pax illa quae per angelum Christo sole nostro nascente extitit decantata dicentem gloria in excelsis deo et in terra pax hominibus bone voluntatis. Pace et concordia gaudet altissimus et per eam mirum in modum gloriatur. Pacifici dicit dominus filii dei vocabuntur', Flores, p. 12.

3 'Caelum terra et mare donec inter se in pace sunt et quiete nature sue terminos servant neque unus contra alterum surgit stat mundus et pulchritudine sui et decore prefulget', *Ibid.*, p. 13. McManamon, p. 51.

will be evident throughout the earth'.⁴ Cajetan also spoke of the coming of the heavenly Jerusalem in which the King of Peace bequeathes and bestows his peace.⁵

Concord was also seen as an overflow of divinity in the world, with humankind being caught up in the unity of the Trinity. At the Lateran Council Giles of Viterbo said: 'Certainly unity is called a mountain of God, because in the one essence of God there is also precisely one nature, and for us to realise that unity is not solitary nor sterile but possessed of the utmost fecundity'.⁶ Unity of faith, of course, involved the extirpation of heresy. The Lateran Council preceded Martin Luther, but later funeral and pre-conclave orators addressed the threat of discord sown by his teaching. So Carvajal, after his enumeration of heresies that past popes had been called on to counter, said that 'in our own time the Apostolic See, following the footsteps of our ancestors, has judged Martin Luther of the same impiety and of being a pertinacious heretic'.⁷ Adrian VI was praised by Vecerius for his efforts to punish the madness of Lutheranism,⁸ while Grana commended Clement VII for making the eradication of this current heresy one of his top priorities and thereby returning the faith to its pristine state.⁹

From the mid-fifteenth century at least, the praise of the state of peace and concord was accompanied by a plea for princes to cease conflict, not only to be in harmony with Christ's injunctions and gift, but so that they could join forces against the Ottoman Empire which was seen as continually seeking to overrun and dismember the Church.¹⁰ So Grana decried 'the Turkish Tyrant whose sword for so many years now has been wet with Christian blood'.¹¹ At the Lateran Council, Bernard II Zanni spoke passionately from experience of Ottoman ravages in his own diocese. Warning his fellow

4 'Adverte et provide ut in ea concordia vigeat, discordia recedat, pax subeat, pax vera, pax sancta, pax communis et perpetuis temporibus duratura ut [...] super universam terram uberrimos caelestis benignitatis pariat fructus', Christopher Marcellus, Mansi, 761E.

5 'Haec est illa Ierusalem, patres, in qua [...] rex pacificus pacem relinquit nobis, pacem suam dat nobis', Cajetan, Mansi, 723B.

6 Giles of Viterbo, *Inaugural Oration*, p. 287.

7 'nostra quoque tempestate sedes apostolica maiorum vestigiis insistent Martinum Lutherum eiusdem impietatis pertinacissimum sectatorem hereticum iudicavit', Carvajal, *Oratio de eligendo Summo Pontifice*, p. 6.

8 'Ob plectendam Luteranorum insaniam', Vecerius, p. 8.

9 'Duas sibi res Clemens in eo temporum statu maxime procurandus proposuit; alteram exstirpandae haeresis [...] de rebus fidei pristinum in statum communi consilio vindicandis', Grana, p. 273. McManamon, p. 49.

10 O'Malley, *Praise and Blame*, pp. 232-235.

11 'Turcarum Tyrannus, cuius ensis tot iam per annos christiano maduerat sanguine', Grana, p. 275.

prelates of the fate awaiting more of Christendom, like many orators, he painted the Turks as the sum of all fears:

Consider, Fathers, the present distress of Christ's faithful against whom the Turks are raging most cruelly. They snatch children from the embrace of their parents and infants from the breasts of their mothers, they violate wives in front of their husbands, they seize virgins from their mothers in malicious lust, they slaughter aged parents as useless before the very eyes of their children, they harness young men like oxen to the plough compelling them to turn the earth with the ploughshare. But what need is there to say more? No respect for woman is to be found among them, no tenderness for youth, no compassion for old age.¹²

Accordingly, in his Council oration, Giles told the assembled Fathers that Pope Julius 'implores the pacification of Christian princes and the direction of their arms against Muhammed, the public enemy of Christ.'¹³ In his own address at the Council, Cardinal Farnese repeated the general view that this final use of arms was the logical end point of a peace process: 'once the heresies have been destroyed, the civil wars of Christians have been calmed, and the civil evils and vices by which we are besieged have been repressed, we may take up against the enemies of the faith arms as useful and necessary as could be wished.'¹⁴

While the orators gave the princes a prime responsibility in the achievement of peace, they reserved the pre-eminent role of peacemaker to the pope. As Carvajal said: 'it is the Roman Pontiff who can broker peace

12 'Considerate, patres, praesentes aerumnas Christi fidelium in quos Turcas crudelissime desaeviunt, filios a complexum parentum, infantes ab matrum uberibus eripiunt, uxores in virorum conspectu violante, virgines e matrum amplexu in hostile libidinem rapiunt, senes parentes tamquam inutiles filiorum in oculis trucidant, juvenes sicuti boves aratro jungunt, et terram vomere vertere cogunt. Sed quid pluribus opus est? Nulla in eis reperitur feminei sexus reverentia, nulla puerilis aetatis pietas, nulla senectutis miseratio', Bernard II Zanni, *Mansi*, 705E.

13 Giles of Viterbo, *Inaugural Oration*, p. 295. Although usually referred to as the 'warrior pope', there was significant rhetoric and symbolism in Julius' time representing him as a broker of peace and his personal use of arms as ultimately means to peace. See Massimo Rospocher, *Il papa guerriero: Giulio II nello spazio pubblico europeo*, pp. 93-111.

14 'ut heresibus extinctis, sedatis intestinis Christianorum bellis, et intestinis prope malis et vitiis, quibus obsessi sumus repressis, contra fidei hostes non minus utilia et necessaria quam optata sumantur arma', Cardinal Farnese's address on the purposes of the Lateran Council, reproduced from BAV, Mss. Chigiani, I. III. 89: Consistorialia Raph. Riarii, Tom. II, De Concilio, fol. 46 in Minnich, 'Concepts of Reform Proposed at the Fifth Lateran Council', p. 238.

and concord'.¹⁵ So Flores beseeched the conclave cardinals to elect one of their number who would bring peace to the whole world through just rule: 'Such a man, who with justice would distribute and moderate the spiritual and the temporal. This is that distinguished virtue which enlarges a state with peace, for Isaiah says: "The work of justice shall be peace, and the service of justice, quietude and security forever"'.¹⁶ In line with this role, Alexis Celadoni, Bishop of Molfetta, urged the conclave cardinals to provide a successor to Pope Alexander who could bring peace between France and Spain and, later, Grana praised Clement VII for his untiring efforts to effect such a peace.¹⁷ At the Lateran Council, Stephen Teglatus, Archbishop of Patras and Bishop of Torcello, wrapped up the pope's obligation to undertake reform, achieve peace and concord and defeat the Turk in the same package which had become by now characteristic of most of the curial orators. Speaking directly to Leo X, he said:

Holy Father, who hold in yourself the fullness of power, a true reform throughout the earth will be preached, both in spiritual and temporal matters, once your decree is spread. Therefore, lay hold of the two-edged sword of divine power entrusted to you and command, order, enjoin that universal peace and cohesion prevail among Christians for at least ten years [...] and, as is fitting, launch now a campaign against the enemies of the faith since our enemy, like a ferocious dragon, rushes in haste to devour us.¹⁸

15 'Pontifex ad pacem et concordiam allicere potest', Carvajal, *Oratio de eligendo Summo Pontifice*, p. 10.

16 'Talem qui cum iustitia spiritualia et temporalia distribuat et moderet. Hec est illa insignis virtus que rempublicam cum pace auget "erit enim opera iustitie pax" inquit Isaias, "et cultus iustitie silentium et securitas usque in sempiternum"', Flores, p. 7.

17 'hinc duos clarissimos ac potentissimos reges, Christianorum regum primarios in quorum concordia et pace tota paene fidelium spes et infidelium calamitas vertitur', Alexis Celadoni, 'Oratio ad Sacrum Cardinalium Senatium Ingressum ad Novum Pontificem Eligendum', reproduced from BAV, Palat. IV, 1229, fol. 236r in McManamon, p. 67; 'reges deinde, ac principes per litteras, et nuncios est adhortatus, ut, depositis armis, sedatis discordiis, se ad christianam rempublicam sublevandam, quae multis cladibus debilitata, caput iam extollere, et sese erigere vix posset, converterent', Grana, p. 266.

18 'Pater sanctissime, qui plenitudinem potestatis in te habes, praedicabitur, et vera reformatio tam in spiritualibus quam in temporalibus, ubique terrarum tuo decreto diffuso fuerit. Arripe ergo gladium divine potestatis tibi traditum bis acutum, et iube, impera et manda ut pax universalis et colligatio per decennium inter Christianos et minus fiat [...] et expeditionem contra hostes fidei ut par est e vestigio obtineas: quandoquidem hostis noster, tamquam draco saevissimus, ad nos devorandos operatur et festinat', Stephen Teglatus, Mansi, 927B.

In an earlier session of the Council, Leo had already laid out in detail his efforts to bring peace between the princes and concluded by saying:

We omitted nothing, so far as lay in our power, to arrange and produce by our every effort that, once discord and disagreement of any kind had been removed, they [the princes] would wish eventually to return, in complete agreement, grace and love, to universal peace, harmony and union. In this way, further losses would not be inflicted on Christians from the hands of the savage ruler of the Turks or from other infidels.¹⁹

The curial orators of Farnese's time, then, including the cardinal himself, followed those who had gone before them in the quattrocento, embedding concepts of *Pax et Concordia* in the script for the papacy and often linking them with broader concepts of reform. The pope, therefore, was to be a bestower of peace, a broker of peace, a seeker of concord, a punisher of discord, all in all someone who would restore the ancient experience of the *Pax Romana* and take it to a new universal and spiritual height.

Summary of Events: Conflict and Threat 1535-1538

A summary of political events will help to contextualise the challenges and preoccupations for Pope Paul in playing out this demanding role during his pontificate. Here I will focus on the conflict between Francis I and Charles V and touch on the threat of the Ottoman advance to which I will give more detail in the next chapter. The two princes had been at enmity with each other before Paul's pontificate and continued thus unswayed for almost his entire reign. Francis ascended the throne of France in 1515. Charles assumed rule of the Netherlands and Franche Comté in the same year and became king of Castile and Aragon in 1516.²⁰ As leaders of the two major European dynasties, Valois and Hapsburg, with a history of conflict between their houses and with roughly equal resources at their disposal, tension and competitiveness between them was almost inevitable. The succession to the Holy Roman Empire was the springboard for open and ongoing conflict.

19 Pope Leo X in Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 1, p. 607.

20 The two major works of the respective reigns of these monarchs are R.J. Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior and Patron: The Reign of Francis I* and Karl Brandi, *The Emperor Charles V: The Growth of a Man and of a World-Empire*. As the English translation of Brandi does not include references, useful companions are Harald Kleinschmidt, *Charles V The World Emperor* and the recent monograph of Geoffrey Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*.

Both wanted the title for its honour, for the domains that went with it and for the role of temporal protector of the Church.²¹ When Charles was elected Holy Roman Emperor in 1519 Francis was deeply aggrieved and began to look for ways that he could raise himself above Charles.

The answer lay in Italy. The vulnerable Italian territories to which Francis could lay a dynastic claim offered power, wealth and honour as well as potential sway over the papacy and its decisions in both temporal and spiritual spheres.²² Charles also coveted Italian territory for the same ends and was given extra impetus towards them by imperialists in Spain and Italy who urged him to revive ancient concepts of a *monarchia universalis* in which the emperor would take over the Papal States and the pope would be reduced to a purely spiritual role. This, they argued, was especially needed as a counter to the Protestant revolt.²³ Although Charles never undertook a venture of these dimensions, he made it clear that he considered gaining territory in Italy as the jewel in the crown of his honour. Writing to two of his envoys in France, he said:

It seems to me that my present aim should be to fulfil my desire to find a place where I can win honour and reputation. To this end, it appears there is no alternative more convenient or suitable than going to Italy. I have decided therefore to cross the sea to Italy and to subordinate all else to this goal.²⁴

All-out conflict between Francis and Charles over Italian territory took place in the years 1521-1529, 1536-1538 and 1542-1544. The war that began in 1536 was sparked by the death of Duke Francesco Sforza of Milan at the beginning of November 1535. With no natural heir, the rulership of Milan was

21 Knecht, p. 165.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 176.

23 The attempts by imperially aligned Italian nobles and cardinals to press these ideas on Charles during Paul III's time is explored in depth in Elena Bonora's *Aspettando l'imperatore: Principi italiani tra il papa e Carlo V*. The influence of these people, who were basically enemies of Paul, should not be overplayed. Paul emphatically put down the revolts of Italian nobles, like the Colonna, whose hopes of imperial intervention turned out to be barren (see below p. 168). Among the cardinals, Paul's intractable enemy, Ercole Gonzaga, wrote of how few servants of the emperor there were in the College and bemoaned how powerless they were. See the letters of Gonzaga quoted in Pastor, Vol. XII, p. 183, n. 1.

24 Letter from Charles V to Gerard de Rye and Philibert of Orange, September 1528, in Charles Weiss, *Papiers d'Etat du Cardinal de Granvelle*, Vol. I, p. 429; translation in Martin Rady, *The Emperor Charles V*, p. 104. Margaret of Austria, aunt of Charles V, who with the mother of Francis, Louise of Savoy, brokered the Treaty of Cambrai, said that what was most precious to both princes was their honour. See William Bradford, ed., *The correspondence of the Emperor Charles V and his ambassadors at the courts of England and France*, p. 224.

vacant. Francis immediately proclaimed his second son, Henry, the rightful successor. Charles rejected the claim and sent troops and officials to Milan who took possession of the Duchy in his name.²⁵ As a result, Francis sent troops into Piedmont and Savoy to establish staging grounds for assaults on Milan. Charles responded by attacking French forces and throughout 1536 there were skirmishes and battles across the northern states of Italy.

To the dismay of Paul and Charles, Francis formed a treaty with the Ottomans in February 1536. In a galling use of terminology, this treaty proclaimed peace and concord between Francis and Sultan Suleiman and, although most of its provisions were around opening up trade in their domains, it committed both sides to refrain from taking captives from each other.²⁶ By September 1536 Charles had advanced further north, invading Provence and capturing the town of Aix. However, there this phase of the conflict began to peter out. French troops were reinforced, preventing the imperial troops from moving forward, and famine and dysentery began to diminish the imperial numbers, eventually felling 7000 men.²⁷ In mid-September Charles began a retreat, pulling back to Genoa from where he sailed to Spain. It was clear to all, though, that this cessation of conflict was a respite only.²⁸

The respite was no comfort to Pope Paul for, also in September, a more worrying threat began to take shape as Turkish forces set out from Constantinople towards the fortress of Clissa on the coast of Dalmatia. If Clissa fell, the way would be clear for the Turks to mount attacks on the Italian coastal areas of the March of Ancona and Romagna.²⁹ The news that reached the papal court was that this was the clear intention of Suleiman who, moreover, wanted to establish the seat of his Empire in Rome.³⁰ Amid rising fear throughout Italy, Paul appealed to Charles and Francis to make an enduring peace and unite their forces against the Turks. But the plea was in vain. Thus, the Ottoman advance continued unchallenged throughout early 1537. On 9 March, in an eleventh hour attempt to hold off the Turks,

25 See Michael Mallett and Christine Shaw, *The Italian Wars 1494-1559*, p. 229.

26 For a discussion of the Treaty see Kenneth Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)*, Vol. III, pp. 400-401.

27 For an account of this campaign see Mallett and Shaw, pp. 232-234 and Knecht pp. 333-341.

28 Mallett and Shaw, p. 234.

29 Christian troops were stationed at Clissa and it had been a Turkish target for several years. From before Paul's election, warnings had been sounded of the danger should Clissa be taken by the Turk: 'vi è facile traietto et breve sulla Italia et su quei porti della Italia che sono più vicini a Roma', Letter of Pier Paolo Vergerio to Pietro Carnesecchi, 22 July 1534, *Nuntiatuerberichte*, Vol. 1, p. 284.

30 Pastor, Vol. XI, p. 261. Fifteenth century predecessors of Suleiman saw their sovereignty as extending to Rome and the Holy Roman Empire and took to themselves the title of *Kayser-i Rum*. See Mustafa Soykut, *Italian Perceptions of the Ottomans*, p. 62.

3000 troops supplied by the pope and King Ferdinand, the emperor's brother, landed near Clissa. This was the same day that the *Consilium* was presented in consistory. Three days later the Christian troops were overrun, their commander was decapitated, and Clissa fell.³¹

Although Italian anxieties were at their height, an invasion of Italy did not materialise at once and not from Clissa. New fears were provoked when, in June, a fleet of 250 Ottoman galleys and other supply ships reached Valona in Albania, just across from the Apulia region in the heel of Italy.³² On reaching Valona the forces moved on quickly to the island of Corfu which they sacked. Then, in late July, the Ottoman Admiral, Barbarossa, led his men onto Italian soil in Apulia near Otranto in a swift and vicious attack. Several cities were sacked and numerous citizens were carried off into captivity. Within two weeks, though, Barbarossa unexpectedly withdrew. This could have been because the Apulia attack was either a diversion for other planned attacks that did not eventuate or an exploratory incursion by Suleiman to see if the French would come to the party and engage the imperial forces in the Po Valley.³³ Whatever the reason, no one in Rome believed that this was anything more than a winter hiatus. Indeed, word came from Venice to Rome that, come Spring, Suleiman would set out again for Italy with 300,000 horse and 500 galleys.³⁴

Accordingly, Paul continued on as before in seeking peace between France and the Empire. This he managed to do by bringing both Francis and Charles together in Nice, in May and June 1538, where he brokered a ten-year truce. Although it actually only lasted for four years, the truce was nevertheless a remarkable achievement in diplomacy. I will say more about this shortly.

Pope Paul and Peace

Perhaps the best document that shows how the demands of *Pax et Concordia* weighed upon Paul is a Bull of Indiction for the Council of Trent. Promulgated

31 Setton, p. 421.

32 Word reached Rome in mid-June of the Turkish approach to Valona: 'Si disse che Sua Santità ha havuto nuovi avisi così per la via d'Ancona come di Venetia della uscita di questa armata turchesca alli xvii del passato et che esso Signore Turco dovea venire verso Vallona con l'esercito pedestre', Report of Filippo Rodi to Duke of Ferrara, 21 June 1537, ASMO, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b.36, c. 233-VII, fol. 24, 2.

33 See Pastor, Vol. XI, p. 270; Capasso, *La politica di papa Paolo III*, Vol. I, p. 306; Setton, p. 431.

34 See the letter from the Doge and Senate to their ambassador in Rome, Marco Contarini, 24 November 1537, in Setton p. 128, note 130.



in May 1542, *Initio nostri huius Pontificatus* called the Council to begin in November of that year. In doing so, it restated some of the traditional conciliar rationale contained in the original Bull convoking a Council at Mantua but went way beyond the length and language of that earlier statement.³⁵ It is, in fact, a comprehensive statement of Paul's view of the interplay of the political and religious issues during his pontificate. It is both a catalogue of his priorities and an apologia for the eight years of his reign to that time.³⁶ Although it is a most formal document, written in the customary curial prose (*stilus curiae*), there is a consistency in the text with the complaints Paul made in his conversations with ambassadors.³⁷ His voice is clearly evident in the Bull's expression of the trials and frustrations of the complex state relations, conflicts and threats that he had encountered. The opening sentences are indicative of the tenor of the whole text:

At the beginning of this our pontificate, which, not for any merits of our own, but of its own great goodness, the providence of Almighty God hath committed unto us, already perceiving unto what troubled times, and unto how many embarrassments in almost all our affairs, our pastoral solicitude and watchfulness were called; we would fain indeed have remedied the evils wherewith the Christian Commonwealth had been long afflicted, and well-nigh overwhelmed; but we too, as men compassed with infirmity, felt our strength unequal to take upon us so heavy a burden. For, whereas we saw that peace was needful to free and preserve the Commonwealth from the many impending dangers, we found all replete with enmities and dissensions; and, above all, the princes, to whom God has entrusted well-nigh the whole direction of events, at enmity with each other. Whereas we deemed it necessary that there should be one fold and one shepherd for the Lord's flock in order to maintain the Christian religion in its integrity, and to confirm within us the hope of heavenly things, rather the unity of the Christian name was rent and well-nigh torn asunder by schisms, dissensions, heresies.³⁸

35 The Mantuan Bull, *Ad Dominici gregis curam*, of 1536 covers two and a half pages in *C.T.*, Vol. IV, pp. 3-5, while *Initio nostri huius Pontificatus* covers five pages. There was another brief Bull in 1537, *Benedictus Deus*, that both prorogued Mantua and called a Council at Piacenza in just over a page, *C.T.*, Vol. IV, pp. 136-137. A final Bull of 1544, *Laetare Hierusalem*, reconvoking Trent covers two and a half pages, *C.T.*, Vol. IV, pp. 385-387.

36 The Latin text of the Bull is in *C.T.*, Vol. IV, pp. 226-231. An English translation, which I will use here, is in *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent*, ed. by J. Waterworth, pp. 1-12.

37 For a catalogue and explanation of the formulae of the *stilus curiae*, see Thomas Frenz, *I Documenti Pontifici Nel Medioevo e Nell'Età Moderna*, pp. 40-47.

38 Pope Paul III, 'Initio nostri huius Pontificatus', in Waterworth, pp. 1-2.

Having begun here by nominating peace as a central healing force for the ills of the Church, Paul proceeds to mention peace either alone or with concord a further twenty times in the document, citing it as an essential good for Christendom or a pre-condition for the Council or, with resignation, an actual purpose of the Council given its elusiveness in all that has been done so far. In what has been done, he highlights his own role and unceasing efforts: ‘We, in the mean time, applied ourselves to that holy and most necessary work, the negotiation of peace; and this with all the zeal, the affection, and the earnestness of our soul’ and ‘For ourselves, we, as far as in us lay, have not, indeed herein omitted anything that was due from our pastoral office. And if there be any who interpret in any other sense our endeavours after peace, we are indeed grieved’.³⁹ He had no real need for concern, though, the genuineness of his endeavours was recognised widely. Thus, when word reached Rome in November 1537 that a truce had been struck between Charles and Francis, the ambassador for Urbino reported that: ‘What is clear to the whole of Rome is that the pope is beside himself with the news of the truce and the prospect of peace’.⁴⁰

Paul pursued peace with a suite of strategies: a steadfast neutrality, direct negotiation for peace with each of the two major princes, bringing both to the negotiating table, and the use of marriage as diplomacy. The conflict of 1535-1538 saw him utilise all of these strategies. A principle of neutrality underlay whatever he did. It was long a part of his own style to chart the course between competing figures and he had become adept at doing so. The fact that he had remained in favour with all the successors of Alexander VI, beginning with Alexander’s arch enemy Giuliano della Rovere, is testimony to his skill.⁴¹ He had also seen up close the political chaos of Clement VII’s reign as that pope flipped and flopped between alliances with France and Spain. Clement’s decision to join the anti-imperial League of Cognac in May 1526, allying the papacy with France, Florence, Milan and Venice, clearly contributed to Charles’ failure to restrain his troops as they made their way to Rome in 1527 where they mercilessly sacked the city and humiliated Clement.⁴² As well as the papal mission of achieving *Pax et Concordia* for the whole of Christendom, Paul could

39 Ibid., pp. 4 and 5.

40 ‘La cosa chiara a tutta Roma che il papa è rimasto attonito mezzo fuori di se con la nuova della tregua per il sospetto della pace’, Report of Giovan Maria della Porta to Duke of Urbino, 14 December 1537, ASF, Ducato di Urbino, Classe 1, filza 133, fol. 1107.

41 In fact, Farnese was one of Julius’ preferred companions in leisure time. See Christine Shaw, *Julius II: The Warrior Pope*, p. 179.

42 See Cecil H. Clough, ‘Clement VII and Francesco Maria Della Rovere, Duke of Urbino’, p. 102.

thus see that alliances could have dire consequences for Rome itself. In the case of France, there was the additional risk that a papal alliance with Charles would propel Francis into following the example of Henry VIII, taking France into schism and installing himself as leader of the Church in his territories.⁴³

Given their support for Farnese during the conclave, the French initially had expectations that, having won the tiara, Paul would now declare himself for France. But within days of his election and notwithstanding French offers of territory for his son, Pierluigi, Paul announced to the French Cardinals of Lorraine, Bourbon and Tournon that, as father of all, he would never choose between competing nations and would give his pastoral care to all alike.⁴⁴ Thereafter he never tired of repeating this stance. He summed it up in one of his conversations with Lorenzo Bragadin, the Venetian ambassador with whom he met frequently:

We wish to remain neutral and there is no one else in poor Italy who has done more to avoid destruction than us. And we proceed as do the hands of a man's body, that the right helps the left and the left the right, at the same time walking along a pathway that conserves the liberty of Italy and attempts to reach a destination together. I do not mean unduly bound together but communicating one with the other and together keeping in mind all that we hold dear that contributes to the common good.⁴⁵

Late in his reign, Paul claimed to the Modenese ambassador that he had always maintained that stance: 'We in our pontificate have always walked in the way of neutrality and will continue to walk in that way'.⁴⁶ In their

43 Pastor says that this was also the reason Paul refrained from excommunicating Francis when he began entering into agreements with the Ottomans. Pastor, Vol. XI, p. 265.

44 Pastor, Vol. XI, p. 219; Capasso, *La politica di papa Paolo III*, Vol. I, p. 75.

45 'Nui volemo restar neutrali et non ci restando nella povera Italia altri membri che non siano guasti che nuy, et nui facciamo come fanno le mani nel corpo del homo, che la destra aiuta la sinistra et la sinistra la dextra, camminando ad un camino di conserva la libertà de Italia et andando ad una fine intendendoci ben insieme, non dico de lega altramente ma comunicando uno all'altro et aricordandoci insieme tutto quello che extimemo che sii a proposito del ben commune', Report of Lorenzo Bragadin to the Venetian Senate, 2 November 1536, ASVe, Senato Secreta, Archivio Proprio Roma, b. 4, fol. 150v.

46 'Noi nel nostro pontificato havemo sempre camminato nella neutralitade et ci camminamo più.' Report of Bonifazio Ruggeri to Duke of Ferrara, 8 October 1548, ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 41, c. 248-XIV, fol. 11, 1.

reports, other ambassadors also concurred that this had been a hallmark of Paul's papacy.⁴⁷

The Enmity between Princes

As already seen in the opening paragraph of the Council Indiction, Paul was forthright in holding Charles and Francis to account for the state of Christendom, finding 'the princes to whom God has entrusted well-nigh the whole direction of events at enmity with each other'.⁴⁸ This perilous enmity spurred him to intercession with them: 'By letters, Nuncios and our Legates *a latere* selected from amongst our venerable brethren, did we very often strive to move them to lay aside their jealousies and animosities, to unite in strict alliance and holy friendship, and to succour the tottering cause of Christendom: for as it was to preserve this especially that God had bestowed on them their power'.⁴⁹

Paul saw their intractable animosity, even when not in open conflict, as unsettling Christendom, distracting from the Turkish and Protestant issues, delaying the Council and threatening Italian states and Rome itself. What he said in the Indiction he had been even more frank about in his interactions with ambassadors. Thus, as the Sultan's forces made for Clissa and Paul's pleas to Charles and Francis to make peace and join together for the protection of the Church once more went unheeded, Paul, in talking to Bragadin, branded both princes as 'barbarians' with whom one always needed to be on guard and have eyes wide open in dealing with.⁵⁰ Speaking of Charles, Paul said: 'We have made the upmost supplication, giving to the emperor every promise and every offer that could be made and sending him, as is said, *carte blanche* for whatever it takes to make peace in order to attend to Turkish affairs and respond to the evils befalling Italy'.⁵¹

47 See, for example, the report of Giovan Maria della Porta: 'Se vede che il papa non ha mai fatto un minimo uffitio non che gagliardo né persuadere il dominio a questa unione et scusasi di non l'haver fatto per non se partcipe della neutralità sua', 5 August 1537, ASF, Ducato di Urbino, Classe 1, filza 133, fol. 818.

48 Pope Paul III, 'Initio nostri huius Pontificatus', in Waterworth, p. 1.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 4

50 'Sono tuti dui barbari et la cosa è di tanta importanza che si deve avere grandissima consideratione et star bene con gli ochi aperti', Report of Lorenzo Bragadin to Venetian Senate, 19 November 1536, ASVe, Senato Secreta, Archivio Proprio Roma, b. 4, fol. 160r.

51 'Havemo fatto tutto quello che potemo supplicando et vi devemo ogni cosa sapiate che nui habbiamo fatte allo Imperatore tutte quelle promesse et tutte quelle offerte che si possono et mandatoli, come dir si suole carta bianca, per far questa pace ne è possibile che el si possi

Examining a visit by Charles to Rome, involving a speech he gave at the Vatican Palace, can be of value in attempting to understand how his conflict with Francis confronted Paul. It also has relevance for the attention Paul gave to reform. In June 1535, in a rare move against Turkish forces, Charles led a substantial naval expedition from Spain to the fortress of La Goletta on the Bay of Tunis where he had a major victory over the Turkish Admiral, Barbarossa.⁵² This enabled Charles to go on to Tunis which he took and freed thousands of Christians.⁵³ There was rejoicing throughout Europe and Paul himself led the singing of a *Te Deum* and a solemn Mass in Rome.⁵⁴

The jubilation became somewhat muted when Charles left Tunis and landed with his troops in Southern Italy to begin a gradual triumphant progress to the north. The prospect of the emperor's troops once again heading for Rome put the populace there in a state of unease. Accordingly, Paul was quick to try and shape events. He sent his son, Pierluigi, to Charles with an invitation to come to Rome as a guest and to celebrate there his victory over the Turk. While Charles accepted the invitation, he treated Pierluigi with little honour as Paul's stance of neutrality rankled with the emperor who felt that his recent successes on behalf of Christendom had more than earned him papal allegiance.⁵⁵ Paul, for his part, was not to be swayed especially as he was treating with many parties, including Francis, over the Council which he hoped to convoke within months.

Charles and his much feared troops entered Rome on 5 April 1536. It was a splendid and awesome procession which concluded without incident and with Charles kissing the feet of the pope.⁵⁶ The two leaders met initially for six hours and spoke often over the next two weeks, an unexpectedly

piegare, né si move ponte per le cose del Turco, anzi par, che si ralegrì del mal de Italia', Report of Lorenzo Bragadin to Venetian Senate, 30 November 1536, ASVe, Senato Secreta, Archivio Proprio Roma, b. 4, fol. 166r.

52 Kleinschmidt p. 162

53 The Pope's Secretary Ambrogio Ricalcati wrote from Rome to Pier Paolo Vergerio on 8 August 1535: 'Hiersera venne certa nova della vittoria felicissima contra Barbarossa et presa di Tunisi che fu alli 22 del passato [...] Sono liberati circa 20,000 schiavi christiani tra donne e homeni, morto n'è una infinità de Mori et Turchi', *Nuntiatürberichte*, Vol. 1, p. 473. For a detailed account of this campaign see Brandi, pp. 366-368.

54 Letter of Ricalcati to Vergerio, *Nuntiatürberichte*, Vol. 1, p. 474.

55 Pastor, Vol. XI, p. 236.

56 For a detailed description of the procession see the contemporary account, 'Ordine, Apparati et Cerimonie della Solenne Intrata di Carlo Quinto Imperatore sempre Aug. nella Città di Roma', in Forcella, pp. 39-50.

long period as Charles decided to stay for the Easter ceremonies. Out of their discussions came a final agreement for Paul to convoke a Council for May the following year.⁵⁷ On 17 April, simply on his own initiative, Charles gave an unscheduled speech before the pope, cardinals and many other diplomats in the *Sala dei Paramenti*.⁵⁸ Delivered in Spanish for an hour and a half, the speech was an oratorical tour de force that left its audience both taken aback and marvelling.⁵⁹ It was a recounting of events in the emperor's twenty-year reign which portrayed him as the true temporal builder of peace and concord in Christendom who was ruefully confronted at every turn by Francis, the wrecker of peace.

Charles began by thanking the pope and cardinals for their expeditious actions to convoke a Council. He gave little attention to the nature of the Council except to reveal his own priorities for it: the extinction of the Lutheran heresy and termination of the conflict between him and Francis which, in conscience, he could say he had no fault in provoking.⁶⁰ In truth, he had 'always wanted to be a kinsman and a good cousin of King Francis'⁶¹ who, on the contrary, had always sought Charles' total ruin and destruction.⁶² He went on to recount his many deeds in favour of the Church and Italy during the reigns of Leo X and Clement VII, contrasting them with Francis' actions which he said were aimed at subjecting the Apostolic See and the whole of Italy to the French throne.⁶³ Unsurprisingly, Charles made no mention of the Sack of Rome by his troops. Rather, he said he had always seen his imperial role as a calling to serve the Church and Italy: 'in Bologna in the presence of Pope Clement VII, of happy memory, he took the Imperial Crown in order to bring a true peace and liberty to Italy and tranquillity

57 See the report of Giovanni Agnello to the Duke of Mantua, 8 April 1536, reproduced in Pastor, Vol. XI, Appendix 18, p. 571.

58 There are a number of accounts of this speech from ambassadors and others present. For one of the ambassador's reports see Giovan Maria della Porta to the Duke of Urbino, 17 April 1536, ASF, Ducato di Urbino, Classe 1, filza 133, fol. 433r. The most comprehensive account is the anonymous *Lettera sopra il ragionamento che fece Carlo Quinto l'anno 1536 venendo da Tunisi in presenza di Papa Paolo Terzo et Cardinali* which I will use here. It is held in the Vatican Library, BAV, Barb. lat., 5314, fols. 142r-157v.

59 'un bellissimo parlamento che durò più d'un hora e mezza con tanta gravità, prudenza, gratia, memoria, et ordine che come gli fece restare stupiti tutti gli auditori,' BAV, Barb. lat., 5314, fol. 142r.

60 BAV, Barb. lat., 5314, fol. 142v.

61 '...voleva essere sempre tanto ad sangue et buon cugino del Re Francesco,' BAV, Barb. lat., 5314, fol. 143r.

62 '...haveva sempre procurato et cercato la sua total rovina et destrutione,' BAV, Barb. lat., 5314, fol. 144r.

63 BAV, Barb. lat., 5314, fol. 146v.

to the Christian Commonwealth'.⁶⁴ Frustrated at the obstacles Francis continued to place in the way of these ends, Charles, with high chivalric flourish, proposed a duel 'with sword and dagger',⁶⁵ to settle things finally.

Significantly, Paul gave only a brief expression of thanks which Charles, in a further breach of protocol, interrupted to say that it was now opportune for His Holiness to join forces with him the peacemaker.⁶⁶ Paul went on, avoiding a direct response to this plea, but offering to do whatever he could to promote peace 'as a good Shepherd and Father of all'.⁶⁷

The speech is notable not only for the issues Charles expanded on but also for what he did not mention at all: reform of the Church. He had previously raised reform with Popes Clement and Paul, both through diplomatic channels and personally, making clear his desire for changes in the curia.⁶⁸ But here in the presence of the pope, the cardinals and a host of curial officials, it was not on his agenda at all. There was reform movement under way that he could have taken the opportunity to encourage: Commissions of reform had already been constituted and Contarini had been appointed to the College of Cardinals with a view to further action. It could be that Charles thought it beyond the bounds of his role as a guest to raise such matters face-to-face. Yet the very delivery of the speech showed that he did not consider himself bound by the usual protocols of such visits. More likely he did not want to distract from his main messages by bringing in a lower order priority. For Charles, the recognition of his honour, his political aims in the Empire and Italy, and the achievement of alliances against France constituted the main game.

Consistent with the last of these, before he left Rome the day after the speech, Charles made a number of gifts and pledges to the pope and his family: for the pope a diamond worth 12,000 ducats, for Cardinal Alessandro either the diocese of Monreale or Jaen, each worth more than 12,000 ducats, for Pierluigi the Marquisate of Novara with 12,000 ducats a year, for Ottavio

64 'a Bologna alla presenza della felice recordatione di Papa Clemente settimo presa la sua imperial corona per dare la vera pace et libertà all'Italia et la quiete alla Republica Christiana', BAV, Barb. lat., 5314, fol. 148r.

65 'con spada et pugnale', BAV, Barb. lat., 5314, fol. 150v.

66 This interaction is not mentioned in the Vatican text but is attested by both Pastor, Vol. XI, p. 250 and Brandi p. 378 without reference in the English translations.

67 'si offerse di fare ogni buon ufficio per far la pace come a buon pastor et commune Padre', BAV, Barb. lat., 5314, fol. 153v.

68 See Massimo Firpo, 'Politica imperiale e vita religiosa in Italia nell'età di Carlo V', pp. 248-249. Note also the shifts in Charles' policy towards reform and the Council according to which of his advisers were in ascendancy, in Daniel A. Crews, 'Juan de Valdés and the Conciliar Diplomacy of Charles V', pp. 73ff.

a state within the kingdom of Naples and 10,000 ducats.⁶⁹ It was clear to observers that these were all intended to bind the pope – ‘strettamente collegato’⁷⁰ – to the emperor. While the pope accepted each of the gifts and pledges, except for the state for Ottavio, they did not sway him any closer to the emperor. Paul’s neutrality was more precious to him than anything Charles could offer. He would not sacrifice his status as the ‘Father of all’ which continued to afford him the possibility, admittedly wafer thin, that he could persuade the two princes to reconcile and turn from fighting each other over Italy to fighting in unison to protect her.

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6. The Ottoman Threat

Abstract

Discord between the princes heightened the sense of threat to Italy by the Ottomans. Accordingly, Paul III increased his efforts to broker peace between Charles and Francis. In 1538 he was finally successful when he brought the two monarchs together in Nice where they agreed on a ten-year truce. At the same time, the Ottoman advance towards Italy continued and Paul needed to spend more and more on defensive strategies. The most effective way of increasing income for troops and defences was the sale of Church offices. Thus the reform proposals, if accepted, would have undermined the pope's entire effort for peace and concord and hence they gained no traction with Paul or other key actors.

Keywords: Sultan Suleiman, Barbarossa, Treaty of Nice, papal finances, benefices

In Italian public discourse, with the notable exception of the Venetians, the Turks were portrayed as the nemesis of all Christendom.¹ The perception that Italy, in particular, would be laid waste in the vilest way by Ottoman forces, if they could get a foothold, was heightened by the discord between Christian princes. In the Council Indiction of 1542, Paul III spoke of this vulnerability: 'Our impious and ruthless enemy the Turk was never at rest and looked upon our mutual enmities and dissensions as his fitting opportunity for carrying out his designs with success'.² In speaking of the attacks on Apulia Paul conveyed the fear and consequent action that were prevalent throughout his pontificate: 'Meanwhile the Turk, our cruel and perpetual enemy, attacked Italy with a vast fleet, took, sacked, ravaged several cities of Apulia and carried off numbers into captivity whilst we, in the midst of

1 See Soykut, p. 59. In the midst of the anti-Ottoman rhetoric and very real threats to the Italian Peninsula, the Venetians strove to preserve their ties to 'an inseparable "infidel" commercial partner', Soykut p. 22.

2 Pope Paul III, 'Initio nostri huius Pontificatus', in Waterworth, p. 2.

the greatest alarm and the general danger, were engaged in fortifying our shores and in furnishing assistance to the neighbouring states'.³

Ottoman designs had long prompted alarm among Italians, but that alarm reached new peaks in the 1530s. In August 1534, shortly before Paul's election, Barbarossa had harassed towns on the southern coast of Italy and then created a panic in Rome when his fleet suddenly appeared in the Tiber and weighed anchor near Ostia. All Barbarossa did at this time was replenish the fleet's water supplies and sail off. But he had sent a chilling message about what was possible.⁴ As indicated in Chapter 4, within a few weeks of becoming pope, Paul gathered some of the finest architects, engineers and military minds in a conference to plan fortifications and military strategy. These conferences became a feature of the pontificate with prominent participants such as Michelangelo, Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, Giovanni Mangone, Francesco de Marchi, Alessandro Vitelli, Sforza Pallavicino, Gianfrancesco Montemellino, and Giulio Orsini. They creatively and prudently guided Paul's defensive strategies.⁵ As a result of the early conferences a decision was taken to completely fortify the city along both flanks of the Tiber, renovating existing ancient and medieval walls, building new ones, and placing angle bastions at strategic points. Antonio da Sangallo was appointed chief designer and overseer of the works which began in October 1537.⁶ Da Sangallo also directed an inventory of all papal fortresses and their arsenals and renovations and provision of new artillery followed.⁷ During the 1530s and 1540s, the fortresses renovated were not just in the city, Civitavecchia and Ostia, but those along the Adriatic coast and in the Farnese towns of Castro, Parma and Piacenza.⁸

Before these works could begin, however, in late 1536 Turkish forces steadily progressed towards Clissa and Paul's concerns grew. Indeed the ambassador Bragadin found him in almost total desperation, with the danger leaving him 'unable to speak without the most heartfelt pain and incredible anguish'.⁹ In early January 1537, Paul told Bragadin that Christendom had

3 Ibid., p. 3.

4 See E.H. Ramsden, ed., *The Letters of Michelangelo*, Vol. 2, p. 263.

5 de la Croix, pp. 277-278.

6 See Francesco Paolo Fiore's commentary on the Sangallo drawing U1019, in Frommel and Adams, p. 184.

7 Ibid., p. 146.

8 Nicholas Adams and Simon Pepper, 'The Fortification Drawings', in Frommel and Adams, p. 62.

9 'Sua Santità in questo esser quasi in una total disperatione [...] non si poteva parlar senza un cordialissimo dolor et incredibile affanno al gran pericolo', Report of Lorenzo Bragadin to Venetian Senate, 30 November 1536, ASVe, Senato Secreta, Archivio Proprio Roma, b. 4, fol. 166v.

never been in greater peril, not just because of the Turks, but due to the 'mischievous operations' of both Charles and Francis. Paul, on the other hand, would give everything and his own life to defeat the Turk.¹⁰ The French ambassador said that the fear was so great at this time that the curia was thinking of abandoning Rome.¹¹

On 15 February Paul wrote to Charles and Francis once again, recalling the efforts he had undertaken to broker peace between them in the face of Christianity's wretched affairs and imploring them anew to pursue that remedy.¹² Over coming weeks a flurry of letters went out to Italian states declaring the emergency – 'a most grave and imminent danger facing Italy and the whole of Christendom from the monstrous Turks'¹³ – and informing them of a double tithe to fund troops and fortifications. This tithe was announced broadly in a Bull, *Duas Integras Decimas*, which called on all the hierarchy to collect the funds and send them to Rome.¹⁴

As mentioned earlier, the fate of Clissa was hanging in the balance as the *Consilium* was presented to the pope and cardinals. When news of the fall of Clissa reached Rome in early April, discussion of the *Consilium* was well underway. With reform proposals on the table that would radically reduce the income of the papal treasury, Paul began to spend even more on the fortification of the coasts which he had already begun. The provision of artillery and munitions in April were supplemented in May, the Modenese ambassador reporting a consistory which approved further fortifications

10 Report of Lorenzo Bragadin to Venetian Senate, 1 January 1537, translated in Rawdon Brown, ed., *Calendar of State papers and manuscripts existing in the archives and collections of Venice 1534-1554*, Vol. V, p. 53.

11 See letters of the Bishop of Macon to Cardinal du Bellay cited in Setton, pp. 406-407.

12 Part of Paul's letter to Charles reads: 'Dum quo in statu res miserae christianitatis hodie sint futuraeque propemodum formidentur reputamus unicuique his remedium in conclusione pacis inter te et christianissimum Regem fore videmus etsi cum rubore et dolore nostro frustra idem tam saepe tentavimus tamen obliti pudoris memores officii idem cum tua majestate quod et cum ipso rege christianissimo facimus repetere nostraque preces renovare nunc volumus', 15 February 1537, ASV, Arm. XLI, tom. 5, no. 198, fol. 207. A similar letter was written to Francis on the same day, ASV, Arm. XLI, tom. 5, no. 201, fol. 208.

13 'gravissimo et proximo periculo quod Italia et universam Christianitatem ab immanissimis Turcis', Pope Paul III to Duke of Ferrara, 4 March 1537, ASV, Arm. XLI, tom. 5, no. 92, fol. 112. In the same fondo there are similar letters to the Florentines on 6 March 1537, ASV, Arm. XLI, tom. 5, no. 94, fol. 113, and to the Governor of Milan on 12 March 1537, ASV, Arm. XLI, tom. 5, no. 95, fol. 114.

14 Bull of Pope Paul III, *Duas Integras Decimas*, 20 March 1537, ASV, Arm. XLI, tom. 5, no. 96, fol. 115.

of Civitavecchia, Terracina and the maritime towers along with additional funds to be sent to Ancona to supply galleys.¹⁵

With later news of Turkish forces reaching Valona, Paul sought money from the Roman barons to boost the number of soldiers guarding the city to 15,000 as, said the Florentine ambassador, 'Rome is gripped in the gravest fear of the Turks'.¹⁶ Paul also called on the whole of Rome to beseech God, in humble penitence, to deliver the city. As well as prayer and fasting, he ordered a number of processions¹⁷ and he himself took part in one walking barefoot from Piazza San Marco to the church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva.¹⁸ It was during this period that the Commission to consider reform of the Datary was being set up and beginning its work.

Throughout June and July 1537 the letters of Italian ambassadors were preoccupied with the progress of the Turks, the size of the force, and the pope's defensive response.¹⁹ They show that Paul was continually sending troops to vulnerable zones and seeking funds to deploy and provision more troops. The emperor had provided galleys under the admiralty of Andrea Doria and additional ships were being sought. To the consternation of all, a French fleet was seen at Corfu where its admiral, Bertrand d'Ornesan, was reported to be urging Suleiman to unleash a hundred galleys against the coasts of Sicily, Apulia and the March of Ancona.²⁰

As evident from the Indiction and other reports, Paul was mortified by the incursions and devastations wreaked in Apulia in late July. Despite the quick withdrawal of Barbarossa, Paul's fear of a concerted invasion rightly continued and thus so did his focus on defensive strategies.

15 'Hanno concluso di fortificare Civitavecchia, Terracina et quest' altre torre maritime mandare dinari in Ancona et gia anco per fornire le sue galere', Report of Filippo Rodi to Duke of Ferrara, 18 May 1537, ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 36, c. 233-VII, fol. 10, 1.

16 'Nostro Signore vole dal corpo di Roma docento milia scudi et dicer' vol fare 15 milia fanti per la guardia di Roma [...]. Roma sta in grandissima timor' di turchi', Report of Michelangelo Tebaldeschi to Cosimo I de' Medici, 28 June 1537, ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 3260, fol. 140.

17 'Qua si fanno di belle processioni per placare l'ira di Dio verso di noi', Report of Filippo Rodi to Duke of Ferrara, 21 June 1537, ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 36, c. 233-VII, fol. 24, 2.

18 Pastor, Vol. XI, p. 268.

19 Rodi reported that, on 14 June 1537, 240 galleys had been seen at Salonica, while at Scopia there were 150,000 cavalry with another 50,000 expected; then, on 24 June, that Barbarossa's armada was at Methoni and preparing for an advance on Sicily. Letter of Filippo Rodi to Duke of Ferrara, 7 July 1537, ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 36, c. 233-VIII, fol. 6, 2. Giovan Maria della Porta reported on the fortifications being prepared 'in caso che il Turco pigliasse piede in Puglia', not knowing that the incursions had already occurred. Report to the Duke of Urbino, 2 August 1537, ASF, Ducato di Urbino, Classe 1, filza 133, fol. 805r.

20 See the accounts of this cited in Setton, p. 431, note 143.



The Treaty of Nice

Paul decided to press ahead in two ways. With the aim of decisively halting any further Turkish advance, he negotiated a Holy League of the Papacy, the Empire and Venice which was promulgated in February 1538. Differing priorities between the three partners, though, meant that the League turned out to be more symbolic than strategically effective.²¹ Paul thus gave more attention to increasing the pressure on Charles and Francis to accede to his long-held aspiration and meet with him in person to broker a more durable peace. As he said in the Trent Indiction:

We ceased not to implore and conjure our most beloved sons in Christ, Charles, ever August, the Emperor of the Romans, and Francis, the Most Christian King, the two main supports and stays of the Christian name, to meet together for a conference between them and us [...]. They, yielding at last to our prayers, repaired to Nice; whither we also, for the cause of God and to bring about peace, undertook a long journey, though sorely unsuited to our advanced age.²²

They came to Nice dragging their feet, but they came. Charles arrived first, kissing the feet of the pope on 18 May 1538, and began discussions with him immediately.²³ Francis took his time and did not arrive till 31 May.²⁴ So Charles engaged in a number of negotiations with Paul, who was also talking with already arrived French representatives, out of which came an initial agreement to extend the truce by three months.²⁵ When Francis was finally in Nice and formal negotiations with the two princes began, the reservations, complaints and demands of both were manifold. Moreover they declined to meet each other face-to-face. So Paul engaged in shuttle diplomacy or, more precisely given his status, received Charles and Francis

21 For an account of this fractured and ultimately short-lived League see Capasso, *La politica di papa Paolo III*, Vol. I, pp. 330–342.

22 Pope Paul III, 'Initio nostri huius Pontificatus', in Waterworth, p. 4.

23 'Hoggi Sua Maestà è venuta qui a basciare i piedi a Sua Santità et è stata audientia publica, me par anchora s'è dato principio al negoziare', Report of Nicolò Ludovisi to the Senate of Bologna, 18 May 1538, ASBo, Senato Lettere, Serie VII, Vol. 12, unpaginated.

24 Pastor XI, p. 286.

25 The Bishop of Bologna wrote from Nice: 'non s'intende altro senonche tra Sua Maestà et il Re Christianissimo si è fatto un'altra triegua di tre mesi. L'Imperatore è stato già due volte con Nostro Signore a lungo il Re di Francia si aspetta alla più lunga', Report of Nicolò Ludovisi to the Senate, 26 May 1538, ASBo, Senato Lettere, Serie VII, Vol. 12, unpaginated.

in a series of individual visits at his lodgings at a Franciscan convent.²⁶ Paul said that: '(We) applied ourselves to that holy and most necessary work, the negotiation of peace and this with all the zeal, the affection, and the earnestness of our soul'.²⁷ Over the course of eighteen days negotiations ebbed and flowed and, at one stage, nearly sank altogether. But finally, to Paul's relief: 'in that our meeting and conference at Nice, though by reason of our sins, a true and lasting peace could not be concluded between the two princes, yet was a truce for ten years agreed upon'.²⁸

After initial celebrations and some recovery in Nice, the parties continued their interactions in both formal and informal ways. Paul and Charles met again at Villafranca and then entered Genoa together in state. There another seal was added to negotiations, with Paul and Charles agreeing on the marriage of Paul's grandson, Ottavio, to Charles' daughter, Margaret of Austria. So as not to compromise his neutrality, Paul also proposed to Francis a marriage of a French prince to Paul's granddaughter, Vittoria.²⁹ Charles took his leave of the pope and went on to a town near Marseilles where he met Francis. There they confirmed the truce in further talks and festivities. Paul was delighted by these unscheduled encounters between the two princes: 'the news of which was to us a source of very great joy, and so confirmed us in our good hope, that we believe that God, at length, had hearkened to our prayers and had graciously received our earnest wishes for peace'.³⁰ Thus, Paul returned to Rome where he was welcomed with acclamation and a grand procession.³¹

Paul was under no illusion about the fragility of any agreement between these two intractable combatants. In fact, within four years Francis once again declared war on the Empire. But, at Nice, Paul's achievement was a remarkable testament to his persistence and negotiating skill capitalising, of course, on the toll that the conflict had taken on both sides. On his return to

26 Cardinal Innocenzo Cibo wrote to Cosimo I de Medici, 'Si è dipoi andato dietro ad alchuni partiti di pace proposti dal Papa et Sua Santità abboccatasi quatro di fa con Sua Maestà. Et poi ogni dì ha negoziato con li agenti de l'una et de l'altra parte, et hoggì si è abboccata con Cristianissimo, né per ancora si sente altra conclusione, ma più presto si vede poca speranza di pace', 13 June 1538, ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 3716, fol. 138.

27 Pope Paul III, 'Initio nostri huius Pontificatus', in Waterworth, p. 5.

28 Ibid.

29 Pastor, Vol. XI, pp. 291-292.

30 Pope Paul III, 'Initio nostri huius Pontificatus', in Waterworth, p. 6.

31 For a vivid description of the serial ranks, decorations and route of this procession see the contemporary account: 'La gloriosa e solenne intrata del S.N.S. Papa Paulo III in Roma dopo il santo viaggio di Nizza', in Forcella, pp. 53-62.

Rome he would no doubt have been well pleased by the inscription erected over the Porta del Popolo:

Paulo. III. Pont. Max.
 Cuius. Sapientia. Ac. Auctoritate.
 Pace. Inter. Christianos. Confirmata.
 Bellum. Adv. Turcas. Susceptum. Est.
 S.P.Q.R.
 Ad. Spem. Futurae. Victoriae.³²

Funding Defence

The financial demands of resisting the Turkish advance are of direct relevance to how the impact of reform would have been perceived in Rome. A general idea of those demands can be reconstructed but it is no easy endeavour to give a full account since our knowledge of papal finances is quite fragmented. As Peter Partner says: 'We know far more about how the popes got their money than how they spent it'.³³ This is partly because some records have been lost and partly because of the intricate nature of papal financial structures and the difficulty of pulling their records together.³⁴ It was also common for large transfers of funds to papal relatives or familiars to occur without being recorded in principal accounts.³⁵

Papal finances began to experience severe strain when the divided allegiances of the Avignon Schism also divided papal revenues.³⁶ Despite a return to a sole Roman papacy, under Martin V, incomes were very slow to recover. By the 1480s the financial situation was one of ongoing deficits due to recurrent defence demands, the rebuilding of Rome, papal nepotism and papal display.³⁷ The extravagant expenditures of Clement VII, along with the ransoms and reparations he was forced to outlay after the Sack, left Paul with a treasury bled dry.³⁸ Like his predecessors, though, Paul was not about to rein in his spending. He had many projects, both urban and

32 Forcella, p. 57.

33 Peter Partner, 'Papal Financial Policy in the Renaissance and Counter-Reformation', p. 49.

34 Peter Partner, 'The Budget of the Roman Church in the Renaissance Period', p. 256.

35 Peter Partner, 'The Papacy and the Papal States', p. 367.

36 Melissa Meriam Bullard, 'Raising Capital and Funding the Pope's Debt', p. 24.

37 Partner, 'The Papacy and the Papal States', p. 362.

38 Pastor, Vol. XI, p. 224.

familial, that he was determined to pursue and fortifications and military expenditures were essential to defending both the city and the Papal States.

While it is not possible to give a full inventory, some examples serve to show the continuity and scale of military and fortification demands. In June 1537, Paul committed 15,000 troops to the defence of Rome.³⁹ Soon after, he deployed 3,000 men to Ancona, 200 to Civitavecchia, 500 to Ostia, and 300 to Terracina.⁴⁰ In the following year he sent 38 galleys in an attempted relief of Corfu⁴¹ and, as part of the Holy League, he was required to contribute 36 galleys to a force of 200.⁴² Throughout 1537 Paul was having to pay the emperor 20,000 ducats a month towards the overall protection of papal territory by imperial forces;⁴³ late in the year, he also made a commitment to pay 700,000 ducats for the first half of 1538.⁴⁴ In addition he conceded a two-tenths subsidy from income of the clergy of imperial dominions to aid Charles V's expedition to Tunisia.⁴⁵ The Venetians, too, were granted a 10 per cent retention of taxes on benefices to assist their capacity to contribute defensive and offensive actions.⁴⁶

Fortifications and the replenishment of arms were also expensive. The plan to encircle Rome with fortified walls, for example, included designs to build eighteen bastions but construction of the first one alone cost 44,000 ducats.⁴⁷ Accordingly, the plan was scaled back to fortification of just the medieval Leonine city. Here further bastions were built, beginning at the Porta Santo Spirito where three were built at a cost of 35,000 scudi.⁴⁸ All these works in Rome and throughout the Papal States required the employment of scores of engineers and architects along with thousands of skilled and unskilled workers.⁴⁹ The degree of rebuilding and re-fortification begun

39 'Nostro Signore [...] vol fare 15 milia fanti per la guardia di Roma', Report of Michelangelo Tebaldeschi to Cosimo I de' Medici, 28 June 1537, ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 3260, fol. 140.

40 Capasso, *La politica di papa Paolo III*, Vol. I, p. 297.

41 Partner, 'Papal Financial Policy', p. 52.

42 Setton, p. 445, note 204.

43 'havendo a contribuire Sua Santità venti mila ducati il mese allo Imperatore per questa difesa contra il turcho', Report of Filippo Rodi to Duke of Ferrara, 21 June 1537, ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 36, c. 233-VII, fol. 24, 1.

44 Letter of Alessandro Farnese (grandson) to Girolamo Aleandro, 17 December 1537, *Nuntia-turberichte*, Vol. 2, p. 303.

45 Setton, p. 435; Pastor, Vol. XI, p. 223.

46 Setton, p. 426.

47 Pastor, Vol. XII, p. 559.

48 *Ibid.* p. 560.

49 Nicholas Adams and Simon Pepper, 'The Fortification Drawings', in Frommel and Adams, p. 62; Pastor, Vol. XII, p. 560, n. 4.

under Paul gradually consumed all the surplus revenue of the Papal States.⁵⁰ Military expenses absorbed at least 40 per cent of all papal revenue.⁵¹

To augment sources of income, Paul and the curia used every means at their disposal. As mentioned earlier, a double tithe on clergy throughout Christendom was proclaimed in March 1537. For the first time, a tax across the Papal States, the *sussidio triennale*, was levied on all including the usually exempt clergy.⁵² A household hearth tax of one ducat was also proclaimed throughout the Papal States.⁵³ In Rome taxes on grain and bread were increased.⁵⁴ The combination of these and other measures like them, though, was still far from adequate in funding expenses and Paul found himself pushed more and more into the arms of the bankers who were accredited to the papal court. There were at least twenty of these *mercatores Romanam curiam sequentes*. The most favoured bank of Paul's pontificate was that of Bindo Altoviti who was made Depositor General of the Apostolic Chamber.⁵⁵ He was succeeded in that role by Benvenuto Olivieri.⁵⁶ They and other bankers performed a host of financial functions for the pope, cardinals and curial agencies. Of these, their principal roles were to collect taxes and other monies due to the papacy and to provide loans to the pope. Many of the loans funded the military support functions of the Apostolic Chamber which managed contracts with mercenaries, pay and muster of troops, and building and provisioning of galleys.⁵⁷ Often the banks partnered in consortia to share the risk, contracting themselves with the Apostolic Chamber for a usual return of 12 per cent on the sum advanced.⁵⁸ Thus, in March 1538, the bankers Cavalcanti-Giraldi and Strozzi loaned the Chamber 58,700 gold scudi and supplemented that a few months later with a further loan of 11,800 scudi; in 1539 Benvenuto Olivieri & Partners loaned 15,000 scudi; and in 1540 Olivieri and Cavalcanti jointly loaned 21,000 scudi.⁵⁹ By September 1540 the Apostolic Chamber was in debt to the bankers for

50 Partner, 'Papal Financial Policy', p. 25

51 Partner, 'The Papacy and the Papal States', p. 364.

52 Mauro Carboni, 'Public Debt, guarantees and local Elites in the Papal states (XVI-XVII Centuries)', p. 152; Partner, 'Papal Financial Policy', p. 47.

53 Capasso, *La politica di papa Paolo III*, Vol. I, p. 293.

54 Ibid.

55 See Melissa Meriam Bullard, 'Bindo Altoviti, Renaissance Banker and Papal Financier', pp. 21-57.

56 See Francesco Guidi Bruscoli, *Papal Banking in Renaissance Rome: Benvenuto Olivieri and Paul III, 1534-1549*.

57 Partner, 'The Papacy and the Papal States', p. 361.

58 Bullard, 'Bindo Altoviti', p. 38.

59 Bruscoli, p. 84.



297,000 scudi and still needed a further loan of 60,000 scudi to get it through the next few months to Christmas.⁶⁰ The most significant point to note of relevance to reform proposals is that the collateral for many of these loans was provided from currently vacant or prospectively vacant benefices in the gift of the pope.⁶¹

The banks also administered the sale of shares in the *Monte della Fede*, basically shares in the Church, which had been set up in 1526 primarily to fund campaigns against the Turks.⁶² The shares (*luoghi*) were sold for 100 gold ducats and could be bought by any Christian, cleric or lay, and sold on. Another investment that was particularly attractive to upwardly mobile Romans was the acquisition of venal offices. Some of these offices, around 600, had half real and half honorary functions but the majority, around 3,000, were nominal offices only.⁶³ Of the latter were the Colleges of Knights which combined a straight out purchase of honour, through grant of a title, along with an income of around 10 per cent for a purchase price of 1,000 ducats.⁶⁴ Investors felt secure in their purchase because the popes offered binding guarantees, limited discretion, and acceptance of predecessors' obligations.⁶⁵ In 1535 Pope Paul released 151 of these honorary offices, the Knights of St. Peter, as a means of obtaining a loan of 75,500 gold scudi from the Strozzi bank.⁶⁶ This sale of the offices was so successful that Paul subsequently established the Knights of St Paul, the Knights of Loreto, the Knights of St George and the Knights of the Lily.⁶⁷ Overall Paul raised around 450,000 gold scudi in this manner.⁶⁸ Although many of these venal offices involved no pastoral or administrative functions, some did, and all were direct purchases of Church office and dignity which constituted both simony and the diversion of revenues of the Church from common into private property, both of which were severely condemned in the *Consilium*.

60 Ibid., p. 83. These loans continued to grow in size throughout the pontificate with figures well above 100,000 scudi common from the mid-1540s. See Bullard, 'Bindo Altoviti', p. 38.

61 Partner, 'Papal Financial Policy', p. 24.

62 Michele Monaco, 'Il primo debito pontificio: Il Monte della Fede (1526)', pp. 553-569; Bruscoli, p. 104.

63 Bruscoli, p. 96.

64 Bullard, 'Bindo Altoviti', p. 38.

65 Carboni, p. 151.

66 Felice Litva, 'L'attività finanziaria della Dataria durante il periodo tridentino', p. 140.

67 Hallman, p. 131.

68 Litva, p. 141.



Politically, then, the timing could not have been worse for reform. Particularly throughout 1537 Rome was increasingly consumed by the threat of Turkish invasion. The pope and the curia were anxiously working to bolster Italian defences and to turn the attention of the emperor and French king away from fratricidal conflict to joint action against the Ottomans. This was left out of the reform equation by Contarini and his friends. So were the demands on the pope to be the guardian of peace and concord. The reform proposals, if accepted, would have undermined his entire effort.

The alarm and fear caused by the princes' conflict and the advance of Turkish forces cast a pall over all of Italy. Of course, alarm and fear were common in the Renaissance given the frequency of conflict within and between Italian states and the designs of foreign powers. But in this period troops were actually fighting in northern Italy, towns and villages were being razed, cities were under siege then taken by Spanish or French troops and mercilessly dealt with. Moreover, Ottoman forces were initially just a short sail away, then actually set foot on Italian soil, destroyed Italian towns and took away Italian captives. It was only ten years since the Sack of Rome and many Romans knew the horrors of invasion. An attack by the infidel would be as bad and the Sultan intended it to be more enduring.

Not only was the whole of Rome consumed by the imminent threat – 'Roma sta in grandissima timor' di turchi'⁶⁹ – but its citizens were also unsettled by the straitened circumstances forced on them by increased papal taxes. Already chafing under what they considered to be an oppressive tax regime, their mood was reflected in the resistance of some of the barons to the new imposts. The barons told the pope, some bluntly, that they would take responsibility for protecting their own people.⁷⁰ Paul's granting of honorific titles with incomes and lucrative shares in the Church were attempts to placate the nobility and merchants alike while still drawing in income. Indeed, in this time of heightened social unease, Paul did not want to exacerbate that unease or alienate those he was relying on to facilitate implementation of his policies and decisions. Thus, in the face of objections to reform proposals from curial officials who would be directly affected, Paul renewed their rights on numerous occasions, including the right to sell their offices.⁷¹

69 Report of Michelangelo Tebaldeschi to Cosimo I de' Medici, 28 June 1537, ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 3260, fol. 140.

70 'questi baroni qua di Roma non vogliono che li suoi sudditi paghino quel scudo per fuoco dicendo che anco loro hanno da guardare il suo', Report of Filippo Rodi to Duke of Ferrara, 21 June 1537, ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 36, c. 233-VII, fol. 24, 1.

71 For a list of some of these renewals of rights in the late 1530s, see Walther von Hofmann, *Forschungen zur Geschichte der Kurialen Behörden, vom Schisma bis zur Reformation*, Vol. 2, p. 68.

After God, it was the pope that people looked to for protection and perhaps him even more so. Not only was the pope best placed politically to defend Italy, it was his sacred duty to achieve peace and concord throughout Christendom. As we have seen in the rhetoric of the humanist orators, peace was the signal gift of Christ and, as the Vicar of Christ, the pope was expected to deliver. Paul felt this keenly. It was a priority for him way beyond his commitment to reform.

Finally, there was the elevated demand for finances. Underlying the proposal to do away with the sale of benefices was the fundamental tenet of the *Consilium* that ecclesiastical commercialisation was at the root of all current evils and of the deep scandal among the faithful.⁷² Yet this was the most effective way for Paul to garner the funds he needed. To get loans from the banks and cash from wealthy citizens, instruments like the sale of venal offices and share returns from the *Monte della Fede* were ready to go in this time of crisis. The procedures were there, the bankers were eager, and Italian investors were not backward in seizing the prospect of a good return. Overall it has been estimated that if Paul had found a way to effect the recommendations of the *Consilium* it would have cost him most of the revenue of the Datary.⁷³ Likewise the impact on the Apostolic Chamber would have been severe, although it is difficult to estimate reliable figures. The reformers took no account of this, other than to claim that if Paul healed the diseased Church in the way they proposed then, with relief and abundant affection, the faithful would give generously to make up for whatever was lost in revenue.⁷⁴ Instead of this reassuring vision, Paul could only see Turks at the threshold.

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⁷² *Consilium*, p. 91.

⁷³ Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini*, p. 182.

⁷⁴ See the 'Consilium quattor electorum a Paulo III super reformatione S.R. ecclesiae', written by Contarini, Carafa, Badia and Aleandro, presented 24 September 1537, in *C.T.*, Vol. IV, pp. 208-215.



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7. The Council of Trent

Abstract

From the late 1530s, Paul III quietly moved away from reform. Nevertheless, as a matter of honour, he continued to pursue his long-standing commitment to hold a General Council. But the pope's priorities for it were limited to the achievement of peace between Christian princes, unity in the Church and defeat of the infidel. Despite many obstacles, Paul managed finally to convene the Council at Trent in 1545. The first years of the Council had minimal success in achieving its goals and little impact on reform which Paul largely contained. However, both Paul and the Council did sow the seeds of episcopal residence in single dioceses, a reform that would eventually become a core part of the Counter-Reformation.

Keywords: Conciliar convocation; Datary; Lutherans; infidels; episcopal residence

Pope Paul did not call the Council of Trent in order to address Church reform. The disappointing program of his chosen reformers in the 1530s, along with consuming political challenges, meant that reform had slipped down and virtually off his list of achievable goals. Instead, his major goals for the Council were to bring three other intractable problems of his pontificate – peace between Christian princes, unity in the Church, and defeat of the infidel – to a universal forum where maximum pressure could be exerted for their resolution. These were intertwined with an overarching goal of preserving and augmenting his honour through delivering on his long-time public commitment to hold this highest of forums. While Paul allowed reform to be considered, he ensured that the boundaries of that consideration were tightly drawn.¹

1 There has been a resurgence of scholarship on the Council of Trent in recent decades which has exposed many 'myths' in the historical work and in the popular view of the Council since it closed in 1563. It is now generally agreed that a clear distinction needs to be drawn between Trent the actual Council and 'Tridentinism', namely how the Council was interpreted and

As early as December 1537, just nine months after presentation of the *Consilium*, there was talk in Rome of reform being over. The activity of the new reform Commission, in particular its focus on the Datary, was well-matched by the reform opposition and hindered by the new Commissioners who were of a different ilk than the *Consilium* authors. Not long after publication of Loreri's incisive memorial on the validity of compositions, it was being said in Rome that: 'The reform of the Datary has gone up in smoke'.²

While the pope continued to encourage the work of the Commission, he showed no sign of taking reform action. He was waiting. In November 1538, after Contarini produced his memorial on compositions, Paul called him aside as they were journeying to Ostia and discussed the memorial in a cordial way with him, wanting to learn more of Contarini's arguments. This touched Contarini who wrote to Pole saying that 'Our Best Old Man' had revived in him a great hope that God would do something good and that the gates of hell would not prevail against the Spirit of the Lord.³ Paul also continued to publicly confirm his support for reform. At Paul's behest, his grandson, Cardinal Alessandro, wrote to Aleandro, who was now nuncio to Charles V, asking him to convey to the emperor that: 'Reform is dear to the pope's heart more than ever'.⁴ But the *Consilium* authors had not adjusted their direction in the face of opposition; they were still treading the same path, urging the pope to act by means of sweeping abolition regardless of the consequences. Paul remained keenly aware of the consequences for honour and social stability and, in the absence of viable alternative systems and practices, he continued to utilise what was available to him. Thus, staying with the example of the Datary, Paul's use of its funds and

implemented as the years passed by. The current state of scholarship is best accessed in the three volume set of essays, published in 2018, which sprang from a 2013 conference at Louvain marking the 450th anniversary of the Council's closure: Wim François and Violet Soen, eds., *The Council of Trent: Reform and Controversy in Europe and Beyond (1545-1700)*. Even with the excellence of this scholarship, Paul III remains largely in the background of analysis.

2 'La reforma del Datario è ita in fumo', Letter of Giovan Girolamo de Rossi to Duke of Ferrara, 2 December 1537, ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 36, c. 239-I, fol. 43, 2.

3 'In via compellavit me seorsim Optimus hic Senex Noster, solusque cum solo sermonem instituit de Reformatione Compositionum et dixit se detulisse secum, atque legisse antelucanis horis tractatulum quondam, quem conscripsi [...] plurimamque Christiane mecum disseruit, quo effectum est, ut iterum conceperim magnam spem aliquid Deum boni acturum neque portas inferi praevalituras esse contra Domini spiritum', Letter of Gasparo Contarini to Reginald Pole, 11 November 1538, *Epistolarum Reginaldi Poli*, ed. by Johann Georg Schelhorn, Vol. 2, p. 141.

4 'La reformatione è a cuore a Nostro Signore più che mai', Letter of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese to Girolamo Aleandro, 17 December 1538, in Walter Friedensburg, ed., *Nuntiaturberichte aus Deutschland nebst ergänzenden Aktenstücken*, Vol. 3, p. 305. (Hereafter *Nuntiaturberichte*).

its capacity to secure loans grew throughout the 1530s and 40s.⁵ He also regularly renewed the privileges of the Datary and other curial officials on whom he relied. These privileges contained the right to sell their benefices or transfer them to relatives, both while their custodians were living or, after death, in their wills.⁶

Paul remained open to the product of the reform Commissions but nothing of substance emerged and, by 1540, the public statements of encouragement from the pope were noticeably winding down as was discussion of reform in consistory.⁷ In March 1540, the ambassador Sernini wrote to his master at Mantua saying: 'There is no more talk about the Datary, everything is to be reformed slightly, without touching the root of the matter'.⁸

There was one area where Paul took some direct action albeit modest: that of episcopal residence. That bishops should have only one diocese and reside in it had been called for in most reform documents since the Council of Constance (1414-1418) and it had been mentioned again in the *Consilium*.⁹ It had come to be a potent symbol of a Church returned to its traditional state: the shepherd in the midst of his flock with his concern for its welfare and salvation, the *cura animarum*, way over and above any personal advantage to himself. Although, like other reform proposals, it was an attempt to take the Church backwards, it could be approached symbolically and without fundamental disruption of the curial system or of the pathways to honour

5 Hallman, p. 149.

6 For a list of some of these renewals of rights in the late 1530s, see Walther von Hofmann, *Forschungen zur Geschichte der Kurialen Behörden, vom Schisma bis zur Reformation*, Vol. 2, p. 68.

7 The *Concilium Tridentinum* records only three consistory discussions of reform in 1542 the last of which, on 11 October, reads: 'Fuit factum verbum de reformatione Curiae, de haeresibus et de mittendis legatis, et nihil conclusum', Vol. IV, p. 455. Some historians see Paul's approval of the Jesuit order in 1540 as the initiation of a new force for reform, but apart from sending two theologians to Trent, the Jesuits did not involve themselves in reform. The eminent Jesuit historian, John O'Malley, says: 'Although the Society of Jesus is often described as having been founded to reform the Church, the early Jesuits did not in fact see "reform of the Church" as their direct concern', *The First Jesuits*, p. 321.

8 Nino Sernini to Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, 13 March 1540, quoted Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini*, p. 171. This did not mean that Paul would tolerate manifest maladministration or corruption. He had tried quite hard to convince Bartolomeo Guidiccioni to take on the reins of the Datary and, when Guidiccioni managed to resist, Paul appointed successive administrators who would provide leadership that was both competent and faithful to the Apostolic See. He thought he had that with Vincenzo Duranti, but when Duranti was discovered, in 1541, to have been involved in fraud Paul dismissed him and gave the position to the Farnese familiar, Girolamo Capodiffero. See Matteo Sanfilippo, 'Vincenzo Duranti' and *C.T.*, Vol. IV, p. 454.

9 *Consilium*, p. 89.

for curialists and their families. In terms of status, once a bishop always a bishop, the dignity was lifelong. It was also possible to resign the less prestigious of one's dioceses without undue financial loss. The revenues could be retained to a large extent through pensions or replaced through grants of non-episcopal benefices. In addition, the legal device called the *regressus* meant that if the resigned diocese became vacant in the future, the one who held the *regressus* could call the diocese back again and, while holding it temporarily, could enlarge existing pensions or establish new ones as well as allocate the diocese to a person of his own choice.¹⁰ The *accessus* gave the pope similar rights to bestow pensions and the diocese itself.

Thus there was no great risk for Paul when, on 13 December 1540, he called together the eighty bishops who were living in Rome and gave notice of his opinion that each of them should proceed to their own church where they should reside and care for their flock.¹¹ Paul would not have been surprised, however, that many of the bishops immediately spoke up to say that residence was a significantly limited aid to the *cura animarum*, given the multiple exemptions from episcopal jurisdiction of individuals, religious bodies who were responsible only to the pope, and of the host of clerics and lay persons who had long-standing rights to hold benefices or nominate their incumbents.¹² Paul promised immediately to give the bishops overriding authority against those with exemptions.¹³ But, recognising the complexity of the issues, he said he would explore them further with the cardinals and then respond in more detail.¹⁴ This he did and, in 1542, prepared a Bull which reduced the exemptions of persons, religious orders and corporations from episcopal jurisdiction and gave bishops exclusive right to assign benefices in the even months of a year.¹⁵ The strength of resistance to the

10 Hallman, p. 34.

11 'Die 13 decembris 1540 Papa convocavit omnes archiepiscopos et episcopos qui erant in Urbe, et exposuit eis, se esse in sententia, ut quisque proficisceretur ad suam ecclesiam, gregem suum curaturus', *C.T.*, Vol. IV, p. 454.

12 A quickly prepared memorial to the pope from the bishops about these restrictions on their jurisdiction is in *C.T.*, Vol. IV, pp. 481-485.

13 '...obtulitque omnibus liberam alternativam et facultatem procedendi contra exemptos et si quam aliam gratiam petiissent', *C.T.*, Vol. IV, p. 454.

14 The Modenese ambassador reported that these discussions were going on during the course of January: 'Hieri nel consistoro Nostro Signore torno a parlare di questa benedetta riforma et che gli vescovi vadino alle chiese loro et domani si fa congregatione di questi Reverendissimi deputati per intendere le domande che fanno i vescovi havendo ad andare', Report of Bonifacio Ruggieri to Duke of Ferrara, 29 January 1541, ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 39, c. 248-III, fol. 11, 1.

15 The draft of the Bull *Superni dispositione concilii* is in *C.T.*, Vol. IV, pp. 489-498.

Bull, especially from exempt orders and their cardinal-protectors at the abrogation of long-held rights, led Paul to delay publication and to refer aspects of it for further consideration. But he left open the scope for change and, as will be seen below, would return with further measures four years later at the time of the Council.

Political Conflict and Council Delays

In the early 1540s the Truce of Nice began to falter. The ever-simmering antagonism and territorial competitiveness between Charles V and Francis I reignited and led once again to war. This and other conflicts in Italy, along with renewed Ottoman advances, captured Paul's energies much more than examining the seeming dead-ends in the maze of reform. At the close of the 1530s it had seemed for a short time that peace between the emperor and French King was actually being cemented through their face-to-face interactions. Paul reflected a common perception when, in the Trent Indiction, he said: 'the Most Serene Emperor [...] traversed France on the most friendly and harmonious terms with the Most Christian King and with great show of mutual good will towards each other'.¹⁶ Indeed, as Charles spent from late November 1539 till mid-January 1540 crossing France towards the rebellious Netherlands, he met often with Francis, parlaying, feasting and hunting with him. When Charles reached Paris on 1 January 1540, the streets were decorated with symbols of peace and concord.¹⁷ During this time together the two monarchs exchanged political views and proposals in many areas, including territorial possessions, dynastic alliances, the Lutheran question, the Council, and joint action against the Ottomans. But for all these exchanges and the time they spent in festivities, personal bonds between them were never forged. The forces of ambition and pre-eminence on the political stage seem always to have laid greater claim on both.

These forces, as ever in their relationship, crystallised around possession of Milan. In their interactions the two men skirted around the issue rather than seek a negotiated resolution as both knew that their positions would not yield. On 11 October 1541, Charles proclaimed his son, Philip, Duke of Milan. Francis, recognising that the only means for reversing this development was overwhelming military force, renewed overtures to Sultan Suleiman

¹⁶ Pope Paul III, 'Initio nostri huius Pontificatus', in Waterworth, p. 7.

¹⁷ Knecht, p. 394.

in the hope of joint action in Italy.¹⁸ As in earlier years, Paul was dismayed. Speaking with the Florentine ambassador, he said their times were like those of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey and recalled the saying of Lorenzo de' Medici that it was better to have to deal with a wise enemy than a mad friend. Such times required of him even more that he maintain his neutrality.¹⁹

When the French ambassador returned to Paris from Constantinople with promises from Suleiman of substantial support, Francis saw an endgame within reach.²⁰ He declared war on the Empire on 12 July 1542. The alarm levels in Rome were fuelled particularly by the involvement of the Turks who, in previous months, had been making sporadic incursions along the Italian coast. Now there were rumours that Turkish and French forces were preparing to sweep south through Rome and on to Naples.²¹

In addition to these threats from foreign forces, Paul also had to deal with two rebellions from inside the Papal States that threatened to spill over and cause wider revolt. The commune of Perugia refused to pay papal taxes and declared its independence in February 1540. Likewise, in 1541, the Colonna family, led by Ascanio Colonna, cut off papal remittances and contributions to papal forces, then closed the borders of their lands around Rome to all papal traffic. Paul offered some perfunctory negotiation but soon sent troops to both recalcitrant territories and severely put down their rebellions including razing the Colonna towns of Rocca di Papa and Paliano.²²

Along with these preoccupations for the pope, with their implications for papal status and their drain on papal funds, there was the ongoing Lutheran challenge. This was in fact a greater concern to Charles than it was to Paul. Charles was not only distressed by the dissent of the Lutherans and

18 Setton, p. 450.

19 The pope said: 'che eravamo condotti in tempo che le cose erano nel medesimo essere che nella guerra civile al tempo di Cesare e Pompeo; e che si ricordava uno detto del Magnifico Lorenzo de' Medici il quale diceva: che era meglio avere a fare con un inimico savio che uno amico pazzo; imperocchè qui gli era passo fare suo debito a mantenere la neutralità', Report of Averardo Serristori to Cosimo de' Medici, 12 June 1542, ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 3264, fol. 401.

20 Knecht, p. 479.

21 The rumours proved unfounded at this time, but the Franco-Ottoman forces fiercely attacked the Neapolitan coast in May 1544. Knecht, p. 489.

22 The Modenese ambassador recorded the pope going to see the ruins of Rocca di Papa and weighing up whether to also raze Paliano: 'Nostro Signore è andato questa mattina a dar una volta verso queste terre del Signor Ascanio per vedere la demolitione di Rocca di Papa et per risolversi sul fatto se deve conservare Paleano o pur gettarlo a terra'. Report by Bonifacio Ruggieri to the Duke of Ferrara, 18 June 1541, ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 39, c. 248-IV, fol. 6, 2. For accounts of the rebellions of Perugia and the Colonna, see Pastor, Vol. XI, pp. 328-344.

the discord that it sowed, but by the prospect of German lands withdrawing from both the Church and imperial allegiance. Charles hoped that dialogue on doctrine and action on reform would stem the dissent and shore up the loyalty of the German princes. Paul, on the other hand, had long been resigned to preserving the integrity of the Church by casting out the Lutherans. This was part of his agenda for the Council which he foresaw not so much as healing the rift in the Church but sealing it, making the Church whole again by cutting off the diseased limb. He had no interest in dialogue with the Lutherans but was willing to go along with it at Charles' behest as he needed Charles' support to hold the Council and to secure the Farnese designs on Parma and Piacenza. Thus, Paul allowed the Diet of Regensburg to proceed in early 1541, but it was not to touch matters of reform. At Charles' request, the papal legation to Regensburg was led by Contarini. Paul's instructions to Contarini made it clear that the only topics were to be matters of doctrine and that no concessions were to be made. Indeed, Paul's instructions were more about urging the emperor to spurn requests for help from Ascanio Colonna who was in the midst of his rebellion at the time.²³

After some dogmatic middle ground was reached on the question of justification, the Diet stumbled and fell over transubstantiation and the role of the papacy.²⁴ In the Indiction, Paul openly declared that this was always his expectation and that his main game had been the convocation of the Council:

As there was now no longer scarcely any hope of peace and the scheme of procuring and treating of a reunion in those Diets seemed only adapted to excite greater discord, we were led to revert to our former remedy, a General Council; and by our legates, cardinals of the holy Roman Church, we proposed this to the emperor himself and this we did especially and finally in the Diet of Ratisbon (Regensburg) at which our beloved son, Cardinal Gasparo Contarini, of the title of St Praxedes, acted as our legate with very great learning and integrity. For whereas what we had previously feared had now come to pass, that by the advice of that Diet we were called upon to declare that certain of the articles maintained by the dissenters

23 There is a significant historiography on the Diet of Regensburg. Two of the most useful treatments are in Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini*, pp. 186-256 and Jedin, Vol. 1, pp. 379-391.

24 The Modenese ambassador reported that: 'Nel consistoro di hieri forno lettere di Ratispona (Regensburg) di xxvii, xxx et xxxi che le cose della dieta non potriano andare peggio', Report of Bonifacio Ruggieri to the Duke of Ferrara, 11 June 1541, ASMò, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 39, c. 248-IV, fol. 4, 1.

from the Church were to be tolerated until they should be examined and decided on by an ecumenical Council; and whereas neither Christian and Catholic truth nor our own dignity and that of the Apostolic See would suffer us to yield this, we chose rather to command that the proposal should be openly made that a Council should be held as soon as possible.²⁵

To Paul's bitter disappointment, just a month after the Council Indiction was published, in May 1542, and the call to attend was still being sent out through legates and letters across the Church, inaugurating the Council became impossible as this was when Francis I declared war on the Empire and attacked the Netherlands and Spanish border towns. Not only was travel to Trent now unsafe for many prelates but, even if they went, the French and imperial bishops could not work together with any sense of common cause. In order to be seen to be achieving something, Paul acceded to the long prompting of Cardinal Carafa and reconstituted the Roman Inquisition in July 1542 with Carafa at its head. But, for Paul, the Inquisition was a long way from a Council in its capacity to confront the critical issues facing the Church. With only limited backing from the pope, the Inquisition's procedures and penalties in pursuit of doctrinal infraction were mild compared to its later days when the severe Carafa had a free hand as pope himself.²⁶ Paul kept reform issues completely out of its purview.

The Council and Papal Honour

Pope Paul's investment in a Council went deep. He had openly espoused the holding of a General Council while still a cardinal and it had been a major commitment for him since the outset of his pontificate.²⁷ Soon after his election he had sent legates throughout Europe to garner support for a Council and, having achieved that, he had proclaimed its convocation on Pentecost Sunday in 1536. He declared at that time that the Council would serve the honour of God and the exaltation of the Church.²⁸ It was also

25 Pope Paul III, 'Initio nostri huius Pontificatus', in Waterworth, pp. 7-8.

26 See Silvana Seidel Menchi, 'Origine e origini del Santo Uffizio dell'Inquisizione Romana (1542-1549)', in Agostino Borromeo, *L'Inquisizione: Atti del Simposio internazionale*, pp. 302-308 & 314-319; Pastor, Vol. XII, p. 508. Carafa reigned as Pope Paul IV from 1555-1559.

27 The Venetian ambassador, Soriano, said that, unlike Clement VII, Farnese had never feared the holding of a Council and, during the *sede vacante*, had reiterated his support for a Council convocation. Report to the Venetian Senate, 1535, in Alberi, p. 313.

28 The text of the Bull *Ad Dominici Gregis Curam*, dated 2 June 1536, is in *C.T.*, Vol. IV, pp. 2-6.



evident to all that such a high enterprise would bring honour to the pope himself. Thus, the nuncio to the emperor, Vergerio, wrote to the pope's secretary, Ricalcati, saying: 'Regarding this Council, I feel certain that it will be profitable and yield great and everlasting honour to God and to Pope Paul III'.²⁹ The chosen city for the Council was Mantua and, with preparations well underway, it was a great frustration to Paul that the Duke of Mantua reneged on his agreement to hold it in his city, thus forcing the pope into proroguing the Council in April 1537.³⁰ Despite that setback and many after it, he never ceased from seeking a suitable site and the right conditions for the Council to take place. As will be explained shortly, Paul only ever reluctantly agreed to Trent as the site and, every now and then, he attempted to change to a nearer city. The prevailing view was that the pope's honour was in play in such Council negotiations. This is evident in the emperor's argument for no change to Trent as the site in 1545:

Up till now His Holiness has consistently demonstrated to the whole world with the clearest signs that he wishes to hold the Council, in accord with which he has done whatever he possibly could to make it happen. Now to transfer it from Trent would be an about-face and a flight from this commitment which has carried the hope of so much good fruit and upon which His Beatitude has stood and still stands with the greatest honour and satisfaction of everyone of goodwill.³¹

Paul eventually let Trent stand as he had indeed reiterated his commitment in the 1542 Indiction in which he had summoned the Council once more with great solemnity and declared that he could no longer countenance delay. As noted already, the outbreak of war had then placed seemingly insurmountable obstacles to the Council's inauguration. Yet he did not give up. It was integral to his honour 'to persevere to the end'. In addition, the

29 'Dal qual concilio che per certo habbia ad esser fruttuoso et con grandissimo honore di Dio et di Papa Paolo III in sempiterno', Letter of Pietro Paolo Vergerio to Ambrogio Ricalcati, 13 November 1535, *Nuntiaturberichte*, Vol. 1, p. 543.

30 Cardinal Ghinucci wrote to the Venetian ambassador at the Imperial Court on 21 April 1537: 'Hieri Nostro Signore ad suo incredibile dispiacere far la prorogatione del concilio in consistoro', ASN, Archivio Farnesiano, b. 1883, unpaginated.

31 'Sua Santità fin qui ha sempre dimostrato a tutto il mondo con chiarissimi segni che là vole il concilio, sopra di che ha fatto quanto dal canto suo ha possuto, così, hora levandolo da Trento, parebbe un tergiversare et un fuggir di volerlo maxime hormai, che si puo sperar qualche buon frutto, et dove Sua Beatitudine n'è restato et ne resta al presente con honore grandissimo et satisfatione di tutti i buoni', from a report of an audience with the emperor by the nuncios Verallo and di Caserta in Massarelli, 19 October 1525, *C.T.*, Vol. I, p. 291.

more the challenges of peace, unity and defeat of the infidel dragged on, or faded then re-emerged, the more Paul was inclined to the rhetoric which portrayed a Council as a crucible for resolving all the ills of Christendom:

With God going before us in our deliberations and holding before our minds the light of his own wisdom and truth, we may in the said sacred ecumenical Council, in a better and more commodious manner, treat of and, with the charity of all conspiring to one end, deliberate and discuss, execute and bring to the desired issue speedily and happily whatsoever appertains to the integrity and truth of the Christian religion, the restoration of good and the correction of evil manners, peace, unity, and concord both of Christian princes and peoples, and whatsoever is needful for repelling those assaults of barbarians and infidels with which they seek the overthrow of all Christendom.³²

Now, even with war in his way, Paul could not bear once again to be seen to step back from his public commitment, although he was well aware that the Council could not proceed until conflict ceased. Thus, as a sign that it was a matter of papal honour that the Council would open at the earliest opportunity, together with the cardinals Paul decided to retain his legates at Trent.³³

Fortunately, in less than two years, a lack of resources on both sides of the war led the two monarchs to seek a truce. This they proclaimed on 14 September 1544 in the Treaty of Crépy, an article of which contained the agreement of both to a Council at Trent.³⁴ Thus Paul renewed the Council preparations with vigour.

Unsurprisingly given its history so far, obstacles arose that further prevented the Council from getting underway. The major obstacles were the ongoing tussles between Paul and Charles over the location of the Council and the place of reform within the Council agenda. Consistent with Charles' observation quoted above, the Council Secretary, Angelo Massarelli, recorded that beneath the push and pull around the location of the Council lay the politics of honour.³⁵ Although Paul had said he was willing to go along

32 Pope Paul III, 'Initio nostri huius Pontificatus', in Waterworth, p. 11.

33 'Nel concistoro di hieri si tratto sola sopra materie conciliali e si era expediente e di dignità della sede apostolica di tenere più là quelli legati', Report of Bonifacio Ruggieri to Duke of Ferrara, 12 May 1543, ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b.39, c. 248-VI, fol. 20, 1.

34 See Jedin, Vol. 1, p. 501.

35 'Et così Sua Santità tornerà lei a cavallo et sul honore et reputatione de prima, et l'imperatore tornerà nelli termini ancor primieri, che non voglia per hora altrimenti concilio', Diary of

with Trent as the Council site, his preference remained to hold it in papal territory where his authority would be more strongly felt. Cities in the mix were Vicenza, Ferrara, and even Rome. Charles knew that German princes and bishops would never attend in such cities and, as he still held out hope of some compromise on Lutheran questions, he was most reluctant for a Council to proceed without German participation. The imperial allegiance of German lands hung significantly on them remaining within the Catholic fold. As Paul realised that the emperor would not give way on this and as papal legates and some bishops were already in Trent, Paul eventually allowed preparations to go forward there.³⁶ It was more important to his honour that the Council actually open.

Of greater dispute was the place of reform within the Council agenda. Paul's preference had been revealed in the 1542 Indiction: the word was not mentioned. As noted above, the closest he came was in speaking of 'the restoration of good and the correction of evil manners'.³⁷ He was determined to keep reform as a lower order issue, with primacy given to doctrine, and to maintain tight control over the content and progress of any reform discussion. He was wary of the Council diminishing his rights and authority, both over the Council itself and over the universal Church. He would also not tolerate the Council framing measures which would precipitously upset the systems of the Roman curia. For his part, Charles wanted only reform to be considered. If doctrine was considered, while he held out hope for compromise, he knew that it was just as likely that Lutheran positions would be condemned and this would lead German princes to break once and for all with the Church and thus with the Empire. Dealing with reform may be enough to assuage the Germans.³⁸ If he could not hold off

Angelo Massarelli, 19 October 1545, *C.T.*, Vol. I, p. 294. Massarelli's diary is an invaluable source for day-to-day events and communications at Trent.

³⁶ See the letter of Cardinal Farnese to Alessandro Guidiccioni, 4 November 1545, *C.T.*, Vol. IV, p. 435.

³⁷ Pope Paul III, 'Initio nostri huius Pontificatus', in Waterworth, p. 11.

³⁸ Cardinal Farnese wrote to the Council legates of Charles' fear of Lutheran condemnation and that the abuses of the Roman court would not be dealt with: 'Questo lo fa l'imperatore per trattener li lutherani tuttavia in timore del concilio, cioè che habbino paura di non esser condannati, et così Sua Maestà ottiene quello che vole da loro. Et da questa medesima causa mosso indice tuttavia colloquii et diete, acciochè dimostri, che vol trattar con loro per via amichevole et non lassarli condannare, del che più loro temono. Dall' altra banda con questo tenere il concilio così sospeso tiene quodammodo una briglia in bocca al papa come quello, che habbia sempre paura, che non si proceda contro li tanti abusi della chiesa et corte Romana, et perciò gli pone innanzi, quando li parla d' aprirlo, che si parli delli abusi et non di dogmi. Et con questo freno l'imperatore cava ancor da Sua Santità quello che vuole', Massarelli, 1 September 1545, *C.T.*, Vol. I, p. 252.



dogma entirely, Charles strongly maintained that reform areas should be considered first on the Council agenda.

These issues continued to delay opening of the Council as they were thrown backward and forward throughout 1545, way beyond the published opening date of 15 March. Massarelli recorded the emperor's wish and Paul's response as relayed in a letter from Cardinal Farnese:

As far as the Council is concerned, His Majesty does not want it to commence until he leaves from Worms. Then, as he has said from the beginning, he does not wish it to begin with doctrine but with the abuses in the Church and to attend in this way to reform. His Holiness has replied that he will not be found wanting in doing what serves God and the honour of the Apostolic See, joined with that of His Majesty.³⁹

When time was dragging by even more, some prelates who had made their way to Trent began to talk of returning home. But Paul let it be known that they were required to remain out of respect for his honour.⁴⁰

Even when the Council finally opened, on 13 December 1545, the issues of contention remained unresolved to such an extent that no agenda for the Council actually existed.⁴¹ After the opening Mass and other ceremonies, the first session of the Council could only agree on a date for the second session;⁴² when the second session occurred, it only issued an exhortation to everyone at Trent to behave well; the third session, by now 4 February 1546, reaffirmed the creed of Nicaea-Constantinople as foundational to its work and put off further sessions till April to allow more time for the questions of process to be sorted through and in the hope that more bishops would have arrived.⁴³

39 'Quanto al concilio, che non pareva a Sua Maestà si cominciassse, finchè non partiva da Worms, poi quando se li desse principio, non si parlasse nel principio de' dogmi, ma degli abusi della chiesa, et si attendi fra questo mezzo alla riformatione etc. La Santità Sua gli ha risposto, che non mancherà di fare quello che sia servitio di Dio et honor di quella santa sede, congiunto con quel di Sua Maestà Cesarea', Massarelli, 24 July 1545, *C.T.*, Vol. I, p. 225.

40 'Li prelati, non potendosi stare, saranno forzati, senza che veruno li cacci, di andarsene, et così Sua Santità haverà havuto il suo intento, it ci sarà l' honor suo', Massarelli, 13 August 1545, *C.T.*, Vol. I, p. 240.

41 Jedin, Vol. 2, p. 15. The Council was to have three periods: 1545-1547, 1551-1552, and 1562-1563.

42 A 'session' of the Council was a formal, ceremonial event at which decree proposals that had been worked on were read and voted upon. The working meetings in which debates were held were called 'General Congregations'.

43 Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2, pp. 662-663.



The battle over the place of reform was being fought out both remotely between the emperor and pope and proximately at the Council by papally and imperially aligned bishops. Each side had reluctantly admitted that both doctrine and reform would be considered, but which should have priority remained very much in contest. Throughout the early part of 1546 the Council legate, Marcello Cervini, was regularly writing to Cardinal Farnese in Rome relaying the views of those who wanted to begin with reform.⁴⁴ Farnese wrote back repeating His Holiness' intention that matters of faith should go first and that it was important for the reputation of the Council not to bend to alternative voices particularly when heresy so urgently needed to be cast out.⁴⁵ This argument did not gain any traction with the imperial bishops, and unaligned bishops were tending to side with them to such an extent that Cervini felt that there was danger that the honour built up for the pope by the legates in enabling the Council to begin would be lost.⁴⁶ In private correspondence to the pope's secretary, Bernardino Maffei, Cervini said the legates were attempting: 'to rescue the honour of the Apostolic See and the Roman court in the face of a Council convened to reform the world and amidst great dissatisfaction with that court'.⁴⁷ The legates' own proposal was that the Council should start with reform of sacramental and liturgical abuses, while the pope should deal contemporaneously with an effective reform of the curia. If this were to happen: 'it would shorten the Council by several months and the honour that His Holiness has already acquired in this enterprise will be augmented day by day'.⁴⁸

44 See for example Cervini's letters of 22 January 1546, ASV, Carte Farnesiane, Vol. 9, fol. 11r and 4 February 1546, ASV, Carte Farnesiane, Vol. 9, fol. 31r.

45 'la intentione di Sua Santità era che le cose delle fede fussero le prime a proparsi et incominciarli non perchè la non desiderasse che si venga quanto prima alla reformatione ma perchè la non vederà cagione alcuna per la quale se havesse ad alterare uno ordine così essenziale come questo come non vedi anco di presente; ne giudica che sia conveniente nè allo effetto in sè della causa nè alla reputatione del concilio che si concedenda alle voglie di altri in una deliberatione che importi tanti et che habbia tante ragioni in contrario [...] ma etiam che si faccia senza aspettare che le materie delle heresie siano terminate pure che si sia dato loro progresso come per ogni rispetto meritano di havere', Letter of Cardinal Farnese to the Council Legates, 21 January 1546, ASV, Carte Farnesiane, Vol. 9, fols. 56v and 57r.

46 'perdesi quell'honore che con tanta nostra fatica ci pareva havere acquistato a Sua Santità', Letter of Marcello Cervini to Alessandro Farnese, 4 February 1546, ASV, Carte Farnesiane, Vol. 9, fol. 31r.

47 'recuperare l'honore alla sedia apostolica et alla corte Romana in cospetto di un concilio congregato per reformare il mondo et malissime satisfatto di essa corte', Letter of Marcello Cervini to Bernardino Maffei, 30 January 1546, *C.T.*, Vol. X, p. 348.

48 'Quanto al capo dela reformatione, faremo ogni opera che si cominci da gli abusi che sono circa l'administratione de sacramenti, come predicare, confessare, dir messa et simili, li quali

Eventually, in February 1546, there emerged from the bishops a proposal to resolve the impasse by pairing decrees on doctrine and reform. In other words, in the formal voting sessions whenever a doctrinal decree was put to a vote it would be succeeded by a reform decree.⁴⁹ Paul initially balked at this but finally agreed so that the Council might start its work. He knew that his legates still had a variety of means to ensure that reform played second fiddle.

Although the prelates at the Council came to agreement on how to deal with reform, many tensions still existed. They were fomented in particular by the envoys of the princes and rulers who, while they had no speaking or voting rights on the floor of the Council, they would regularly gather the bishops of their domains to discuss tactics that would conform to the wishes of their masters.⁵⁰ The presence of the envoys was particularly meant to facilitate discussions around peace, but often the rulers' sensitivities about territory, honour and their rights of ecclesiastical patronage added extra heat to the already febrile debates in the General Congregations.

The Council's Minimal Impact on the Ills of Christendom in the 1540s

The work of the Council thus was slow and fraught and its output modest, to say the least. During the reign of Pope Paul the Council remained constituted at Trent from November 1545 to March 1547 in which time just four formal sessions to pass decrees were held. Due to fear of a fatal disease that appeared to be spreading in Trent, the Council then transferred to Bologna, against initial opposition from Paul and permanent opposition from Charles, where it struggled on till September 1549 without ratifying any further decrees. In the four sessions at Trent, in accord with the agreement on pairing at each session, eight decrees in all were passed. The decrees on doctrine were on the Bible and tradition, original sin, justification, and the sacraments. The decrees on reform dealt with authorised versions and interpretation of the Bible, preaching, residence of bishops, and benefices.

non sono di poca importantia, et a mio iudicio terranno un pezzo occupato il concilio, in modo che, se intanto Dio ispirarà Sua Beatitudine a reformare con effetto la corte et il datario senza molto rumore, ma con effetti, s'abbreviarà qualche mese questo concilio, et l'honore che Sua Santità ci ha acquistato già dentro pigliarà augumento di giorno in giorno', Letter of Marcello Cervini to Bernardino Maffei, 23 January 1546, *C.T.*, Vol. X, p. 329.

49 This agreement was reached on 22 January 1546, *C.T.*, Vol. IV, p. 572. For the debate on that day see Jedin, Vol. 2, pp. 31-32.

50 See O'Malley, *Trent: What happened at the Council*, p. 87.



So how well did the Council's early years fulfil Paul's traditionally framed aims for it and how did reform fare in the midst of those aims? I will take them one by one using the wording from the 1542 Trent Indiction.⁵¹

Integrity and truth of the Christian religion

The doctrinal decrees all effected the aim of Paul to sever the Protestants from the body of the Church and to shut down discourse among Catholics who might be weighing the merits of Protestant challenges. The decrees did so by forcefully denying the *sola scriptura, sola fide* stance of the Lutherans. In its first decree of substance, the Council affirmed apostolic traditions as having equal status with scripture in guiding the Church:

Following the example of the Orthodox Fathers, the Council accepts and venerates with a like feeling of piety and reverence all the books of both the Old and the New Testament, since the one God is the author of both, as well as the traditions concerning both faith and conduct as either directly spoken by Christ or dictated by the Holy Spirit, which have been preserved in unbroken sequence in the Catholic Church.⁵²

In subsequent decrees, the Council clarified ancient doctrinal positions on original sin, justification and the sacraments through joint reliance on scripture and tradition. The decree on justification was a finely crafted document that acknowledged the pure gift of faith and grace, but affirmed human agency in accepting the gift and living in accord with that through good works.⁵³ The Fathers also rejected the Protestant rejection of most of the sacraments and their function of transmitting salvific grace, confirming that there were seven sacraments and that, of those, baptism, confirmation and Holy Orders effected a permanent, spiritual transformation of the soul.⁵⁴ Thus, there was no reform of doctrine and no compromise with Protestant positions. This confirmed what Paul had long held and what was evident at Regensburg, that it was decades too late for reconciliation, the ways had long parted.

51 There was a later Bull, *Laetare Hierusalem*, which re-convoked the Council after the Treaty of Crépy. That Bull, which was put together in haste, is in *C.T.*, Vol. IV, pp. 385-388. For the reasons stated in Chapter 5, I regard the 1542 Indiction as closer to Paul's own voice.

52 Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2, p. 663.

53 *Ibid.*, pp. 671-681.

54 *Ibid.*, pp. 684-686.

Restoration of good and the correction of evil manners

Paul's vague aim in the heading above was made a little more specific by the Council which spoke of: 'the reform of the clergy and the Christian people'.⁵⁵ But this was still some distance from reform of the head – papal, cardinalatial and curial practice – which was not directly addressed. This was mainly due to the work of the legates who continually steered the Council away from Roman issues. The legates, Del Monte, Cervini and Pole, were all talented cardinals of high standing: Del Monte and Cervini became popes themselves and Pole came within one vote of the papacy. With Del Monte often ill and Pole leaving the Council in June 1546, supposedly for health reasons, Cervini was the driver of the Council process. He was by conviction a reformer who had urged Paul on numerous occasions to initiate reform in Rome. But he was first and foremost a man of the pope and of the Farnese family who saw his role as serving Paul's honour which he held as united to the honour of God.⁵⁶ As legate he did not scruple to use a mix of flattery and denigration, financial punishments, and bribery to bring prelates around to the papal positions. This included rewards of benefices.⁵⁷ What needed reform was used to stave off reform.

The exception, once again, was in regard to episcopal residence. This issue first made its appearance, with tentative steps, onto the floor of the Council in April 1546, slightly cloaked under the issue of preaching. The cloak was still in place when the reform decree was brought to a formal session on 17 June 1546, but the real issue was clear. The decree required bishops and parish priests to preach to their flocks – 'personally bound to preach' – on a regular basis, at least on Sundays and Holy Days.⁵⁸ If one had to preach that often in a diocese, one had to reside there. The tentativeness about the obligation was evident in the phrase 'unless legitimately impeded', and nothing was said about how an impediment could be established.⁵⁹ But it was an appearance of long contentious issues about clerical and episcopal office and the responsibilities of holding benefices that could be taken

55 Ibid., p. 660. *Laetare Hierusalem* referred to: 'deinde ut ea quae in populo Christiano reformatione indigent reformatur et in meliorem formam restituantur', *C.T.*, Vol. IV, p. 386.

56 In a letter to Cardinal Farnese, Cervini spoke of the 'diligentia et vigilantia che io uso all' honor di Sua Santità che lo stimo sempre congiunto con l'honor di Dio', Letter of Marcello Cervini to Alessandro Farnese, 7 January 1546, in Massarelli, *C.T.*, Vol. I, p. 5, n. 3 cont. from p. 4.

57 Hudon, pp. 43-64, incisively describes Cervini's role at the Council and his continual protection of papal interests.

58 Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2, p. 669.

59 Ibid.

further. How much further was thrashed out, often in acrimonious debate between imperial and Italian bishops, over the next six months.⁶⁰

Following this debate, a new decree on reform was presented in session to the Council on 13 January 1547. Its introduction began with familiar terminology but had a revelatory last phrase:

The same holy Council, with the same presidents and legates of the Apostolic See, desiring to gird itself to restore ecclesiastical discipline, which to a considerable extent has collapsed, and to correct depraved customs among both clergy and Christian people, has decided to take as its starting point those who have control over the more important churches.⁶¹

In those last few words, the cry that had rung out around Christendom for so many years – *Purga Romam, purgatur mundus* – was silenced. Reform of the Roman curia was not going to happen. At least not directly. The imperial bishops and others who wanted reform had learned that they could not mount a frontal attack on the abuses or systems in Rome, but they held out hope that, by penning the bishop to his flock, they would not only reform the ranks of the episcopacy but also gradually limit the trafficking in benefices that constituted so much of the Roman abuses.

This was a sound strategy given the circumstances at the Council and was in line with what the pope himself had tentatively initiated in 1540: it would not rupture the systems of the curia, it would bring in change gradually and, for the time being, leave open ample pathways to honour. Thus, before the decree came to a vote, Paul both expressed his support and asserted his supreme authority by issuing the Bull *Nostrum non solum* in early January 1547.⁶² The Bull universalised the requirement that bishops should hold only one diocese, affirmed that no dispensations would be permitted, and gave those with multiple dioceses six months to resign the ones in excess.

The decree put to the Council echoed the Bull. It restricted bishops to a single diocese and forbade them to absent themselves for more than six months on pain of loss of a quarter of diocesan revenues. If an absence went beyond six months, after further warnings, it was to be denounced to the pope who was to deprive the bishop of the diocese altogether. The pope

60 Jedin, Vol. 2, pp. 328-343.

61 Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2, p. 681.

62 The text is in *C.T.*, Vol. IV, pp. 504-512

was also not to grant dispensations from these provisions. In addition, the bishop was given greater jurisdiction over benefices in his diocese and over Cathedral chapters and major churches which could be 'visited, corrected and emended' by the bishop whose decisions could not be overturned.⁶³ At the heart of these provisions was the *cura animarum*, affirming that one who holds a diocese must have the skill and the will to be a faithful shepherd:

they are to attend to themselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has placed them, to feed the Church of God which he obtained with his own blood [...]. They should know that they can never fulfil that duty if, like hirelings, they abandon the flocks committed to them and completely neglect the guardianship of their flocks, whose blood will be required at their hands by the supreme Judge, since it is most certain that the shepherd's excuse is not accepted if the wolves devour the sheep and the shepherd knows it not.⁶⁴

Paul gave another sign of his support, on 18 February 1547, by extending the provisions of *Nostrum non solum* to the cardinals, although allowing them, in accordance with ancient custom, to hold their titular Roman church as well as a diocese. This news was conveyed to the Fathers at the Council who greeted it with 'much praise and honour of His Holiness'.⁶⁵

Given the brevity of their January decree and some dissatisfaction over it, the bishops at Trent came back quickly to buttress residence with a more comprehensive decree on benefices. This was put to the Council on 3 March 1547. It repeated the provisions in Paul's decrees that prelates of all ranks would need to free themselves of all but one diocese within six months. It then went on to mandate residence in lesser benefices and thus to prohibit the holding of multiple benefices. Here it stitched its provisions into the tradition of the Church more tightly than the earlier decree by citing and renewing regulations of earlier popes – Alexander III, Gregory X, Innocent III – and Councils – Chalcedon, Lateran III, Lyons II, Lateran IV. It also required the bishop to visit his churches 'no matter how exempt' to ensure that the *cura animarum* was adequate.⁶⁶

63 Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2, p. 683.

64 Ibid., p. 682.

65 'Quod decretum fuit commendatum ab omnibus patribus huius congregationis, cum multa laude et honore Suae Santitatis', Massarelli, 25 February 1547, *C.T.*, Vol. 1. p. 619. The text of the decree concerning the cardinals is given on p. 621.

66 Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2, pp. 686-689.

At the same time, the decree stopped well short of dismantling the current benefice system: 'Let local ordinaries strictly compel those who hold several charges or otherwise incompatible ecclesiastical benefices to show their dispensations'.⁶⁷ Where dispensations prevailed, the decree merely provided that competent care of souls be provided, supported by an 'appropriate part of the revenues'.⁶⁸ This left pensions and other imposts on the revenues intact. The decree also did not address devices like the *accessus* and *regressus* which brought revenues back to the papacy or to previous holders of the benefice through temporary repossession, fees for reassignment, or further pensions.⁶⁹

Passing a decree was also just one part of the reform equation, the other part, as always, was enforcing compliance. Consistent with his reservations about reform, Paul proceeded slowly and cautiously. Several times he extended the time limit for cardinals to divest themselves of multiple dioceses.⁷⁰ He also took little action against the eighty bishops in Rome whom he had previously urged to abide in their dioceses. Ten years after the Council's decree on residence, well after Paul, there were in fact 113 bishops living in Rome.⁷¹

All the same, a cultural shift had begun, one that was gradually to replace the general view of benefices as property with a view that they were domains of pastoral responsibility. The holding of multiple dioceses, in particular, had started to tilt from an accrual of honour to a cause for shame. This was recognised by Paul's grandson, Cardinal Alessandro, as early as January 1546. Writing to Marcello Cervini, the cardinal said he was aware that his pluralism could become a matter for discussion at Trent and thus he would like known his sincere promise that he would set an example of divesting himself of benefices as a matter of gentleman's honour.⁷² Similar feelings of self-consciousness with regard to benefices were evident at the Council.⁷³

67 Ibid., p. 687.

68 Ibid.

69 Hallman, pp. 34-38.

70 Ibid., p. 32.

71 O'Malley, *Trent: What happened at the Council*, p. 179.

72 'Perchè so che tra le cose che si possono ragionare tra voi di là familiarmente, potrebbe essere che si mentione qualche volta in la materia delle pluralità delle chiese delle beneficii del Cardinale Farnese, io vi prego, che a bona occasione voi promettiate per parte mia ch'io in questo caso so' per dare esempio, non che di ubedire, et che una delle cose, ch'io desidero che stabilite in concilio è questo, come spero di fargline vedere presto la prova; di questo prometto da parte mia largamente che da gentil' homo gli ne farò honore', Letter of Alessandro Farnese to Marcello Cervini, 22 January 1546, *C.T.*, Vol. 10, p. 324.

73 See the examples of Cardinals Madruzzo and Del Monte in Jedin, Vol. 2, p. 30.

Gradually some cardinals began to set such an example with resignations and, by the time Paul died in 1549, over 84 per cent of Italian cardinals had reduced their dioceses to one.⁷⁴ As noted earlier, an incentive in this was the remaining capacity to drain income from the ceded dioceses or to hold lesser benefices. But a wedge had been placed which was sunk deeper later in the Council and which gradually asserted the *cura animarum* as the means to episcopal honour. One should not overplay the effect of the Council or Paul III in this as the process took over two hundred years to cement. But it did begin in Paul's reign and, in the face of the cultural obstacles of his time, it is more than faint praise to say that he opened the door to it.

Peace and unity and concord of Christian princes and peoples

The Council was meant to facilitate peace by bringing together bishops and princes, or their envoys, of Christian nations and have them work together in common cause on issues that would build unity and goodwill. The model was exemplified in Massarelli's account of the arrival of the first French bishops at the Council:

There arrived in Trent four French bishops, namely the Archbishop of Aix, the Bishops of Clermont, Riez and Agde. They were received very graciously and accompanied by many prelates and by Señor Diego, ambassador of the emperor, and by the Spanish Bishops of Geense and Astorga and many other Spaniards. It is a good sign that the French and Spanish now honour each other given that for so many years they have been enemies in such great wars.⁷⁵

But the rapprochement was fairly short-lived as two of the French prelates left Trent before the Council opened and they were not replaced. No German bishops or envoys took part either.

In its first eighteen months the Council actually exacerbated instability and conflict in Europe. While Charles V held out some slight hope that the German princes or their envoys and bishops would attend the Council,

74 Hallman, p. 33.

75 'Vennero in Trento quattro vescovi Francesi, cioè l'arcivescovo Aquense, il vescovo Claramonti, Rienz et Adense. Furono ricevuti molto gratamente et accompagnati da molti prelati et dal Señor Diego, ambasciatore dell' imperatore, et dal vescovo Geennense et Astorga, Spagnuoli, et da molti altri Spagnuoli. Buon segno, che li Francesi et Spagnuoli hora si honorano insieme, che già tanti anni sono stati con sì grande guerra insieme inimici', Massarelli, 5 August 1545, *C.T.*, Vol. I, p. 230.



perhaps some Protestants too, and that some compromises would issue, he gave up that hope by early 1546. Luther died on 18 February 1546 but it was abundantly evident that Lutheran doctrines and practices were by then embedded in much of German society. Moreover, that German princes would use Lutheranism to rally resistance to imperial rule. Charles had been considering war as a means of resolving the German situation since early in 1545. As he managed to consolidate allegiances with some of the Protestant princes, such as Maurice of Saxony and Albrecht and Joachim of Brandenburg, he saw the possibility of victory increase. The deciding impetus came in a treaty that Charles concluded with Paul in June 1546. Under its terms, Paul would supply 12,000 troops and 700,000 ducats towards war against the remaining Protestant princes of the Schmalkaldic League (the Protestant territories of the Empire). The war was to be pursued under the banner of peace and concord. The opening of the treaty proclaimed:

Given that for many years Germany has been disturbed and oppressed by heresy, from which it has suffered infinite damage and calamity and put itself in danger of total destruction and ruin while giving widespread scandal, and having provided its territories ample time and means of returning to peace and union, it is now evident, after the convocation of a General Council in Trent, that the Protestants and Schmalkaldic League will not submit themselves to the Council decisions [...]. Thus it has seemed fitting to His Holiness and His Imperial Majesty to sign the capitulations herein for the honour of God and for the welfare of Christendom and particularly that of the said Germany.⁷⁶

The treaty went on to commit the emperor and pope to imminent war against the Schmalkaldic League and the Protestants in order to return them to the true faith and obedience to the Apostolic See. Thus, any arrangements with defeated parties on religious questions would be negotiated with the pope.

76 'Trovandosi la Germania da molti anni in qua perturbata et vessata dalle heresie, dalle quali le sono seguiti et segono infiniti danni et calamità, con pericolo de la sua destruttione et rovina et con scandalo di molti altri, et havendosi procurato la quiete et unione di quella provincia già tanto tempo et per tante vie, et vedendosi che dopo la convocazione del concilio universale in Trento li Protestanti et Smalchaldiani hanno detto che non sono per sottomettersi a la determinazione di esso concilio, la apertione del quale fu fatta la terza domenica del advento proximo passato, et seguito doppoi più sessioni per attendere con la gratia del Dio al suo felice progresso è parso a Sua Santità et Sua Maestà di fermar ad honor di Dio et beneficio publico della Christianità et particolare della detta Germania la infrascripta capitulatione', *Nuntiaturberrichte*, 6 June 1546, Vol. 9, p. 576. Full text of the Treaty pp. 575-578.

The war was comparatively swift. Due to poor military planning, the League failed to take some initial advantages and soon troops of the Empire and papacy were steadily taking territory in the upper Danube Valley. By December 1546 the tide was inexorably against the League. At this time the treaty between the emperor and pope expired and Paul refused to renew it after a series of frictions, particularly over danger to the Council from nearby battles and Paul's consequent wish to transfer the Council to Lucca, as well as concessions of religious toleration which Charles made to defeated German regions without consulting Paul. The imperial troops remained in the ascendancy, though, and Charles gained complete control over Germany on 24 April 1547 when the Elector of Saxony was soundly defeated in a battle at Mühlberg.

By this time tensions with France that had arisen during the early stages of the Council had also receded. The always fragile peace between Charles and Francis had frayed and strained during 1546. Francis saw opportunities for France in the Schmalkaldic War and began making overtures to the Protestant princes to form an alliance with him and Henry VIII with whom Francis had made a treaty at the same time as the one between Charles and Paul.⁷⁷ But the deteriorating health of both Henry and Francis meant that the possibility of their participation in any new conflict gradually faded. Henry died on 28 January 1547 and Francis died a couple of months later on 31 March. Pope Paul remarked that the latter event could well be seen as a gift from heaven.⁷⁸ It was certainly a circuit-breaker as the new French king, Henry II, was less aggressive than his father and did not believe he had the funds for any war of substance in the short-term.⁷⁹ Charles was also tired of war, for the time being, so peace between the Empire and France held for the remainder of Paul's pontificate.

Repelling the assaults of the infidels

Like most Renaissance popes, Paul had originally hoped to inspire a new crusade that would conquer the Ottoman Empire. Ever the realist, though, by the time of the Trent Indiction he had modified this aim to enabling the Council to do 'whatsoever is needful for repelling those assaults of barbarians and infidels with which they seek the overthrow of all Christendom'.⁸⁰ The

77 The Treaty of Ardres-Guînes between France and England was concluded on 7 June 1546. For this and Francis' alliance overtures see Brandi, pp. 545 and 562.

78 'Sua Santità parlando poi di questa morte del Re mostrò che fosse sortita divinamente dal cielo', Report of Bonifacio Ruggieri to Duke of Ferrara, 9 April 1547, ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 41, c. 248-IX, fol. 34, de-coded section.

79 Setton, p. 485.

80 Pope Paul III, 'Initio nostri huius Pontificatus', in Waterworth, p. 11.



Council Fathers had ramped up the rhetoric again proclaiming a goal of 'the crushing and complete removal (*extinctionem*) of the enemies of the Christian name'.⁸¹ But the underlying process remained the same: let us achieve *Pax et Concordia* in Europe, then form a united force against the infidel. The inability of the Council to achieve that first aim meant that the second was never going to occur. As it turned out, events outside the Council, again, led to an alternative emerging.

Throughout the early 1540s, Barbarossa had continued to harass and pillage the southern coast of Italy and its islands. On 29 June 1543 he had even sailed up to the mouth of the Tiber creating major alarm in the city.⁸² Early in 1545 reports began filtering through to Rome that, as by now usual, a major Turkish expedition of troops and galleys was being prepared for the Spring.⁸³ Within a couple of months, though, these reports diminished. In fact, Barbarossa had retired to his palace in Istanbul and died there the following year. Suleiman had by no means given up his designs on Europe, but he was currently preoccupied with an expedition to invade Persia. Charles and Ferdinand, therefore, took the opportunity to sound out Suleiman on possibilities for a truce. At Trent, in May 1545, Massarelli recorded that two of Charles' envoys had passed through the city on their way to Venice to join up with the French ambassador there and travel on with him to Constantinople to seek a truce of five years.⁸⁴ The negotiations went back and forward and were inhibited by inducements from both Francis, for Suleiman to side with him in attacks on Frederick and Charles, and from Protestant princes to join with them against the Empire in exchange for the remaining imperial territory in Hungary and the whole of Austria. But eventually an Ottoman-Imperial truce of five years was ratified, part of which included Ferdinand agreeing to pay 30,000 ducats to Suleiman to retain imperial territory in Hungary.⁸⁵ During Paul's time, the Council made no more mention of the Turks.

81 Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2, p. 660.

82 Setton, p. 470. Barbarossa was under orders from Suleiman not to attack papal lands at this stage.

83 Setton, p. 486.

84 'Il Signore Don Diego et Messer Gerardo (Veltwyck), secretario Cesareo, partirono di Trento alle 19 hore verso Venetia. La causa della loro andata è che detto secretario sta per andare al Turco insieme con Monsignore di Monluc, oratore di Francia in Venetia, per concludere con esso Turco una tregua, la quale un pezzetto fa si tratta, et mandarla ad essecutione per 5 anni, si potranno, o altro tempo, che saranno concordì, Massarelli, 31 May 1545, *C.T.*, Vol. 1, p. 197.

85 Setton, p. 485.



Overall, the early years of the Council saw modest advances in the definition of doctrine and dealing with the heretics, in the promotion of residence in dioceses and benefices, in the maintenance of peace between the princes, and the lessening of the Ottoman threat. The latter two had nothing to do with the Council but they were achieved on Paul's watch and, as far as the Romans were concerned, he was worthy of credit. Many remembered Clement who delivered them to disaster and they were grateful for fifteen years of safety in the midst of an unstable world. On the broader European scene, those who had hoped that the Council would usher in a new age of reform realised they would have to wait for a new age on many fronts.

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8. Reform in the Twilight Years

Abstract

The interplay of honour and reform continued in the last years of Pope Paul's pontificate. With the Council transferred to Bologna and most of the prominent reformers either dead or retired, the movement for reform was left languishing. Yet Paul was aware that reform was unfinished business and that if he could keep it under his control, it would bring him honour to stimulate the movement once more. In his last year, Paul made attempts to bring influential bishops to Rome to consider reform possibilities. Those efforts were still in train when Paul died. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the course of reform under Paul and on how culture shaped events in this period.

Keywords: Farnese territory; Paul III death; cultural narratives; theatre of Rome

On 28 February 1548 Pope Paul III celebrated his eightieth birthday. He had been considered old when he assumed the papacy at age sixty-six. By now his age was a constant backdrop to the affairs of his pontificate. Thus, in 1544, in preparation for the Council, Paul had renewed his binding instructions on what was to happen regarding a papal election if he should die while the Council was in progress.¹ Around 1546, he wrote his *Ricordi* for his grandson, Alessandro, acknowledging that his time was near and giving advice about promoting the family interests under the next papacy.² On the family side, news of even minor ailments prompted requests for

1 See the Bull 'Ad prudentis patrisfamilias officium spectat', 19 November 1544, *C.T.*, Vol. IV, pp. 388-389. The aim was to prevent any resurgence of the conciliarism that flowed from the Council of Constance at which 25 bishops joined the cardinals in electing Martin V. Thus Paul mandated that, should he die during the Council, the conclave was to take place in Rome or a city of the Papal States and the electors were to be cardinals only.

2 Pope Paul III, *Ricordi* to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, c.1546, BAV, Barb. lat., 5366, fol. 135r.

reassurance from Farnese relatives, his grandchildren in particular.³ In fact, Paul's health was fairly stable and he remained as engaged and attentive as ever to the issues of the day. Of these, the Council and the Farnese patrimony received his particular attention. Both these hinged on his relationship with the emperor.

Over the course of 1547 Paul's relationship with Charles fell into an abyss. Added to their conflict over the Council's transfer to Bologna and Charles' toleration of Protestant doctrine and practice in Germany came a shocking imperial attack on the Farnese family. On 10 September 1547, agents of the Imperial Viceroy of Milan, Ferrante Gonzaga, murdered Paul's son, Pierluigi, and Gonzaga quickly took possession of the Farnese territory of Piacenza.⁴ It soon emerged that Charles had at least condoned if not conspired in the assassination of Pierluigi and the invasion. As well as Charles' discomfort at the proximity of the new Duchy of Parma and Piacenza to imperial territory, the immediate trigger seemed to be Pierluigi's apparent support for a plot to overthrow the imperial admiral Andrea Doria who ruled over Genoa.⁵ Even if true, this was a gross over-retaliation which was widely regarded as an opportunistic grab for territory.⁶ Paul was devastated at the death of his son, the loss of Piacenza, and Charles' affront to himself and the Farnese family.⁷ He was also gravely concerned about further aggressive steps that Charles might take, especially as two imperial envoys appeared in Bologna

3 There are, for example, several letters in the Parma archives, from August 1547, by the pope's Chamberlain, assuring Farnese grandchildren that His Holiness was recovering well from nasal and stomach complaints and that 'del resto Sua Santità sta bene e gagliarda', letter of Bernardino della Croce to Ottavio Farnese, 21 August 1547, ASPr, Casa e Corte Farnesiana, b. 17, fasc. 3, fol. 235. See also fol. 240 and fol. 305.

4 The instigation by Gonzaga was quickly known in Rome: 'A Sua Santità s'è andata maggiormente confermando l'opinione ch'ella teneva che Don Ferrando avesse tenuto mano al caso di Piacenza', Report of Averardo Serristori to Cosimo de' Medici, 15 September 1547, *Legazioni di Averardo Serristori*, p. 161.

5 Geoffrey Parker, *Emperor: A New Life of Charles V*, pp. 338–340.

6 In coded sections of his report, the Modenese ambassador wrote of the view in Rome that the 'calamità' which had befallen the house of Farnese was fundamentally due to the 'cupidità del Imperatore' and warned his master that the imperialists not only had designs on Piacenza and Parma, but also on Reggio and Modena. Report of Bonifacio Ruggieri to Duke of Ferrara, 21 September 1547, ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 41, c. 248-XI, fol. 5, de-coded section.

7 Writing to the papal nuncio at the imperial court, Cardinal Farnese recounted the recent events and said with diplomatic restraint: 'et così si sta anche di presente finchè si intenda la volontà della Maestà Sua, di mente della quella non potiamo mai pensare che tanta sceleragine si sia commessa, et che ella per la sua solita giustitia e grandezza di animo, oltre alla particolare affetione che ha sempre mostrata a madama et al duca, sia per tolerarla', Letter of Alessandro Farnese to Giovanni Poggio, 16 September 1547, *Nuntiaturberichte*, Vol. 10, p. 114.

and declared to the Council that, because of the guilt and negligence of the Fathers and the pope and the resulting storms and tempests threatening the Church, the emperor was prepared to take the Church under his own protection.⁸

It was a galling turn of events that the emperor, who was meant to be the greatest papal defender in Christendom, was now the pope's greatest rival. In Paul's view, he had ceaselessly tried to forge a relationship with Charles, through personal meetings, through diplomatic agents and correspondence, through joint military exploits, and through creating a bond of blood in the marriage and issue of Ottavio and Margaret. Yet now, in regard to the Church, not only was Charles declining to act to enforce the Council's decrees in German lands, he was tolerating the heretics, usurping papal authority, and threatening to subject the Council and Rome to himself. With regard to the Farnese family, Charles had both plotted to strip the patrimony and the last of Paul's children from him. The significance of this in a world bound by honour was recognised by the new French king, Henry II, just days after Pierluigi's death. As a counterpoint to Charles' affront, Henry inducted Pierluigi's son, Orazio, into France's highest chivalric order, that of St Michael, bestowing the title of Duke in that order on him.⁹

It is to Paul's enduring credit that, throughout what he perceived as egregious assaults and affronts, he did not go over to an alliance with France nor otherwise lose his composure and respond to Charles with violent language or ecclesiastical sanctions. Any of these would have provoked Charles further. Instead, he responded with skilful diplomacy, both through his nuncio at the imperial court, Francesco Sfondrato, and directly with the imperial envoy in Rome, Diego Mendoza. By dealing with present issues, mainly the future of the Council and of Parma and Piacenza, and by trading

8 'invictissimum dominum nostrum Carolum Romanorum imperatorem semper Augustum, defectu, culpa et negligentia vestra et sanctissimi Pauli III Summi Pontificis, ecclesiae procellis et tempestatibus quas metuit ex hoc facto, videtque impendere, totis suis viribus obviam iturum, ejusque protectionem et tutelam omni studio suscepturum', From a speech of the imperial envoy, Francesco Vargas, to the Council Fathers at Bologna, 16 January 1548, in Odorico Raynaldus, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, Vol. 33, p. 277. See also the reports of the envoy, Diego Mendoza, about Paul's fear of losing Rome and the defensive steps he took, *Nuntiaturberichte*, Vol. 10, pp. 570, 572, and 574.

9 Orazio wrote to Paul from the French court expressing his profound grief – 'questa afflitione che è piaciuto a Dio di mandarmi con la perdita così miserabile del mio padre' – and recounting the support and honour accorded to him by Henry II, 'mi habbia visto honorato del ordine di San Michele del quali egli è gran cancelliere et così questa mattina straordinarissimamente et con molto favore Sua Maestà me l'ha dato et col novo titolo di Duca che mi è venuta', 21 September 1547, ASPr, Casa e Corte Farnesiana, b. 18, fasc. 12, unpaginated.

proposals on both rather than raking over the coals of Charles' injuries to him, Paul steered the politics back from precipitous threat towards uneasy stand-off. In doing so, he reasserted his honour as part of the equation. By early 1548 Charles was negotiating on an admittedly tense yet even keel with an assurance to the nuncio that 'as far as he was concerned, he had not moved against nor will he ever move against the dignity of the pope or against the Holy See'.¹⁰

This gave some reassurance in regard to the safety of Rome but did not imply any change to the imperial strategy in Germany. It remained clear that Charles was willing to cede religious obedience for civil obedience. The agreements of toleration that he made throughout Protestant lands were brought together formally in a document called the 'Augsburg Interim' published on 15 May 1548. The full title makes clear why the word Interim was used: 'Declaration of his Roman Imperial Majesty on the observance of religion within the holy Empire until the decision of the General Council'.¹¹ Thus, it made provisions for religious practice in Germany until the Council was restored to Trent where more of the emperor's input into the resolution of German issues was to be accepted. While mainly asserting traditional catholicity, the Interim's formulations were deliberately vague ignoring, for example, Trent's precise definitions on justification and the sacraments. It also permitted marriage of the clergy and communion under both kinds. Overall, Charles left the Lutheran churches to go on as before. To make such provisions without papal consultation or approval continued to be a serious overstepping of the religious mark by the principal Catholic monarch.

With regard to the Council, during previous negotiations, in mid-1547, Cardinal Farnese told the Florentine ambassador that the pope, as a matter of honour, would never give in to Charles' demand that the Council return to Trent.¹² Now, with the landscape vastly changed, Paul showed some flexibility on the issue.¹³ The principal conditions for him were that the Council should both be in the place and dealing with the agenda which were

10 'Finalmente disse che da se non ha tentato nè tentarà mai contra la dignità del pontifice, nè contra quella santa sede', Report of Francesco Sfrondato to Cardinal Farnese, 22 February 1548, *Nuntiaturberichte*, Vol. 10, p. 258.

11 See Pastor, Vol. XII, pp. 412-415 for a summary of the Interim contents.

12 'che il Papa per onore suo non lo tornerebbe mai a Trento', Report of Averardo Serristori to Cosimo de' Medici, 11 June 1547, *Legazioni di Averardo Serristori*, p. 163.

13 See 'Responsio Sanctissimi Domini nostri data ipsi oratori Caesareo in publico consistorio Romae 1 Februarii MDXLVIII', in Odorico Raynaldus, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, Vol. 33, pp. 287-294 and letter from Cardinal Farnese to Francesco Sfrondato, 1 February 1548, *Nuntiaturberichte*, Vol. 10, pp. 243-245.

approved by the pope and free of any external intervention. The Council in free operation was the fulfilment of the pope's word and that its remit continued to be around papally mandated issues of peace, doctrine, moral reform and the infidel, meant that the honour of Paul and the Apostolic See was still in play at the highest religious and political level. Thus, even when negotiations reached a stalemate and Paul recognised that the work of the Council could not proceed, he allowed the bishops in Bologna to leave, on 17 September 1549, but kept the Council open.¹⁴

Similarly, Paul would not surrender a place for the Farnese within the ruling families of Italy. As well as Piacenza, Charles wanted Parma which Ottavio had been swift to fortify after Gonzaga's occupation of Piacenza. Charles could have taken Parma by force but was wary of Paul finally departing his neutrality for an alliance with France. Thus, he began to bargain for Parma with offers that would see the Farnese continue as a ruling house in some other territory. But Paul would not hear of Parma going to Charles: Cardinal Farnese said that such a thing would 'bury the pope alive'.¹⁵ So negotiations went on. Those advising Paul and his family knew the dimensions that would hold weight with them. Thus the ambassador for Cosimo de' Medici, who was imperially aligned, urged Cardinal Farnese to convince his grandfather to accept an offer of Charles on the grounds that: 'the accord with His Majesty would serve universal peace, the best interests of the Apostolic See, the honour of the pope, the benefit and stability of his House, and the upholding and increase of the greatness of His Most Reverend Lordship [the cardinal]'.¹⁶

As 1549 wore on with negotiations yielding little, Paul decided to take Parma out of the equation by ordering that it and Piacenza return to the lands of the Church. Ottavio was to be given Camerino and a considerable sum of money.¹⁷ Paul's last days saw him furious and his family convulsed as Ottavio refused to comply with his grandfather's direction and began framing an alliance with Ferrante Gonzaga, his father's murderer, to expel

14 See Massarelli, *C.T.*, Vol. I, p. 864.

15 'perchè questo non sarebbe altro che sotterrare il Papa vivo', Report of conversation with Cardinal Farnese in a report of Averardo Serristori to Cosimo de' Medici, 9 July 1549, *Legazioni di Averardo Serristori*, p. 203.

16 'l'accordare con Sua Maestà sarebbe con quiete universale, il meglio per la Sede Apostolica, l'onore del papa, l'utile e stabilimento di casa sua, e il mantanimento e aumento della grandezza di Sua Signoria Reverendissima', Report of Averardo Serristori to Cosimo de' Medici, 9 July 1549, *Legazioni di Averardo Serristori*, p. 204.

17 The various proposals in these tortuous negotiations are a regular feature in the reports of the ambassador Bonifacio Ruggieri to the Duke of Ferrara in the latter part of 1549. See ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 42, c. 248-XVI, fol. 16 forward.

papal troops from Parma so that Ottavio could continue on as Duke. This was only avoided as Paul could not bear to leave his life with his family in turmoil and the patrimony unresolved. As a final illness overtook him, he signed an order for the papal commander in Parma to hand over the city to Ottavio.¹⁸

The State of Reform at the End of Paul's Pontificate

In the midst of the fraught events of the late 1540s, reform beyond the issue of episcopal residence was left languishing in the no man's land of Bologna. The desultory discussions in that city were mainly about doctrine, with reform rarely making an appearance. But nothing substantive could be done about either until the imperial bishops rejoined the discussions. On the imperial side, Charles had virtually given up on reform in Rome. The reforming he was most concerned with now was that of the clergy in Germany, in the hope of yet mollifying the Protestants as well as strengthening the control of Catholic bishops in German territories.

In Rome, the dust seemed to have settled over curial reform. No one was pushing the matter. Most of the *Consilium* authors and other reformers had either died or retired to their dioceses to do what they could there. Reginald Pole appeared in consistory from time to time and was occasionally asked by Paul to write on an issue of the Council or doctrine. But, from early 1547, Pole was largely caught up in government of the territory of Bagnoregio near Viterbo.¹⁹ Cervini kept the flame burning within him, but he was given a series of other legations beyond the Council and was also trying to effect reform in his diocese of Gubbio from an enforced distance. Overall, it seemed that, in Rome at least, the era of reform and its champions had passed.

Yet it made one last appearance from the wings and onto the papal stage. It was an appearance that in a number of ways encapsulated Paul III's attitude to reform. Thrown into the mix of negotiations about the Council, throughout 1549 Paul declared that he wished to summon some of the imperial bishops remaining at Trent and some of the papally aligned bishops at Bologna to come to Rome to discuss reform and the state of the Church in general. This was in part a gesture of authority, a response to Charles' presumptuous intrusion into reform of the Church in Germany. Paul was reasserting his universal jurisdiction. Yet it was no mere political feint. The

18 Ottavio managed to hold on to Parma and the Farnese maintained their rule there till 1731.

19 Thomas F. Mayer, *Reginald Pole: Prince and Prophet*, pp. 165-166.



subsequent negotiations and correspondence show that it was a serious proposal, one that indicated Paul's awareness that reform was unfinished business, business that he was not averse to seeing discussed and proposals formulated as long as this occurred directly beneath his eye.

Before issuing formal summonses, Paul made representations about the proposal to Charles through his nuncio at the imperial court, Pietro Bertano, Bishop of Fano. Charles did not reject the proposal but tried to use it as a lever to restart the Council at Trent, saying that he would support the bishops coming to Rome but that anything decided there should be referred for final judgement to the Council which could add or subtract from what was presented from Rome.²⁰ Paul, of course, made it clear that final decisions about reform were for him to make in God's name.²¹ He then went ahead to summon to Rome four bishops at Bologna and four at Trent, ensuring that a range of nationalities were included.²² The bishops at Bologna immediately expressed their willingness to come to Rome. The imperial bishops at Trent delayed while they sought Charles' direction on how to respond. Bertano was directed by Cardinal Farnese, Paul's grandson, to assure Charles that Paul was energetic and committed to this renewed consideration of reform, after which he would do whatever was judged most expedient for the service of God and the benefit of religion.²³ Given this, Bertano told Charles, how could it be possible for His Majesty to impede the imperial bishops from participating 'without grave offence to God, scandal to the world, and his own dishonour?'²⁴ Nevertheless, Charles instructed the bishops at Trent

20 'L'imperatore è contento di mandare una parte delli Prelati di Trento a far la riforma qui (Roma) ma con questa aggiunta *salvo iure Tridentini Concilii* il quale possa poi anco aggiungere et sminuire a quanto si sarà facendo qui', Report of Bonifacio Ruggieri to the Duke of Ferrara, 6 July 1549, ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 42, c. 248-XVI, fol. 16, 3.

21 'circa la riforma Sua Santità in nome di Dio facesse ciò che le pareva', Report of Bonifacio Ruggieri to the Duke of Ferrara, 20 July 1549, ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 42, c.248-XVI, fol. 20, 5.

22 See the letter of Paul III to the imperial Cardinal Pacheco, 18 July 1549, *C.T.*, Vol. XI, pp. 503-504. The Bologna bishops summonsed were Giovanni Hangeste, Archbishop of Noyon, Sebastian Leccavela, Bishop of Naxos, Olaus Magnus, Archbishop of Upsal, and Richard Pate, Bishop of Worcester. The bishops at Trent were Cardinal Pedro Pacheco, Archbishop of Jaen, Giambernardo Diaz, Bishop of Calahorra, Francesco Navarro, Bishop of Badajoz, and Pietro Tagliavia, Archbishop of Palermo.

23 'Sua Santità Dio gratia sta tuttavia sana e gagliarda e ben disposta a consultare quid agendum nella materia della religione, et dopo la consulta far quello che sarà giudicato più espediente per il servizio di Dio et beneficio della detta religione', Letter of Cardinal Farnese to Pietro Bertano, 6 August 1549, *Nuntiaturberichte*, Vol. 11, p. 324.

24 'come potrà la Maestà Vostra impedire questo senza gravissima offesa di Dio, scandolo del mondo et suo dishonore?', Report of Pietro Bertano to Cardinal Farnese, 19 August 1549,

to decline the summons. Thus, Cardinal Pacheco wrote to Paul from Trent saying that he and his brother bishops with him, as humble servants of His Holiness, wished they could comply, but they had already come to Trent, not of their own volition but at the command of the pope, where they were waiting for God to enable them to discern whatever was necessary for the restoration of the Church. Seeing that Trent was the place to deal with the issues that the pope wished to engage, they begged to be excused.²⁵ Paul wrote back that he did not regard their grounds to be excused as legitimate and that, if the reason they went to Trent was his command, he could not see why they would not be consistent and respond to his command on this occasion.²⁶ He reminded them of the duty to obey the head of the Church and renewed his summons to the consultation. Bertano was also instructed to take issue with the emperor once again, reiterating that His Holiness was genuinely trying to provide Christianity with an effective and general reform, with the help of the prelates of Trent and Bologna as well as others, and, with the reform in place, one could also hope to finish the Council having reached an agreement on a third site for it of satisfaction to all. The emperor should not be worried as the pope always kept in mind the honour and convenience of His Majesty and that he had no other goal than service of God and the peace and health of Christianity.²⁷ This, however, yielded no

Nuntiaturberichte, Vol. 11, p. 328.

25 'Sed cum intelligat ipsa apertissime, quibus potissimum de causis universi, qui adsumus Tridentum ad oecumenicum concilium non tam nostra sponte advenimus quam Sanctitatis Vestra iussu coacti sumus: facillime intelliget nihil nos aliud exspectare hic aut praestolari quam ut Deus optimus maximus quae turbata sunt sic componat: ut concordii studio ea pertractari possint, quae ad necessariam ecclesiae restaurationem et summam dei gloriam pertinent. Quae quidem indicto legitime et aperto hic concilio commodissime tractari possunt et confici: quam possum humillime obsecro et oro Santitatis Vestra, ut quando statum totius negotii, cuius causa hic sumus, ita novit, ut neque fusius explicare necesse sit neque fortasse expediat: me si Romam hoc tempore non proficiscor, excusatum habere velit', Letter of Cardinal Pedro Pacheco to Pope Paul III, 25 August 1549, *C.T.*, Vol. XI, p. 508.

26 'Verum considerantes, quemadmodum scribis, te non tua sponte, sed iussu nostro isthuc venisse, haud facile nobis persuadere possumus, quin idem quoque et nunc facias, praesertim cum ad ipsum voceris, cuius gratia te isthuc praestolari significasti', Letter of Paul III to the bishops residing at Trent, 7 September 1549, *C.T.*, Vol. XI, pp. 508-509.

27 'si provedesse ancora al resto della Christianità con una buona e generale riformatione da farsi con la presentia de prelati e di Trento e di Bologna et altri; la qual riformatione fatta, si poteva sperare che per finire il concilio si fusse trovato d'accordo un luogo terzo da sodisfare a tutti [...]. Non ha dunque causa Sua Maestà di dolersi in questo, essendo stato l'animo di Sua Beatitudine di far honore e commodo di Sua Maestà quanto al particolare, et quanto al publico di consultare quel che deve fare nel presente stato delle cose un pontefice, che non ha altro fine che il servitio di Dio et la pace et salute della Christianità', letter of Cardinal Farnese to Pietro Bertano, 11 September 1549, *Nuntiaturberichte*, Vol. 11, pp. 340-341.



change in the stance of the imperial bishops. Cardinal Pacheco replied to Paul with similar expressions of submissiveness as in his earlier letter, yet still maintained that Trent was the best place to carry out what the pope intended.²⁸ Writing about any further outreach to the imperial bishops, Cardinal Del Monte offered a warning to Cardinal Farnese that reflected his view of the state things had fallen into since the opening of the Council: '(be careful) not to walk expectantly into a beautiful garden which then turns out to be a maze from which we cannot escape'.²⁹ Negotiations on the pope's proposal continued back and forth into November 1549 on the tenth day of which Paul III died.³⁰

When the news of Paul III's death spread through Rome the response was unexpected: the city remained subdued and tranquil. Typically, the period after a pope died, the *sede vacante*, was marked by civil disorder, with riots commonplace and statues of the dead pope destroyed.³¹ This time, although people were armed and prepared to defend life and property, almost nothing happened. The Venetian ambassador, Matteo Dandolo, noted with surprise:

Not only was he (Paul III) not deserted, like many of his predecessors, but both his body and soul having been most admirably tended until death, he was then accompanied with floods of tears from Monte Cavallo to St Peter's [...] and, although it rained hard, there was such a crowd of people of all sorts to kiss his feet that they stood outside the grating, crying *peccavi mea culpa*, and making those within touch the corpse on their behalf, a thing unheard-of [...]. As compared with former vacancies of the Apostolic See, it is singular how few outrages are committed.³²

28 Letter of Cardinal Pacheco to Paul III, 11 October 1549, *C.T.*, Vol. XI, pp. 517-518.

29 'et similmente de non entrar in qualche giardino bello in prospettiva, che dipoi riesca un laberinto et non ne possiamo uscire', Letter of Cardinal Giovanni Del Monte to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, 11 September 1549, *C.T.*, Vol. XI, p. 510.

30 Paul had fallen ill on 7 November with stomach problems and fever and gradually declined over the next few days until on the 10th: 'Nostro Signore questa mattina fra le xiii et xiiii hore rendette lo spirito a Dio', Report of Bonifacio Ruggieri to the Duke of Ferrara, 10 November 1549, ASMo, Estense, Ambasciatori Roma, b. 42, c. 248-XVII, fol. 27, 1.

31 See Laurie Nussdorfer, 'The Vacant See: Ritual and Protest in Early Modern Rome', pp. 173-189 and John M. Hunt, 'The Conclave from the "Outside In": Rumor, Speculation, and Disorder in Rome during Early Modern Papal Elections', pp. 355-382.

32 Report of Matteo Dandolo to Venetian Senate, 13 November 1549, translated in Rawdon Brown, ed., *Calendar of State Papers*, Vol. V, pp. 274-276.

The Romans recognised that they had much to be thankful for from this man who had dominated the city for the last fifteen years. Although there were still scars of the Sack in the built environment and the social psyche, the city had largely recovered. Most fundamentally, Rome had remained free of attack despite a series of very real threats. The economy was stable, civic and religious life were restored, and a building and street design program had continued apace throughout the pontificate. Moreover, carnival, religious processions and other forms of display in public spaces punctuated daily life with spectacle. Under this pope, a Roman, the theatre of Rome had returned in all its magnificence.

In considering aspects of Paul's pontificate, a central aim of this book has been to deepen the historiographical understanding of how culture shapes people and events. The explorations of the identity formation of Paul III and of the dynamics of the movement for reform under him are useful case studies of how each generation hands on to the next a set of narratives about the world and how to function in it. The narratives become prisms through which people view themselves and the world and, because the prisms are shared, they produce social expectations of how to construct oneself and how to interact with others. In other words, as Geertz says, culture tends to control.³³ Of course, because the narratives in a culture have their origins in subjective reflection and social discourse, they are rarely all-encompassing or static, they are usually permeable to further reflection and discourse. This means that there are often contested elements of the narratives or gaps which they do not cover. This leads to the necessity to choose between competing concepts within versions of the narrative or to seek an alternative narrative. Nevertheless, a dominant set of narratives can exercise powerful cultural control. The book has shown that in the social and ecclesiastical domains of the cinquecento, concepts of honour and tradition functioned as controlling narratives. The dominant set of narratives within the rhetoric of honour and tradition, along with the way honour played out in politics, significantly constrained Pope Paul and his reformers in framing strategies for change. In this sense, the epitaph on the tomb of Paul's predecessor Adrian VI was borne out: 'Alas! How even a most righteous man's power to act depends on the times in which he happens to live'.³⁴ Paul III, the *Consilium* authors, and the most effective opponents

33 Geertz, p. 44.

34 'Proh dolor! Quantum refert in quae tempora vel optimi cuiusque virtus incidat'. A diversely translated inscription, the translation here substantially follows that of Lewis W. Spitz, *The*

of the *Consilium* were all righteous men with genuine aspirations for reform of the Church. Yet the social world in which they lived thwarted those aspirations. To succeed they would have had to construct a new social world which could have been seen as bringing advantage across society. They would also have needed the charisma and social protection to move towards it. Those dimensions aligned around Martin Luther in Germany, but the cultural forces were far and away stronger in Rome. Even astute and committed reformers, like Sadoletto, could not break away from those forces either in theory or personal practice. The most that had some promise were Paul and the Council's small steps towards episcopal residence, but it was many decades before those steps became a movement that changed the culture in Rome.

The analysis here has given most attention to honour since I have maintained that, in the theatre society of Italy and in the courts of Europe, honour was the key principle of identity construction and often the deciding factor in political decision-making as European leaders asserted their identity within events. On a daily basis, honour was a critical driver of the construction of self and interactions in society. Although not without contested areas of understanding, overall honour had a taken for granted actuality that meant it was always in play on the social stage.

In considering reform, I have pointed to the contest on the social stage between social virtue and Christian virtue in the understanding of honour. I readily admit that this is a distinction that many of the players would not have recognised. The bishop granting benefices to his relatives thought he was doing no more than his Christian duty. It is a distinction which proved difficult to see given the strength of humanist rhetoric which extolled honour and painted the magnificence of prelates as a homage to the magnificence of God and as a sign of the prelates' rightful place at the peak of the human hierarchy. Yet there was a real contest between honour as humility and service of the flock and honour as magnificence and lordship over the flock.

Alessandro Farnese accepted the latter interpretation, one that surrounded him as he grew up and rose through the ecclesial structure to the papacy. As part of the socialization process of the time, he unconsciously imbibed the cultural codes of aristocratic honour and throughout his life consciously reinforced them to himself and to others. His understanding of the behaviour required by his honour was that it be marked by loyalty,

Renaissance and Reformation Movements, Vol. 2, p. 470. The tomb is in the church of Santa Maria dell'Anima in Rome.



constancy and the fostering of good order. While some around him behaved with expediency, indulgence, or self-aggrandizement for its own sake, his honour would not permit him to follow these paths. His leadership of his family and the high roles he took in the Church were conducted according to how he perceived the expectations of the social world for these roles. That conduct issued from the role welded to the aristocratic self. He was not a peasant or a merchant or a monk, he was a noble. Humanist preachers had already crafted the papal role in noble, and indeed sometimes imperial, terms. While striving to act out the humanist script, Farnese added to it the informal aristocratic script based in family honour.

Once pope, Farnese's openness to reform can be seen in terms of fidelity to the role and to the honour that undertaking reform would bring him. Again, part of the script of humanist orators and writers was that a faithful pontiff would reform the Church and in so doing would bring honour to God and to himself. But Paul needed to be shown how to play out this script in practical terms within the constraints of the cultural imperatives that had given rise to the curial system and to the abuses within it. He was not a strategic thinker or a charismatic leader, let alone a boundary breaker. He recognised that in many areas he needed advice and, indeed, his strength was that he consulted, sought out experts and stakeholders, weighed options and then decided and acted with firmness of purpose. This worked well in areas like patronage, politics, and military strategy. In the ecclesiastical sphere, though, his advisers were hampered by tradition, a deep-seated orientation to moving forward by looking backwards that had been reinforced by the humanist respect for antiquity. So while Paul chose reform advisers of high intellect and integrity, they could not show him the way. Moreover, at the same time as they assured him that he would gain honour from reform, they themselves were reinforcing the abuses that needed reform. They did so by actively participating in the labyrinthine system of regulations, fees and protocols for access to Church office precisely because it was built to facilitate networks of obligation and patronage whose cultural aim ultimately was to yield honour.

The tomb of Paul III, by Guglielmo della Porta in St Peter's Basilica, has the figure of the pope seated with his right arm outstretched and the hand palm down. The gesture echoes that of the statue of Marcus Aurelius which Paul had moved to the Campidoglio. It is a gesture of power and peace. Paul III's reign was indeed one that pursued power for the papacy, for Rome and his family, and peace for Christendom that involved a restored Church once more blessed by concord. Like all leaders of high standing his

actual achievements were mixed, the constraints on his aspirations many. Throughout the long and often fraught years, though, Paul held fast to the source of his aspirations, his honour.

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When Paul III was elected in 1534, hopes arose across Christendom that this pope would at last reform and reunite the Church. During his fifteen-year reign, though, Paul's engagement with reform was complex and contentious. A work of cultural history, this book explores how cultural narratives of honour and tradition, including how honour played out in politics, significantly constrained Pope Paul and his chosen reformers in framing strategies for change. Indeed, the reformers' programme would have undermined the culture of honour and weakened Rome's capacity to ward off current threats of invasion. The study makes a provocative case that Paul called the Council of Trent to contain reform rather than promote it. Nevertheless, Paul and the Council did sow seeds of reform that eventually became central to the Counter-Reformation. This book thus sheds new light on a pope whose relationship to reform has long been regarded as an enigma.

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