

A “Second Counter-Reformation?
Aspects of the pontificate of Pius VI reconsidered”.

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Abstract

Radical transformations came about in the Habsburg Empire and their satellite states during the 1780s, as the Emperor Joseph II embraced the Enlightened reforms and promoted ways in which laws and a new order could be spread. The main opposition towards this sovereign and his reforms came from the Catholic Church. In 1775, shortly after he was declared pope, Pius VI issued a bull (*Inscrutabile divinae*) which was at the same time an anti-Enlightenment manifesto and a warning towards any criticisms within the Church of Rome. In 1781, Joseph II reformed censorship, and in 1782, began a campaign to suppress monasteries belonging to contemplative orders and issued the Edict of Tolerance. In a short period of time, the subjects of the Empire had access to great scholarly works of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe. Under Joseph II the newly generated intellectual culture produced an amazing number of pamphlets, books, and journals/periodicals, the like of which had never been seen before in the Habsburg territories. Public debate on the state, religion, and society accompanied the flood of short tracts, bringing together a group of intellectuals in support of “Josephinism”.

A strong counter-reform movement arose in answer to this reform action; the movement was represented by members of new diplomatic class endowed with greater powers, since they were announced as the pope’s direct representatives abroad. After the suppression of the Jesuit Order, the apostolic nunciatures and printed publications became the instruments of diffusion and control of the Catholic population. The increase in anti-Enlightenment publications and the recall of the community of the faithful back to the orthodoxy was the pretext for a series of measures against the Jews and catholic reformers. Therefore Rome

and Vienna became the centres of a battle whose main objective was the renewal of society or its negation. Compared to “orthodox” historiography and the main research into this topic which state Pius VI’s inadequacy when confronted by the reforms imposed by the Emperor, many of the documents consulted demonstrate a certain capacity on the part of the Church of Rome in not only resisting the wave of reforms introduced by the Hapsburg court, but also in successfully imposing its own political policy in the Italian peninsular at the same time.

The answer from Pius VI led to a series of changes (among which, it should be remembered, the worsening status of the Jews and the end of Jansenism) which left lasting traces in the history of the Church, and even stronger in European history.

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Author's declaration

The work presented in this thesis has all been carried out by myself and has not been submitted previously for a degree at York or any other University.

I hereby certify that no part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication.

Introduction

This thesis analyses some significant aspects the papacy of Pius VI (original name Giovannangelo Braschi, 1775-1799) that have been substantially overlooked in the secondary literature, in order to argue for a reappraisal of his papacy. The following analysis, revolves round three aspects of his policy. The first element is the exacerbation of the laws concerning the Jews subject to the jurisdiction of the Papal State. The extensive nature of these measures had the purpose of strictly preventing any contact between Jews and Catholics and, at the same time, strengthening the Catholic identity by discriminating the Jewish minority.¹ Braschi clearly associated Hebraism with the greater diffusion and success of Enlightenment ideas. The second point takes into account the greater involvement in the Pope's political actions of his nuncios and of the clergy directly under his control. The way this aspect developed after Pius VI's pontificate also needs further consideration.² The third point examines how the press supporting papal supremacy was supported and became stronger in order effectively to oppose Jansenistic ideas that the Viennese and pro-Jansenistic press supported.³

I here define the renewed attitude of closure and intolerance for the non-Catholic world under Pius VI's pontificate in terms of a "second Counter-Reformation". With this word I do not specifically refer to the discussions within the Christian world nor to the theological matters debated by the Counter-

¹ Marina Caffiero, *Legami pericolosi, Ebrei e cristiani tra eresia, libri proibiti e stregoneria* (Torino, 2012), pp. 15 - 16.

² Mario Rosa, *Clero cattolico e società europea nell'età moderna* (Bari, 2006), p. IX.

³ Patrizia Delpiano, *Il governo della lettura, Chiesa e libri nell'Italia del Settecento* (Bologna, 2007), pp. 48 - 49.

Reformation, but I intend to focus on the topic that Catholic historiography has substantially ignored, namely the Inquisition and the suppression of the heresy during Braschi's Papacy.⁴ The Inquisition and book censorship survived into the eighteenth century and, as we will see in the first chapter, Pius VI's initiatives gave them new strength.⁵

The choice of the name Pius, rather than Benedict or Clement was no accident. Moreover it should be interpreted clearly as a conscious choice, given that the new pope did not pay homage to his direct predecessors. On the subject of the choice of the name Pius, Marina Caffiero has written that Braschi decided he viewed himself as a direct successor of the saintly Pius V as pope (1566-72) as he nurtured a profound veneration for him who had strictly observed the precepts of the Council of Trent, who had been the enemy of the Protestants, the creator of the Congregation of the Index and, above all, of the Holy League against the Turks and of the victory at Lepanto. Moreover, Pius V's bull *Hebraeorum Gens* (1569) ordered the expulsion of the Jews from any place of residence within the Papal State, except for the port of Ancona which was an important trade centre of the Papal State and Rome⁶. In particular, the aspects of the first Counter-Reformation that can be found in Pius VI's pontificate are

⁴ This subject does not appear in the historiography on Pius VI, the main researches on his papacy seem to focus on his relationship with the fine arts and the French Revolution which would eventually consecrate him as a martyr of the Church. Refer to the first chapter of this thesis for the bibliographic reference.

⁵ Adriano Prosperi, *Il Concilio di Trento* (Torino, 2001), p. 143.

⁶ This is how the historian Israel comments on the effects of Pius V's bull: "In un sol colpo furono liquidate decine di comunità ebraiche [...] In totale vennero chiuse 108 sinagoghe, poste sotto sequestro dai funzionari papali. Migliaia di profughi furono costretti ad abbandonare le loro case a Orvieto, Viterbo, Forlì, Tivoli, Ravenna, Rimini e molte altre località. [...] La politica inesorabile di Pio V colpì anche gli ebrei dei territori papali francesi, Avignone e il contado Venassino". Jonathan I. Israel, *Gli Ebrei d'Europa nell'età moderna (1550-1750)* (Bologna, 1991), p. 32. Nicole Lemaitre also gives a severe opinion on Pius V's anti-Jewish policy: "Le pontificat marque une nouvelle étape dans l'assainissement matériel et moral de Rome [...] et plus encore par la purification religieuse, sinon ethnique, au moyen de l'aggravation de l'enfermement des juifs dans le ghetto, afin de les forcer à se convertir". Nicole Lemaitre, *Dictionnaire historique de la papauté*, p. 1331. See also Caffiero, *Legami pericolosi*, p. 232.

linked to the exacerbation of the laws against the Jews within the Papal State. For the new Pope the Jewish Question stopped being a mere theological matter and acquired political connotations almost immediately. At the very beginning of his pontificate (1775), the publication of an edict against the Jews gathered a compendium of the punitive-restrictive articles of the previous papal edicts on the Jews which dealt with all aspects of Jewish life.⁷ For instance, it forbade the Jews to read the Talmud and to spend the night outside the ghetto. Pius VI's edict was not limited to all the previous regulations which worsened the life in the ghettos, but it also introduced new ones. Some of these articles were not intended to aggravate the Jews' conditions, but rather to blank out their memory and identity. Among these there were the new regulations on funerals that forbade the Jews to use memorial stones or inscriptions or to say the Psalms or to light grave lamps.⁸ Among the 44 articles of the *'Editto sopra gli ebrei*, the twenty-first had an innovative political importance as it revoked the prerogatives of bishops and law courts of "any dignity, rank, office, or pre-eminence" to temporarily suspend the effects of the edict. These measures attested to Pius VI's intention of distinguishing himself from his predecessor (Clement XIV) as far as the resolution of the Jewish "problem" was concerned.⁹

1.1. Research methods and objectives

The research which follows is based on new and previously under-utilized archival sources. In particular the opening of the Archive of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (in 1998) has made it possible to

⁷ The edict on the Jews, issued on 5th April 1775, grouped together all the oppressive laws against the Jews that had been promoted by the past popes and increased their effects. Biblioteca Casanatense, Per.est. 18 - 76.98, ff. 3-5. *Editto a stampa*, Roma, 1775, April 20.

⁸ The failure to comply with these rules entailed the demolition of their sepulchres, the payment of a fine, the possibility to go to prison and other sanctions.. *Idem*, article XI and XII, f. 4.

⁹ *Idem*, ff. 3-5.

effectively use some data relating to censorship and anti-Jewish laws. The archives of the Italian Jewish communities, which have up to now been used by scholars principally for research purposes on religious matters linked to the Jews or to the history of Rome, have provided my research with important documents. In addition, I have also used the existing secondary literature, mostly from the 19th century (which is quite ample regarding general historic context, though fairly incomplete in the documentation of individual events). My research focuses on a period of ten years (1780 – 1790) in the history of diplomatic relations between the Papal States and the Empire. In 1787 the tension between the Habsburgs and the papacy reached its climax (with, amongst other events, the expulsion of the Apostolic nuncio Marcantonio Zondadari and the popular revolts which occurred in Prato and Pistoia in Tuscany following the Synod of Pistoia). In fact, the correspondence between the Apostolic nuncios and the Secretary of State showed a disregard for the traditional prudence normally demonstrated in communications by Apostolic ambassadors, with the introduction of more audacious language directly inspired by the anti-Enlightenment tones adopted by the contemporary papal briefs. The rationale of my project aims at examining, from a diplomatic perspective, the features of the political choices that the papacy adopted in relationship to “Josephinism”, which I consider as the changes that Joseph II made in the ecclesiastical field and as his intention to put religion under state control.¹⁰ A primary aspect that has emerged from my analysis is Pius VI’s vigilant efforts to make the new doctrines serve the defense of the faith in Catholic Europe, and particularly in the Habsburg Empire.

¹⁰ I will deal with the word Josephinism in the second chapter, but in this case I specifically refer to the definition suggested by Maass, that is Staatskirchthum, “state domination of the church” or “Caesaropapism”. Ferdinand Maass, *Josephinismus* (Vienna, 1961), pp. XVIII-XX.

The majority of my research was done at the Vatican Secret Archives and the Hof-und Staatsarchiv in Vienna. Further research was carried out in the collections of the Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede, Archivo General de Simancas (Spain), Archivio Storico della Comunità Ebraica di Roma, the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati in Siena, Archivio della Comunità Israelitica in Siena, the British Library, and the National Archives at Kew, London. Additional investigations, mainly regarding French policy in the Austrian Netherlands, were carried out in the Archives Nationales in Paris. On the basis of the above, a systematic reconstruction has been made of both the diplomatic phases and actions that the Papacy and Empire undertook between the year 1782 and 1787, and to reconstruct the diplomatic dynamics of the Papacy and the Empire in the light of French, Spanish and English diplomatic envoys.

The study starts by analyzing the impact of Josephine reforms in the context of the Habsburg Empire in terms of policy, administration and doctrine. In particular, during the second year of Joseph's reign as sole ruler (1781) the pope was moved to travel to Vienna to meet the Emperor in order to find a political solution. One of Joseph II's reforms was considered more dangerous than others by the diplomatic circles in the Church, namely the Edict of Tolerance which granted partial religious freedom to the confessions living within the Empire's borders.¹¹ This overview is an essential basis of this study that will subsequently address other aspects of Joseph II's decade of rule. It should be noted that there are no comprehensive studies on this subject at an

¹¹ Derek Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. II, 1780-1790 (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 168-70.

international level¹². Published studies about diplomatic and other actions by the nunciatures in the Empire territory, particularly about Brussels's nunciature, are even more limited.¹³

The discovery and analysis of the sources show the nuncio's political *function* to be decisive, as an effective representation of papal rights. Given the marginal attention paid to this aspect of papal diplomatic policy up to now, the nunciatures' strategic importance in certain matters should be underlined. In fact, I have been able to locate a large number of memoirs of an anecdotal nature as well as private correspondence between the apostolic nuncios and the most prominent political figures whom they met during their diplomatic activities.¹⁴ The period immediately before the French Revolution will be investigated with the support of brief reflections about the political importance of nuncios within wide-ranging religious diplomacy. In response to the archival documents, my research has been oriented towards a more thorough analysis of events that have not been given adequate attention previously. There are five major points to note here. Firstly, the nuncio and the nunciature directly represent the Pope. As Owen Chadwick has noted:

¹² The long-awaited second part of the biography of *Joseph II* cited in the previous footnote does not focus particular attention on the diplomatic relations between the Papacy and the Empire, but is limited to relating the theories already expressed in previous writings. In fact Beales had expressed most of his theories on the relations between the Papacy and the Empire in his work: "Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth-century Europe". Beales, *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth-century Europe* (London, 2005), pp. 207–61.

¹³ Jan Craeybeckx, "The Brabant revolution: a conservative revolt in a backward country?", *Acta Historiae Neerlandica* 4 (1970), pp. 49 – 83; Eugène Hubert, "La mission et le papiers du nonce Zondadari (1786-1787)", *Bulletin de la Commission Royale d'Histoire*, 84 (1920), pp. 111–84; Dries Vanysacker, *Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi (1725 – 1792): an enlightened ultramontane* (Bruxelles, 1995), pp. 258–66.

¹⁴ See Chapter 3, pp. 184-208.

In Catholic countries the nuncio was more than a mere ambassador.¹⁵

The nuncio carried out diplomatic duties, but: he was also an agent of the Catholic Church to see that the decrees of Trent were enforced. Therefore he grew larger than any envoy or newsvendor.¹⁶

Secondly, the material and moral responsibility of the nunciatures in Vienna and Brussels should be taken into consideration. The imperial chancellery and Joseph II accused the nuncio of Brussels of having distributed copies of the papal brief *Super soliditate* and in this way of having provoked the rebellion of seminarians at the University of Louvain, which then escalated to openly disobeying to imperial edicts.¹⁷ Thirdly, one should note the importance of the role that the nuncios actually played in the imperial territories in the “Josephine decade” (1780-1790), with special focus on 1787. Next, one should note the change in ecclesiastical policy in response to changing European balances of power.

The first chapter presents the fundamental stages of the origins of Pius VI’s “Second Reform”. In approaching this specific subject, which deals to a large extent with the figure of the Pontiff, the research was focused, above all, on specific points such as the internal State government, the worsening of Jewish legal conditions within the Papal State, the papal foreign policy (with special

¹⁵ Owen Chadwick, *The Popes and European Revolution* (Oxford, 1981), p. 318.

¹⁶ *Idem.*

¹⁷ HHSTA, Belgien, count of Belgioioso to Kaunitz, f. 167r, f. 200r.

reference to the French Revolution) and ecclesiastic politics, limiting analysis exclusively to certain periods of his ministry.¹⁸

One factor which has perhaps obscured appreciation of this aspect of Pius' pontificate is the fact that interest in Pius VI's overall politico-theological plan diminished immediately after the beginning of the 19th century because philosophical interpretations by writers of the same period were no longer pertinent. The pope's own death in exile, together with the vicissitudes suffered by the papacy under Napoleon has distracted historians' attention from these aspects of Pius' pontificate. Therefore, my thesis was born out of the intention of demonstrating that, in his attempt to repair the torn fabric of European Catholicism, the role of Pius VI was fundamentally active and by no means passive, as has been stated in so much of the historiographical literature.¹⁹ With this aim, I wish to investigate the numerous activities of the pope and I have been able to discover that his political plan became apparent immediately after his election, to be continued consistently throughout the long period of his pontificate. Therefore, the topics to be considered in the first chapter will deal with the biographical reconstruction of the most important moments of his career before his election, the instruments and the objectives for battle that were identified almost immediately by the newly elected pope, and the changes brought about by his action during his pontificate.

¹⁸ Pietro Baldassari, *Relazioni delle avversità e patimenti del Glorioso papa Pio VI, negli ultimi tre anni del suo pontificato* (Modena, 1840-43); Augustin Barruel, *Histoire civile, politique et religieuse de Pie VI, écrite sur des mémoires authentiques par un française catholique romain* (Paris, 1801); Beccattini, *Storia di Pio VI* (2 vols., Venezia, 1801-2); Bourgoing, *Mémoires historiques et philosophiques sur Pie VI et son pontificat, jusqu'a sa mort: ou l' on trouve des détails curieux sur sa vie privée, sur ses querelles avec les diverses puissances de l' Europe, sur les causes qui ont amené le renversement du trône pontifical, et sur la révolution de Rome*, tirés des sources les plus authentiques (Paris, 1799); Ferrari, *Vita Pii VI cum appendice* (Padova, 1802).

¹⁹ Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners, A History of the Popes* (3 edn, London, 2006), p. 260; Jeffrey Collins, *Papacy and politics in eighteenth – century Rome, Pius VI and the arts* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 290–98.

The second chapter presents the new course of reforms introduced by Joseph II and Pius VI's first reactions to these reforms. In 1781, Joseph II abolished censorship, inaugurating the season of Enlightenment throughout the Empire. Vienna became the largest centre that promoted the new philosophy which influenced debates on culture, society and religion. Analysis of the Viennese case raises a number of questions which will be developed in my dissertation. In particular, it is necessary to analyze whether this first reform by Joseph II as sole ruler should be considered a simple adhesion to the cultural and philosophical movement which arrived from France or rather, as the first phase of the reforms which aimed at increasing the power and prestige of the Emperor.²⁰ The political events should also be read through the production of books and pamphlets which fed a certain debate in intellectual networks of the era and which were not overlooked by the Church. In this preliminary phase, historiography in reference to publishing during this period has focused on the phenomenon of the quantity of printed works – or rather, the increase in their production, the possibility of access to works which had been prohibited, the circulation of ideas that united the intellectuals of Europe, without focusing on the strategic importance of Joseph's reform.²¹ The abolition of censorship was only the first reform which would have, according to the intentions of Joseph II, threatened the authority (both political and moral) of the Pope.

The Pope's visit to Vienna in 1782 can be considered as a first attempt at dialogue or as a clarification of the consciousness of the Roman Church in

²⁰ Most biographers of Joseph II consider that the combination of the Enlightenment education he received during his youth, as well as governmental necessity formed an idealistic cohesion that characterised the reforms established by the Emperor. Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. I, pp. 20–68.

²¹ Ernst Wangermann, *Die Waffen der Publizität. Zum Funktionswandel der politischen Literatur unter Joseph II* (Vienna, 2004), p. 11.

finding itself at a historical turning point which excluded it from the Imperial Court and threatened to circumscribe its political influence within the borders of the Papal State. The research into communication between the Nunciatures and Rome and contemporary historiography (to the events being described) attempts to find an answer to the question which involves the most fundamental concepts concerning papal authority, or rather, the Church's jurisdiction and the teachings of the Pope as the Vicar of Christ on Earth. Both these concepts must be touched upon and developed in order to comprehend the reactions of the Pope and his ambassadors. The documents on Giovanni Angelo Braschi's visit to Vienna can provide an example.

The third chapter concerns the answer that the pope wished to give in response to the reforms proposed by the imperial government within the diplomatic perspective of the period and urgent needs of the papacy. The production of pamphlets will be studied in order to analyse both points of view (papal and imperial). As noted above, concepts such as ecclesiastical jurisdiction and the authority of the Pope and his nuncios are essential for understanding the Church's reactions to Joseph II's reforms. In this chapter, the analysis focuses on the Church's diplomatic actions in the Eighteenth century, specifically on the use of nuncios and nunciatures by the Holy See as direct agents of papal control in the place of bishops, who were often considered unreliable because they were thought to be easily influenced by reformist thinking (such as Jansenism or Enlightenment) or by absolutist rulers in their dioceses. Following the suppression of the Jesuit order in 1773, the attempt to strengthen papal authority took substance through the nuncios, the direct external representatives of the Church's State. The matters considered in this chapter lead us to note a changing diplomatic relationship between the nuncios and the Papal Secretary of State,

both in the larger context of the imperial territory, and in a specific context that will be the subject of further investigation in the following, fourth chapter.

This chapter aims at defining the diplomatic environment more clearly, with its true dynamisms and the relations/ratios of strength and weakness between the nuncios and the authorities of the host countries. In that way it will be possible to understand (as far as possible) the political agenda of the nuncio of Brussels, Zondadari, his role in the rebellion by the seminarists of Louvain, his field of action, its true extent, and the role of the nuncio as a privileged instrument in the diplomatic activity of Pius VI. The Chapter will present the figure of the nuncio by examining his career in order to understand both his training/education and his motives in his ensuing actions as apostolic nuncio. The analysis of diplomacy, through the nuncios, involves a careful study of Zondadari's behavior, the subject of this chapter, and requires us to observe that these rebellions are a symptom of the endogenous and exogenous ferment that was stirring among European populations in the late Eighteenth century.

Chapter four demonstrates how the particular combination of theological-political-diplomatic factors, anatomised in the previous chapters, played themselves out in two fundamental periods, not only during the papacy of Pius VI, but also in the period in which the Church assumed a position in opposition to the reforms of Joseph II: 1782-1783 (including the abolition of monasteries and the Edict of Tolerance) and 1786-1787 (institution of the General Seminary in the Austrian Low Countries and the Synod of Pistoia). Chapter three offers an overview of the various theological currents and ecclesiastical choices of the period. I aim to describe the ideological context in which the pope found himself having to operate. I also wish to underline how the anti-Enlightenment press under Pius VI was channeled and organised according

to the directions of the pope himself and no longer entrusted to the good will of individual bishops and the offices charged with censorship.

The revolution in Austrian Flanders can be considered a case apart in European history (together with popular revolt in Italy, the counter-revolutionary *Viva Maria*). Its original feature is the participation of the Church in a revolt against a Catholic monarchy in favour of the return to the former customs and privileges which the Church had held in that country. Until then, the Church and the old regime had formed a single structure, whatever their difficulties.

Chapter 1 - Rome and Vienna

Under the papacy of Pius VI, (1775-1799), there was a strong revival of anti-Enlightenment propaganda. This counter-attack by the Church against the “presumed philosophers” was launched immediately by the pope, only a short time after his election as the Vicar of Christ. The brief *Inscrutabile divinae sapientiae* could be cited as a political-theological manifesto (1775, December 25), as it was the pope’s intention that this work should represent a definite guide for bishops against the “false philosophy” that was undermining the “true” faith.¹ In spite of widespread political, economical and spiritual problems, writers, artists, religious orders and the clergy, bureaucrats and high prelates attempted to restore a certain prestige to the figure of the pope and the Church of Rome using a range of different means and methods. Another aspect of Pius VI’s government that is here taken into account is his policy towards the Jews. For the new Pope the Jewish Question stops being a mere theological matter and acquires political connotations almost immediately. At the very beginning of his pontificate (1775), the publication of an edict against the Jews, *editto sopra gli ebrei*, drew on the harshest anti-Jewish legislation and introduced new elements intended to blot out their traditions and memory. These new measures attested to Pius VI’s intention of distinguishing himself from his predecessor (Clement XIV) as far as

¹ This first papal encyclical during Pius VI’s pontificate aimed at providing guidelines to combat the internal and external dissidence that had developed in the Catholic world. The points listed in the encyclical were also reiterated in many later briefs issued by the pope. In the brief, *Constantiam vestram* (10.11.1798) the pope returned to the subject of the distinction between philosophy as a discipline which includes the sum of human knowledge, and the philosophy of the Modern era which was presented as being one discipline among many others, focussing on the negative aspect of the latter: “on philosophy and presumed philosophers” he says: “Usurping its name to Philosophy, it does not teach Religion and virtue, which are part of the true Christian wisdom, but it becomes the creator of every wickedness, licentiousness, greed, lust, mother of all calamities, sorrows, ruins, busy at subverting all human and divine things”. Ugo Bellocchi, *Tutte le encicliche e i principali documenti pontifici emanati dal 1740*, (Città del Vaticano, 1993), p. 314.

the resolution of the Jewish “problem” was concerned. The variety of these methods used by Pius VI, which found a meeting point in the struggle to support *Mater Ecclesiae*, is the object of my research. In particular, I have chosen to analyze those diplomatic-political *instrumenta* used by Pius VI in the conflict against the reform and “modernist” movements which he considered were undermining the foundations that sustained the true faith and the survival of the Church itself. The personalization of the papal office, namely recognizing that the Pope has the same powers as any other head of State – a statement that is here being analysed from a historical point of view – has been widely criticized: what is pointed out in particular is that the pontifical institution, the idea of religion is above the papal office.² Some scholars indeed believe that it is the theological aspect and the collegiality of the decisions taken that prevail against the figure of the pope as a sovereign monarch. Consequently they take into greater account (especially as far as religion is concerned) a theological-religious periodization rather than considering the reign of a single pope.

Even if the dangers of a historical analysis are well known and the criticism it might receive have been taken into consideration, the present work does not aim at studying a specific period in the history of the Church, but the changes and the political legacy of a pope, aware that each succession and each new election to the papal throne involved “possible risks of discontinuity, of fractures [that] could undermine the heart of the institution”.³ After von Pastor’s Herculean task of reconstructing the popes’ history, the most recent study on this subject under the supervision of Antonio Menniti Ippolito who proposes, once

² “Posta anche in fatti (e mai concessa) che sia la poco lodevole privata vita d’un qualche sommo Pontefice, non risulterà che sempre vantaggiosa l’idea di una religione, che anche male servita dai suoi ministri, nientemeno vince e stà ferma”. Moroni G., *Dizionario d’erudizione ecclesiastica*, p. 151.

³ De Vincentiis, *Papato, Stato e Curia nel XV secolo*, p. 96.

again, a time scansion based on successive papal governments.⁴ He backs his choice stating that: “those who ascended the papal throne were actually administrators and organizers of men rather than priests”.⁵ Obviously Menniti Ippolito’s intention is not to deny the importance of the pope’s entourage, in fact he states that the pope is: “the key element of a system, of a curial family that took care of him, assisted him all the time, protected him, concealed and made up for his mistakes”.⁶ He believes in the existence of a system that depends on a pope, therefore on a single person not on an institution and maintains that the latter implies the idea of a government.

Despite having clarified this, a periodization that takes into account the government of each pope is a valid approach from a historical point of view but also extremely insidious given the double nature of the pope’s government⁷. Unlike many ancient institutions which are under analysis, papacy is still a “living” institution (though it has changed during the centuries). I will focus on the period between 1781 and 1790 during which there was an intensification in the conflict between the emperor Joseph II of Habsburg Lorraine and the Holy See on the one hand, and the weakening of religious society with the assertion or strengthening of the secular state on the other, beginning with the French Revolution and followed by the constitutional monarchies of the Nineteenth century.

In order to examine these events, we must consider their religio-historiographical aspect, and assess the relationship that exists between

⁴ Antonio Menniti Ippolito (ed.), *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, (3 vols., Roma, 2000).

⁵ Antonio Menniti Ippolito, *Il governo dei papi in età moderna*, p. 24.

⁶ Idem., p. 25.

⁷ Paolo Prodi, *Il sovrano pontefice* (Bologna, 1982), pp. 15–79.

hagiography and its contrast to more critical historical literature. Reading the historical literature that has focused on this decade, it is clear that very little attention has been focused on Pius VI and the period we are intent on analyzing.⁸ In fact, the latest biography on this pope dates back to eighty years ago.⁹ Moreover, many of the studies were carried out not long after the pope's death and, as we have stated later, they tend to either absolve or condemn Pius VI without objectively examining his conduct.¹⁰ They focused on the pope's behaviour from an anti-revolutionary viewpoint, ignoring a large part of the previous action taken by the papal government. Relations between the papacy and the House of Habsburg during the decade of Joseph's reign (1781-1790) clearly express the results and contradictions of imperial policy in opposition to the Church. Immediately prior to 1773, (the year in which the Society of Jesus was suppressed and the defence of papal primacy thus became pertinent to the pope himself) every project involving secularization inevitably concluded with a comparison between the organisation and structure of the Jesuit Order and the royal courts of the various major Catholic powers. From this viewpoint, the link between the policy of Pius VI and the successive pro-Jesuit party should be emphasised. The support of the pro-Jesuit faction accorded to Pius VI was subject to a tacit agreement to a future restoration of the Order, and although

⁸ Because of the current historiographical trend which tends to study in detail specific topics only, a more general analysis is lacking on the subject of the relations between Joseph II and the papacy during the period in question. This aspect was also emphasised by Elisabeth Garms-Cornides. Elisabeth Garms-Cornides, "Il papato e gli Asburgo nell'età delle riforme settecentesche", in Gabriele de Rosa and Giorgio Gracco (eds.), *Il Papato e l'Europa* (Catanzaro, 2001), pp. 255-56.

⁹ Ludwig von Pastor, *The History of the Popes, Pius VI. (1775-1799)* (40 vols, engl. edn., London, 1923-1953), vols. XXXIX and XL.

¹⁰ Pietro Baldassari, *Relazioni delle avversità e patimenti del Glorioso papa Pio VI, negli ultimi anni del suo pontificato* (Modena, 1840-43); Francesco Beccattini, *Storia di Pio VI* (2 vols., Venezia, 1801-02); Jean François Bourgoing, *Mémoires historiques et philosophiques sur Pie VI et son pontificat, jusqu'à sa mort* (2 vols., Paris, 1802); Pezzi I., *Geschichte des Papstes Pius VI* (Vienna, 1799); Giovanni Battista Tavanti, *Fasti del S.P. Pio VI con note critiche, documenti autentici e rami allegorici* (3 vols., Firenze, 1804).

Jesuit intervention in civil society was absent, it insisted on the defense of papal primacy in every aspect (theological, political, and diplomatic).¹¹ Despite the expulsion of the Jesuits from other Catholic countries, rather than losing strength, in Austria the Jesuits became even more consolidated. After the suppression of the most of the Jesuit Order in Austrian lands, the ex-Jesuits were almost immediately re-integrated in their educational role and took part in the political conflict discreetly, trying to incorporate Enlightenment principles into Christianity. The process of secularisation of the State, censorship, and theological conflict with Jansenism, to name but a few issues, became the new responsibilities and challenges which the papacy would have to face without the support of the Society of Jesus.¹² Under Pius VI's pontificate the definition of Jansenism has a different meaning to the one, strictly theological, elaborated by the Popes who came before Braschi. In the difficult context of his pontificate, as we will notice in the following chapters, the ideas of those who tried to reform the Catholic Church in the ecclesiastical field, were excessively simplified.¹³

The word Jansenism referred to a many-sided movement linked to the Catholic reform and characterized by a total loyalty to Augustinianism, moral

¹¹ Marina Caffiero, "Pie VI", in Levillain Philippe (ed.), *Dictionnaire Historique de la Papauté* (Paris, 1994), p. 1330.

¹² However, even though the Jesuit order had been suppressed, some scholars believe that it continued to be in some ways represented in the curia. The scholar Pietro Stella blames the Jesuits for the flare-up of the relations (from 1775) between the papacy and the bishops who continued to regard as valid some of the Jansenistic claims. Among the most interesting cases that will be discussed in this thesis, there is the one concerning the bishop of Pistoia Scipione de Ricci. Pietro Stella, *Il Giansenismo in Italia II, Il movimento Giansenista e la produzione libraria* (Roma, 2006), p. 167.

¹³ While Zondadari was bishop of Siena (1795-1823) several ecclesiastics had to stand trial because of their "Jansenistic" learnings. The word "Jansenist" started to be used, in its negative meaning, by the Sienese anti-revolutionaries thus referring to whoever sympathized with the French, even though they were never proper Jansenists. It would be more correct to refer to them as pro-democrats, pro-revolutionaries or pro-Jansenists. Francesca Piselli, *'Giansenisti', ebrei e 'giacobini' a Siena* (Firenze, 2007), p. XI.

rigorism and a form of individualistic spirituality.¹⁴ Since the early Eighteenth century, the following papal condemnations of the *Augustinus* were perceived by the Catholic reformers as a sign of the decay and of the need for renewal within the Church. In particular, in the German-speaking area, characterized by mixed Catholic-Protestant communities living together, the confrontation and debate on Jansenism and on a general renewal of the Church was much more intense. In the theological works the expression *illuminatio* was often used and the lemma *Aufklärung* was still unknown to the *Großes vollständige Universal-Lexikon* of the editor Zedler in 1732.¹⁵ But at the end of the Seventies in the 18th century, the discussion about the meaning of “enlightenment” (*Erleuchtung*) and “enlightened” (*aufgeklärt*) heated up, especially when the importance of the Christian traditions and of the principles it upheld started to be weighed up. At the beginning of the Eighties (18th century), at the same time of the eulogies for Maria Theresia, the expression *Aufklärung* started to circulate insistently indicating, according to Catholic writers, the right relation between faith, the use of reason and criticism, namely the values that had to inspire an enlightened mind. In reality, even though the Enlightenment and the Jansenism were clearly

¹⁴ The movement takes its name from Cornelius Jansen (1585-1638), bishop of Ypres, who became known after his death thanks to the publication in 1640 of his text *Augustinus* (Lovanio). In his work on positive theology Jansen wanted to present a synthesis of St. Augustine’s thought on God’s grace and free will. The characteristics that allowed to unify the movement born after the bishop’s death were mainly : an « intellectual certainty » and an absolutization of the truth that did not take into account the ecclesiastical authority and his thinkers. The *Augustinus* was often subject to papal interventions. At first Urban VIII spoke his mind in the bull *In eminenti* (1643), then, since the debate on Jansen’s text was not fizzling out, Innocent X decided to put an end to the theological discussions on the *Augustinus* issuing the bull *Cum occasione* (1653). Many Jansenistic ideas were drew on and published between the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th. Among these works the most important was, without doubt, *Réflexions morales sur le Nouveau Testament* (1687) by the oratorian Quesnel. Given the importance, not merely theological, of the pro-Jansenistic front in France, Louis XIV asked for the Jansenistic propositions to be condemned again and his demand was satisfied. Clement XI’s bull *Unigenitus* (1713) marked a great part of the 17th century. Philippe Levillain, *Dictionnaire historique de la papauté*, pp. 921-24.

¹⁵ *Großes vollständige Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste, welshe bishero durch menschlichen Verstand un Witz erfunden und verbessert vorden*, etc (68 vols., Leipzig, Halle, 1732-1754), vol. III, p. 56.

different (e.g. man's natural condition was positive for the followers of the Enlightenment and negative and redeemable only through God's grace for the Jansenists), both currents of thought had been condemned without reserve in Pius VI's encyclical *Inscrutabile divinae sapientiae*. Even if they were considered "a product of the devil, propagators of atheism and destroyers of social bonds", they did not form a united and common front but, as the encyclical read, they were brought together by their criticism towards the papal supremacy. The Synod of Pistoia (1786) acted as the trigger for that negative cliché that lasted even after the end of the French Revolution.

In the second half of the 18th century, the German-speaking catholic area, because of its proximity to the protestant world, posed a whole series of problems to the Catholic Church, mainly concerning its failed revival.¹⁶ These recent problems forced the papacy to reconsider its methods of repressive action, which will be the subject examined in this work. In fact, the rhetoric and language used in the briefs during Pope Braschi's pontificate, his use of the nunciatures and the nuncios, and his renewed, and in certain aspects, new anti-Jewish politics, will be the subjects for analysis in chapters one.

Examination of the manner in which the papacy attempted to confront the Enlightenment and the "evils" that permitted its diffusion or that resulted from it, shows a Curia which became stronger and harder in the defense of its status.¹⁷ The death of Pope Clement XIV followed shortly after the suppression of the Jesuit Order. In memoirs of the period, as well as in anti-clerical writings of the 19th century, the pope who had authorised the destruction of the Society of Jesus

¹⁶ Elisabeth Garms-Cornides, "Il Papato e gli Asburgo nell'età delle riforme settecentesche", pp. 256-60.

¹⁷ Marina Caffiero, "Pio VI", in Antonio Menniti Ippolito (ed.), *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, vol 3, p. 494.

(attempting to use unjust methods to slow down its end) feared a strong Jesuit reaction. Von Pastor stated that the death of the pope was surrounded by rumours of poisoning.¹⁸ According to certain people this was a vendetta carried out by ex-Jesuits; for the Jesuit partisans, “[...] the lack of religion, charity, and justice which were present in many of Clement XIV’s actions, were combined in the abolition of the Jesuit Order”.¹⁹

The suppression of the Jesuits marked the start of a new process of controlling education by the state, opening the way for the formation of a new secular ruling class. Because of the consequences of the suppression, the European, almost world-wide, “religious crisis” which broke out in Bourbon territories provoked a critical situation in neighbouring countries. According to the historical literature about that era the 18th century represented the strongest period of dechristianisation in the European continent.²⁰ In the majority of cases the causes were identified as being the same factors listed and condemned by Pius VI in his brief *Inscrutabile divinae sapientiae*. In most of the Catholic nations there was a general tendency towards the reinforcement of the national Churches, and in certain cases, vain hopes of secession.²¹ Spain remained one of the strongholds of orthodox Catholicism with a large number of bishoprics,

¹⁸ Massimo Moretti, *Clemente XIV Ganganelli, Immagine e memorie di un pontificato*, (Santarcangelo di Romagna, 2006), pp. 196–201.

¹⁹ Idem, p. 174: “[...] la mancanza di religione, di Carità, di Giustizia sparse in diverse azioni di Clemente XIV s’unirono insieme nell’abolizione de’ Gesuiti”.

²⁰ Tim Blanning, *The pursuit of Glory, Europe 1648 - 1815* (London, 2007), pp. 355–63.

²¹ A text that considers all the mentioned countries is: Owen Chadwick, *The Popes and the European Revolution*, (Oxford, 1981). These sources are particularly representative for Germany: Walter Horace Bruford, *Germany in the Eighteenth Century: The Social Background of the Literary Revival* (Cambridge, 1935); Harm Klueting, *Katholische Aufklärung – Aufklärung in katholischen Deutschland* (Hamburg, 1993); Rudolf Schlögl, *Glaube und Religion in der Säkularisierung* (Munich, 1995). On Holland: Franco Venturi, *Settecento riformatore, IV. La caduta dell’Antico Regime (1776-1789). Il patriottismo repubblicano e gli imperi dell’Est* (Torino, 1984). On Portugal and Spain: Kenneth Maxwell, *Pombal: Paradox of the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1995); Samuel J Miller., *Portugal and Rome c. 1748-1830: An aspect of Catholic Enlightenment* (Rome, 1978); Ricardo Garcia-Villoslada, *Historia de la Iglesia en España* (5 vols., Madrid, 1978 – 80), vols. IV and V.

monasteries/convents of every order, priests and clergy.²² The Spanish Inquisition still strictly controlled the borders to prevent any infiltration of subversive ideas. However, King Charles III (1716-1788) who had chased the Jesuits from Spain (1767), combined this defence of Roman Catholicism with the maintenance of the most absolute regalism, which limited interventions by the Holy See.

During a diplomatic mission in Portugal, the future cardinal Pacca “noted a movement of militant hostility towards the papacy”, which was a strong cause of anxiety since Pombal, first minister and advisor to King José I (r. 1750-1777), had completely, or almost completely, distanced the Portuguese clergy from Rome by placing it under civil jurisdiction.²³ The Portuguese Court considered that the clergy was not in need of Rome and this opinion persisted even after Pombal’s fall from grace; the government’s attitude towards the pope became so cool that Pacca feared the worst for the Church of Rome.

After having given asylum to the French Protestants, in exile following a revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), Holland became a refuge for Jansenists: Utrecht, a long-standing Catholic town, became a centre of active and inflexible opposition which spread throughout Europe even in Lutheran regions. In Prussia, during the reign of Frederick II, the *Philosophes* exercised authentic intellectual sovereignty. In Germany Catholics were subject to the influence of Protestantism, strengthened by rationalism and mystical Pietism; unbelief made more progress in many other country and Febronianism struck the episcopacy so strongly that a schism almost occurred. Febronianism was a movement within

²² William James Callahan, *Church, Politics, and Society in Spain, 1750-1874* (London, 1984), pp. 38 - 46.

²³ Maxwell, “Pombal: The Paradox of Enlightenment and Despotism”, in Hamish M. Scott (ed.), *Enlightened Absolutism, Reform and Reformers in later Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Ann Arbor, 1990), pp. 103-104.

the Catholic Church that spread throughout Germany in the second half of the eighteenth century thanks to Nicolaus Hontheim, called Febronius, (1701 - 1790) that advocated more autonomy for the bishops (Episcopalism) and claimed a greater influence by the State over the Church.²⁴

While the Habsburgs always paid very close attention to the policy of controlling and containing the Church, a strategy of furthering this practice was adopted in the period of Maria Theresa's reign (1740-1780); compared to Charles VI's forty reforms (1711-1740), there were 120 decrees in her first twenty-seven years of rule. Of the many decrees made, two are worthy of special note.²⁵ The decree of 1767 that imposed the *regium placet* for papal bulls, and the decree issued in 1771 that introduced the prohibition against founding new confraternities without the approval of the state authority, and the prohibition against secular and regular clergy from drawing up legal wills.²⁶ During the period of Joseph II's joint rule with his mother Maria Theresa (1765-1780), it is possible to place a date of 1765 as the start of the movement which was to be named after the Habsburg Emperor, Joseph II (1780-1790). Josephinism can be historically defined as the collection of reforms through which experiences were making headway throughout Europe. Often described by historians as "various cultural and conceptual trends (such as Enlightenment, Gallicanism, Jansenism, Febronianism, concepts of government based on natural rights, and economic

²⁴ Augustine Fliche and Victor Martin, *Storia della Chiesa* (24 vols, Roma – Torino, 1956-1991), vol. XIX/2, pp. 1123-34.

²⁵ Ogris Werner, "Staats- und Rechtsreformen", in Walter Koschatzky (ed.), *Maria Theresia und ihre Zeit. Eine Darstellung der Epoche von 1740–1780 aus Anlaß der 200. Wiederkehr des Todestages der Kaiserin* (Salzburg - Wien, 1979), pp. 56–66.

²⁶ Regium placet was a formal state approval of measures of state provision that only ecclesiastical administrative measures thus approved shall be civilly recognized and maintained. Zweyte Abtheilung der Sammlung der kaiserlich-königlichen landesfürstlichen Gesetze und Verordnungen in Publico-Ecclesiasticis, welche unter der Regierung Ihre kaiserl. königl. Majestät Marine Theresien erschienen sind, vom Jahre 1740 bis 1767-1767 bis 1782 (2 vols., Vienna, 1785).

and demographic theories). All these movements, together with the emperor's initiative, led to redefining the Church's position in society within the more general reform process of the Habsburg State".²⁷ It should be stressed that, though Joseph II and his mother had essentially similar perspectives, when Maria Theresa died in 1780, the Church lost a point of contact which had offered an element of moderation and possible conciliation.

1.1. The "secular" role of the Church in the Catholic States

The Church was responsible for a large part of all activities involving care and instruction, as well as being in charge of all aspects of a sacred nature, or connected with sacred topics. Until the second half of the Eighteenth century the State had no links with instruction which, for this reason, remained under the control of teachers in various religious orders (such as the Barnabites, Piarists, Jesuits, Benedictines).²⁸ Alongside initiatives which were directed at benefitting the affluent classes, such as the Jesuit colleges for example, other initiatives were directed at the common people, like the schools run by the Christian Brothers. Less widely developed, although not completely absent, was education for girls. The daughters of the aristocracy or upper classes were educated in boarding schools attached to convents, and later in the Eighteenth century, conservatories emerged from the transformation of contemplative institutes.²⁹ For the rest of the population, female education remained particularly lacking, and it was only at

²⁷ Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. I, pp. 439–41; Jean Berénger, "Joséphisme" in Philippe Levillain (ed.), *Dictionnaire Historique de la Papauté* (Paris, 1994), pp. 970–73; François Fejtö, *Joseph II, un Habsbourg révolutionnaire* (Paris, 1982), pp. 189–206; passim Ferdinand Maass, *Der Josephinismus, Quellen zu seiner Geschichte in Oesterreich 1760 – 1790* (5 vols., Vienna, 1951 – 1961).

²⁸ Mario Rosa, "Spiritualità mistica e insegnamento popolare", in Gabriele De Rosa and Tullio Gregory (ed), *Storia dell'Italia religiosa, 2. L'età moderna* (3 vols., Bari, 1994), vol II, pp. 298–302.

²⁹ *Idem*.

the end of the 17th century that certain providential initiatives appeared, like the Maestre Pie teaching order, which opened various schools in Rome and Lazio, even though the number did not cover the needs of the population. Because of lack of means as well as indifference to the problem, education for the common people was almost inexistent and the level of illiteracy in the population of Rome may have exceeded 90 per cent of the laity.³⁰ The few efforts made were mainly carried out by the Church. Even the universities, up until the reign of Maria Theresa and Joseph, remained essentially ecclesiastical. Similar was the situation regarding hospitals and caring for the sick in general, which was considered as being an expression of Christian charity, and therefore basically the responsibility of the hierarchy.

This statement is valid only from a general viewpoint and it should be remembered that, at local levels, other hospices and hospitals also existed set up by secular authorities, or more often, institutes were administered by both religious and secular bodies in collaboration, although contrast and conflict arose for administrative control of certain institutes by those who were simultaneously in power, or who followed each other in chronological order. Conflict in territories of the Habsburg Empire between the various municipalities and dioceses was not uncommon, each laying claim to authority over the local hospital.

1.2. The Jews of Rome and the Holy See in the second half of the Eighteenth Century

The Jewish community in Rome represents a special issue for the Holy See as the Jews had lived in the capital of Christianity for thousands of years

³⁰ Idem, p. 37.

(Indeed, this particularly community can plausibly claim to be the oldest continuously inhabited settlement of Jews in the world). Their relationship with the Pope and the Roman Church, before the institution of the Ghetto in 1555, followed different sociopolitical trends which often contradicted each other. In “The Popes and European Revolution” Chadwick dedicates an entire section to the description of the Jews’ conditions and rights in Rome – whereas he wrote much less on the other Jewish communities such as the Polish and Austrian ones.³¹ Moreover, Rome established itself as the Pope’s favourite observatory to oversee the Jews, therefore, it is here that a model for the segregation and fight against “their infamous Talmud” was created. The measures that Pius VI adopted towards the Jews were not new from a legislative point of view, nor in the way they were put into effect. What makes Pope Braschi’s government actions towards the Jews worthy of attention is the “unearthing” and enforcement of the entire Jewish corpus created by the papacy in the past. For this reason it could be useful to briefly retrace the measures adopted by the papacy since the papal bull instituted the ghetto up to when Braschi became Pope. This very short excursus aims at underlining, through the highlighted points, the similarities and differences between Braschi’s pontificate and the previous ones. In particular, we will see how the delimitation of the space assigned to the Jews was regarded by pope Braschi as a cordon sanitaire just as it had been by those who had established it a long time before. Anyway, the legislative measures adopted by the previous popes, more or less severe as they were, allowed the Jews of the ghetto to survive (the Pope’s aim was to convert people. The Jews were not simply seen as heretics; therefore, in spite of restrictions which will be later

³¹ Chadwick, pp. 19–20.

discussed, they continued to be tolerated).³² On the contrary, the application of all the mentioned measures that Pius VI put together in his legislative corpus contributed to the worsening of the living conditions of the entire Jewish community in Rome.³³ The papal bull that in the sixteenth century started a new series of measures against the Jews was the *Cum nimis absurdum* (1555) – the measure that obliged the Jews to live in areas delimited by walls – clearly explains the plan that backs the papal decision:

Because it is completely absurd and improper that the Jews, who have been condemned to eternal slavery on the basis of their own sins, can – under the pretext of being protected by Christian love and tolerated while living among the Christians – show such ungratefulness towards them, and pay back their mercy with abuse, and expect to dominate them rather to serve them as they should [...] considering that the Roman Church is indulgent towards these Jews as witnesses of the true Christian faith, in order that they admit their mistakes and make all possible efforts to accept the true light of the Catholic faith urged by the pity and benevolence of the Apostolic See, they should acknowledge that they were rightly enslaved by the Christians while the latter were freed thanks to Our Lord Jesus Christ, and admit that it is unfair that the free woman's son serves the servant.³⁴

³² Marina Caffiero, “Tra Stato e Chiesa. Gli ebrei in Italia nell’età dei Lumi e della Rivoluzione”, in Corrado Vivanti (ed.), *gli ebrei in Italia, Storia d’Italia, Annali 11/II* (1997, Torino), pp. 1124-32.

³³ See also ASR, Camerale II, Ebrei , b. 4.

³⁴ *Cum nimis absurdum, Bullarum Diplomatum et Privilegiorum Sanctorum Romanorum Pontificum* (vol. VI, Torino, 1860), pp. 498–500.

Therefore, according to Gian Pietro Carafa and his successors' auspices, once the Jews had been humiliated, reduced to poverty and marginalized, they would have inevitably opened their eyes. Aware of the revelation and the well-being of their Christian fellow citizens, they would have finally crossed the threshold of the House of Catechumens, which were founded for their conversion.³⁵ In order for this approach to work, it was essential for the Jews and the Christians to spend some time together, without forgetting, though, that the former were always inferior. The conversion strategy was, therefore, based on two different and opposite points – exclusion and inclusion – physically represented by the ghettos and the Casa dei catechumeni, which were the places appointed locally to manage, accommodate and absorb the religious minorities.³⁶ On the whole, when looking at Catholic proselytism in Rome we must take into consideration two parallel aspects: if on the one hand, we assert that the confinement in the ghetto did not imply the total separation and exclusion of the Jews from city life, but led to the development of economic and social relations between them and the rest of the population, on the other, the existence of this

³⁵ The *Casa dei catechumeni* was an “institution in Rome for intended converts (catechumens) and converts in Christianity (*neofiti*). A building in Rome to house intended Jewish or Muslim converts to Christianity was allocated by Pope Paul III in 1543. In 1554, Pope Julius III imposed a tax of ten gold ducats on each of the 115 synagogues in the Papal States to cover the cost of maintaining the converts. Subsequently the tax was borne by the Jewish community in Rome alone, which had to pay 1,100 scudi yearly. A College of Neophytes was established in 1575 to accommodate converts who wished to enter a religious order. Both institutions were supervised by a cardinal-protector. Houses of catechumens were also established in other Italian cities where there was a ghetto. The potential convert received instruction for 40 days, and if he then refused baptism was allowed to go back to the ghetto. The pressures exerted on him however were so great that this seldom happened. It is estimated that 1,195 Jews were baptized in Rome between 1634 and 1700, and 1,237 between 1700 and 1790, i.e., two per 1,000 and one per 1,000 respectively of the total Jewish population in these periods”. Attilio Milano, *Ghetto di Roma* (1964), 283–306; C. Roth, *Venice* (1930), 118; A. Balletti, *Gli ebrei e gli Estensi* (1930), 207–20. “http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0004_0_04072.html” (17 July 2012).

³⁶ Marina Caffiero, conference paper: “Spazi urbani e scene rituali dell’ebraismo romano in Judei de Urbe Roma e i suoi ebrei: una storia secolare Roma 7-9 novembre 2005”, Università di Roma “La Sapienza” Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia. www.fupress.net/index.php/sdd/article/download/2174/2095 (10-09-2012).

thick network of exchanges makes its analysis somehow problematic³⁷. Once we accept the idea of the permeability of the ghetto it becomes necessary to wonder about its consequences. The separation strategy that aimed at converting the Jews has profoundly affected the perception and form of this interchange.

At the beginning of the 18th century, the Jews of the Ghetto of Rome were more tolerated. By reducing the tax burden, Clement XI (1700 – 1721) followed through Innocent XII's (1691 – 1700) recovery plan (the house rents had been reduced by 12%). He granted even higher reductions and prescribed the curtailment of the wages paid to the Christian guardians of the Ghetto. The following popes, Innocent XIII, Benedict XIII and Clement XII who ruled between 1721 and 1740, were definitely against the Jews and confirmed the old oppressive measures; even though, in practical terms, the community managed to bypass these rules and their businesses actually increased.³⁸

In 1728 the Holy Office decided when and how the Jews could carry out their activity as second-hand dealers outside the Ghetto. The extension of the cemetery on the Aventine in 1728 (a piece of land was bought from the local hospital Santa Maria della Consolazione) proves that the finances of the Jewish community had improved. Benedict XIV, Clement XIII and Clement XIV, who were on the papal throne between 1740 and 1774, did not adopt particularly

³⁷ Idem.

³⁸ In his notes (1724) reported by Abraham Berliner, the German traveller Abraham Levi of Horn stated that, among other forms of oppression, on the first day of the carnival six representatives of the Jewish community had to dress up as slaves of the Imperial period and appear before five members of the council. There they bowed to the five men and the rabbi said: “we are here to do our duty and declare ourselves to be slaves and subject servants”. As far as the crafts carried out in the ghetto Levi wrote in his diary that: “three quarters of the working population in the Ghetto were tailors, the rest did other jobs. Among the former, the men cut and sewed new clothes, the elderly turned them inside out and the women tailored buttons, sewed buttonholes, mended rips and were extremely good at creating all sorts of embroidery; in the summer they worked in front of the shops so that the alleys were crowded. According to a detailed list of 1726, the other quarter worked as haberdashers, goldsmiths, jewellers, manufacturers of sieves, girdles and saddles, hardware traders, carpenters, fishermen, carpet, coral and precious fabric dealers”. Abraham Berliner, *Storia degli ebrei di Roma* (Milano, 2000) pp. 239-41.

oppressive measures against the Jews of the Ghetto, considering that in 1772 the Hebrew community was no longer within the jurisdiction of the Inquisition but supervised by the less intransigent vicar, and business licences were more easily granted³⁹. Nevertheless, some old prescriptions were still valid and, under Benedict XIV's pontificate, the Ghetto was searched twice for forbidden books. In 1753 the confiscated texts were so many that they had to be loaded onto 38 carts. Moreover, Clement XIV's "positive" disposition towards the Jews did not exclude the policy of conversion that Ganganelli had demanded from the Cardinal vicar Marcantonio Colonna: a papal rescript dated March 25th 1770, indeed, rejects a report that the Roman Jews had made concerning the forced conversion of a woman preciously baptized in the Casa dei catechumeni and gives the Holy Office the full power of extending the quarantine period granted for conversions.⁴⁰

In spite of these measures, for most historians Clement XIV's government was one of the most favourable for the Jews since the institution of the ghetto⁴¹ while Pius VI's government was one of the worst. In reality some of the usual parameters that describe the Jews' condition during papacy are insufficient. If it is true that some initiatives have a legislative-symbolic outcome that is beyond the implementation period of a legal corpus, Pius VI's government has responsibilities that go far beyond the end of "his papacy".

³⁹ "Vengono aperte manifatture di seta, una fabbrica di cappelli e una farmacia". Ibid., p. 251.

⁴⁰ Moroni, *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica*, XXI, p. 23.

⁴¹ Philippe Boutry, "Clément XIV" in Philippe Levillain (ed.), *Dictionnaire Historique de la Papauté*, p. 395.

1.3. The edict on the Jews and its consequences

The edict on the Jews, issued on 5th April 1775, grouped together all the oppressive laws against the Jews that had been promoted by the past popes and increased their effects. The edict was made up of 44 articles that strongly restricted any kind of spiritual and business activity of the Roman Jewish community. Some of these measures aimed at making changes in the long term, like the ones against their sacred books, the ban on the manufacturing of objects of worship (such as menorahs, mezuzots and suchlike) and on the use of the Jewish writing.⁴² Other measures, instead, had an immediate pejorative effect on their life, such as the restrictions on trade, professions and on the freedom of movement⁴³. The life in the ghetto got markedly worse because of Pius VI's edict as proved by the many problems that arose: the increase in the number of aggressions against the Jews, the greater diffusion of the phenomenon of the *oblazioni* (the forced christenings) and the uncommon ritual tributes demanded by many of the Pope's officials from the Jewish *fattori* (councillors), such as genuflexions and the kissing of the shoes.⁴⁴

In her recent book *Relazioni pericolose*, Marina Caffiero reports that in 1789 the Jewish community in Rome wrote a long *Memoriale* for the government authorities denouncing the Jews' conditions in Rome and asserting their rights.⁴⁵ Once again the main addressees of this memoir were the Roman institutions that competed with the community for economic reasons: the

⁴² Biblioteca Casanatense, Per.est. 18 - 76.98, ff. 3-5. Editto a stampa, Roma, 1775, April 20.

⁴³ Idem, ff. 7-10.

⁴⁴ 80% of the reported attacks against the Jews in the 18th century happened during Pius VI's pontificate. Most attacks took place during the first two years of his government. Many of these accounts come from the collections of the Archivio Storico della Comunità Ebraica di Roma (ASCER) 1QI-1 inf. 5., 1TG inf. 5. Proof of the Jews' pleas/complaints to the Pope can be found in the Archivio di Stato di Roma (ASR) which has absorbed most of the papal archives on the matter and of the Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede (ACDF).

⁴⁵ Marina Caffiero, *Legami pericolosi, Ebrei e cristiani tra eresia, libri proibiti e stregoneria* (Torino, 2012) p. 331.

Apostolic Chamber, the Capitoline Chamber, the *Pia Casa dei catecumeni* and the *monastero delle Convertite*.⁴⁶ The Jews' claims were based on legal arguments also brought forward by the European Enlightenment culture. As usual the drafting of the memorial had been assigned to a board of twelve Catholic lawyers.⁴⁷ We do not know to what extent the passing of time influenced both the tone of the requests (which was audacious and quite disrespectful) and the actual drafters of the memorial. At any rate, this document shows a greater Jewish involvement between the conditions of the Jews in Rome and the international political developments (France in particular). A previous document which has not been published yet is the "Defence of the edict of 1775", written in 1777; the drafters' intentions were to prove that it was impossible to abide by many commas of the edict.⁴⁸ In its brief introduction, emphasis was given to the need to deal with the wretched economic condition of the Roman Jews, caused by a legal system (introduced only two years previously) which was no longer tolerable and had to be changed. The "defence" brought forward to the pope allows, through a representation of its history (its Jewish-Roman history), to understand the interpretation and perspective which were specific to the community and to analyse the perception of the relationships with society outside the ghetto. This report does not bring to the pope's attention

⁴⁶ Most of the *Pia Casa dei catecumeni* were created in the second half of the 16th century. Here the Jews who had intended to renounce their religion were obliged to live in utter isolation for 40 days. After that, they had to undergo an exam and if they passed it they could be christened. If, on the contrary, they were seen as "obstinate", they could go back to their co-religionists or go into exile. The first *casa dei Catecumeni* was instituted in Rome in 1543 by Ignazio Loyola. Even in the first half of the XVIIth century the *Compagnia del Divino Amore* resolved to help the prostitutes who are repentant and sick. As a consequence a papal bull dated 19th May 1520 "Salvator Noster" orders the founding of a monastery called *delle Convertite* in the Colonna area, next to the church *Santa Lucia della Colonna* (that for the occasion changed its name to *Santa Maria Maddalena*). Here the women who wanted to start a new life were accommodated and guided.

⁴⁷ It could have not been otherwise because the Jews could not practice law. Caffiero, *Legami pericolosi*, p. 332.

⁴⁸ ASCER, 1QI – 1 inf. 5, fasc. 13, f.1r., "Difesa dell'editto del 1775 che dimostra l'impossibilità di operar molti capitoli di esso". Rome, 1777.

a single problem, but a more complex and general situation that took a turn for the worse after the papal edict. The difference lies in the different time context and in the political conditions that had changed between the drafting of the two documents. It must have been more difficult (as proved by the caution shown towards the pope) to address a similar appeal in 1777. As far as the document is concerned, its analysis shows that the most important requests are those connected to the personal safety of the Jews. As a matter of fact, even though some of the measures are intended to humiliate and make the life inside the ghetto more and more difficult, the chapters that cause more concern to the drafters of the “defence of the edict” are those concerning the obligation for the Jews to identify themselves and the ban on the use of carriages.⁴⁹ According to the writers, both these bans put the Jews’ lives at risk. And if the Jews were assaulted it was almost impossible to lodge a complaint (and, in any case, ineffective from a legal point of view).⁵⁰ Robbing the Jews who left the ghetto to sell their products could have been in some ways favoured by the legal powers or, even, by the police⁵¹. Speaking of the obligation to make oneself recognized, the document addressed to Pius VI reads: “The Jews would not mind using a

⁴⁹ “Si ordina nel capitolo XX dell’editto suddetto degli ebrei d’indossare “il consueto segno al cappello” sotto pena di scudi 50 ed altre pene ad arbitrio del giudicante. [...]”. Biblioteca Casanatense, [Per.est.18_76.98, ff. 6, 8-9. Editto a stampa, Roma, 1775, aprile 20.](http://dr.casanatense.it/drviewng.html?action=jumpin:idbib=1057:idpiece=1:imageNumber=1:idpiece=-1) L’intero documento è visibile sul sito della biblioteca Casanatense in Roma: <http://dr.casanatense.it/drviewng.html?action=jumpin:idbib=1057:idpiece=1:imageNumber=1:idpiece=-1> (20 - 01 - 2012).

⁵⁰ Among the many pleas addressed to the Pope, there is one in particular that best summarizes the situation: “poichè vivendo colla loro semplice industria necessitati di girare per la città a procacciarsi il vitto e supplire all’obbligo di molti pesi, quasi niuno, rimane esente dalli scherni, ludibri, percosse, ferite, alle quali per l’odio contro li medesimi concepiti ingiustamente soccombono, di modo che e da fanciulli e da adulti e da uomini, e da donne, e infine dalla [provetta] senile età miseramente sono molestati. Proseguiva poi chiarendo che: sono quasi assordite le orecchie de tribunali dalli quotidiani ricorsi [...] onde simili attentati rimanendo impuniti sempre più si accresce l’audacia d’ogn’uno in offendere persino a rimaner feriti li poveri ebrei”. ASCER, IQL – 1 inf. 5, fasc. 9, f. 1. Roma, 1777.

⁵¹ Only when the Jews travelled outside Rome they were allowed not to wear the badge on their hats for a short period of time. They could not use carriages but they could use carts and horses which exposed the riders to the elements limiting their autonomy.

sign of recognition on their hats if, after that, they were not treated badly and offended by the common people [“recognized” omitted in the draft] not just with insults, that they could even patiently bear, but many times with stones, punches, spits, and a thousand strains. Some get injured and went back to the ghetto with the marks and bruises of the beatings and very often without obtaining justice”.⁵² The sign of recognition was introduced to distinguish the Jews from the Christians, thus preventing the “scandal” of an excessive and reciprocal familiarity by “marking them with a sign of disgrace and enslavement”.⁵³ Lastly, the particular circumstances of the time “demanded for this custom to be introduced”. But those who had advocated its use must have been aware of the dangerousness of wearing it on hats, because of the many aggressions denounced by the Jews who worked outside the ghetto. Moreover, the same sign had to be worn by prostitutes, thus emphasizing why this “stigma” was required by law. It did happen, though, that the rules were disregarded by part of the community and that “controllers and controlled”, by tacit agreement, allowed the rules to be broken. This way, during the festive season, Jews could often be seen with the *gentiles* in or outside the ghetto. The violation of the rules was allowed and even wanted and used as an element of social control and to ensure stability.⁵⁴ In this legal dimension, where sometimes the “exception” added to the rules, Pius VI’s

⁵² “L’usare il riferito segno al cappello nulla rincrescerebbe, se per mezzo di esso riconosciuti, non venissero poi dal minuto popolo [eliminato in stesura "riconosciuti"] gravemente strapazzati ed offesi, non già colle sole ingiuriose parole, che pur pazientemente soffrir potrebbero, ma spessissime volte colle sassate ancora coi pugni, coi calci, cogli sputi nella faccia, e con altri mille insoffribili strapazzi, ritornandone purtroppo alcuni al ghetto feriti con non leggere percosse; e di più soggetti sono alla fatal disgrazia di non ricever neppur giustizia”. It was unlikely for the Jews to report a theft, as they ran the risk of being denounced themselves in return, for having sold something that they were forbidden to trade. ASCER, 1QI – 1 inf. 5, fasc. 13, f. 3.

⁵³ In this regard an interesting fact was that the Jews were obliged to financially maintain the monastery of the Converted that hosted redeemed prostitutes. Besides, the document which we are taking into consideration here was a consequence of one of the many lawsuits between the Jews and the monastery over the aforesaid obligation.

⁵⁴ ASR, Ebrei, b. 4, fasc. 130, a. 1796.

government action underlined the importance of abiding by the laws on the Jews. The republication of the edict of 1775 and the constant requests made to the bishop as vicar of Rome and to all the controlling bodies had to lead to a different international scene and to a definite change. Under Pope Braschi's pontificate, the number of Jews under investigation for having disobeyed the edict grew considerably. This created a rift between the Jews and most of the population because of the individuation of the problems which were common to all Jews (they were seen as responsible for famines, illnesses, etc).⁵⁵ In the Archivio Storico della Comunità Ebraica di Roma (ASCER) there are many petitions and copies of the complaints of the several assaults against the Jews who were now easily recognizable because of the distinctive badges on their hats. Some of them even preferred to serve the sentence provided for in the edict and wear the hat only when approaching the guards at the entrance to the ghetto.⁵⁶ The fact that the Jews could not use carts, carriages or horses made it very difficult for them to carry their products and to get about without being recognized. This exposed them to several dangers in Rome. Many knew that if a Jew was outside the ghetto, it was probably for business reasons so he became an easy target both because he was carrying money and goods and because he was a Jew. Moreover, very few people would have testified against the aggressors because some of those who robbed the Jews were policemen or guards of the ghetto.⁵⁷ This evident diversity (the sign on the hat) was part of a logic that dated back centuries and had been strongly reminded of by Pius VI's edict, namely the legal inequality between Jews and Catholics. Regarding the legislative corpus

⁵⁵ ASR, Camerale II, Ebrei, b. 22.

⁵⁶ The punishment consisted in paying 50 scudi and included other corporal punishments at the judge's discretion. Biblioteca Casanatense, Per.est.18_76.98, f. 6. Editto a stampa, Roma, 1775, aprile 20.

⁵⁷ ASCER, 1QI – 1 inf. 5, fasc. 16, f. 4.

against the Jews, the historian Adriano Prosperi observes that: “In all these cases what we are faced with is a form of social exclusion advocated by the authority which consists in the invention of a barrier: on the one side the real human being, on the other what is considered inhuman”.⁵⁸ The defence memoir of the Jewish community included other comments on the Edict and ended with the community’s plea to the Pope:

Prostrated before Your Holiness, this oppressed and almost dying community humbly begs for the edict to be modified and for the above-mentioned permissions as they are necessary for this unhappy nation to continue its miserable existence. The Jews would prefer to die only once than to live such an unhappy life which is worse than death.⁵⁹

Even though statements of humbleness were common when writing directly to the Pope, the final part of this document is only similar to the letters addressed to Pius VI during the first years of his pontificate, at least in the papers kept in the collection ‘suppliche – rapporti ebrei cristiani (XVIII century)’ of the ASCER.⁶⁰ The pleas in the collection that has been partially described so far show a sharp increase in the number of attacks and a general worsening of the life conditions of the Roman Jews during the first years of Pius VI’s pontificate. Among the many documents only the “defence of the edict of 1775” summarizes all the problems and the appeals to mitigate the papal measures which had previously

⁵⁸ Adriano Prosperi, *Il seme dell'intolleranza, Ebrei, eretici, selvaggi: Granada 1492* (Bari, 2011), p. VIII.

⁵⁹ “Prostrata adunque ai piedi della Santità Vostra l'oppressa è quasi spirante Università suddetta umilmente implora, dalla sovrana clemenza e somma sua pietà le fin qui divise moderazioni dell'editto e le indicate permissioni per che le une e le altre necessarie sono alla penosa sussistenza della meschina nazione altrimenti bramerebbero i miseri ebrei piuttosto una sol volta morire che menar penando una vita sì miserabile, che è assai peggiore della morte che della grazia”. ASCER, 1QI – 1 inf. 5, fasc. 13

⁶⁰ ASCER, 1QI – 1 inf. 5.

been brought forward by single individuals. This document shows the real pressure that these laws exerted in the ghetto in Rome. The publication and the observance of the “very strict” edict on the Jews would have impoverished even further the community of the ghetto both economically and spiritually.⁶¹ From a political point of view Pius VI always associated the Jews with a possible negative distortion of the social order, as a destabilizing vehicle of wrong and false philosophies. It was obvious that the situation was changing when, in January 1793, the Roman population showed a high degree of hostility during its revolt and the French diplomatic agent Hugon de Bassville was killed. The Jews got involved in the popular anti-French hatred because they were believed to be accomplices and supporters of the French Revolution. On that occasion the ghetto in Rome was besieged and its walls and doors caught fire, while the Jews were barricaded inside it for days.⁶²

Further on, attention will be given to how the political-social developments in Europe affected and negatively influenced the lives of the small communities of the Papal States.

1.4. Pius VI, his political agenda

In this section I shall analyse the actions taken by the government of Pope Pius VI in relation to the printing and diffusion of bulls during his pontificate (1775-1799). This analysis also includes the activities of the apostolic nunciatures and the printing of anti-Habsburg material, encouraged by Pius VI, as well as the consequences that these various actions provoked in the field of pontifical diplomacy. Moreover, emphasis will be placed on Pius VI’s policy

⁶¹ Caffiero, *Legami pericolosi*, p. 191.

⁶² Enzo Sereni, “L’assedio del ghetto di Roma del 1793 nelle memorie di un contemporaneo”, *La Rassegna mensile di Israel*, X (1935), pp. 101-25.

towards the Jews in order to point out that their conditions got worse within the Papal State and that the Pope firmly believed in the connection between Judaism and Enlightenment. It should be remembered that the greatest economic and theological problems faced by the papacy during the decade between 1780 and 1790 originated in German territories, and, more specifically, were caused by the government of Joseph II.⁶³ More particularly, the period refers to the season of revolt that the Habsburgs were forced to face in their dominions, and the manner in which these uprisings were facilitated by the pope's anti-reformist and anti-Habsburg policies. In this sense, because of the very nature of the uprising and its diffusion, it cannot be defined as a movement of revolt with its origins among the people; on the contrary, precisely because of the organic structure of the revolt, it must have had its roots in the centre of the Church of Rome. In the following chapters I often refer to the number of revolts, the chronological order and their geographical localisation, and from this information I believe it is possible to make certain assumptions on an important role played by the papacy in the outbreak of these revolts. The diffusion of the papal bull *Super Soliditate*, written to confute the theories of Eybel, and circulated through the European nunciatures, represents one of the many measures adopted by Pius VI in opposition to Joseph II and, in certain cases, as with the episode concerning the seminarists of Louvain, it was the very instrument of propaganda which actually led to the revolt. It should be remembered that the "excessive" nature of the *Super soliditate* bull does not lie in its specific content; in fact, in his document, Pius VI condemned the proposition made by Eybel which stated that Christ

⁶³ Beales stressed the importance of Joseph's toleration policy, in fact he report that: "'Joseph's work', a recent historian has said, 'unmistakably constituted the first great generalized attack in modern European history by a Christian ruler against the medieval restrictions that burdened Jewish life'". Beales, *Joseph II, II.*, p. 212.

desired that the Church be administered in the same manner as (the administration of) a Republic".⁶⁴ In fact, apart from the defensive nature of the papal status, this remonstrance did not contain any statements that differed from the time in which the bull was diffused. In reality, it was actually the contrast between the different legal rights (*ius sacrum, ius civile*) that led to the papal bull becoming a source of contention between the pope and the emperor.⁶⁵

In spite of its importance as far as the actions of his government and the period in which they occurred were concerned, the work of Pius VI has not been the subject of much research in recent decades; however, this chapter cannot avoid taking into account certain studies on the subject carried out during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as other published sources, articles and monographs. Although the most recent contribution is the biographical entry by Marina Caffiero in the *Enciclopedia dei Papi*⁶⁶, the latest full biography is the volume of the *History of the Popes* by Ludwig von Pastor⁶⁷, published in 1934. At the beginning of the twentieth century the French canon, Jules Gendry, printed two volumes of a pious biography⁶⁸, which, at the time formed a work not without points of criticism. Contemporary Italian historiography today occupies a particularly important position in relation to topics written recently on the economic reforms; to the point that comparison with source material provides a far more scrupulous description of Pius VI, in spite of the fact that certain contradictions concerning his character still exist. Giustino Filippone wrote that

⁶⁴ "Il Cristo ha voluto che la Chiesa sia amministrata alla maniera di una Repubblica". Bellocchi, *Tutte le encicliche e i principali documenti pontifici emanati dal 1740*, p. 142.

⁶⁵ Idem.

⁶⁶ Caffiero, "Pio VI", *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, pp. 492-509. Id., "Pie VI", *Dictionnaire historique de la papauté*, pp. 1330-34.

⁶⁷ Von Pastor, *The History of the Popes, Pius VI. (1775-1799)* (40 vols, engl. edn., London, 1923-1953), vol. XL, XXXIX.

⁶⁸ Jules Gendry, *Pie VI, sa vie, son pontificat (1717-1799), d'après les archives vaticanes et le nombreux documents inédits* (2 vols., Paris, 1906).

Pius VI has been interpreted as a pope divided in two, with a foot in both centuries, and also with a pontificate which was divided in two: initially defined as “a pope who was ostentatious, a patron of the arts, a prince of his time, a reformer”; he was later seen as a victim or martyr of history.⁶⁹ Following the two volumes on Pius VI by von Pastor, the most recent monograph dedicated to this pope is that by Jeffrey Collins, which analyses the relationship between the pope and the arts.⁷⁰ This volume by Collins presents a wide-ranging analysis of the artistic works produced for the Church during the pontificate of Pius VI. Although it is focussed on art, the book advances arguments about the political “philosophy” of the pope’s government: “Braschi’s strategy was to compensate for the real diminution in the papacy’s secular and spiritual authority by maximizing its symbolic prestige”.⁷¹ The pope’s commitment as patron of the arts was not perceived as part of an overall plan to relaunch the Church on the whole, but as the main instrument of redemption by a pope who saw the past (Renaissance splendour, in this particular case) as the only possibility of a future for the papacy. In brief, according to Collins, the only operative field left open to the pope in foreign and internal politics was that of art, while prudent and careful diplomatic practice was applied for the remainder of the government agenda.⁷² In reality, it has been demonstrated that most of the papal activities were directed at reinforcing strong moral authority, not only through art, but above all through the vast printed production of anti-Jansenist and anti-Enlightenment material.⁷³

⁶⁹ Giustino Filippone, *Le relazioni tra Stato Pontificio e la Francia rivoluzionaria, Storia diplomatica del trattato di Tolentino* (Milano, 1967) vol. II, p. 1. “[...] un Papa fastoso, protettore delle arti, principe del secolo, riformatore”.

⁷⁰ Jeffrey Collins, *Papacy and politics in eighteenth – century Rome, Pius VI and the arts* (Cambridge, 2004).

⁷¹ Idem, p. 290.

⁷² “Circumspection was the order of the day”. Collins, *Papacy and politics*, p. 296.

⁷³ In relation to the numerous critical interventions against the Church, we should quote Ronnie Po-chia Hsia: “Its political insignificance notwithstanding, the Baroque papacy presided over a

The other face of the eighteenth century - that which was opposed to the Enlightenment - and a certain aspect of which I am striving to reconstruct with my research - does not appear to be as stationary when confronted with the new ideas as has been often described by Collins and other historians. On the contrary, Pius VI was able to oppose the current changes relative to the process of secularisation, creating propaganda with a “controenciclopedia preventiva”⁷⁴ (*precautionary counter-Encyclopaedia*) and setting up a “controrivoluzione attiva”⁷⁵, (*active counter-revolution*) thanks to the use of the printed word, based on a solid theoretical structure which would then guide the action of the Holy See well beyond the closing of the century. In the volume, “The Early Modern Papacy”, Anthony Wright analyses the figure and role played by Pius VI in the main debates that modern Europe was engaged in: the problems that the pope had to handle seem to fade away when compared to the main subject.⁷⁶ For example, while discussing Jansenism, the scholar examines some political actions taken by Pius, such as his attitude towards the suppression of the Company of Jesus and Josephinism.⁷⁷ The author deals with topics that have been well studied by the classic historiography on the last pope of the 18th century and he does not disregard cardinal Braschi believing that his choice for a name aimed at reminding the “independence of the post - Tridentine Pius V”.⁷⁸ The historian David Chambers considers Pius VI a procrastinator and incapable

heroic Catholicism, peopled with missionaries, martyrs, converts, and living saints. The eighteenth-century papacy, in contrast, drew inward, conscious perhaps of its bygone age of greatness”. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *The World of catholic renewal 1540-1770* (2nd edn., Cambridge, 2004), p. 217.

⁷⁴ Piero Gobetti, *Risorgimento senza eroi e altri scritti storici* (Torino, 1976), pp. 13–64.

⁷⁵ See Venturi, *Settecento riformatore, II. La chiesa e la repubblica dentro i suoi limiti*.

⁷⁶ A.D. Wright. *The Early Modern Papacy, From the Council of Trent to the French Revolution 1564-1789* (London, 2000).

⁷⁷ Idem., pp. 186-87.

⁷⁸ Idem., p. 186.

of assuming initiatives both in political matters as well as military.⁷⁹ In this original book on the papacy and the art of warfare, Chambers describes Pius VI as if he had placed a great distance between himself and the model of Renaissance pontificates, a role which many of his critics have often attributed to him. Again, according to the same historian, Pius V (the pope who supported the constitution of the Holy League on the 19th of May 1571, and which led to the crusade against the Ottoman Empire, culminating in the Battle of Lepanto on the 7th of October 1571), whom Pius VI “honoured the memory”, applied a policy that was not in favour of the use of arms.⁸⁰

Quite different is the case of the recent historical publication *Et ecce gaudium* promoted by the Jewish Community of Rome on the occasion of the visit by Pope Benedict XVI to the Beth Knesset of Rome.⁸¹ The texts present strong accusations against the policy of Pius VI, in these pages; the pope is examined in the light of the relations between the papacy and the Jewish community and from a Jewish point of view. Furthermore, above all, the work includes, in the greeting and the introduction, references to political matters which have little connection with the topic which is under discussion.⁸² The pope is described in a historically decontextualized fashion as the “bloodthirsty and frustrated” sovereign of a State in strong decline, who tried to save the situation

⁷⁹ David S. Chambers, *Popes, Cardinals and War* (London, 2006), pp. 178-82.

⁸⁰ “[...] he (Pius VI) was not prepared to emulate Pius II nor to repeat the fulminations and physical commitment of a Gregory VII or a Julius II [...]”. Idem p. 179.

⁸¹ Daniela Di Castro (ed), *Et ecce gaudium, Gli ebrei romani e la cerimonia di insediamento dei pontefici* (Roma, 2010).

⁸² The figure of Pope Braschi underwent rehabilitation and decontextualisation lacking in any scientific value. With regard to this aspect, I refer to the first pages of the volume in question, as well as the various appeals to cancel the event promoted under the sign of the so-called “Moed di Piombo”. See: Di Castro (ed), *Et ecce gaudium*, pp. 5-13.

Gherush92 http://www.gherush92.com/news_it.asp?tipo=A&id=2933 (Roma, 29-01-2010), accessed on 19 October 2010.

with the promulgation of anti-Jewish laws aimed at instigating pogroms.⁸³ The text *Et ecce gaudium* offers an interpretation of the activities of various popes, making distinctions between “the good and the bad”: in other words, in the context of Papal State territories, between those popes who improved social and juridical conditions, and those who, on the contrary, worsened the situation. The anti-Jewish attitude of Pius VI should also be analysed from a theological and political point of view, because from the very beginning of his pontificate, the pope considered Judaism as being allied with the so-called philosophers “cosiddetti filosofi” who threatened the true religion.⁸⁴ The new anti-Jewish provisions set out by Pius VI were therefore closely linked with the whole “counter reform” structure, and should not be considered as an expedient to resolve the economic conditions of the state. In this sense, the edict concerning the Jews, together with anti-Enlightenment publications, was a further political-doctrinal attempt aimed at containing the philosophical reasoning within the context of a project to reconstitute Catholicism in a Europe which Pius VI considered as becoming increasingly more secularised. The eight articles of the edict concerning the press must be considered from this perspective, that is to say not merely as a further pressure on the Jews, but as part of a bigger plan aiming at defending the Church from the diffusion of conflicting ideas.⁸⁵ In reality the aim of the exhibition catalogue states quite the opposite: (in spite of the oppression that the Jews were surely subject to) the close-knit relations and

⁸³ Di Castro (ed), *Et ecce gaudium*, pp. 19-21.

⁸⁴ Bellocchi, *Tutte le encicliche e i principali documenti pontifici emanati dal 1740*, p. 142.

⁸⁵ The eight articles of the Edict on the Jews are entirely dedicated to the abolition of the press, diffusion, sale, import and export, as well as the manual copying of all texts in Hebrew.

symbolic value between the Roman community and the thousand-year-old institution of the papacy.⁸⁶

Lastly, it should be remembered that in the second part of the biography of Joseph II by Derek Beales, the figure of the pope was not analysed at all; there is no mention of Pius VI throughout the entire chapter dedicated to the closing down of the monasteries in the Habsburg territories, nor is there any reference to the protests made by the nuncio Garampi.⁸⁷ On the other hand, the nuncio's correspondence contained many references and explicit accusations in relation to the imperial directives and to those who took advantage of them: "The bishops do not dare say a word against any of the decrees they receive, but publish them immediately"⁸⁸; he also insisted on the subject of the expropriation of the monasteries "The manner in which even the holy vessels and vestments are desecrated is disgusting. A large part finishes in the hands of the Jews".⁸⁹ In conclusion, Beales decided not to analyse the role of the pope in spite of the fact that, as can be clearly understood from his words, a large part of the reforms introduced by Joseph had a direct or indirect influence on the spheres of interest of the Church of Rome.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ It seems that much of this text is not integrated as being part of a more general discussion; on the contrary, the result is often ambiguous, since criticism is expressed against the pontificate of Pius VI and at the same time, there is a celebration of the bond between the Jewish community and the Holy See. The exhibition was focused on the discovery of fourteen panels painted in the 18th century that illustrate the participation of Roman Jews at the ceremonies in honour of the newly-elected pope. Among these "cartelli effimeri" two are dedicated to Pius VI's cavalcade to take possession of his territories. Di Castro (ed), *Et ecce gaudium*, p. 68.

⁸⁷ Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. II. *Against the World, 1780 – 1790* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 271–306.

⁸⁸ "I vescovi non osano fiatare contro qualunque siasi decreto, che venga loro intimato, ma all'istante li pubblicano". ASV, nunz. Germ. 415, Garampi to Pallavicini, f. 76v., Vienna 1784, August 3.

⁸⁹ "Fa ribrezzo il modo con cui si profanano anche i vasi e gli arredi sacri. Gran parte va in mano degli ebrei". ASV, nunz. Germ. 414, Garampi to Pallavicini, f. 278v., Vienna 1784, June 22.

⁹⁰ "[...] early in November Garampi reported to Rome that the situation in the Austrian Monarchy was in his opinion now even more dangerous to the Church than the Reformation of the sixteenth century had been, because in the meantime the power of princes had grown and religious feeling had declined." Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. II., p. 217.

It should perhaps be specified that much of the critical historiography concerning Pius VI dates from the 20th century. However, there were some items from the previous century whose conclusions repay examination. The first article that specifically refers to Pius VI can be found in the *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica* edited by Gaetano Moroni (from 1847 to 1859),⁹¹ which describes the complete life of the pope, taking care to also include his career in the Curia. In the section dedicated to his pontificate, focus is placed on the latter part during the French Revolution, with special emphasis on the period of imprisonment under the French occupation by Bonaparte. This is an important contribution; above all for the fact that it is part of a dictionary which is the expression of the culture, environment and mentality of the so-called “zealous factions” of the Curia (not only under Pope Gregory XVI) and therefore, of those who were hostile to the group who were more favourable towards dialogue, even with the French Republic. There is no doubt that Moroni is the trailblazer in the most fundamental aspects of writings on Pius VI, even though there is a lack of precision in certain details.⁹²

⁹¹ Gaetano Moroni, “Pio VI”, in *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica* (vols 103, Venezia, 1847-1859), vol. LIII, pp. 86–115. Biographical information including his activities as a Church historian can be found in: Giuseppe Monsagrati, “Il peccato dell’erudizione. Gaetano Moroni e la cultura romana della Restaurazione”, in A.L. Bonella, A. Pompeo, M. I. Venzo (ed.), *Roma fra la Restaurazione e l’elezione di Pio IX: amministrazione, economia, società e cultura* (Roma, 1997), pp. 649-63.

⁹² An example of this refers to the Pontine marshes, an operation where Moroni hides the fact of only partial success, stating that: “Una delle prime magnanime imprese di Pio VI fu l’arduo prosciugamento delle *Paludi Pontine*, per la cui grandiosa operazione in tutto il pontificato non risparmiò né spese né cure, recandosi quasi ogni anno in luogo di villeggiatura a Terracina, che ricolmò di benefizi, per vegliare sulle operazioni, che convertirono una immensa palude in fertilissimo territorio, secondo il suo giusto concetto”. Moroni in *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica*, vol. CCLX. Pio VI, pp. 480-82. The historian Marina Caffiero also describes the actions of Pius VI in an enthusiastic manner: “Le travaux d’assèchement des marais Pontins, qui durèrent presque vingt ans et pesèrent lourdement sur les finances de l’Etat, furent grandioses. Le pape les suivit personnellement”. Caffiero, “Pie VI”, *Dictionnaire historique de la papauté*, p.1332. However the comments by Collins take on a different tone; he states that the pope’s “success” in accomplishing the partial reclaiming of the Pontine marshes is still an object of debate among historians. Collins, *Papacy and Politics*, p. 21.

Pius VI is not a pope whose life is easy to interpret; nor is it easy to understand completely on initial analysis. As far as history is concerned, for most of the historians analysed here, he remains a pope of the *ancien régime* who understood nothing of the events associated with the Reformation and Revolution. As we have seen, even today, many views on Pius VI seem to be too hasty or influenced by partisan opinion, as in the past. Historiographical analyses of Pius VI offer the image of a zealous man, strongly focused on the arduous defence of papal supremacy and the Church of Rome against the “barbarism” of Enlightenment philosophy. These interpretations mostly refer to and analyse the years immediately after his election. However, it is my opinion that in order to understand the actions of Pius VI, also relevant is consideration of the period of his younger years, his education, and his cultural, ideological and spiritual preferences and inclinations. This was the period of apprenticeship for Pius VI preliminary to his election. If this period is examined we should then be able to read his political and diplomatic actions as the “natural” consequences of his education/training and the opinions and beliefs he matured during his formative years.

1.4. The beginnings

Giovanni Angelo Onofrio Melchioro Natale Antonio Braschi was born on Christmas day, 25 December 1717, in Cesena, Romagna.⁹³ The future pope was educated by the Jesuits, studying classics, but he mainly focussed on judicial studies. In 1735, he became *Doctor Juris utriusque* at the age of seventeen; then

⁹³ He was the eldest of eight children: four brothers and four sisters. Of all his siblings only the last, Giulia Francesca, married. She wed the Count Girolamo Onesti, and provided the future pope with two nephews who, as has been widely documented, were an important part of the pope’s life. On Pius VI and his nephews see: Menniti, *Il tramonto della Curia nepotista, Papi, nipoti e burocrazia curiale tra XVI e XVII secolo* (Roma, 1999) pp. 157-58.

thanks to his maternal uncle, Giovanni Carlo Bandi, he continued his studies, but without access to the customary *cursus honorum* available to the young members of Roman aristocracy, which consisted of a doctorate in law in Rome.⁹⁴ Braschi replaced his uncle as Cardinal Tommaso Ruffo's auditor, taking over the administration of the archdiocese of Ostia and Velletri.⁹⁵ In 1753, Braschi became the pope's personal valet or *cameriere segreto* shortly afterwards, Pope Benedict XIV appointed him as his personal secretary: he worked in the service of the "enlightened Pope" "papa illuminista", expert in Canon law, attempting to theologially restore the supremacy of Rome.⁹⁶ Following this, he was nominated canon treasurer of St. Peter's Basilica (an important source of revenue), and lastly, Referendary of the two *Signature* (The Tribunal of the Signatura of Grace and the Signatura of Justice were both courts of appeal of the Roman Curia).⁹⁷ During this time in 1758, Clement XIII Rezzonico succeeded Benedict XIV as pope. Braschi's career began once more in his role as auditor to the pope's nephew, Cardinal Carlo Rezzonico (1724-1799),⁹⁸ *camerlengo*, and therefore in charge of the finances of the Holy See. Following this he was nominated to the commission charged with deciding on the problem of the Jesuits. The Spanish and Portuguese monarchs had been putting pressure on the

⁹⁴ He was employed by his uncle as personal secretary, and under his protection, continued his studies at the University of Ferrara. His uncle had been the auditor of the papal legate Tommaso Ruffo, in the province of Ferrara. The new pope, Benedict XIV, nominated Ruffo a member of the Sacred College of Cardinals and bishop of the dioceses of Ostia and Velletri, outside Rome.

⁹⁵ In this new role, Braschi showed himself as an astute negotiator and a prudent mediator in the judicial conflict between Rome and Naples; in particular he came into contact with the horrors of war at Velletri, a bloody battle during the military campaign by the Spanish and Austrians under the command of Don Carlos de Borbone, in the attempt to conquer the Kingdom of Naples.

⁹⁶ Garms-Cornides, "Storia, politica e apologia in Benedetto XIV: alle radici della reazione cattolica", in Philippe Koeppel (ed.), *Papes et papauté au XVIII siècle* (Paris, 1999), pp. 144-61.

⁹⁷ The position of referendary is the most efficient and rapid means of access to become appointed cardinal.

⁹⁸ Moroni, *Dizionario di Cultura Ecclesiastica*, vol. LVII, pp. 165-66.

pope to require the total suppression of the Society of Jesus.⁹⁹ Braschi's career surged ahead once more in 1766, with his appointment as auditor to the Reverend Apostolic Chamber, the equivalent of the Minister of Finance. In 1769, the Franciscan, Ganganelli was seated on the throne of St. Peter taking the name of Clement XIV.¹⁰⁰ Barruel stated that, at that time, Braschi was more in favour of reforming the Jesuit order rather than supporting its actual suppression.¹⁰¹ Giovanni Angelo Braschi was elected cardinal on the 26th of April 1773, with the titular church of S. Onofrio. During the same period he was submerged in business affairs because he had been nominated the Protector of the Benedictine Abbey of Subiaco; so he retired from public life and dedicated himself to the administration and work of this major monastic institution.¹⁰² His time spent at Subiaco permitted Braschi to be absent from Rome when the papal brief *Dominus ac Redemptor* was diffused (21st July 1773); this was the brief that provoked the suppression of the Society of Jesus. During a period that was so difficult for the Church, Braschi managed to maintain his distance from political contention. At the death of Clement XIV, which occurred in 1774, discontent and debates concerning the suppression of the Jesuits dominated the conclave which was assembled to elect the successor to Clement XIV.

⁹⁹ In this delicate affair, Braschi maintained a very discrete attitude without ever revealing his personal opinions and never openly taking sides with either faction; neither that of the Curia and the Pope who made strong attempts to defend the Society, nor that of the Ambassadors and Cardinals of various monarchies, in this way earning himself his nickname of "furbe romagnol". Gendry, *Pie VI, sa vie, son pontificat (1717-1799), d'après les archives vaticanes et les nombreux documents inédits*, p.17. "Le plus exaltés parmi les partisans ou les ennemis des jésuites l'appellent le furbe romagnol, et taxaient son silence d'ambition et de duplicité".

¹⁰⁰ His full name was Giovanni Vincenzo Antonio Ganganelli, later Brother Lorenzo of the Conventual Order of St. Francis, and then pope, under the name of Clement XIV. Moretti, *Clemente XIV Ganganelli*, pp. 52-58.

¹⁰¹ Barruel, *Histoire civile, politique et religieuse de Pie VI*, p. 16.

¹⁰² Pastor maintains that Braschi was elected cardinal thanks to the Bourbons and not to Clement XIV, who did not like him. Von Pastor, *The History of the Popes, Pius VI.*, vol. XXXIX, p. 24.

The conclave opened on the 5th of October 1774 and lasted for 4 months and 9 days,¹⁰³ with the participation of 44 cardinals, 16 of whom had been created on behalf of the Catholic monarchies. The Sacred College was generally divided between the Crown Cardinals, called *politicanti*, (*intriguing politicians*) and those of the Roman party, called *zelanti* (*zealous faction*), mainly occupied in re-establishing the Jesuit Order. The cardinals present at the conclave had been nominated by the previous three popes so that neither group was numerically larger than the other; therefore one of the important elements of this conclave was the option that Catholic sovereigns could count on through one candidate or another.¹⁰⁴

Braschi had the advantage of not seeming to take one side or the other; and it is almost certain that he would have promised not to re-instate the Jesuit order.¹⁰⁵ Basically, and above all because of this promise, Braschi could have appeared as being the most conciliatory candidate among the *zelanti*. On 14 February after the final difficulties had been resolved, the cardinals gathered in Braschi's cell to pay their first homage by kissing his hand. The next day, a unanimous decision led to his election: on 22 February, he was anointed bishop (he had never held this office) and was crowned in St. Peter's Basilica. The following Sunday, on 26 February, the new pope opened the Holy Door of the Basilica to perform the inauguration of the Holy Jubilee Year of 1775, which had

¹⁰³ This was the longest conclave of the early modern times since the election of Pius IV in 1559 which lasted 5 months. See Levillain Philippe, "Conclave (depuis le concile de Trente)", in Philippe Levillain, *Dictionnaire Historique de la Papauté*, pp. 439-42.

¹⁰⁴ Charles III of Spain, delegated his minister, the Count of Floridablanca to state his preference for 12 candidates this time; but the Courts of Vienna and Lisbon expressed their preferences for certain cardinals popular with their *entourages*. Gendry, *Pie VI*, p. 68.

¹⁰⁵ "Braschi's friend Giraud, as active as ever, was only too pleased to pass on a declaration from Braschi that he would only govern in harmony with the Courts and that he would never think of restoring the Society of Jesus". Von Pastor, *The History of the Popes, Pius VI.*, vol. XXXIX, p. 19.

been delayed because of the conclave.¹⁰⁶ This gesture emphasised the entry of the pontificate into the ranks of the “zelanti”, as did his choice of the name Pius: which was the name of the last canonised pope, the man who had worked relentlessly to activate all the decisions of the Council of Trent, the zealous reformer who had instigated the crusade against the Turks, and last of all, an ex-Dominican inquisitor.¹⁰⁷ On the day of the election, de Bernis wrote to Louis XVI about the new pope; along with the pragmatic information and the topical description of the noble aspects of the pontificate, he also included comments on the pope's excellent intentions. Then with prudence, he added that although the pope desired the benevolence and trust of the catholic sovereigns, “God alone is able to read inside the human heart and men can judge only on appearances... The reign of the new pope will reveal whether, before his election, we were observing his true face or a mask”.¹⁰⁸

The first nominations were the result of the agreements made during the Conclave: Pallavicini was named Secretary of State to humour the courts of Catholic Europe,¹⁰⁹ Negroni was awarded the *Dataria*, and Zelada given the Holy Office. Pius VI did not forget to whom he owed his triple crown: The French Ambassador, de Bernis, who received visits from the whole of Europe in the palazzo De Carolis,¹¹⁰ maintained all the economic benefits conceded by the previous pope. The first letters written by the Ambassador concerning the new

¹⁰⁶ Aurelio De' Giorgi Bertola, *Per l'avvenimento felicissimo al trono del sommo pontefice regnante Pio VI* (Siena, 1775). On the subject of Jubilee celebratory rituals see Maria Antonietta Visceglia, *La città rituale, Roma e le sue cerimonie in età moderna* (Roma, 2002), pp. 239-85.

¹⁰⁷ Caffiero, “Pio VI”, *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, p. 494.

¹⁰⁸ “Dieu seul connoit le fond des coeurs, et les hommes ne peuvent juger que sur les apparences. Le règne du nouveau pape fera connoitre si avant son élection on avoit vu son visage, ou son masque”. Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Paris, Correspondance politique, Rome, 871, f. 131.

¹⁰⁹ Filippone, *Pio VI*, p. 9.

¹¹⁰ De Bernis took over palazzo De Carolis, in the Corso, today the seat of the *Banca di Roma*.

pope related to the Jesuit question.¹¹¹ De Bernis remained in Rome to ensure that the new pope did not re-instate the Society of Jesus, and that its Superior General, Ricci, remained in prison. As far as Pius VI's attitude towards the Jesuits is concerned, no more information was given in relation to the Crown cardinals.¹¹²

The beginning of the pontificate was linked with the Holy Year, which statistically, according to the number of those accommodated, amounted to the arrival of approximately 130.000 pilgrims in Rome.¹¹³ The number of pilgrims from France and other Catholic monarchies had decreased as a result of the spreading of the Enlightenment movement, or more realistically, because of attempts by the monarchies to establish direct relations between the bishops and the State, between the bishops and the dioceses. The Supreme Pontiff was aware of this situation, and to close the Jubilee year and extend its grace throughout the Catholic world for the year 1776, Pius VI wrote his first encyclical, *Inscrutabile divina sapientiae*, promulgated on Christmas Day 1775. This encyclical was to all intents and purposes a *pamphlet* against modern philosophy that was

¹¹¹ Pellettier, *Rome et la Révolution Française*, p. 40.

¹¹² The situation was very different among those who opposed the pope; not many believed in the pope's indifference towards the various pamphleteers, like that of the Imperial agent Brunati. It was their opinion that the pope was hindered by his proverbial caution from reinstating the Society of Jesus. However when assigning the most prestigious positions, he gave precedence to those recommended by the Jesuit supporters. There are not many articles or specific texts on the relationship between Pius VI and the disbanded Company of Jesus, therefore here we refer to general texts on this topic. There was evidence that showed Pius VI working to attempt to reinstate the Society of Jesus, "a step at a time", as declared by Hartmann. (Hartmann Peter C., *I gesuiti* (Roma, 2003), p. 111). In 1783 during a long secret audience between Pius VI and Monsignor Benislawski, Jesuit and Bishop coadjutor of Mogilev, the Pope not only gave his consent to the activities of the Society of Jesus in Russia, but also confided: "il suo dolore per i danni incalcolabili dovuti alla soppressione della Compagnia e per lo stato di vera schiavitù in cui lo tenevano, al riguardo, le grandi potenze". Sommavilla Guido, *La Compagnia di Gesù* (Milano, 1985), p. 166. Again another scholar underlined the links between Jesuits and the papacy in; Antonio Trampus, "I gesuiti austriaci dopo la soppressione della Compagnia: una comunità dispersa?", *Annali di Ca Foscari*, XXXV, 1-2, (1996), pp. 42-144. Lastly, Sabina Pavone describes the support given by Pius VI to those orders that were based on Jesuit ideals. Pavone Sabina, *I gesuiti, dalle origini alla soppressione* (Bari, 2004), p. 137.

¹¹³ In relation to the pontifical festivities by Pius VI see Mario Gori Sassoli, "Pius VI (1775-1799)" in Maurizio Dell'Arco (ed.), *Corpus delle feste a Roma, il XVIII secolo e l'Ottocento* (Roma, 1997), pp. 211-56.

devastating religion and the monarchy, with widespread infiltration, and included offering martyrdom for all those who opposed it for the good of the Church. Drawing on the topics broached by Clement XIII, the pope stated that these were the times prophesied by St. Paul, characterised by the presence of arrogant men who blasphemed against God, denying his existence, or defining him as “non-intervening”, in the manner of the deists. The philosophy full of deceit, which attracted the “incauti” (unwary) and the “multitudo”, and that proclaimed that man was free and “subicere cuicumque”, was destroying religion and eliminating every respect for social hierarchy. That “morbis pestilentibus” (pestilential disease) spread “in the public academies, the houses of the magnates, the palaces of kings and [...]” even into the inner sanctum¹¹⁴; but above all it created doubts in the minds of the naïve, given that “sapientes fraudatores” (masterly charlatans) deceived them with “with words and expressions so flattering that the weak, who form the majority, were caught by the bait, and tricked in a compassionate manner so that they either renounced their faith completely, or allowed it to become totally weakened”.¹¹⁵

Confronted with what seemed to be the short-sightedness of the princes, the risk concerned the “gubernationis tranquillitate” (serenity of the government) and the “sanitas populi” (health of the people). It was essential that the bishops prepare the necessary medicine: it was vital to remove “the poisoned books from the view of the flock” and to isolate “the infected souls rapidly and severely so that they could not harm others”. The pope’s message was explicit: Plead, reprimand, criticise.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Bellocchi, *Tutte le encicliche e i principali documenti pontifici emanati dal 1740, II (1758-1823)*, p. 129.

¹¹⁵ Idem, pp. 128-29.

¹¹⁶ Idem, pp. 124-31.

Furthermore, the new pope made important changes, no longer transmitting the circular underground messages that the Holy See sent in certain cases to inquisitors spread throughout the territory; with the gradual decline of the inquisitorial system and the suppression of the Jesuits, he dealt with problems by asking help from the bishops and the nuncios, who for the most part answered his call.¹¹⁷ Pellettier wondered if the brief: *Inscrutabile divinae sapientiae* was not prophetic, discovering more than just a few similarities with the judgement that Pius VI would later make about the period of the French Revolution.¹¹⁸ As has been observed above, many historians considered Pius VI the least capable among the modern popes to understand the reform period, and later, the events of the Revolution.¹¹⁹ His first encyclical could be interpreted in this sense, but it is also the result of a pragmatic vision of society at that time: In any case, in one way or another, the brief represented a declaration of closure concerning the attempt to create a meeting ground between Faith and the new rationality of the Enlightenment period.

Pius VI declared in his first consistory that he wished to restore the tarnished image of the Church. He also took certain measures to re-establish order in Rome, asking for greater cooperation from the City Governor, and asking for the resignation of the food rationing Prefect, Bischì, because of the uprisings that had occurred during the conclave. Rome had a new administrative pope who intended to inaugurate his pontificate by introducing innovations, taking advantage of the temporary period of political tranquillity reached after

¹¹⁷ On the Jesuits see Chadwick, *The Popes and the European Revolution* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 345-390.

¹¹⁸ Pellettier, *Rome et la Révolution Française*, pp. 40-41.

¹¹⁹ The historian Madelin gave this opinion on Pius VI: "Je ne sais si, dans la long lignée de papes modernes, il en fut un qui fut moins apte à comprendre la Révolution". Louis Madelins, "Pie VI et la première coalition", *Revue Historique*, LXXI (1903), p. 6.

the suppression of the Society of Jesus as well as the attention he was being paid by the European Courts.¹²⁰

1.5. Information concerning the pontificate of Pius VI between 1775 and 1787

And so, what were the impressions concerning this new pope? In the theologico-diplomatic conflict between the Holy See and the Empire, the symbolic aspect and the characterization of the opposing parties during this new period of Reform and Counter-reform may be considered a marginal factor, but by no means irrelevant, and should be taken into consideration. Following his mother's death, Joseph II appeared in official and public iconography in his general's uniform, without any of the excessive extravagance and ostentation typical of professional military figures, but simply as a means to make himself recognisable to others.¹²¹ And the pope? There are many accounts of the reactions of the population of Rome after having seen the pope on the day of his election, as well as the following period.¹²² The majority of the population was favourable towards the arrival of the new pope who impressed them with his personal charisma, his youthful age (barely fifty-seven years old) and his "athletic bearing" which certainly distinguished him from his predecessors.¹²³ Moreover, the admiration of the population reflected the same idea which, according to Jeffrey Collins, was that cultivated by the pope himself, to

¹²⁰ In order to understand the extent of the Jesuit and anti-Jesuit movements during the decades prior to the pontificate of Pius VI, see Venturi, *Settecento riformatore, II. La chiesa e la repubblica dentro i suoi limiti*, vol. 2, pp. 3-64.

¹²¹ Ilsebill Barta-Fliedl, *Familienporträts der Habsburger, Dynastische Repräsentation im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (Wien, 2001), pp. 117–21.

¹²² Collins, *Papacy and Politics*, pp. 12–13.

¹²³ Idem, p. 13.

inaugurate a new Augustan era.¹²⁴ The ambition to become a new Augustus coincides with the remarkable artistic plan deliberately directed at creating an image of dynastic-papal grandeur which was carried out with considerable tenacity by Pius VI. It is comprehensible that from Braschi's viewpoint, only renewed papal power could counter these times when the Church was in great danger. The battle to demonstrate a public image was part of an authentic challenge that the Church had to sustain against the Enlightenment movement and later against Joseph II.¹²⁵

He was impressive in aspect, and energetic; contemporaries spoke freely of his physical good looks and refined features.¹²⁶ He looked younger than his actual age, and apart from a few sporadic occasions, he was in very good health up till 1787, and even later.¹²⁷ As far as his "moral behaviour" was concerned, he seemed above reproach, since he had no embarrassing female "friendships". The only fault that attracted criticism was a problem that had almost disappeared from the Roman Curia in the eighteenth century, but that he had brought back into the public eye: nepotism. The fact that he had appointed his nephew Romualdo cardinal in 1786 could have been still considered as a Roman habit (he was to be the last nephew-cardinal in the history of papacy)¹²⁸; but the very

¹²⁴ "If Braschi began his image campaign in dialogue with his papal precursors, he soon wished to be seen not just as a new Peter, but as a new Caesar". Collins, *Papacy and Politics*, p. 36.

¹²⁵ There is a historiographical tendency to view the pontifical ceremonies and protocols in a negative light, setting them within a wider social and economical controversy. But those ceremonies and that splendour were perfectly instrumental in order to govern the country and even more so to preserve the image of the successor of Peter. Visceglia, *La città rituale, Roma e le sue rappresentazioni in età moderna*, pp. 119–90.

¹²⁶ "In the words of one observer, he seemed born to be a sovereign", Collins, *Papacy and politics*, p. 7.

¹²⁷ It took another ten years before there was any news of bad health concerning Pius VI. When he died in 1799, the pope was 82: "Perché le cronache del tempo ci parlino di una nuova malattia del papa occorre arrivare al maggio 1797; egli ormai, è bene ricordarlo, ha 80 anni". Giovanni Ceccarelli, *La salute dei pontefici, nelle mani di Dio e dei medici, Da Alessandro VI a Leone XIII* (Milano, 2001), pp. 156-60.

¹²⁸ Antonio Menniti Ippolito considers that the French Revolution was responsible for having made of Pius VI the last nepotistic pope, and in fact he wrote that : "Gli eventi rivoluzionari, che

rapid social and economic career of his other nephew Luigi, and the construction of a palace in piazza Navona (Palazzo Braschi cost the princely sum of 150.000 scudi), as well as the appropriation of some of the reclaimed land in the Pontine marshland, contributed towards his negative public image.¹²⁹

Of the five cardinals who followed in the position as Secretary of State, none seemed to have acquired the pope's trust completely,¹³⁰ although he did bestow some trust to two other cardinals, Gerdyl and Antonelli, but only in certain cases,¹³¹ consulting them only in those matters where he felt their experience was necessary.¹³² The pope controlled the Curia with suspicion, and in turn was controlled by the monarchs.¹³³ Pius VI was often referred to as a man who did not understand the times in which he was living, especially in relation to the Enlightenment.¹³⁴

pure furono particolarmente gravosi per le figure dei papi regnanti – Pio VI appunto e Pio VII – risparmiarono alla chiesa romana un nuovo corso nepotista, chissà quanto lungo, chissà quanto solido”. Menniti, *Il tramonto della Curia nepotista*, p. 158.

¹²⁹ Luigi became Duke of Nemi and in 1781 he married Costanza Falconieri, a member of the family closest to the pope among the Roman aristocracy. In order to secure an economic future for the first of his two nephews, Luigi, the pope took personal risks, trying to gain possession of Amanzio Lepri's riches. The legal proceedings between the pope and Lepri's heirs were concluded in 1789, resolving a situation which was extremely embarrassing for the pope. as stated by Ippolito Menniti: “But an authentic scandal was provoked by the initiative of the pope in inducing the professed member of the Order of Malta, Amanzio Lepri, to declare Luigi as the universal heir to his enormous wealth (estimated at 1,500,000 scudi). It would seem that this great wealth had been accumulated through embezzlement by Lepri's father who had been Contractor of the Pontifical Customs Houses. In 1785, after his death, the Lepri nephews also laid claim to the inheritance, denouncing the mental infirmity of their uncle at the time of his writing the will in favour of the pope's nephew. A scandal broke out when they produced a new will and testament which satisfied their ambitions”. Idem, p. 157.

¹³⁰ In chronological order: Pallavicini from 1775 to 1785, then the position was four months “vacante”, Boncompagni –Ludovisi from 1785 to september 1789, de Zelada from 1789 to august 1796, Busca from 1796 to april 1797, Giuseppe Doria Pamphili from 1797 to 1799. See the judgement of Filippone, *Le relazioni tra Stato Pontificio e la Francia rivoluzionaria*, pp. 9-17.

¹³¹ Both were appointed cardinals at the beginning of the pontificate in 1775 and in 1777.

¹³² In the year 1783 Pius VI worked in secret on the problems concerning the German Churches with Della Genga, keeping all the affair hidden from the Curia. Stendhal, *Diario di un viaggio in Italia* (Milano, 1993), pp. 210-11.

¹³³ During his initial years of government, he was considered by de Bernis as: “Un enfant d'un excellent naturel, mais trop vif, et qui serait capable de se jeter par la fenetre si on n'y prenait garde”. Idem, pp. 193-94.

¹³⁴ Pelletier, *Rome et la Révolution Française*, p. 45. Collins made a much stronger statement, writing that: “Pius's estrangement from his age was perhaps his greatest distinction as a patron. If

How much did the pontificate of Pius VI count as far as Enlightenment was concerned? We will describe some of the fundamental characteristics of the papacy in the next paragraph, as well as the relations with other states.

1.6. The Pope: administrator and Reformer

At the beginning of his pontificate, Pius VI attempted to reform the State in several areas.¹³⁵ There were a certain number of intellectuals in the Pontifical state open to the ideas of the Enlightenment period, who had an influence on the Roman Curia. Agriculture was suffering from chronic underproduction; craftsmanship and small industry did not develop for the whole of the 18th century; the large number of internal customs tolls prevented the free circulation of goods and food products. Naturally the reform in economic fields desired by the newly-elected pope is not to be interpreted as a global reform plan, but rather as the need to enable the Papal States to fund their economic deficit. In reality, throughout the whole of the 18th century each pope had to face the same problem, that of funding the State deficits.¹³⁶

At the time when he was Treasurer of the Apostolic Chamber, Braschi had already presented Clement XIII with a project for economic reform; but now, having become pope, he was able to recover it and put it into action.¹³⁷

After having opened the mines and the manufacturing works at the beginning of

Bloom is right that history is ‘the index of the men born too soon’ then the art of Pius VI was the index of a man born too late”. Collins, *Papacy and politics*, p. 298.

¹³⁵ See Luigi Dal Pane, *Lo Stato Pontificio e il movimento riformatore del XVIII secolo* (Milano, 1959); Nicola La Marca, *Liberismo economico nello Stato Pontificio* (Roma, 1984); Venturi, “Elementi e tentativi di riforma nello Stato Pontificio del XVIII secolo”, *Rivista Storica Italiana*, LXXV (1963), IV p. 778-817; Enzo Piscitelli, “La industria e il commercio al tempo di Pio VI”, *Studi Romani*, 4 (1956), p. 442-57; L. Savi, “Economisti romani e riforme di Pio VI”, *Economia e Storia* 6 (1959), p. 81-84.

¹³⁶ La Marca, *Liberismo Economico nello Stato Pontificio*, pp. 70 – 71.

¹³⁷ “Alla base della decisa volontà del nuovo papa di operare e concretare le riforme progettate non doveva essere certamente estranea la sua ambizione personale, né il motivo, vecchio ormai di quasi un secolo, di creare nuove fonti di entrate per colmare, sia pure in parte, l’enorme deficit finanziario dello Stato”. Idem, p. 154.

his pontificate, on the 27th of July 1776, Pius VI published a *motu proprio* aimed at encouraging agriculture and commerce.¹³⁸

In order to instigate the reforms, Pius VI set up a special congregation, nominating Guglielmo Pallotta as Treasurer General, and charging cavaliere Giovanni-Cristiano De Miller with the realisation of the land register. A *motu proprio* dated the 9th of April 1777 established financial taxes for all the population without distinction or privilege, including ecclesiastics. These reforms could have been more incisive if the pope's instructions had been diligently observed, and if there had not been strong opposition on behalf of the aristocracy.¹³⁹ On the other hand, the land register did not make accurate calculations of property that existed within the State, but simply gathered the statements made by proprietors without checking for their accuracy.¹⁴⁰ In order to better counter the problems posed by the aristocracy, in 1785, Pius VI replaced Palotta with Fabrizio Ruffo as Treasurer General. An edict dated the 30th of April 1786 ordered the free circulation of goods, and established customs tax on imported products.

The unpopularity of the pope and the Treasurer increased considerably over the years; even the agrarian reform, which had not yet been resolved decisively, was blocked by the large landowners; everybody was strongly opposed to the reforms.¹⁴¹ Even the creation of a land register in the province of Bologna met with strong opposition. Towards the last decade of the 18th century, the state of the economy was disastrous and the lack of equality between

¹³⁸ The reform was aimed at being developed in three directions: the abolition of the *Dazj Camerali* (or the taxes paid for transporting goods within the State), the institution of a general land register, and the creation of a customs service at the borders.

¹³⁹ *Idem*, p. 210.

¹⁴⁰ *Idem*, pp. 211-212.

¹⁴¹ "Tutti i cardinali, i prelati, i ministri camerali erano contrari alle riforme per ambizione, odiosità al pontificato e a Ruffo". Dal Pane, *Lo stato pontificio e il movimento riformatore del XVIII secolo* (Milano, 1959), pp. 293-294.

various provinces was extreme¹⁴². Many of these initiatives were directed at strengthening the centre of power, even though it was not yet the propitious moment. Any renewal was blocked by the very people who should have been those mainly concerned by this project¹⁴³.

It is probable that in the light of this lack of success, the pope's attitude towards the Jews and the Jewish Community in Rome took an unfavourable direction¹⁴⁴; even though, initially the political policy of Pius VI presented a different view to that of his predecessor, Clement XIV¹⁴⁵. The subject of Judaism was faced in the same manner as the rejection of modernism; and therefore, the rejection of Judaism and modernism became one of the means for rebuilding a strong Church.

1.7. The Church of Pius VI and publications

Repressive restrictions were applied in the Church State after the 1760s, with the burning of prohibited books and exemplary punishments inflicted on unrepentant readers. However, outside the Papal States, the Inquisition courts were forced to take into consideration the organisation of State censorship,

¹⁴² The coffers of the State were gradually being emptied; the Apostolic Chamber printed paper currency to compensate the lack of noble metals. Stefano Tabacchi, *Il Buon Governo, Le finanze locali nello Stato della Chiesa (secoli XVI-XVIII)* (Roma, 2007), pp. 412-16.

¹⁴³ The lack of participation by the few representative of the middle classes, (craftsmen, small business, etc) made it even more difficult to eliminate any of the large privileges of the regime.

¹⁴⁴ See: Mario Rosa, "La Santa Sede e gli Ebrei nel XVIII secolo" in *Storia d'Italia*, annali 11-2 (Torino, 1997), pp. 1069-90; "Tra tolleranza e repressione: Roma e gli Ebrei nel XVIII secolo", in *Italia judaica III. Gli Ebrei in Italia dalla segregazione alla prima emancipazione*, atti del III convegno internazionale (Tel Aviv – Roma, 1986) pp. 81-98; Caffiero, "Le insidie de' perfidi giudei, Antiebraismo e riconquista cattolica alla fine del XVIII secolo", in *Rivista Storica Italiana* 105 (1993), pp. 551-81; Thomas Brechenmacher, *Der Vatikan und die Juden* (Munchen, 2005), pp. 65-71.

¹⁴⁵ Among all these actions, the publication concerning the Jews, should be remembered; it was printed on the 5th of April 1775 "fra le pastorali sollecitudini". In 44 paragraphs, this publication contained all the laws that controlled the life of the Jews within the Church State. This was not limited to restoring old restrictions, but aggravated the situation with new regulations for life in the ghettos. Following the pope's publication, any Jew who wished to stay even a single night outside the ghetto, was forced to apply for a special authorisation. The punishment for spending a night outside the ghetto was death. A. Milano, "L'editto sopra gli Ebrei di Pio VI e le mene ricattatorie di un letterato" in *Rassegna mensile di Israel* 19 (1953), pp. 118-26.

against which the various publications and regulations issued by the Holy See could achieve little because of hostile, local regulations and restrictions. In any case, the crisis of the Inquisition should be interpreted not so much as total and definitive decadence, as much as progressive re-adaptation by the Institutions to the changes which were underway.¹⁴⁶ In answer to the diminution of its repressive powers, the Roman Holy See focused on the policy of persuasion, calling a gathering of all the bishops in Europe to confront the ever-increasing production of printed material that was considered as directed against Rome.

Pius VI organised the mobilisation of all the bishops of Europe, and used encyclicals as his main means of communication, not only within, but also outside the ecclesiastical community to provide instructions in reading matter as well as matters that were strictly “political”. The chronological and subject matter of this correspondence, including inquisition regulations, deeds of the nuncios, and papal encyclicals on one hand, and pastoral instructions to local clergy and sermons on the other, uncovers a certain coincidence of intent between Rome and the farflung dioceses of its Church in supporting what seems a well-orchestrated campaign against the reforms proposed by the Habsburgs and Joseph II. And this occurred in spite of the different opinions expressed by the Jansenists on the question of whose authority gave the right to exercise jurisdiction in a diocese (that is - the bishops and not the pope) and concerning the right to read prohibited texts, marriage dispensations, etc etc, therefore the

¹⁴⁶ In relation to the actual decline of the role of the Inquisition, see: Andrea del Col, *L’Inquisizione in Italia. Dal XII al XXI secolo* (Milano, 2006), pp. 560-77; V. Ferrone, M. Rosa, *Riformatori e ribelli nel 700 religioso italiano*, (Bari 1969); G. Imbruglia, “Il conflitto e la libertà. Pietro Verri da il «Caffè» alla Storia di Milano”, in C. Capra (ed.), *Pietro Verri e il suo tempo* (Bologna, 1999), pp. 447-87; Girolamo De Miranda, “Vico e il Sant’Ufficio, L’Inquisizione e gli storici: un cantiere aperto. Tavola rotonda nell’ambito della conferenza annuale della ricerca (Roma, 24-25 giugno 1999)”, *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei* (Roma, 2000), pp. 429-437; M. Peruzza, “L’Inquisizione nel periodo delle riforme settecentesche. Il caso veneziano”, *Ricerche di storia sociale e religiosa*, XXIII (1994), pp. 139-86; Giovanni Romeo, *L’Inquisizione nell’Italia moderna* (Bari, 2002), pp. 105-19.

Jansenist condemned the interferences by the Church of Rome as absurd privileges compared to a prohibition that concerned all the faithful.

In fact, the repression option seemed to be a failure in a context where demands for renewal were being interpreted by jurisdictional practice through the suppression of local inquisition courts (such as Tuscany and Lombardy, in 1781 and 1782).¹⁴⁷ So it became essential to relaunch a war using publishing which, in close association with the battle against the diffusion of the Enlightenment movement and Jansenism, was fought through the publication of the confutation of texts listed on the Index, translations of *antiphilosophiques* works, and reviews directed at stamping out prohibited books.

The use of printing *a maggiore gloria di Dio* and, above all, the outbreak of an authentic publication war, sparked off during the second half of the Eighteenth century by the printing of confutation of texts in the Index, among which, we recall *Febronius abbreviatus et emendatus* by the bishop of Trier Hontheim and the numerous pamphlets by Eybel, formed extremely important instruments directed at maintaining the intellectual supremacy in 18th century Catholic Europe. These strategies were not without precedence since in the post-Tridentine period, the Church had played a leading role in promoting holy works as a measure against Protestantism and, ranging from catechisms to the lives of the saints.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Respectively under the government of Peter Leopold and Ferdinand Habsburg-Lorraine.

¹⁴⁸ Albano Biondi, "Aspetti della cultura cattolica post-tridentina. Religione e controllo sociale", in *Storia d'Italia, Annali*, 4 pp. 253 – 302. Simon Ditchfield, *Liturgy, sanctity and history in Tridentine Italy, Pietro Maria Campi and the preservation of the particular* (Cambridge, 1995). In relation to printing in the context of 18th century missions, see Roberto Rusconi, "Gli Ordini religiosi maschili dalla Controriforma alle soppressioni settecentesche: cultura, predicazione, missioni, in *Clero e società nell'Italia moderna*", in Rosa (ed.), (Bari, 1995), p. 247. For France, see the section dedicated to "Le livre et le propagandes religieuses", in *Histoire de l'édition française*, I, *Le livre conquérant. Du Moyen Age au milieu du XVIII siècle*, edited by Roger Chartier, Henri-Jean Martin, 1982, pp. 302-364.

It has been demonstrated how the method of controversy was refined during that period to combat a very widespread movement against which solutions of sheer strength had no effect.¹⁴⁹ Examples of a strong link between censorship by the Index and writings in defence of the “patrimonio della fede” (heritage of the Faith) emerged from the past of the Counter-reformation. In relation to this, we recall the activities performed by the Roman hierarchies aimed at organising criticism of prohibited authors like Jean Bodin¹⁵⁰. So therefore, under certain aspects, the use of publishing as a means was a return to the former remedies used for the Counter-reformation. Furthermore, this return which is represented clearly in the re-printing of the manual, *Della educazione cristiana* by Silvio Antoniano (1540 - 1603), “adattato ai nuovi increduli” (adapted for the new unbelievers). This was first published in 1583 and, as can be seen in the notice for the reader,¹⁵¹ its reprinting was legitimized by the conviction that there were extensive connections between the heresies of the first modern era and the “l’incredulità” of the present,¹⁵² in which there was a tendency to associate the widely varied Enlightenment culture.¹⁵³ The reprint of this volume in 1785, presented some arguments in support of papal supremacy in contrast to most antipapal and pro-Jansenistic press that recognized a greater role to bishops as they were the first to be responsible for the believers.

¹⁴⁹ Mario Infelise, *I libri proibiti* (Bari, 2004), pp. 114-20.

¹⁵⁰ Enzo Baldini, “Jean Bodin e l’Index dei libri proibiti”, in Cristina Stango (ed.), *Censura ecclesiastica* (Firenze, 2001), pp. 79-100.

¹⁵¹ From the “Educazione cristiana de’ figliuoli”: three books written by Silvio Antoniano, then cardinal of S. Chiesa at the request of Carlo Borromeo (Roma, 1785). The text can also be accessed online: http://it.wikisource.org/wiki/Tre_libri_dell%27educatione_christiana_dei_figliuoli (accessed 15 January 2010).

¹⁵² Although the term “incredulità” is used, it mainly means that a series of rather varied phenomena cohabit together.

¹⁵³ Venturi, *Settecento riformatore, II. La chiesa e la repubblica dentro i suoi limiti*, vol. 2, pp. 185-213.

At this point it is useful to refer to certain changes and to focus on the peculiarity of Eighteenth century history in reference to the ecclesiastical control of reading matter. In order to explain the increasing importance of publication, especially during the 1770s, first of all the gradual and, moreover, conclusive awareness of the Church must be understood, since it came to be realised that it was impossible to interrupt the flow of prohibited books by adopting the coercive methods established during the Counter-reformation¹⁵⁴. During Joseph's reign the strongest influences behind the luminaries of the court were Joseph von Sonnenfels, Tobias von Gebler, Gottfried van Swieten, and Ignaz von Born. These high officials had all been active in promoting intellectual development in the Empire, and they themselves represented various carefully elaborated philosophies of Enlightenment. In addition to their own intellectual production and influence, they supported the efforts of lesser writers and academics through mentoring, or the provision of positions and pensions¹⁵⁵. The ongoing Eighteenth century metaphor referring to uninterrupted flow, using frequently the two terms *flooding* and *deluge*, would seem to be an important clue to indicate the difficulty in building solid, efficient banks to arrest a torrent that had become far too unruly.¹⁵⁶ Very often, writing from Rome (in his reports to Kaunitz) the agent Brunati referred to the difficulties encountered by the pope in wishing to prohibit hostile or so-called reformist press which was generally

¹⁵⁴ For example, only in France did the State censorship apparatus change from: "200-400 titoli annui degli inizi del secolo ai 500 della metà; nel 1764 ne furono rivisti 1564. Nello stesso periodo i revisori passarono così dalle 120 unità alle 200". Infelise, *I libri proibiti*, p. 95.

¹⁵⁵ Without these statesman, the activities and ideas of the Austrian Enlightenment would have remained negligible. See Venturi, *Settecento riformatore, IV. La caduta dell'Antico Regime (1776-1789)*, vol. 2, pp. 652-54.

¹⁵⁶ Pietro Stella, *Il Giansenismo in Italia, II. Il movimento Giansenista e la produzione libraria* (Roma, 2006), p. 74.

branded by the supporters of the papacy as Jansenist or heretic.¹⁵⁷ The procedural “transparency” in relation to the texts examined by the Index remained an open question for the Church, an area where Benedict XIV (pope, 1740-58) had attempted reform with little success.¹⁵⁸ This discretionary power by the Church and the lack of specific references created the basis for open contrast between the empire of Joseph II and the Italian States under the Emperor’s influence. Above all, in those aspects that concerned the relations between the Empire and the Church, this awareness, was the result of the Inquisition, in turn closely linked with the rising of the State censorship apparatus, which unblocked narrow openings for the market of texts on the Index.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, during the course of the Eighteenth century, the greatest resources offered to publishing were able to support the efforts made by the Church in encouraging production which assumed an increasingly systematic approach. And furthermore, in the late Eighteenth century which had discovered the enormous potential of transforming mankind through education, the attempt to reach all social levels was strengthened, offering each one a suitable remedy according to their various styles of life. The use of publishing also led to a transformation of the literary genre used as instruments to criticise the *Ancien Régime* / Old Regime (dictionaries and novels, for example) and also brought about the promotion of pedagogy for good reading matter that catered to the new tastes of the public.

¹⁵⁷ Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz, (1711-1794), Austrian state chancellor during the eventful decades from the Seven Years’ War (1756–63) to the beginning of the coalition wars against revolutionary France (1792). Kaunitz was responsible for the foreign policy of the Habsburg monarchy, and he served as principal adviser on foreign affairs to the empress Maria Theresa as well as for Joseph II and Leopold II. HHSTA, Rom, Korrespondanz, 206 Brunati, Brunati to Kaunitz, Rome 1787, February 7, ff. 23-24rv.

¹⁵⁸ Hubert Wolf, *Storia dell’Indice, Il Vaticano e i libri proibiti* (Roma, 2006), pp. 37-38. Patrizia Delpiano, *Il governo della lettura: Chiesa e libri nell’Italia del settecento*, (Bologna, 2006), pp. 80–85; Gigliola Fragnito, *Proibito capire* (Bologna, 2005), p. 285; Sandro Landi, *Il governo delle opinioni. Censura e formazioni del consenso nella Toscana del settecento* (Bologna, 2000), p. 94.

¹⁵⁹ Del Col, *L’Inquisizione in Italia. Dal XII al XXI secolo*, p. 502.

Recognising the crisis of the repressive system which originated in the 16th century and reference to this after almost two centuries at the peak of the age of Enlightenment (at the end of the XVIII century), should not prevent us from noting how the ‘courts of reading matter’ (*tribunali della lettura*) continued to carry out activities which were far from marginal. On the contrary, the analysis of the relationship, quite close between the world of censorship and publishing production promoted in ecclesiastic circles, determined a critical discussion within the Curia about the supposition of the decline in the dominant role played by the Church during the 18th century. Moreover, these critical reflections generated a change: the Curia switched from a context of repression to one of persuasion, while the ecclesiastic-diplomatic pressure moved from the use of “force” towards upper classes. And that was probably how a gradual move was made away from secret censorship, which was decreed during meetings of the Index and the Inquisition, directed at banning reading, moving towards public censorship, which confuted and corrected by means of the instrument of publishing and preaching; in other words, it directed the public, to whom it offered preventive and curative antidotes against dangerous books. The control of reading matter was based less and less on the compromise between the prohibited and the admissible, and on the contrary, this control worked by means of complex mechanisms of controlling ideas. What appears perfectly clear today is therefore a relationship composed of a certain number of underhand schemes between ecclesiastical censorship and the emerging of public opinion in 18th century Europe, underhand schemes that have also been demonstrated as being the result of censorship practices set up by State authorities in Europe.¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ See Landi, *Il Governo delle opinioni*, pp. 264–69; Minois, *Censure et culture*; Edoardo Tortarolo, “La censure à Berlin au XVIII siècle” in *La lettre clandestine*, 6 (1997), pp. 253–62;

During this stage of the crisis of the *Ancien Régime*, above all during the 1780s, the process of the diffusion of censorship centred in public contexts. It often shows that the leading instruments were not the tribunals of the Inquisition, but mechanisms such as preaching, published reviews (linked with the Holy See) and, in final analysis, the activities of the apostolic nuncios operating as diffusers/defenders of ecclesiastical texts.¹⁶¹ These were mechanisms which appeared in the 1780s, when freedom of the press, sanctioned in States like those governed by Joseph II, struck at the very roots of the Roman prohibitions, and the silences of the Index were filled by the confutations expressed in papal briefs and diffused by nuncios and bishops: “scouts in the house of Israel” according to the words of Pius VI.¹⁶²

1.8. The briefs of Pius VI

Among the various factors that defined the anti-Enlightenment politics of Pope Pius VI and his role in opposition to the Habsburgs and Joseph II, one of the most important aspects is what appears after reading the pontifical briefs, especially in cases where these were very influential in selecting, modelling, and interpreting actual facts. This type of “literary” intervention sheds a strong light on the specific properties of a function which was not only ideological, but also operational, expressing indignation and disapproval, and sanctioning genuine

“Censorship and the Conception of the Public in Late-Eighteenth Century Germany: Or, Are Censorship and Public Opinion Mutually Excluding Entities?”, in *Shifting the Boundaries. Transformation of the Languages of Public and Private in the Eighteenth Century*, Edited by Dario Castiglione and Lesley Sharpe, Exeter, 1995, 131-50.

¹⁶¹ The art of confutation was fully introduced in the circles of patronage relations and formed a possible means of rising in the ecclesiastic hierarchy. Apart from the career of the Barnabite Gerdil who became a cardinal in 1777, assuming the position of Prefect of the Index and theological advisor to Pius VI, it should be underlined in any case that the list of those who managed to obtain advantages by writing and acting as promoters of the anti-Illuminist movement, is shown to be considerable.

¹⁶² Bellocchi, *Tutte le encicliche e i principali documenti pontifici emanati dal 1740*, p. 130.

battles. The structure of the wording of the pontifical briefs permits the discovery and the identification of the motives behind the war against enlightened principles by Pius VI. These documents reveal that the commitment to act against the *philosophes* shifted from the moral context to another which was far more political, and this, above all, meant assuming extremely strong responsibilities. This strategy is most obvious in the case of the brief we have considered: *Inscrutabile divinae sapientiae* (1775), together with the corollary of the *Editto sopra gli ebrei*, published in the same year.¹⁶³

So, in this section, I will proceed with a systematic analysis of both the vocabulary and the argument in the briefs of Pius VI, gathering suitable data and methods in order to identify the criteria and aim that guided the pope's actions. This type of analysis is rich in signals that invite the reader to sound out the true weight of the argument and wording, and to perceive the pope's censorship and disapproval with regard to the "innovations" of the new era, at least in the fields of ethics and ideology. The information available draws a clear map of the overall political sense, whether openly declared or simply implied, and narrows the delicate problems in relation to progress and philosophy to a neo-counter reformist type "closed mentality".¹⁶⁴ Moreover, it should also be remembered that the individual voice of the pope which, in writing, recalled the harm caused by enlightened philosophy, and which was perceived with great clarity, was also, in turn, the interpreter of the collective voice of the circles of the Roman curia. The main motive for these writings lay in the principle of confutation of the "new" imperial enlightened philosophy, intended as the catalysing element to

¹⁶³ See Caffiero, "Le insidie de' perfidi giudei". Antiebraismo e riconquista cattolica alla fine del Settecento, *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 105/2 (1993), pp. 555-81. A. Milano, 'L"Editto sopra gli Ebrei" di Pio VI e le mene ricattatorie di un letterato', *Israel*, 19 (1953), pp. 118-25.

¹⁶⁴ "Le début de son pontificat marquèrent une rupture avec l'esprit conciliant de son prédécesseur." Caffiero, "Pie VI", *Dictionnaire historique de la papauté*, p. 1330.

resolve a vast ethical-religious-social problem.¹⁶⁵ This was a problem which was extremely significant during this part of the century, and which became increasingly more vibrant and articulate, partially thanks to the recent developments in publishing contexts, which were of a more flexible and open approach, but also more “aggressive” (with reference to Eybel, to whom we will return later). Naturally, the former ideological tradition of the Church, inherited by Pius VI, could not satisfy all the demands of a debate that was reaching its peak at that time, in terms of complexity, diversification and maturity. However, an opening was conceded to consider and discuss a type of atheism and materialism that brought into debate certain problems concerning morals and justice in the secular sense. Analysis of the wording and language used in the texts of Pius VI should contribute towards a clearer focus on the wider “anti-enlightened” concept prevalent during his pontificate. On a linguistic level, the exterior origin of this debate obliged the pope to focus on the traditional but numerous categories of complaints about the corruption of the times and the elimination of the problem. So the innovative element is represented by the radicalization of the condemnation of Enlightenment which not only attacked the philosophers responsible for promoting the new ideas, but was also extended to all those who were considered to be in opposition to papal primacy.

The pontifical brief, *Inscrutabile divinae sapientiae* (1775), ignited a rigid and “dutiful” debate directed at safeguarding the “true Religion” (which is actually an Augustinian syntagm: “De vera religione”) and the “sacred canons” against individual licence/liberty and the “obsession with innovation”, - just as a

¹⁶⁵ It should be remembered that the challenge to the Empire did not affect only the territories directly governed by the Habsburgs, but also those under the control of the Prince-bishops, who in Germany, looked to Joseph as a possible point of reference for emancipation from Rome. Furthermore, a large part of the supporting local press in Italy was interested in the developments in the conflict between the Papacy and the Empire. John Davis, *Naples and Napoleon*, pp. 23-24.

reminder of the main points that provoked the strongest and most immediate reactions. One feature of this pontifical text, written against the Enlightenment thinkers and their philosophy, is based on presumed notoriety: the enlightened Austrian school of thought, in fact, which needed to be confuted, was always considered as having been already recognised, and therefore was not illustrated.¹⁶⁶ There was no open confrontation, nor was there any discussion concerning the theories of the philosophers, but simply an opposition based on “charity” and “truth” (provided by the faith) but also “purity” in opposition to the “deception” and “impiety” of the opposing enlightened ideas. The aim of this text remained constantly focused on the problems involving a corrupt movement, represented by Enlightenment, which undermined religion and even disrupted “the very basis of rational nature”.¹⁶⁷ However, the philosophical theory was never discussed. It could be argued that the pope had little interest for philosophical debate *strictu sensu*, as a result of the diffusion of the enlightened philosophy, and this lack of reasoning is demonstrated even from a purely lexical and descriptive point of view. And therefore it was the effects of the collision between the true religion (measured according to the “the most diligent observance” of canon law) and a society in chaos, which was being led to destruction by the activities of the “perverse” philosophers, that Pius VI wished to illustrate and dramatise, adopting a variety of strategies towards this end: the choice of invective, dramatic rhetoric, little or no argument, a particular taste in spectacular descriptions of this *disease*, and the immediate effects of an assertive and censorial tone. Although Pius evidently did not feel he needed to discuss his

¹⁶⁶ Beales, “Christians and philosophes: the case of the Austrian Enlightenment”, in Derek Beales and Geoffrey Best (ed.), *History, Society and the churches. Essays in honour of Owen Chadwick* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 169-94.

¹⁶⁷ Bellocchi, *Tutte le encicliche e i principali documenti pontifici emanati dal 1740*, p. 126.

target – Enlightenment philosophy – explicitly since he assumed that his readers knew what he was referring to, this is not the case today. It is precisely the duty of the historian to recover this contextual detail and present it in all its contextual specificity.

In fact, a close and essential relationship existed between the enormity of the harm provoked by Enlightened philosophy and the objective force of the written word. The wording had to be strong; it had to have the power to wage battle against the great moral catastrophe and the mystification that these “frenzied and furious men” were provoking. Numerous were the characteristics that defined the nature of these new philosophers: they were very “cunning” but “false”, they were “philosophers” but “perverse”, they “seduced” with their words while at the same time they spread the “poison of lies”; in reality they were “stupid”, “corrupt” and their philosophy, which hid “their own impiety” behind “an honest name”, was “full of deceit” and constituted a “appalling conspiracy” against the natural freedom of mankind.¹⁶⁸

The papal initiative intervened to organise the defence strategy against the *philosophes* using a defamatory and hostile tone, with an apocalyptic streak. The basis of enlightened philosophy was presented in a context extremely rich in disparaging circumlocution and denigrating allusions. To achieve his objective, Pius VI also made rhetorical use of the powerful metaphor of pestilence/plague and mortal disease, which became part of the argument and made it even stronger.

These formed a type of guiding thread woven through the text like a repeated and varied warp and weave. The brief made clever use of terms taken

¹⁶⁸ The entire document is based on this terminology. For ease of comprehension, in these pages we refer the reader to the complete document. Bellocchi, *Tutte le encicliche e i principali documenti pontifici emanati dal 1740*, pp. 125-131.

from medicine, such as "plague" (twice), "pestilent disease", "cancer", "poison", "infection", "evil/disease", "contaminated", and "ferment"¹⁶⁹.

However, it should be remembered that while, on the one hand, the emphasis placed on medical terms does refer to 'actual' topics in a period that suffered from lack of hygiene and widespread diseases which were also lethal, on the other hand, the texts were written in an apocalyptic rhetorical style which was characteristic of religious publications that described physical disease as the sign of widespread spiritual corruption: this referred to the collective body or the "body of the Church" (*ecclesia*, which, in fact, means "community") which was attacked and offended.¹⁷⁰ The meaning of the purgation, or purification desired by the pope, which, where necessary, imparted the order to segregate "the poisoned books from the eyes of the flock", coincided with the recovery of "health" and "purity" by the body of the Church. The dramatic tension and negative intensity present in this situation was increased with the addition of further expressions which referred to the sphere of uncleanness, thus playing a decisive role in these texts, strongly condemning a situation of serious spiritual suffering. The pope invoked the "dignity" and the "splendour" in the "house of God" and suggested an apocalyptic vision of a church in which the holy vestments, decoration on the altars, and other church furnishings could "be shown in shameful filth". In order to sketch an image of "purity" of the Christian

¹⁶⁹ We would recall, with particular reference to the Jews, that these same terms were used by Garampi to describe the tolerance conceded by Joseph II towards the Jewish nation. Indeed, Garampi was one of the authors of the papal brief. ACDF, CL 1783-84, 10 "Articolo di lettera di monsignor nunzio di Vienna col quale accompagnò l'annessa Professione di Fede per tutte le religioni" Garampi to Zelada, Rome, 1784, May 25.

¹⁷⁰ The use of the medical-pandemic metaphor to refer to the heresy as a whole is echoed during the papacy of Pius VI, in traces of anti-heretic literature used by the ultramontane factor that seemed to make direct reference to the earlier age of the Counter-reform movement. In fact, in 1600, in Rome, to celebrate the Holy Year, the Oratorian fathers of the Vallicella presented a sumptuous dramatic play set to music with an allegorical religious theme, the *Rappresentazione di Anima e Corpo*. A work which remained among the most effective examples of the use of medical-religious analogy during the Baroque period.

faith in contrast with the leprosy of the new philosophy, the pope did not mince his words; in fact several times he did not lose the opportunity to list the signs of the arrival of the worst of all “enemies”, or Satan. As he wrote in this extract:

But these cunning men sweeten and conceal the enormous perversity of their dogmas with words and expressions so enticing, that the weakest – who are the majority – are hooked on the bait [...] they open their eyes towards a false light which causes far more harm than (the powers of) darkness. There is no doubt that our enemy, so eager and capable of harmful deeds, just as he assumed the resemblance of a snake to deceive Adam and Eve, has inspired the tongues of these men, tongues which certainly speak lies.¹⁷¹

After having described the pestilent consequences of such ideology, the text included a deliberate reference to the fact that the sovereigns too had been contaminated and corrupted by the activities of this philosophy. This mainly affected the loss of liberty (and dignity) of mankind, which was controversially identified in the agreement drawn up between the priesthood and the empire.¹⁷²

The deep motivation behind this position assumed by the pope should be searched for at another level - a political level - in contrast with the Habsburgs and Joseph II.¹⁷³ According to the Imperial envoy Brunati, the pope saw the rupture between himself and the Catholic world, not as a problem concerning

¹⁷¹ Bellocchi, *Tutte le encicliche e i principali documenti pontifici emanati dal 1740*, pp. 128-29.

¹⁷² “Conciioffachè i veri cristiani non hanno altre armi da potersi valere contro i più famosi scellerati, se non se quelle delle leggi, proscritte allorché la possanza sovrana ne ha lor confidato il ministero; se la medesima le ha poste nelle mani. [...] Ma la fondamentale ragione, per cui S. Agostino e tutti gli altri padri preferita hanno la filosofia de nostri libri santi a quella degli autori profani, si è perché costoro non parlano punto di Gesù Cristo, mediatore tra Iddio e gli uomini; e che ovunque codesta mediazione è ignorata, non può aver luogo la vera filosofia”. Tommaso Maria Mamachi, *La pretesa filosofia de moderni increduli* (2 vols., Roma, 1767), vol. 2.

¹⁷³ See Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. II, pp. 307-32.

religious practice outside the Holy See (territorial borders were not important in this case, at least as far as traditional borders were concerned), but interpreted it as a political problem. In fact, even though a priori, accused of Jansenism by the ecclesiastical party, the tenacity with which the Habsburgs developed their reforms was in reality an attempt directed at: “prevention against certain factions taking command in the territory of others and the many taxes levied by the Roman court or other dominions”.¹⁷⁴ In his correspondence, Brunati often referred to that separation between State and Church which was rejected firmly by the pope, who instead spoke of a single “sick body” that was in need of treatment.

So, in a final analysis of the information that has emerged, it is important to note the frequency of the terms that refer to uncleanness and disease. This should not be considered surprising given the fact that the concept of “new” is described as “evil/disease”, and in this sense it provides the effect of a magnet, using its basic force in a text lacking in valid argumentation and reasoning.

To summarise, it can be said that by conferring on these writings a rhetorical force with an apocalyptic-coercive influence, instead of using other expertise in a topic that required strong renewed argumentation, in his role as author, the pope adopted a position with the necessary distance from the “evil/disease” represented by the Enlightenment, and assumed a role which was purely one of opposition and censorship, without analysing the contents and without assuming the responsibility of forming a diagnosis. In this role he artificially isolated certain aspects and elements of this new ideology (the “licentiousness”, the controversy on liberty, the discussion on the traditional

¹⁷⁴ HHSTA, Brunati ROM, Korrespondenz 206, Brunati to Kaunitz ff. 23-24rv., Rome, 1787, February 7.

limits of power, the relationship between the individual and society, and the problems concerning materialism), and he deliberately deprived them of their complexity in his quest for an ethical and religious condemnation. In this way, by continuing without a contrasting strategy, the text finishes without any conclusion in an apocalyptic insinuation of evil, or with predictions of widespread pestilence and the degeneration of society and the individual. The episode (but also the names) of the philosophers results as confused and undefined. The importance of the leitmotif of disease in the text is very obvious, even when considering a simple descriptive approach towards the underlying theme of the lexical choices. By multiplying the images of plague and disease, the pontifical text ignited an efficient rhetorical dynamism that created an important level of coherence within the general topic. These choices were based on the metaphorical model *par excellence* of ecclesiastical society, which in reference to the “body”, were well combined with those which represented levels of depravity, mortal disease, and physical degradation. The imagery used by Pius VI still remains a great medical metaphor, but because of the particular use of invectives, it was subject to a bold operation of re-direction: physical sickness became the projection of the moral sickness of a corrupt society.

No reflections on the ideological battle waged by Pius VI against Enlightenment philosophy and politics whose objective was a coercive model of State and government action, can avoid a certain amount of reference to the Jewish question. This remains one of the main political themes approached by this pope, which undermined the foundations of one of the most famous aspects of the Enlightenment period: tolerance. The construction of an anti-Enlightenment position by Pius VI cannot therefore be fully understood in any way without constantly keeping in mind his position against the Jewish

community in Rome, and those present in all the Papal State territories¹⁷⁵. The radical negativity and social-moral inflexibility of Pius VI was echoed repeatedly in his choices of terms such as “integrity” of the Catholic religion, included also in the brief analysed above, as was his imperative need to “control” and “cancel” a complete culture. Once more, the onset of Pius VI’s personal crusade against the Jews began with the recognition of the implicit danger that existed in the reading of certain works, texts or books. In fact, what Pius VI condemned was the studying and reading of any Jewish literature referred to as “blasphemous codes”, Talmudic texts, and sometimes, the Old Testament. What the pope intended to ban were precisely the very aspects of a culture: books and traditions that had been handed down, – in short – the cultural processes and dynamics created by a people, and possessing an autonomy that formed the specific characteristics of the culture of a people. This is the subject of which the social thought of the Catholic Church has always been fully aware and which has been interpreted through an ideological and religious conflict, which placed the “Catholic religion” in opposition against the Jewish faith, judged “blasphemous and perverse”. According to Pius VI, “tolerantismo”/ religious tolerance and as a consequence, the Jews, (who were, together with the Protestants, the main beneficiaries in Western Europe) were one of the main dangers that the Holy See was forced to face. If, during the previous centuries, the Jewish question had been considered in theological terms, now with themes of freedom of cult and tolerance, the problem became political. Therefore, from the very beginning of

¹⁷⁵ Marina Caffiero underlined how Pius VI identified the Jews with so-called “modernity” and felt that the complicity between the Jewish population and that of the international Enlightenment movement often wrongly found confirmation: “In the civil and political emancipation obtained by the Roman Jews during the brief periods of the Republic of 1798-1799 and the Napoleonic occupation”. Therefore Caffiero partially recognised a Jewish role in the “plot” to obtain equal status before the law. In this case Caffiero did not provide information concerning those Jews who “plotted” together with the philosophers. Caffiero, *Battesimi forzati* (Roma, 2005), p. 25.

his pontificate, Pius VI perceived the problem of coexistence with the Jews in almost “epidemic” terms; the condition of the Jews under the new jurisdiction of the pope became similar to that of a community in permanent quarantine. On this subject, Owen Chadwick summed up Pope Braschi’s policy in this manner:

Pius VI immediately (20 April 1775) codified the old Jewish laws of the Papal States and in theory drove back the Jews in the ghetto, prevented their riding in a coach in the city, insisted that they always wear the yellow patch, declared it illegal to hold conversation with Christians in the streets.¹⁷⁶

The principal model used as reference by Pius to clarify the starting point for this *obscurantist*¹⁷⁷ “crusade” is obviously that proposed by Innocent IV, (“*Impia Judaeorum*”) and another by Paul IV (“*Cum Nimis Absurdum*”). But the position of Pius VI emerged very clearly: his actions consisted in placing on the Jewish problem a more general significance, demonstrating how being independent of Jewish culture was generally linked with those relations of cultural exchange typical of “modern” development in forms of social relations and communication.

The aspects of coercion and supremacy, previously experienced, played a crucial role at this point. It is not possible to understand the structure of Pius VI’s “anti-Illuminist” and “neo-counter reformation” ideology without having the theoretical courage to recognise that which was a fundamental aspect in his eyes: the elimination of the Jewish culture. The pope insisted on the need for a radical

¹⁷⁶ Chadwick, *The Popes and the European Revolution*, p. 20.

¹⁷⁷ As it is described in Brechenmacher, *Der Vatikan und die Juden* (München, 2005), pp. 65-71.

“removal” and cancellation of the Jewish problem, especially in Rome.¹⁷⁸ Based on the observation of specific forms of cultural consumption (books, publications, brochures, pamphlets) and attempting to limit their diffusion, Pius VI circumscribed the Jewish problem within the greater context of a defence against cultural disruption and religious “heresy”.¹⁷⁹ It is no accident that Pius VI’s edict comes from the Holy Office, as if to stress the restoration of a power that Clement XIV’s brief had handed over from the Holy Office to the Vicariate. With his decision to change and expand many parts of Benedict XIV’s edict of 1751, the first eight articles of the new edict attacks the Jewish culture on the whole, anticipating a more general negative attitude that was going to culminate in Pius VI’s encyclical.

¹⁷⁸ On the matter Marina Caffiero wrote that: “in questa direzione di analisi, si rivela ancora una volta l’importanza ineludibile del ruolo di Roma, sede della più antica, numerosa e autorevole comunità italiana – quanto all’età moderna -, ma città, soprattutto nella quale, per evidenti motivi, la peculiarità dei rapporti tra il papato e gli ebrei configura il modello e quasi il “laboratorio” delle norme e delle pratiche cattoliche. Roma era il luogo in cui i diversi provvedimenti trovavano una prima applicazione, determinando reazioni o singole vicende che assumevano ben presto una portata e una risonanza extralocale. Ad esse si sarebbe guardato sempre, nel lungo periodo, come a ‘precedenti storici’ di riferimento indispensabili.” Caffiero, *Battesimi forzati*, p. 12.

¹⁷⁹ Again Caffiero wrote on the the same topic: “In materia di libri degli ebrei dunque, superstiziosi, eretici o talmudici che fossero, la normativa continuava ad essere quella durissima cinquecentesca anche due secoli dopo, nell’età dei Lumi. Essa sarebbe stata ribadita, a fine secolo, dall’editto del 1775 del neoeletto Pio VI pubblicato, non a caso, in contemporanea con la condanna della cultura moderna e dei libri pericolosi da essa prodotta”. Marina Caffiero, “Ebrei stregoni? La censura dei libri magici e superstiziosi”, in Hubert Wolf (ed.), *Inquisition und Buchzensur im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (Paderborn, München, Wien, Zurich, 2011), p. 292.

The relationship between the Jews and Pius VI is not the main object of this research. However, it is impossible to ignore the manner in which Pius VI attributed to the Jews an important role in his “Counter-reform”, and it is exclusively in this context that we have included a series of analyses contextualised and limited to the period in question, and without wishing to discuss “the Jewish problem” in itself. Our interest lies in the manner in which Pius VI decided to combat modernism and what were identified as the principle enemies. To date, no up-to-date critical literature exists concerning the pontificate of Pius VI and the Jewish population, but simply articles that refer to single episodes. In spite of the fact that the problem of the historical context between Pius VI and the Jews is described by various scholars, including Ms Caffiero, as a very important factor: “il neoeletto Pio VI Braschi impresso un significato molto netto alla politica pontificia verso gli ebrei, fornendole un carattere di lotta antimoderna che era destinato a durare assai a lungo”. Caffiero, *Battesimi forzati*, p. 25.

The anti-Jewish campaign – whose topics drew new propagandistic and popular sap from Rovira Bonnet’s pamphlet – asserted itself in the papal edict¹⁸⁰. After the isolated condemnations of the enlightened works of the 50s, the Roman Church condemned them with renewed rigour, according to a plan that included the recovery of Catholicism and a radical action against the modern world¹⁸¹. The historian Kenneth Stow believes that Bonnet found favour with Pius VI. From a symbolical point of view, being able to shelve the ritual murder charge against the Jews, after the exculpation ordered by Clement XIV, required the intervention of an inspired polemist. The repression of Jews, Catholics and Enlightened reformers “went hand in hand”.¹⁸² In 1794, once again at the instigation of Pius VI, Bonnet wrote “L’armatura dei forti”, a manifesto against unbelievers and revolutionaries, but also against Jews, Muslims, Masons and Jansenists.¹⁸³ For the Pope, the anti-Jewish campaign was therefore a way of forcing the entire anti-ecclesiastical machine.

Pius’s intervention was directed at destroying all those forms of propaganda and cultural diffusion that challenged and undermined the cultural integrity of the Catholic Church, and at formulating an answer which was just as virulent through written texts with an extremely powerful demanding and censorial content. Therefore, in the vision of Pius VI, there existed roots that were common to Enlightenment philosophers and to the Jews: there was a type

¹⁸⁰ In March 1775 the booklet “Del ristretto della vita e martirio di S. Simone fanciullo di Trento fatto ristampare con una breve appendice da D. Francesco Rovira Bonet Rettor de Catecumeni, e Parroco di S. Salvatore a’ Monti” (Roma, 1775) by Francesco Rovira Bonnet (rector of the catechumens’ House) was published. It caused some stir as it resumed in darker colours the traditional accusations against the Jews by describing the emblematic figure of a victim of a ritual homicide.

¹⁸¹ On this matter see G. Miccoli., *Fra mito della cristianità e secolarizzazione* (Casale Monferrato, 1985). D. Menozzi., *La Chiesa cattolica e la secolarizzazione* (Torino, 1993).

¹⁸² Kenneth R. Stow, *Popes, Church, and Jews in the Middle Ages: Confrontation and Response* (London, 2007), p. 60.

¹⁸³ Idem.

of reciprocity between the tolerance preached by the supporters of the Enlightenment and the tolerance that was to be used towards the Jews (and their traditions).

In fact, on the one hand, one of the dangers that mainly worried Pius VI, was the possible relativization of the divine, which could have been obtained through the liberation of the Jews on a social and judicial level; in other words, by conceding them their civil rights. The concession of basic rights to the Jews at a social and judicial level could have led to a reduction for the Roman Catholic church, which would no longer have been perceived as an absolute and revealed truth, but would have been interpreted in terms of an advantage and - in other words – a moral and social accretion (as stated by Montesquieu in *Lettres persanes...*).¹⁸⁴ The conception of supremacy of this type for the Catholic Church signified the necessity of establishing an inherent “iniquity” in the Jewish people. In Pius VI’s coercive nature and “neo-counter-reformation” attitude, evil/disease, corruption, the plague, blasphemy, and heresy were all elements of the danger represented by the Jews, basically described in an “obscurantist” manner, as involved in sorcery and witchcraft (in relation to this aspect, see chap. IX and X written against amulets and spells). On the other hand, the appeal in atheist and freethinking traditions, represented by the enlightened philosophy, was also extremely dangerous for Pius VI, as this postulated a relationship with (moral and social) reality without religious meditation: in other words, it

¹⁸⁴ “Assuming that we would reason without prejudice, Mirza, I think that it is just as well for there to be several religions in a state. [...] It is no use to say that it is not in the king’s interest to allow more than one religion in the state. Even if every religion in the world gathered together there it would not do him any harm, since every single one of them commands obedience and preaches respect for authority”. Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*, ed. C.J. Betts, (2nd edn., London, 1993), p. 165.

considered the possibility of the position of man within his world seen as an individual, at liberty to make his own choices.

This solution created a gulf between the supposed absolute religious “inner life” and an external view which opened up the opportunity to a human reality in absolute “liberty”. In short, the doctrinal and practical intervention by Pius VI was presented as an authentic ultimatum to choose battle sides, and a “coercive” solution to the problem posed by publishing as the mediator of the relations with modern reality and ideological progress. Papal censorship and coercion began to counteract the diffusion of modernist ideas created in the breeding ground of the followers of the Enlightenment: for Pius VI the conflict that arose between the superiority of the Catholic religion and the “shameful” and “vile” answer by the enemies of the Church consisted in placing the emphasis on emotional values.

Similar characteristics can be seen in the *Super soliditate* (1786) written to confute the texts by Eybel. In fact, here it is possible to read the complaints regarding the “shameful slavery” of the Church subject to these new tendencies which were instrumental in disintegrating order and harmony. The diffusion of this “contemptible propaganda”, published by persons who were even of “fine intelligence” (as Eybel was defined) who called people to help “error” triumph over truth, transformed the complaints into open aggression: the Church, under the guidance of Pius VI, demonstrated that it was possible to resist “hatred” and “hypocrisy/duplicity”, not by using the arms of persuasion and love, but using an equally aggressive and violently dissuasive policy¹⁸⁵.

The pamphlets by Eybel were openly condemned:

¹⁸⁵ ACDF, CL 1783-84, n°10, Garampi to Pallavicini, Roma, 1784, May 25.

no follower of Christ, of any degree or office [...] must dare or presume to read or keep in his possession the aforesaid libellous pamphlet, whether already printed or in manuscript form [...] under pain of excommunication (chap. 24).¹⁸⁶

In order to explain the new “counter-reformation” attitude of the pope towards the modernist ideas of philosophy, the notion of renunciation of what was “new” was necessary, but not sufficient inextricably contained within this concept was also the desire to challenge the enemy of the peace and unity of the Catholic Church. Opposing the hostile philosophy of the “new” thinkers signified searching for confirmation of their own traditional values, not surrendering any part of the battlefield, increasing their own “power”, and together striving to confirm the fact that the Church, in a natural and wise manner, contained within itself dogmatic truth and life. But this conflict was dangerous for the Church as well, because it ran the risk of becoming seized and overturned: excessive proximity to the subject of discussion could expose it to disheartenment and decline. Basically, according to the critics of the Church, this led the Church away from progress in the field of the human disciplines and isolating it. Having reached the very papal threshold in a moment of serious crisis, Pius VI perpetuated the Catholic religion in a more “dogmatic and intolerant” manner taking it back a century in time. The suppression of the Jesuit Order had opened the road to manoeuvring by the bishops to obtain greater

¹⁸⁶ Bellocchi, *Tutte le encicliche e i principali documenti pontifici emanati dal 1740*, p. 149.

autonomy, thus provoking internal strife within the Church once again¹⁸⁷. Therefore consolidation and retrenchment on the part of the papal monarchy could now occur only with the restored authority of the pope, a challenge that Pius VI had demonstrated that he was ready to face from the very beginnings of his pontificate. Instead of confirming the Church's defeatist attitude attributed to the previous pope, Braschi took the opportunity to introduce a "new" version of the papacy. Pius VI's idea seems to have been to intensify papal primacy, which through the introduction of counter-reform "dialectics" would have given the pope the opportunity to crush all internal disputes by declaring them as heretical.¹⁸⁸ For hundreds of years, the voice of the Church had been subordinated to the ideal of inaccessible heavenly harmony; whereas modern philosophy – at least according to Thomas Hobbes – appeared as a progressive liberation from an order, whether natural or divine, superior to governments, like the creation of an autonomous structure of human cohabitation that recognised and accepted the conflicts of the *civitas terrena*.¹⁸⁹ In this sense, the conflicts

¹⁸⁷ In fact the bulk of historiography has shown an interest in the direct link between the suppression of the Jesuit Order and the final attack of the States in question against the Church's monopoly over education and charitable institutions, but an important aspect, and taken into consideration at least partially, is that of the renewed wave of Reform within the Roman Catholic Church. On the subject of the link between the suppression of the Jesuits and the decline of the Church, refer to the orthodox text by Martina, *Storia della Chiesa*, pp. 316-318.

¹⁸⁸ Jansenism was defined as heretical when it threatened the unity of the Church, as in the case of the Synod of Pistoia (1786, July 31st), as put forward by the bishop Ricci. After the publication of the proceedings of the Synod towards the end of October 1788, it was inevitable that Rome would intervene imposing its authority. At the request of the Secretary of State Boncompagni, the nuncio of Florence, Luigi Ruffo Scilla, rapidly dispatched four copies of the *Atti dell'Assemblea dei vescovi* and seven copies of the *Atti e decreti* of the Synod of Pistoia. At first Pius VI contemplated condemning the *Atti* in a solemn and magnificent Council with the participation of the bishops from every region in Italy, however the papal initiative was hastily excluded because of the political situation, given the conflict between the papacy and the courts of Vienna, Naples, and Florence as well as those conflicts that had not been resolved with Venice, Parma and Genoa. Therefore the pope agreed with the project proposed by the cardinal Leonardo Antonelli, to set up a specific commission (*congregazione particolare*) directed at examining the acts and deeds of the Synod of Pistoia.

¹⁸⁹ Norberto Bobbio, *Thomas Hobbes* (Torino, 1989), p. XI.

born in the wake of the French Revolution represented a violent cataclysm for the Church, damaging all forms of hierarchy, both “heavenly and earthly”.¹⁹⁰

The brief *Quare lacrymae* (17 June 1793), written on the occasion of the death of Louis XVI, contains references to human anxiety and disorientation, revealing the disproportion of such a crime not only with regard to the world, but also to the cosmos. The horror and tragedy were enormously strengthened by the emphatic rhetoric employed. The first part of the brief (chap.1) opens with the theme of mourning (including traditional expressions such as “tears” and “lamentations”) for the loss of the “most Christian King”. Confronted by the tragedy that had occurred, it was inevitable to feel an “immense suffering of the soul”, but even more so, the “horrendous display of cruelty and savagery”. The rhetoric used to provoke a sense of horror and to provoke indignation and stupor, the term “horror” – employed several times in the wording – performed specific functions: first of all, the portrayal of a shock; and secondly, preventing what was related from falling into the banality of normal life; and last of all, focussing attention on the forewarning that incredibly terrifying events were imminent.

From this moment forward, in the briefs by Pius VI, all that was terrifying and horrifying became the essential ingredient for any superior moral emotion (and censure). When confronted with the linguistic factor/aspect/symbol of terror/horror, the Christian was called to demonstrate his high moral qualities, while the political/theological opponent of the Catholic faith showed his intrinsic perversion in his refusal of the true faith. When measuring oneself against the immeasurable “evil”, one discovers that the horror is enormous. This initial

¹⁹⁰ “On June 17th, at a secret Consistory, he (the pope) spoke his mind about the murder of the French king. He deplored the mighty fall of France, that once had been the model for the whole of Christendom and a rampart for the Catholic faith, and he did not hesitate to describe Louis XVI, as a martyr”. Von Pastor, *The History of the Popes, Pius VI. (1775-1799)* (40 vols, engl. edn., London, 1923-1953), vol. XL, p. 248.

pathos, confirmed towards the conclusion of the text with the anaphora of the lamentation on the destiny of France (“Ahi, Francia!” - chap. 12 and 13), revealed Pius VI’s project to attack Enlightened philosophy as even more explicit. The death of the King, Louis XVI, was described as having been planned by “ungodly men”, and was unequivocally declared as the product of a conspiracy dictated by the logic of ungodliness and subversion. The message was that the erosion and corruption of moral and religious spheres had been theorized and put into practice by “evil minds incited to revolt”.

It was written in the life of the infamous Voltaire that the human race should be eternally grateful to him for having been the initial sustainer of the general revolution, having incited the people to recognise their fundamental rights to liberty and to use their own efforts to destroy the terrible bastion of despotism, in other words, religious and priestly power¹⁹¹ (chap. 7).

By proclaiming the human right to egalitarianism, with the related elimination of any obstacles which could impede these rights, this philosophy legitimised the ambitions of the people to overcome the limits of their condition¹⁹². The believers were therefore remissively induced to accept these agonistic and violent models, contemptuous of humanity and even an exaggerated fear of death:

¹⁹¹ “È stato scritto nella Vita dell’infame Voltaire che il genere umano gli doveva essere eternamente grato per essere stato il primo sostenitore della rivoluzione generale, avendo eccitato i popoli a riconoscere le proprie rivendicazioni di libertà e ad usare le proprie forze per abbattere il formidabile bastione del dispotismo, cioè il potere religioso e sacerdotale” (chap. 7). Bellocchi, *Tutte le encicliche e i principali documenti pontifici emanati dal 1740*, p. 264.

¹⁹² Pierre Chaunu, *La civiltà dell’Europa dei lumi* (Bologna, 1987), p. 270.

[...] by abolishing the most prestigious forms of government, the monarchy, this has transmitted all public power to the people, who will not be guided by reason, or by counsel; the people make no distinction between justice and injustice; they appreciate and respect few things according to truth, but many according to popular opinion; they lack perseverance, they are easily deceived and led to every form of excess; they have no gratitude, they are arrogant and cruel. They are excited by the sight of human blood, carnage, mourning and the suffering of the dying, as was seen in the amphitheatres of ancient times, and they take great pleasure (chap. 2).¹⁹³

The tenacious search for egalitarianism led to an agonistic explosion of the masses. The exponents of Enlightened philosophy continued in their repeated attempts to detach mankind from religion in order to cultivate cruelty and consolidate wickedness:

[...] the people were indoctrinated with ungodly ideology which was spread ceaselessly among the masses by means of pamphlets overflowing with treachery inciting them to revolt; and to achieve their intent they used the works of depraved philosophers (cap. 6).¹⁹⁴

The godless presumption of French philosophical culture was the product of illusions designed to distract, generated by a liberty “that aims at the corruption of souls, creating depravity, subversion of the order of the law and all

¹⁹³ Bellocchi, *Tutte le encicliche e i principali documenti pontifici emanati dal 1740*, p. 261.

¹⁹⁴ Idem, p. 264.

the institutions”¹⁹⁵ (cap. 7). By using the corrosive power of publication to the full, (“these fruits grew in France from ungodly books, as if from a poisonous tree”),¹⁹⁶ an ungodly rationality was constructed, whose only objective was that of “venting its hate against the Catholic religion” (cap. 9).¹⁹⁷ The loss of religious conscience and the oblivion of moral laws intensified the image of a future of destruction where hyperbolic expansion was even possible. The loss of the guidance of the Catholic religion, where all would be at the mercy of violent action, would therefore represent the end of all peace and harmony among countries because

The religion of the Christian faith is the strongest support for the monarchies, because it restrains /represses abuse by the powerful and insurrection by the subjects.¹⁹⁸

Although the approach using the theme of destruction made the text rhetorically strong and created a distance from normality, the analogy between the events of the deaths of Mary Stuart and Louis XVI leaned towards historical expedience (chap.6). Given the historical implications, the deaths of Mary Stuart and Louis XVI can be assumed to be, or rather, are associated with one another because of the figure of “martyrdom”. The expedient relevance of the danger of religious subversion is therefore an integral part of this interpretation of the death of Louis XVI.

If the authority of Pope Benedict XIV was great, and considerable weight must be given to his opinion when he was in favour of granting martyrdom to the queen Mary Stuart after her death, for

¹⁹⁵ Idem, p. 264.

¹⁹⁶ Idem.

¹⁹⁷ Idem, p. 266.

¹⁹⁸ Idem. p. 268.

what reason should We too not consider King Louis a martyr? In this case too, there were the same attacks against religion, the same intent and the same ferocity. And therefore the same merit should be recognised. And who could possibly doubt that this King was put to death because of hatred against the Faith and outrage against the dogmas of Catholicism?¹⁹⁹

This analogous figure is linked with the strong image of the strength and guarantee of the Catholic religion as a barrier against both abuse of power and insurrection. There is little need to underline the boldness of this juxtaposition, which includes the topics of the death of the king as an outrage, and hatred against the faith and dogmas of the Catholic church; the expedience of using the figure of Queen Mary Stuart acts as an authentic call to order: a call to arms of Catholic Christianity against the abuses of rationalism. The expedient “relevance”, or in other words, “interpretation” of the “martyrdom” of Mary Stuart was aimed at defining the significance of the events of Louis XVI’s death: this related to the need for legitimizing “anti-Enlightenment” and, at the same time, the need for assertion and supremacy of Catholicism in the ideological battlefield.

In the field of attack against Enlightenment, the Church and Pius VI considered it was their duty to legitimise their position in relation to historical events, and felt the need to have recourse to certain means of emotional persuasion, insisting on elements of pathos and rhetoric of a dominant ethical nature. Thus, the wording of the briefs by Pius VI demonstrate the harsh nature

¹⁹⁹ Idem., pp. 263-64.

that was typical of the controversy because of the obviously coercive and censorial appeals directed at persuading their readers and at condemning all that was “new”, but without demonstrating the “errors” of the new ideologists. The particularly coercive nature of these texts was not used in the fields of analysis and discussion, but on the importance of the principle of authority and the negation of various viewpoints.

The pope, valiant defender of all written publication in opposition to Enlightenment, took great measures to diffuse these works through the distribution chain of academies, bishops, and bookshops.²⁰⁰ However, he favoured other channels to make his personal writings known. In fact, because of their official nature, his briefs had to be diffused from the throne of Peter, or by some authority that was symbolically or judicially representative of papal authority.

Some years after Braschi’s pontificate, during the confrontation between France and the Holy See, a connection was established once again between the survival of the papal prerogatives and Jews of the Roman ghetto. As witnessed by the nuncio Pacca the concordat’s demotion of papal powers (imposed by Napoleon on Pius VII) was such that the Roman Catholics expressed their surprise by aligning themselves with the most oppressed – and certainly among the most controlled – communities in the country. Expressions such as “Let us go to the Ghetto”, and “let’s become Jews” suggest that the restrictions invoked by this second concordat placed Catholics in an improbable, indeed unthinkable position – as impossible as imagining themselves as Jews.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ Caffiero, “Pie VI”, *Dictionnaire Historique de la Papauté*, pp. 1330-34.

²⁰¹ “In Roma poi fu la nuova del Concordato medesimo accolta tra le risate, ed i sibili, e molti nel sentirne gli articoli andarono ripetendo quella proposizione, che suol dirsi in Roma quando si

The transition from Catholic to Jew rather than vice versa, denotes the absurdity of the action, the maxim reflecting not only a falsehood, but something impossible. According to the nuncio, the saying was common in Rome. If the expression was indeed as popular as Pacca appears to suggest, then the maxim reveals just how broadly the theme of conversion had permeated the popular culture of Rome in the eighteenth-century. But even if nuncio Pacca's claim was somewhat exaggerated and even if the saying was not as prevalent as he believed, his citation demonstrated the need within the Church hierarchy to perpetuate the government's negative vision of the status - both religious and political - of the Jewish communities. Moreover, the fact that in his memoirs Pacca dealt with the dual concept of Hebraism and revolution and the subversion of the established order seems to be the most characteristic feature of Pius VI's anti-Jewish policy.

1.9. The reissue of the edict on the Jews

In the tense and dramatic climate of the end of the 18th century, the news that Louis XVI (21st January 1793) had died after his trial at the Convention obviously created a reaction in Rome. The journal "Diario estero" dated February 1st that reports the death sentence and the execution, describes the event as: "the most enormous crime"²⁰². The journal described the events in greater detail on 15th February and published the king's will on 22nd of the same month. What was the climate like in Rome at the time? The newspapers tell in detail what was done to defend and fortify the coasts, and inform us on the drawing up of a general defence plan in case of an attack, even if many of these

crede una cosa, non solo falsa, ma impossibile ad accadere: Se questo è vero, andiamo subito in Ghetto a farci Ebrei". Pacca, *Memorie storiche*, p. 253.

²⁰² "il più enorme de' delitti" *Diario estero* n. 1890 Friday 1 February (Roma, 1793).

measures were never put into practice.²⁰³ Among the practical initiatives taken by Pius VI soon after the news that Louis XVI was dead, there was the republication of the Edict on the Jews issued in 1775. The Jews must have been aware of the close relation between the revolutionary events in France and their future in the Papal States if, in some cities they prepared themselves against possible popular uprisings or violent initiatives of the government. For example in Sinigaglia some Jews, afraid of pejorative measures, armed themselves and were, therefore, reported to the local bishop.²⁰⁴ The edict was not enforced everywhere with the same rigour, so the Pope demanded its full observance and denied his consent whenever he was asked to mitigate its effects.²⁰⁵ These decisions did not take into account the local jurisdictions and the regulations issued by the bishops after the edict of 1775. So when the archbishop of Bologna Gioannetti heard that the edict had been published again in February 1793 he wrote to the Pope (through the *Sant'Uffizio* which dealt with problems concerning the Jews) asking him to exempt the Jews, who lived within his diocese, from the obligation to wear distinguishing symbols on their clothes and to spend the night outside the local ghetto.²⁰⁶ The bishop's request also had economic implications because he did not want most of the traditional dealers to leave the city. Through the *Sant'Uffizio* the Pope answered that: "[...] he vigorously reasserts his decision and demands that the edict is observed everywhere. The reasons put forward by Your Excellency to try and exempt the

²⁰³ D. S. Chambers *Popes, Cardinals & War*, p. 178; G. Filippone., *Lo Stato pontificio e la Francia rivoluzionaria* (2 vols., Milano, 1961 - 1967), p. 24.

²⁰⁴ ACDF St. St. TT2-m, fasc. 30, f. 2r., letter from St. Offizio of Ancona to the secretary of St. Offizio in Rome, Ancona, 1793, February 1.

²⁰⁵ ACDF St. St. TT2-m, fasc. 22, f. 10r., circular letter addressed to all the bishops of the Papal State, Rome, November 29. On the same subject: ACDF St. St. TT2-m, fasc. 21, f. 1r., petition of Vita d'Angelo Sanguinetti to pope Pius VI, 1790, June 23.

²⁰⁶ The resident Hebrew population was expelled in December 1593, therefore, the institution of the ghetto did not have an influence on the Jews who were just passing through the city. Only during the Napoleonic period did the Jews start to come back to Bologna.

Jews from the obligation to wear the symbol on their hats or to allow the foreign Jews to come to this city and diocese in order to make their business transactions are not sufficient”.²⁰⁷ The answer of the bishop of Bologna to the secretary of the *Sant’Uffizio*, notwithstanding the obedience due to the Pope, shows that he was not willing to abide by the edict. The bishop wrote: “Since my requests have not been accepted by our lord (the pope), in order to get some explanations on the famous edict and this city where there is no ghetto and the Jews trade wholesale, I have given appropriate orders that comply with your wishes, without taking the blame for any future consequences, that I hope will be a long way off and will not trouble the peace that we enjoy here”.²⁰⁸

The diffusion of the edict was thoroughly accepted by all the dioceses of the Papal States, the bishops’ responses were mostly concise. The blame was given to the reception of the edict and the promise was that it was going to be applied according to the Pope’s will. In some cases the measure was even praised. For example the archdeacon of Pesaro thought that the edict met: “the genius and satisfaction of the people who reluctantly saw the mentioned nation (the jews) walking along the streets with self-confidence and no shame” and he hoped that: “this providence could last”.²⁰⁹ In other cases the bishops pointed out that in their dioceses there were no Jews and if: “some ever come, I will take care to make them observe the edict”.²¹⁰ The most active marketplaces in the Papal State wanted the Pope to suspend the edict at least towards the “foreign” Jews and, on the occasion of trade fairs, towards the residents as well. The

²⁰⁷ ACDF St. St. TT2-m, fasc. 30, f. 4, Answer given by the secretary of the Holy Office in Rome to the bishop of Bologna, Rome, 1793, February 17.

²⁰⁸ ACDF St. St. TT2-m, fasc. 30, f. 4, Answer given by the bishop of Bologna to the secretary of the Holy Office in Rome, Bologna, 1793 February 23.

²⁰⁹ ACDF St. St. TT2-m, fasc. 30, f. 48, Answer given by the Archdeacon Paoli to the secretary of the Holy Office in Rome, Pesaro, 1793 January 27.

²¹⁰ ACDF St. St. TT2-m, fasc. 30, f. 7, Answer given by the bishop of Benevento to the secretary of the Holy Office in Rome, Benevento, 1793 febbraio 23.

bishops appealed to laws and decrees that gave the opportunity to judges and local administrators to make an exception to ordinary laws on special occasions and limited periods of time. The Secretariat of State replied that it was Pius VI's intention to continue rejecting these requests as he had done in the past. Indeed one of the secretariat's pieces of writing addressed to the bishops, says that the Pope: "has already dealt with this affair because he has received many petitions on behalf of foreign Jews who aim at obtaining this permission and he has formally rejected the request concerning the symbol on the hat and has ordered everybody to comply with the other point, namely to live and sleep outside the ghetto"²¹¹. In the Papal State repressive measures concerning the Jews' conditions alternated with ameliorative ones all along the 18th century. These changes coincided with the evolution of the domestic and foreign political situation, but above all with the different personalities who were on the papal throne. Among the several popes of the 18th century, Clement XIV and Pius VI, Clement XI and Innocent XIII, marked a significant change of political attitude towards the Jews. This proves that even though the popes' *ufficio sacro* ideally pursued the same aim it was governed by men who adopted different strategies and policies. I must also stress that the bishops' usual discretionary power as regards jurisdiction was fading compared to the past. Even the strengthening process of the papal authority compared to the authority of bishops or individual inquisitorial courts was becoming more and more apparent. Giving up some profits and, in particular, keeping away foreign merchants from markets which were traditionally open to Jews on special occasions, can only be read as a proof of Pope Braschi's perseverance and willingness to tackle the Jewish problem. In

²¹¹ St. St. TT 2 m. fasc. 37, f. 6r, Secretariat of State to Mgr. Councillor of the Sant'Uffizio, 1793, June 20.

this sense, the exceptionality of the events (the French Revolution), together with the policy followed by Pius VI, especially in Germany, made it possible for the openings within the Catholic Church before his pontificate to die down one after the other.

The next chapter deals with the analysis of the diplomatic relations between the Empire and the Church of Rome before the disappearance of Maria Teresa (1780) and the political changes that followed her death (1780 – 1782). In fact, the new course of reforms undertaken by Joseph II which influenced the European political scene determined the pope's decision to travel to Vienna in an attempt to limit the new reforms introduced by Joseph II, at least in part. Therefore the analysis will be less focused on the nunciature or Pius VI's voyage, but rather on the synergy that evolved between diplomatic structures and the pontiff, and on the "responses" by the pope in answer to Joseph's new season of reforms.

Chapter 2 - Josephinism and the pope's visit to Vienna: 1781-1782.

A variety of religious and economic cultural movements were spreading in the mid Eighteenth century in the Habsburg territories. Examples included Enlightenment, Gallicanism, Jansenism, Febronianism, as well as government ideas based on natural rights and economic and demographic theories. Within the larger reform process of the Habsburg state, these movements led directly or indirectly to a “revised” position for the Church in society. Historical literature refers to this complex historical phenomenon as “Josephism”.¹ The definition of *Josephinism* as a term describing all reforms in the Austrian Monarchy during the reigns of Maria Theresia and Joseph II, and constituting 'an Austrian form of the German Enlightenment', was introduced by Fritz Valjavec in 1944, and has in recent years virtually become standard.² Initially this term was used to simply indicate a reform or act carried out by Joseph II, or later, to chronologically define that it occurred during the reign of Joseph II. The term seems to have taken on an ideological and political meaning in 1834 because of Pietro Ostini, the papal nuncio in Vienna, when he wrote that: “Josephine teaching (*l'insegnamento Gioseffino*) infects all the organs of Austrian government”.³ On the one hand, it was challenging for historians studying this historic situation to

¹ See Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. I, pp. 439-477; Blanning, *Joseph II*, (London, 1994), pp. 27-51. Jean Bérenger, “Joséphisme”, in Philippe Levillain (ed.), *Dictionnaire Historique de la Papauté* (Paris, 1994), pp. 970-73; Maass, *Der Josephismus: Quellen zu seiner Geschichte in Österreich 1760-1790*, vol 1, pp. 5-9; Adam Wandruszka, ‘Geheimprotestantismus, Josephinismus und Volksliturgie in Österreich’, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 78 (1967), pp. 94-101. Wangermann, “Josephinismus und Katholischer Glaube”, in Elisabeth Kovács (ed.), *Katholische Aufklärung und Josephinismus* (Vienna, 1979), pp. 333-35.

² Fritz Valjavec, *Der Josephinismus: Zur geistigen Entwicklung Österreichs im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Vienna, 1944), pp. 141-44.

³ Beales, *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (London, 2005), p. 290.

clearly identify each movement that made up this phenomena, and on the other, to separate the strands of the relationships that had formed between the various cultural movements and Enlightenment ideals. Though it is particularly problematic to give a catch-all definition of phenomena originating from, and fuelled by such a diversity of cultural, social, religious and philosophical movements within a historic period, it does seem possible to discern what influence each had on the time. Historians have preferred to focus on discerning the different bases of Josephism by studying imperial edicts, the press and the papers of the nunciatures, which also illustrate the Church's active resistance to these movements⁴. The ten years that followed the death of Maria Teresa (1780-1790) and that saw Joseph II as sole ruler, marked a strong change in the relations between the papacy and the Habsburgs. Josephism – as has been stated on several occasions, including comments by the historian Derek Beales, became a phenomenon that lasted well beyond the death of Joseph II– and formed a test for the diplomatic policy of Pius VI and his nuncios.⁵ In this context, an examination of the history of the Viennese nunciature will reveal important aspects of the papal “reaction” and that of the apostolic nuncios who emerged as Pius' agents and his new means of diffusion. Indeed, although Garampi, nuncio in Vienna between 1776 and 1785, was often indicated as the leader of the most extreme faction of the Church during this period, in reality he acted adhering closely to the precise political plan of Pius VI.⁶ In fact it was not long before the pope's policy was made clear, disappointing and dashing the hopes of many

⁴ Venturi, *Settecento riformatore, IV. La caduta dell'Antico Regime (1776-1789)*, vol. 2, p. 650-83.

⁵ “To give full account of his legacy would require deep knowledge of at least the sixty years after his death, including the 1848 revolutions, and for some purposes a longer period”. Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. II, p. 677.

⁶ Umberto Dell'Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi 1776-1785*, (Città del Vaticano, 1995), pp. 319-21.

people: for example, the partisans of the Jesuit faction who had maintained some hope of seeing the partial rehabilitation of the order,⁷ and the European Catholic monarchs who were taken aback on observing the actions of a pope who had no intention of retreating in the face of secularism and the end of ecclesiastical privileges.⁸

Joseph II and his reforms have been the subject of fierce historical debate. Edward Crankshaw's biography of Maria Theresa describes Joseph II as overbearing, rude, impatient, ill-tempered, and constantly involved in arguments with his mother over the reforms which continued to fuel the constant contrasts between them.⁹ Crankshaw's analysis reflects most of the standard writings concerning Joseph II, his mother and the reform projects that were never put into effect during their dual reign.¹⁰ The transition from the co-reign to Joseph II's single reign did not bring about significant changes as far as religious reform was concerned; on the contrary, there were several signs of continuity following the policy of the previous government.¹¹ However, it should be remembered that no agreement was ever reached between mother and son concerning complete "Tolerance" for religious minorities, or concerning the schedules indicated for completely eliminating the rights of the Church in Habsburg territories.

⁷ William J. Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus*, (2nd edn., St Louis, 1986), pp. 323-31.

⁸ "In contrast to his predecessor, Pius VI was rather pro-Jesuit, and he was certainly not appreciated by the great powers". Dries Vanysacker, *Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi (1725-1792): an Enlightened Ultramontane* (Bruxelles – Roma, 1995), pp. 142-43.

⁹ Edward Crankshaw, *Maria Theresa* (1969, it. edn. Milano, 1996), pp. 238-39.

¹⁰ This opinion is expressed in particular in biographies of the Empress, while the majority of the biographers of Joseph II assume different positions, even though they maintain the same positive analysis in relation to Maria Theresa. On this matter see Karl Tschuppik, *Maria Theresia* (it. edn. Milano, 1935), pp. 273-81; Alfred Arneth, *Geschichte Maria Theresias*, X (10 vols., Vienna, 1863-1879), pp. 60-75; Jean-Paul Bled, *Marie-Thérèse d'Autriche* (it. edn., Bologna, 2003), pp. 223-46; Hannes Etlstorfer, *Maria Theresia, Kinder, Kirche & Korsett, die privaten Seiten einer Herrscherin* (Vienna, 2008), pp. 186 - 196; Franco Valsecchi, *Il secolo di Maria Teresa* (Roma, 1991), pp. 269-70.

¹¹ "He continued his mother's policy of suppressing 'useless' (religious orders)". Heather Morrison, *Pursuing Enlightenment in Vienna, 1781-1790* (Ann Arbor, 2005), p. 27.

Moreover, with reference to the succession from mother to son in the government of the Empire, the papacy's opposition to Joseph's reforms is almost unanimously considered as an *automatic* reaction by the Holy See and particularly, by the nuncio in Vienna in defence of its prior privileges.¹² However, the methods of intervention have not been noted, and these form the strongest politico-diplomatic aspects of Pius VI's papacy, in spite of the fact that his voyage to Vienna has long been the subject of debate and historical analysis.¹³ Selected among the numerous historians who have worked on this subject, the ideas of Derek Beales are discussed below. He gives an overview of previous studies and stakes out his own original position within them. In the first volume of his biography of Joseph II, he maintains that the definition of Josephism has yet to be thoroughly examined.¹⁴ He outlines the work of the school of Vienna¹⁵ and leading historians of Central Europe, including Maass, Winter and Valjavec.¹⁶ Debates between historians about the definition of Josephism are often limited to the issue of establishing the definition of the period and or they overextend the term to apply to other phenomena such as enlightened 'Christianism'. In contrast, Beales seeks to study a very specific

¹² The nuncio was reassured when he learnt that the pope had decided to intervene with the Emperor personally: "s'immagini l'Eccellenza Vostra quanto siamisi rinforzato l'animo nel leggere la magnanima e veramente zelante risoluzione presa e manifestata dal Santo Padre [...] non differisco un momento per chiedere nei modi consueti l'udienza della Maestà Sovrana a fine di poter accompagnare anche colla mia debbol voce i sentimenti del Capo della chiesa". A.S.V. nuz. Germ. 405, Garampi to Secretary of State Pallavicini Wien, 1781, December 27, ff. 234-35

¹³ Beales, *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, pp. 257-61.

¹⁴ Beales' definition of Josephism is: "a movement for change...affecting many aspects of [the life of the Monarchy], but especially associated with claims made by measures taken by the state to control and reform the Roman Catholic Church within its borders, involving not only obviously ecclesiastical matters like the exclusion of papal bulls, the dissolution of monasteries and the introduction of religious toleration but also wider issues such as the reform of education in all its aspects, the liberalization of censorship and the reorganization of poor relief." Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. I, p. 439.

¹⁵ The Viennese school that Beales studies includes Hershe, *Spätjansenismus* (Vienna, 1977); Klingenstein, *Staatsverwaltung und kirchliche Autorität*; Kovács, *Ultramontanismus und Staatskirchentum im thesesianisch-josephinischen Staat* (Vienna, 1975); Wandruszka, *Leopold II* (2 vols., Vienna, 1963); Wangermann, *Austrian achievement* (London, 1973); and Zöllner, *Österreich im Zeitalter des aufgeklärten Absolutismus*, (Vienna, 1983).

¹⁶ Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. I, pp. 438-79.

period of the emperor's life and environment (1741-1790), refuting Ferdinand Maass' theories that: "Josephism would lose its identity if it was dissociated from government action", which rejected the image of the emperor as a promoter of reforms in favour of the state.¹⁷ Beales illustrates how this movement was indeed fostered by Joseph II's actions.¹⁸ Emperor Joseph II came to power in Europe after a long co-reign with his mother Maria Theresa.¹⁹ Nonetheless, from various aspects, all the legislative action by Joseph II between 1780 and his death in 1790 was the result of the action of his mother Maria Theresa during her forty-year reign, despite the pressure of the State on the public and on conservative elements which became increasingly stronger during the last years of her reign. Therefore, the following section will focus on the governing activities of Maria Theresa and will attempt to understand to what extent Joseph's reforms achieved in the 1780s were a result of previous legislative activities and which reforms actually represented a breakaway.

2.1. The Legacy of Maria Theresa.

Of great importance to the development of a group of like-minded, Enlightenment reformers immediately after her death is Maria Theresa's legacy was the education and religion of her subjects. The original transformation of education in the first wave of Theresian reforms sought to cultivate good bureaucrats. Gottfried Van Swieten was the major reformer of the University of

¹⁷ Idem, p. 440.

¹⁸ Idem.

¹⁹ At court and in the government circles Maria Theresa was referred to as the empress, but she had succeeded her father as archduchess, because the former title was granted *de facto* only to men. It wasn't until 1741, when she had her first son, that she was acknowledged by the Hungarians as their queen and crowned queen of Bohemia on 12th March 1743. To be assured of controlling the imperial title which had been a privilege of the Habsburgs for centuries, she had her husband Francis Stephen of Lorraine crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire on 13th September 1745. Christopher Duffy, *Instrument of War, The Austrian Army in the Seven Years War* (Rosemont, USA, 2000), pp. 16-17.

Vienna, wresting control from the Jesuits and overhauling the various academic departments to make the University more competitive with Protestant universities. History, geography, science, civics and natural law were newly nominated as separate fields of study, providing more secular opportunities for future students.²⁰ In this section I point out that some choices in the educational and State field are the fruit of choices made before Joseph II's ten-year reign (1780-1790). Far from judging the efficacy of the educational methods of the Jesuits or of the new Theresian system, the intention here is to briefly describe these reforms which show the contrast between the Habsburgs and the Papacy. In spite of this, these legal-institutional overlaps between the State and the Church and the following fights for the emancipation of the latter, were a common reality among the Papacy and some Catholic States in the second half of the 18th century.²¹ Some scholars, like Umberto Dell'Orto and Beales, believe that the religious reform process carried out by Maria Theresa and then by Joseph II, is the reason why Pius VI went to Vienna in 1782.²² A brief summary will show that the legal process in the religious field had already started with Charles VI (1685-1740). Joseph II's Edict of Toleration that extended religious freedom to other faiths (1781) of, instead, a new event and a legal twist. In my opinion, it was also one of the main reasons that brought Pius VI to Vienna.

By 1770, Maria Theresa's concerns began to focus on the ignorance of her populace. Fearing that without education subjects could not be sincere, believing Catholics, she turned to the ideas of her newly created education commission. Calling themselves the "Party of the Enlightenment", Swieten, Karl Anton

²⁰ Charles Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1618 – 1815* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 166.

²¹ Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory*, pp. 358-63; Chadwick, *The Popes and the European Revolution*, pp. 412-15.

²² Dell'Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi*, pp. 291-335; Beales, *Joseph II. II*, pp. 214-38.

Martini, and Sonnenfels controlled the *Studienhofkommission*. They favored a complete reform that would involve relieving the monarchy's current teachers of their duties in favor of secularly educated instructors. The court incorporated two strains of thought on the issue of education; fortunately the two frequently complemented each other. The jurist Martini and the queen viewed education as the opportunity to be trained to help create good Catholics while Sonnenfels envisioned a popular literacy that would reinforce morality and strengthen the work ethic.²³

The pope's abolition of the Jesuit order forced on the monarchy the complete overhaul of the system in 1773, until then the Society of Jesus constituted practically the whole of the monarchy's teaching force. The new system developed three sets of schools for the monarchy. The primary schools, universally compulsory, would train good, working Catholics in rural areas and in cities might provide the foundation for later academic instruction. The more exclusive middle schools provided vocational instruction for the middle classes while also providing another avenue for the opportunities for advanced education. Finally, the Gymnasium was the school for in-depth intellectual preparation for those going on to the universities. For the uniform training system of the new teachers for the Habsburg lands, were erected teachers' colleges, or *Normalschule*.²⁴

The state even transformed the basis of study in theology under Maria Theresa. Franz Stephan Rautenstrach designed a new plan for the study of theology in seminary and other theological schools that went into effect in 1776.

²³ James Van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria* (Cambridge, 1984).

²⁴ James Van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria*, pp. 217-21; Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, pp. 188-91.

He placed special emphasis on developmental fields, and “At the foundation of every year of study belongs next to a Latin, Greek, and also a German dictionary; in the same way we find names like Herder... and Gellert’s *Lectures on Morality*, mandated as required reading for certain grades”.²⁵ Study also included learning economics, biology, and chemistry as priests could be called on as economic and social authorities as well as spiritual advisers. Franz Rautenstrauch created a new strain in the study of theology, known as pastoral theology, that ensured the men most able to form the minds of the entire population would create a population meeting the need for an increasingly secular, broadly-educated public while also developing morality and spirituality in line with that of the reformed Catholics.²⁶

The school reforms under Maria Theresa exposed for the first time to education all levels of society.²⁷ Rather than the rote memorization imposed by Jesuit teaching, schools stressed a type of learning that might better complement the Enlightenment ideals of reason and criticism. The reforms of the first half of Maria Theresa’s reign further supported the development of a new class of teachers, formed by the secular educational program of the state: these teachers would quickly replace the Jesuits when, towards the end of the reign, the pope’s abolition of the order necessitated it. The speed of this transformation is representative of the speed with which the reformed system of schooling would affect subjects. Thus, many of the *Aufklärers* active in the 1780s, especially

²⁵ Werner M. Bauer, *Fiktion und Polemik, Studien zum Roman der österreichischen Aufklärung (Innsbruck, 1976)*, p 22-23. See also Eduard Winter on the priest Rautenstrauch, his position vis a vis the two types of enlightened reformers Sonnenfels vs Eybel. In *Der Josephinismus: die Geschichte des österreichischen Reformkatholizismus 1740-1848* (Berlin, 1962), p. 374.

²⁶ Beales, *Joseph II, II.*, pp 290 – 91.

²⁷ Education had to necessarily involve everybody within the Empire given that compulsory secularization was seen by the Habsburgs as a model of social control. James Van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria*, p. XX.

those in their twenties and thirties, had already been touched by the incorporation of secular state sciences and cameralist ideology.²⁸

Secularism increased under Maria Theresa for various pragmatic reasons, including the decreasing power of the papacy and the increasing influence of the state; the model of Prussia provided the benefits of reason to politics and government also stimulated reform.²⁹ However, the Queen herself was a devout Catholic and was eager to use state institutions to impose her view of morality on the populace. Secularization did not entail toleration. The state and the queen were openly prejudiced and repressive towards the Jews and Protestants, expelling or relocating whole communities, and instituting harsh punishment for anyone caught with vestimenta of their religion.³⁰

Austrian Catholicism underwent various stages of reform under Maria Theresa. Some historians stress the dominance of the Jesuits under Maria Theresa; the Society of Jesus did control education in the early part of her reign. However, Maria Theresa's aspirations were antithetical to those of the Jesuits. Historian Robin Okey suggests that the empress was closer to Jansenism than to the Jesuit party.³¹ The Piarists also influenced education reform with their focus on German language and natural sciences.³²

²⁸ “[...] The cameralists were a series of German writers, from the middle of the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century, who approached civic problems from a common viewpoint, who proposed the same central question, and who developed a coherent civic theory, corresponding with the German system of administration at the same time in course of evolution. To the cameralists the central problem of science was the problem of the state. [...] They saw in the welfare of the state the source of all other welfare. Their key to the welfare of the state was revenue to supply the needs of the state”. Albion Small, *The Cameralists: The Pioneers of Social Polity* (Chicago, 1909), pp. 4-5.

²⁹ Ingraio, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 165.

³⁰ Crankshaw, *Maria Theresa* (New York, 1969). This biography articulates the extent of influence religion had on the queen and her decision of state.

³¹ Robin Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy: From Enlightenment to Eclipse* (London, 2002) p. 9.

³² “It is in the fusion of a reconceived piety and up-to-date intellectual motifs, drawn in part from Protestant models, that an Austrian Catholic Enlightenment may be seen emerging in 1760s”. Robin Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 27.

Three successive wars against Prussia proved Austria could militarily hold its own against the reforming militaristic Hohenzollerns. However diplomatic losses and Austria's failures to achieve more extensive compensation ensured the Habsburgs emerged without a clear indications of their victories. The loss of Silesia, and the important role the Hungarians played in the war of the Austrian Succession further ensure that the monarchy after the 1748 would demand more proof of loyalty from the German-speaking lands while acknowledging the greater importance of and some autonomy for the Eastern territories. Further, the war-induced reforms of Maria Theresa in the military, finances, and bureaucracy permanently changed the monarchical power system. The inability of the monarchy "to put the Prussians in their place"³³ turned the newly forming public's attention to that potential source of competition at time when a contradictory trend stressed the importance of language and the cultural ties between Austrians and North Germans. It was under Maria Theresa's reign that the suggestion emerged that Catholicism had stunted the monarchy's intellectual and thus cultural and even political and economic development in contrast to the Protestant faith's tendency to foster progressive development.

Despite the queen's aversion to Enlightenment, she brought in ministers and top officials who would employ their rational, enlightened ideals in the reform they pushed within the state. Chief among the powerful followers of the Enlightenment was Count Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz. The Dutch doctor, Gottfried Van Swieten, was also essential to the rationalization of censorship and education along Enlightenment ideals.³⁴

³³ Daniel Marston, *The Seven Years' War* (Oxford, 2001), p. 90.

³⁴ Ingraio, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 179-85.

The press under Maria Theresa's reign alternated between harsh suppression and relaxed censorship. Drama was one of the ways to express criticism, as censorship rarely touched it. Ironically, ecclesiastical history was also allowed more free expression of criticism. Religious criticism could under no circumstances pass censors, nor could most of the work of the French and English *philosophes*. Johann Pezzl a resident of Vienna in the eighteenth-century, stated that:

the fine arts, the light literature, the life philosophy in popular form... would be disclaimed and denounced through the hypocritical representation of Dame theology, as bastards of the muses, as unruly, disorderly, insolent children. One feared in every epigram a double meaning, in every novel a hail of stones against the Church, in every philosophical thought piece an attempt upon the stability of the state. For that reason, one still read in Vienna the Robinsons, the Grandisons, and the speeches from the realm of the dead; while one in the rest of Germany readers had long before committed Voltaire, Wieland, Lessing, Bayle and Helvetius to memory.³⁵

Despite the unfavorable comparison with her son's reign, Maria Theresa reigned over a remarkable expansion in literacy and publishing. Pezzl provided a history of publication in Vienna, stating: "Up until Maria Theresa's reign one hardly knew in Vienna what literature was. A theological compendium, a commentary about the Pandects, a prayer book, were almost the only items occupying the very badly equipped contemporary publishing houses".³⁶ At this

³⁵ Johann Pezzl, *Skizze von Wien* (6 vols., Vienna, 1786-1790), vol. 4 pp. 474–75.

³⁶ Pezzl, *Skizze von Wien*, vol. 4 p. 473.

point it is worth reflecting on the strong changes that occurred in the market and in the production of published material in the latter years of the old regime, in censorship administration, in police activities, and in the function of the law courts relative to the selling of published books, as well as in the overall relations between the main institutions that controlled late eighteenth-century society. These institutions were placed in a critical situation.³⁷ From the beginning of the eighteenth century, in the territories belonging to the Habsburg monarchy, censorship was the aspect on which the ecclesiastic and secular factions were most strongly opposed to each other. The criteria controlling published material was based on a chaotic system of standards and conventions without any general regulations, among which it became possible to recognise the signs of a slow process of secularisation destined to take control over the ecclesiastic authorities and gradually taking the form of State censorship.³⁸ Certain attempts at reform dating back to the reign of Charles VI (1711-1740) had not produced any particularly important effects except to limit the preventive control of publishing to a smaller number of offices located in the main cities of the monarchy, like Vienna, Prague and Graz. Diffusion was entrusted to members of the Society of Jesus and secular clergy. It was by no means accidental that in order to organise these offices, censorship was applied to religious subjects, as shown in the structure of the archives still today.³⁹ Both in Vienna and in lesser cities, publishing was still dominated by very questionable

³⁷ Mario Infelise, *I libri proibiti*, p. 121.

³⁸ G. Klingenstein, *Staatsverwaltung und kirchliche Autorität im 18. Jahrhundert. Zum problem der Zensur in der thesianischen Reform* (Vienna, 1970).

³⁹ The documents on censorship from the period of Charles VI and Maria Theresa have been incorporated in the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv, Ministerium für Kultus und Unterricht (Vienna).

use of publishing privileges conceded by the sovereign or the censorship authorities often in favour of a preferential clientele.

It was only on the initiative of Gerard van Swieten, the Jansenist chief court physician of Maria Theresia and at that time Prefect of the Imperial Library that the panorama began to change and the first central censorship commission was created in 1751. It was composed of van Swieten himself and some of the teaching staff of the Theresian Academy and the Savoysche Ritterakademie, the jurists Johann Heinrich Gottlob Justi, Christian August Beck and Paul Joseph Riegger, who were appointed to set up the total reorganisation of the regulations in force.⁴⁰ This was the first strong signal against ecclesiastic supervision of censorship and publishing which opened up the road to the gradual removal of the control of published material by the Church of Rome. The measures for publishing authorisation were redefined and rationalised; the various sectors were divided, separating literature from scientific and philosophical disciplines which could have been under a major influence of the Church. Theology and philosophy remained under the direct control of the Jesuit censors, and in fact, two members of the Company were nominated to head the respective offices. The attempt to reduce their influence was achieved by making general consensus obligatory for all decisions which had been made individually up till that time, and by establishing an index of prohibited books. In December 1759 van Swieten complained of the fact that two members of the Company were still included among the revisers in Vienna, and that following the death of one member, another Jesuit had been nominated on the orders of the Bishop of Vienna, Migazzi, without van Swieten having been informed.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Klingenstein, *Staatsverwaltung*, p. 161.

⁴¹ *Idem.*, p. 186.

After the death of van Swieten (1772), the Jansenist positions gradually became weaker with the ultramontane tradition gaining greater strength; shortly before his death, van Swieten had criticised the attitude of provincial censorship offices which opposed the central office, and the fact that the dispositions of the literary Index were continually disregarded. At the end of the 1770s it was obvious that the Austrian clergy still conditioned the censorship offices to a very large extent, both in Vienna and throughout the Empire.⁴² However, in spite of the efforts of the Austrian clergy, publishing production and the translation of “dangerous” texts increased over time and as a publishing centre among German language countries, between 1750 and 1800, Vienna moved from forty-third to third place for its level of importance, outranked only by Leipzig and Berlin.⁴³ The publications of the 1770s provided the foundation and legacy for late Austrian reformers.

Successively, also because of certain individual personal initiatives in favour of Toleration, Joseph upset the balance that his mother had achieved by the hard stance she took against religious toleration. Drawing on documents and secondary literature, the following sections discuss the action of the empress and then the emperor, focusing on religious tolerance and the diplomatic responses of the Holy See.

2.2. Limits of Theresian religious reformism: Maria Theresa and Joseph II.

This section considers some of the most significant episodes illustrating Maria Theresa’s policies regarding religious tolerance and her son Joseph’s opposition to them. There was a delicate balance within the rule of the Habsburg

⁴² J.F. Retzer, *Michael’s Denis literarischer Nachlass*, II (Vienna, 1801), p. 138.

⁴³ H. Kiesel, P. Münch, *Gesellschaft und Literatur im 18 Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1977), p. 114.

monarchy before the death of the empress Maria Theresa (1780). It may be more accurate to describe this as a “three-person rule” rather than a co-reign⁴⁴. Maria Theresa and her son Joseph, who succeeded his father in 1765, were flanked by chancellor Kaunitz, who, from the start of his mandate (1753-92), never failed to exercise his rule and influence over the Habsburg rulers. It has been often noted that Maria Theresa’s point of view coincided with Catholicism’s Jansenist-inspired reformist intent, which also concurred with her son Joseph’s and Kaunitz’s desires⁴⁵. There was however a point beyond which Maria Theresa resolutely refused to go; she would not tolerate the introduction of religious freedom in her empire. It should be noted that this freedom in fact already existed in much of the empire.⁴⁶ Though Maria Theresa did not change the situation she inherited from her predecessors, she would not allow the religious unity of other Habsburg countries to be put into question. Her resoluteness here shows the deep level of support that the empress gave to Catholic reform⁴⁷. Unlike her son and Kaunitz, she did not believe that social and religious reforms should be included in the Enlightenment thinking that had already permeated other European courts. Her action was driven solely by the desire to reinforce Catholicism and equip it to meet the challenge of the Protestant heresies within the monarchy. As a matter of fact, Maria Theresa continued her father’s policy of coercion in handling Protestants. In contrast to the mass expulsions effected by her father Charles VI, the empress deported about two hundred people from

⁴⁴ “It must surely be agreed by everyone that the government had between 1765 and 1780 taken some of the important steps [...] and that the policy owed much to each of Maria Theresa, Joseph and Kaunitz”. Beales, *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth Century Europe*, p. 288.

⁴⁵ Venturi, *Settecento riformatore, IV. La caduta dell’Antico Regime (1776-1789). Il patriottismo repubblicano e gli imperi dell’Est*, p. 624.

⁴⁶ Two illustrative examples can be cited: the first concerns Hungary, where after reconquering it (1699), the Habsburgs, for political reasons, tolerated the country’s religious division; the second example is Transylvania where Catholicism remained a minority religion despite the establishment of the Uniate Church.

⁴⁷ Dell’Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi*, p. 103-104.

Hungary and Transylvania according to statistics from 1773.⁴⁸ In 1777, the religious question came back to the forefront with the discovery of a group of Protestants in northeast Moravia. This situation isolated Maria Theresa from her son and Kaunitz, who felt that the persecutions could cause migration that would be harmful for the economy and the empire image.⁴⁹ The empress changed course. The measures took on a corrective rather than a punitive bent. Maria Theresa decided to found a new diocese in Brünn (Brno) and to have forty churches built there. On the 4 of July, Cardinal Albani presented Pope Pius VI with the plans for founding the new diocese and the empress's letter. Although he asked for time to study the documents, the Pope, approved of the court's proposals: "The Holy Father immediately expressed his satisfaction to me, who finds quite singular the keen interest that Your Majesty takes in the expansion of the Catholic Religion, and in the eradication of insidious heresies".⁵⁰ She hoped these measures would first cut off the "infected area" and then attempt to reabsorb the "illness". However, there was still the matter of those who might "persevere in their error". For those, she saw no solution other than to deport them to Transylvania.

These episodes illustrate the distance between mother and son on the subject of religious reforms. Though both saw no justification for the wealth that the church owned in their territories and its interference in the social sphere, which they felt should be administered by the State, religious freedom was a point of dispute between the empress and the emperor. Joseph did not consider

⁴⁸ Jean-Paul Bled, *Marie-Thérèse d'Autriche* (Paris, 2001), p. 260.

⁴⁹ Dell'Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi*, p. 106.

⁵⁰ "Mi ha fatto subito conoscere il Santo Padre la soddisfazione, che prova ben singolare del vivo interesse, che l'apostolica Maestà Vostra prende per il dilatamento della Religione Cattolica, e per l'estirpazione delle serpeggianti eresie". HHSTA, Roma 1777, July, 5: Albani to Maria Theresia. Original. Rom, Hofkorr. 26, fasc. 8 [year 1777] f. 44.

religious freedom an “illness”, as long as it did not degenerate into fanaticism or a spirit of separation. In Joseph’s opinion, the State exceeded its proper role when it tried to control consciences.⁵¹ Subjects should be expected to be obedient and observe the laws of nature and society. If they fulfilled these duties, they had the right to his protection, regardless of their religious beliefs. Maria Theresa’s response to his position was clear. In a letter addressed to her son on the 5 of July 1777, she emphasized that in Joseph’s relationship to religion, there was nothing moral left, if: “You insist on approving that universal tolerance which you tell me is a principle you will never abandon. I hope you will and I continue to pray to God to protect you from this Disgrace, which would be the greatest the monarchy has ever suffered”.⁵² In another letter, she adds that she is impelled by: “No spirit of persecution, yet by no means indifference or tolerance, is what I desire as long as I am alive”.⁵³

2.3. The Moravia case: Kaunitz and Maria Theresa.

While Maria Theresa confronted her son’s beliefs, she also had to address the actions of Kaunitz who likewise believed in religious toleration. Maria Theresa’s policy in Moravia is a perfect illustration of this difficult relationship. As a result of the deteriorating religious situation in Moravia and disagreements with Joseph, Maria Theresa changed course, softening the measures against Protestant heretics. The empress decreed that the Protestants in Moravia should no longer be disturbed as long as they practiced their religion in private and their

⁵¹ Chadwick, *The Popes and the European Revolution* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 433-34.

⁵² Alfred Ritter von Arneth, *Maria Theresia und Joseph II. Ihre Korrespondenz sammt Briefen Joseph’s an seinem Bruder Leopold* (Vienna, 1867-1868), 3 vols. Vol.I, pp. 157-58. “[...] insistete ad approvare quella tolleranza universale che è per voi un principio dal quale mi dite non devierete mai. Spero che lo farete e continuerò a pregare perché Dio vi preservi da questa Disgrazia, che sarebbe la più grande che la monarchia ha patito”.

⁵³ Arneth, *Maria Theresia und Joseph II.* p. 158. “Nessuno spirito di persecuzione, ma ancor meno indifferenza o tolleranza, è quanto voglio finché sarò in vita.”

children were educated in the Catholic faith. The lightening of pressure led to a precarious easing of tensions of which Kaunitz took advantage to persuade Maria Theresa to take a step further. According to Kaunitz, the time was right to enact an edict that would make religious tolerance official and establish its conditions. Though this was meant to be applied only to Moravia, the empress did not agree and faced pressure from two opposing sides. From one side, Kaunitz tried to persuade her, noting that the idea was supported by the *Staatsrat*. On the other side, there was the archbishop of Vienna, Monsignor Migazzi, who was resolutely hostile to most of the reforms and encouraged her to stand firm in her decisions. The recurrence of upheaval in Moravia in May 1780 convinced Maria Theresa that his arguments were correct. The concessions had had the opposite effect of that desired. Protestants saw the gesture of conciliation as a first step towards recognizing religious freedom. Taking advantage of the empress's birthday (13 of May 1780), they organized a gathering to ask that new measures be adopted towards tolerance. Maria Theresa reacted harshly, using the army to disperse the crowd and making some arrests. Kaunitz's intervention to free those arrested did nothing to change the situation. Maria Theresa intended to snuff out the heresy, as seen by her decision in September 1780 to have forty-three Moravian Protestants deported to Hungary. This can be considered her last action regarding religious issues, as she died soon after.

It should be remembered that though Maria Theresa opposed the policies of Joseph II and Kaunitz, she was not contrary to all changes introduced in the 1760s.⁵⁴ However, though she appeared to favor some of these changes, her opinion about claims to religious freedom did not waver. In a confidential letter,

⁵⁴ It was Maria Theresa who signed the reform decrees with her son and she celebrated them by issuing many medals. Gunther Probszt-Ohstorff, *Shau- Und Denkmunzen Maria Theresias* (Graz, 1970), pp. 249-50; 404-407.

dated 28 of February 1780, she let Kaunitz know that she would always stand by her duty to defend the Catholic religion. She never signed any edict in favor of tolerance: “[...] My conscience rejects any general public act that should bind my hands in the future and force me to ignore that which is my first duty”.⁵⁵

2.4. The final misunderstandings between mother and son, the empress’s death and Joseph II’s first decrees on ecclesiastical matters.

Right from the very beginning of 1777 the nuncio of Vienna (Giuseppe Garampi: nuncio in Vienna between 1776 and 1785) had asked Pius VI’s permission to visit the diocese of which he was bishop. The nuncio had always remained in contact with his diocese through correspondence which was almost as great in quantity as that of his nunciature.⁵⁶ To add further weight to his request, Garampi stated that the Court would have appreciated a possible pastoral visit: “It would lead to much praise in these parts [...] since the Court and others already have rather strict thoughts on the Residence of the Bishops”.⁵⁷ It was only in 1779, and only after the intercession by cardinal Migazzi, that the pope gave Garampi permission to leave the nunciature in Vienna.⁵⁸ The nuncio greeted the news of his permission to leave Vienna like a “balm”. Garampi thought that he would have been able to leave Vienna without any problems during the first half of 1779; in fact, the Court was busy preparing peace treaties with Prussia (negotiations which led to the Treaty of Teschen between the

⁵⁵ Dell’Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi 1776-1785*, p. 121. “[...] La mia coscienza ripugna ad un atto pubblico generale, il quale mi debba legare le mani per l’avvenire e mi obblighi ad ignorare quello che è il mio primo dovere”.

⁵⁶ Idem, p. 226. “[...] onde il mio carteggio per il vescovato eguaglia già quasi quello della nunziatura”.

⁵⁷ Idem. “Ne riporterà in queste parti molta lode [...] giacchè la corte e altri pensano assai rigorosamente sulla residenza de’ vescovi”.

⁵⁸ “Dica pur dunque all’Eminentissimo, che la di lui intercessione è riuscita efficace” ASV, nunz. Germ. 399, Secretary of State Pallavicini to Garampi, Roma, 1779, February 3, f. 54v.

Empire and Prussia in 1779, because of the Bavarian war of Succession 1778-1779) and therefore this meant that there would be a period with few ministerial duties for the nunciature. The nuncio left Vienna for Italy on the evening of the 13th of April. During the voyage Garampi took careful notes of all the artworks and ancient codices he saw, and the books he read in the libraries and the buildings he visited.⁵⁹ He also took advantage of the various stops during his voyage to meet with bishops and intellectuals as far as the point of his arrival in the dioceses of Corneto and Montefiascone, where he remained from May until mid-September. Before he left for Vienna, he managed to have time to meet Cardinal Franz Herzan in Montefiascone. The cardinal was travelling to Vienna to thank the Empress in person for his nomination as cardinal. Herzan reached Vienna at the beginning of September and Maria Theresa had assigned two residences for the cardinal's use, one in the city a short distance from the Court, and the other at Schönbrunn. While the cardinal was in Vienna, Cardinal Albani died in Rome. Albani was Cardinal Protector of the Empire and the hereditary states as well as the ambassador of the Viennese Court to the Holy See. When the news reached the Court, the Emperor and Empress called Cardinal Herzan and assigned him the positions held by Cardinal Albani for such a long time. Kaunitz prepared a set of general instructions with basic principles for Herzan, according to which the relations between the Church and the State needed to be set in order: these were the principles which had inspired the Chancellor's actions for many years⁶⁰; the Empress considered the instructions given to Herzan as being irreproachable.

⁵⁹ See "documentazione varia" in ASV, Fondo Garampi 126, fasc. A.

⁶⁰ In 1779 Philipp Cobenzl was nominated the Vice-chancellor of the Court and the State (1779-1793); given that he was well-disposed towards the Church, his promotion could have led to some hope for a change in the situation. Garampi was under no illusions: Kaunitz would have

During this stay in Vienna, the disagreement between the Empress and the Emperor concerning Herzan became patently obvious. Maria Theresa wished to award the cardinal the prestigious Grand Cross of the order of St. Stephen. Joseph opposed this decision completely. However, in any case, before he left Vienna for his new position in Rome, Cardinal Herzan was awarded the Grand Cross of St. Stephen. In a letter to Peter Leopold, Grand Duke of Tuscany, Joseph II expressed his disapproval of Cardinal Herzan:

My dear brother [...] finally, Cardinal Herzan who has just spent a year taking the air in the corridors of the Court for his health, is about to leave us. He received everything he desired, even as far as obtaining the Grand Cross of St. Stephen [...] he is sly and a scoundrel of the highest order, I must warn you, but at the same time, he is much admired and cherished by the Emperess, Marianne, Marie, Vasquez, and all the rest of that sparkling society [...].⁶¹

Maria Theresa's esteem for the cardinal and the lack of faith that Joseph II felt towards Herzan were also confirmed by the nunciature. The Emperor considered the new imperial ambassador to the Holy See "He's a first class rogue and cheat... but he's the admiration and darling of the empress".⁶² Moreover, information also arrived from the nunciature on Herzan's ideas concerning the more controversial matters in the relations between the Court and the Holy See.

always remained the sole influence for the line followed by the Chancellery. ASV, nunz. Germ. 399, Garampi to Secretary of State Pallavicini, Roma, 1779, June 8, f. 9v.

⁶¹ "Très chère frère [...] enfin le cardinal Herzan qui pour sa santé a passé une année à prendre l'aire des corridors de la cour va nous quitter. Il a reçu tout ce qu'il a voulu et jusqu'à la grande croix de S. Etienne [...] c'est une fripon et un fourbe de la première classe je vous en avertis mais en meme temps c'est l'admiration et le cheri de l'Imperatrice, de la Marianne de la Marie, de la Vasquez et du reste de cette brillante société [...]". HHSTA, Wien 1780, August, 31: Joseph II to Granduke Pietro Leopoldo. FA, Sammelbände 7, fasc. 1780 [year 1780] f. 111.

⁶² Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. I, p. 481.

The cardinal did not always share the principles established by the Holy See concerning exemptions, dispensations, the power of the bishops (which Herzan felt were too restricted), the Holy Office, and similar subjects. However, during his stay in Vienna, Herzan attempted to confute the idea according to which enormous sums of money were being sent to Rome. Furthermore, Herzan demonstrated himself as being an enthusiastic admirer of Pius VI.⁶³

Having concluded his pastoral visit to the dioceses of Corneto and Montefiascone, Garampi spent a few weeks in Rome before he returned to Vienna. The audience of the nuncio with the Empress, the Emperor and the royal family was fixed for 22 December, and with this event, Garampi officially re-assumed his activities in Vienna.⁶⁴

As soon as he reassumed his position at the Court, the nuncio noted a change in the actions of the Imperial government. Maria Theresa was losing her health and power was slipping from her hands, according to the words of the auditor who wrote:

As she gets older, the Queen Empress loses some of her strength of action: she even lets herself be led, either by her ministers or by the Emperor, in directions she does not agree with. The Emperor and Empress continue to distrust each other. But he always takes control; she does not dare make important decisions without his contribution. When he opposes her decisions directly, she capitulates. Therefore, in many matters, she sighs and exclaims: Ah! I cannot do that! Oh, I am alone and

⁶³ ASV, nunz. Germ, 400, Caleppi to Secretary of State Pallavicini, Roma, 1779, November 14, ff. 158v. 161.

⁶⁴ In the absence of Garampi, the nunciature of Vienna was under the authority of the *auditor* Lorenzo Caleppi (1741-1817). Caleppi's services were compensated with an annual pension of 150 scudi. He is described by the historian Vanysacker as: "A man who must certainly be included in the ultramontane camp". Vanysacker, *Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi*, p. 153.

abandoned by one and all! However, the ministers must show that they are under her authority alone: but in spite of this, in all important matters, they either act following the suggestions of the Emperor, or they refrain from any action where they know it is against his will.⁶⁵

The voyage made by Joseph II to Russia between the Spring and Summer of 1780, was one of the most obvious signs that by now all the most important decisions were under the authority of the Emperor; indeed, this voyage was destined to lay the basis for an alliance between Russia and Austria, and in fact drawn up in May 1781.⁶⁶ Maria Theresa disapproved of the voyage planned by the Emperor:

The Queen Mother is very disappointed by this unexpected decision made by her son, to the point that in her answers and instructions to the Czarina she affects a superior manner; even to the point where she prays and begs the Czarina to take great care not to involve herself in political negotiations or to assume commitments.⁶⁷

The new political climate that reigned in the Court of Vienna, dominated increasingly more strongly by Joseph II, inspired Garampi to take new

⁶⁵ “L’Imperatrice Regina quanto più si avanza nell’età, tanto perde di vigore nell’agire: onde si lascia condurre, anche dove non vorrebbe, o dai suoi ministri o dall’Imperatore. Fra questo e lei sono continue le diffidenze. Ma egli prende sempre più il sopravvento; ed ella non osa far cosa di qualche importanza senza il di lui concorso. Ond’è che qualora egli assolutamente si oppone, ella si arresta. Quindi in tante cose procedono quelle esclamazioni, ch’ella non sa sopprimere: ah non posso! Ah che sono sola e abbandonata da tutti! I ministri però debbono mostrare di non essere addetti che a lei: ma ciò non ostante nelle cose di conseguenza, o agiscono con intelligenza dell’Imperatore, o non agiscono dove sanno essergli contrario”. ASV, nunz. Germ. 401, Caleppi to Pallavicini. Wien, 1780, March 5, f. 141.

⁶⁶ Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. II, pp. 104-132.

⁶⁷ “La Regina madre si è molto contristata per questa inaspettata risoluzione del figlio, tanto più che nelle risposte e direzioni della Czara (zarina) non ravvisa, che una affettata superiorità di contegno; onde tanto più lo prega e lo scongiura a guardarsi bene dall’avanzarsi a negoziazioni politiche e contrarre impegni”. ASV, nunz. Germ. 401, Garampi to Pallavicini. Wien, 1780, April 9, ff. 136-137.

precautionary measures. The nuncio proposed that greater care be taken when sending dispatches. He instructed monsignor Federici, Secretary of the Cipher, to use the channel of the bankers Belloni and Smitmer and to change the cipher system currently used by the nunciatures.⁶⁸ These precautions served no purpose, because, as we will see in one of the next paragraphs, there was a spy inside the nunciature.⁶⁹ Following the election of the Archduke Maximilian to the bishoprics of Cologne and Munster (practically the last request made to the Church by Maria Theresa) the sovereign's state of health declined rapidly. During the last week in November the Empress suffered from a very bad cold. Within a few days, the illness became very serious, and the sovereign's physician, baron Störck, announced an initial health bulletin on the morning of 15 November, explaining that it was possible that the illness could lead to her death. The Empress's physical condition did not improve, and it was decided to give her the last sacraments on 26 November. The nuncio took the Holy Eucharist to Maria Theresa. This event was described by Garampi with considerable emotion:

In over thirty years as a priest, I who have always performed my all my ecclesiastic duties willingly on every occasion, I had to draw on all my strength to force myself against my will in order to sustain my body and soul in such a painful endeavour.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ ASV, nunz. Germ. 401, Garampi to mons. Federici. Wien, 1780, January 3, ff. 1- 2.

⁶⁹ See paragraph 1.7 The Egisti affair and the Eybel case.

⁷⁰ "Io che in 30 e più anni di sacerdozio ho incontrata volentieri ogni occasione di funzioni ecclesiastiche, ho dovuto strascinarci mio malgrado, e farmi violenza a fine di reggermi sì lo spirito che il corpo in una sì dolente azione". ASV, nunz. Germ. 402, Garampi to mons. Federici. Wien, 1780, November 26, ff. 128-40.

After she had received the last sacraments, Maria Theresa had moments of bad health, and other moments where she improved, so each time she was able to leave her bed, she continued to deal with certain affairs of State. As she felt her life drawing to an end, Maria Theresa called all her family to her bedside, and with “perfect tranquillity of spirit” she gave them all her benediction. The Emperor remained close to his mother’s bed the whole time, day and night, demonstrating “his duty as an affectionate son”. Maria Theresa died on the evening of 29 November, and the nunciature participated in mourning for the sovereign. All thirty-five members of his household were clothed in appropriate mourning which cost Garampi a considerable sum.

In spite of the emotional declarations during the days following the death of the Empress and the funeral oration written and delivered by Caleppi, when reflecting on the last moments of the life of the Empress, Garampi drew his own conclusions concerning the forty years of Maria Theresa’s reign, emphasising that many of her decisions had caused much harm to the Church:

I have one word to say on the death of the Empress. There is no doubt that she died with great courage, worthy of a strong and also Christian woman. But I was extremely surprised that she did not show the slightest signs of remorse concerning her actions during her 40 years as sovereign, since when she was alive and well, she even personally confessed that she had been deceived many times, and that she had caused much harm. And finally, we were astonished that she did not show any signs of Christian humility, or any fear of her imminent death. She dealt with her affairs up till the very last moment. Content to have her confessor read to her passages from certain books, she did not consult or see the cardinal archbishop or any other priest. It would seem that she was afraid of being

judged badly or criticised for certain of her actions that had harmed the Church. And therefore we must believe that she herself was aware of her actions, even though she felt that she had acted on the advice of those in whom she felt she could place her trust.⁷¹

The first part of the nunciature of the ultramontane Garampi closed with the death of the sovereign. The second part opened with Joseph's accession to the throne, and would be concluded in the middle of 1785.

From the moment of the empress's death, full power passed into Joseph II's hands. In the opinions of contemporaries, the entire process officially seemed to take place without any disturbances, as if the passage of power to Joseph II from Maria Theresa were mere transfer of duties⁷². The very day that his mother died, the emperor confirmed his trust in chancellor Kaunitz, inviting him to continue his task of offering "Sage council and good information".⁷³ Many in the Court of Vienna were certain that the emperor was well up to the task, given his maturity, experience, talents and skills.⁷⁴ The Pope himself sent a letter to the emperor saying he considered it a blessing to have the throne passed

⁷¹ "Una parola dirò sulla morte dell'imperatrice. Ella è morta certamente con una intrepidezza stupenda, come donna forte e anche cristiana. Ma ha fatto gran specie, ch'ella non abbia avuto il menomo rimorso delle sue azioni in 40 anni di regno, quando vivente e sana confessava pur ella stessa tante volte di essersi ingannata, di aver inferiti dei Danni. E finalmente ci maravigliamo ch'ella non abbia dato verun saggio di umilta cristiana, o timore del gran passo. Ha sbrigati affari sino agli ultimi momenti. Contenta di farsi leggere tratto tratto dal suo confessore qualche libro, non ha né consultato né veduto il cardinal arcivescovo, o verun altro sacerdote. Pare che abbia temuto di poter esser messa in mala fede o inquietata sulle cose fatte a danno della Chiesa. Bisogna dunque credere, ch'ella stessa conosceva non ben fatto, sempre che lo avesse fatto per consiglio di quelle persone nelle quali credeva ella di poter collocare la sua confidenza". ASV, nunz. Germ. 403, Garampi to Pallavicini, Wien, 1781, January, 5. f. 11v.

⁷² Garampi felt that the transfer of power from Maria Theresa to Joseph was proceeding without significant changes because he could see that confirmation of Kaunitz indicated the continuation of the existing policy noticing that the emperor never fail to attend the mass everyday in the private chapel. ASV, nunz. Germ. 402, f. 141 30. Wien, Nov. 1780, Garampi to Pallavicini.

⁷³ HHTSA, F.A. Sammelbande 70, fasc. "saggi consigli e buone informazioni." 1780, f.51, 1780, Nov., 29 Joseph to Kaunitz.

⁷⁴ ASV, nunz. Germ. 402, f. 141 30. Wien, Nov. 1780, Garampi to Pallavicini.

to a “Such an excellent judge of how much it matters to and pleases the rulers to protect our Holy Religion and its Leader”.⁷⁵ The nuncio of Vienna reported that though the emperor diligently attended to state affairs, he never failed to attend daily mass in the Chamber’s chapel and on Christmas night, he always took Holy Communion. The transfer of power from mother to son was marked by ritual ceremonies in a nearly Baroque display. The reality of the situation was, however, quite different. Extraordinary dispatches sent by the nuncio of Vienna to the Secretary of State of Rome show us that Joseph II’s taking of the throne in fact took place in an atmosphere of distrust and uncertainty. The nuncio complained that Maria Theresa gave not a word or gesture to ensure her soul’s return to God, not repenting or showing any remorse for the many encroachments under her rule on the Church and its leader.⁷⁶ An extraordinary dispatch that the nuncio of Vienna sent to Cardinal Pallavicini, Secretary of State, gives a clear picture of the situation in the first weeks of Joseph II’s rule:

His Majesty has political views that lead him to be tolerant of all religions, to reduce the Holy See's jurisdictional rights, to increase those of bishops and chapters, to reduce the number of the clergymen and of their assets and incomes, in order to use them in the ways he believes will be profitable for the public.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ ASV, nunz. Germ. 678, f. 141 9. Rome, Dec. “[...] così felice conoscitore del quanto importi e giovi a regnanti il proteggere la nostra Santa Religione e il suo Capo.” 1780, Pallavicini to Garampi.

⁷⁶ ASV, nunz. Germ. 403, f. 11v. 5. Wien, Jan. 1781, Garampi to Pallavicini.

⁷⁷ “Sua Maestà ha massime che lo portano alla tolleranza di ogni religione, alla restrizione dei diritti giurisdizionali della Santa Sede, alla ampliamente di quelli dei vescovi e dei capitoli, alla diminuzione del numero degli ecclesiastici e dei loro beni e rendite, per farne usi ch’ei crederà profittevoli al pubblico”, ASV, nunz. Germ. 403, f. 9v. 5. Wien, Jan. 1781, Garampi to Pallavicini.

The doubt was accentuated by the fact that the emperor, unlike his mother, acted without asking council. This made many fear that new decrees would be issued without warning: “He does everything with such secrecy and circumspection that one cannot have the least prior suspicion”.⁷⁸

At the end of January 1781, a grievance against the Pope circulated in the court because no funeral rites were performed in the papal chapel for the empress. The nuncio reports that the episode was seen as an affront to the empress’s memory and the new ruler. This grievance was not assuaged by historic precedents made known in Rome by Cardinal Herzan of Mary Tudor, Queen of England, Mary Queen of Scots and Isabella of Castile, Catholic queens who also had received no funeral rites in the Papal chapel; equally ineffectual were the explanations that the nuncio of Vienna gave, drawing parallels between Maria Theresa’s case and those of these Catholic queens. A number of new measures were introduced in Vienna in early 1781. In his lengthy extraordinary dispatch of 10 March 1781, the nuncio described the first of these changes to the Secretary of State, following the first audience between the nuncio and emperor, in which Garampi saw an opportunity to learn what Joseph II was planning; the meeting, however, ended in a formality: “We did not speak of business”.⁷⁹

This extraordinary dispatch was delivered to the French ambassador who sent it to Paris to the nuncio Doria, who forwarded it to Rome. The first news in the extraordinary dispatch was about putting aside the matter of Maria Theresa’s funeral rites. Joseph II read a report by Cardinal Herzan and commented: “I am completely indifferent to the degree of respect the Bishop of Rome shows

⁷⁸ Idem, f. 9v. “Tutto si farà in lui con tanto segreto e circospezione che non potrà aversene preventivamente il minimo sospetto”.

⁷⁹ ASV, nunz. Germ. 403, f. 141. 5. Wien, Jan. “[...] non si parlò d'affari.”1781, Garampi to Pallavicini.

towards me”⁸⁰. Abandoning the case of Maria Theresa’s funeral rites, the nuncio demonstrated his awareness of the ferment at the court of Vienna after Joseph II’s ascent to the throne. He notes that the emperor spoke with very few others, but he expected all ministries to make their votes in writing, which meant that he personally dictated the decisions and wanted to be obeyed to the letter⁸¹. The reforms of Joseph II were even more extreme when they related to ecclesiastical matters. In fact, only secular were consulted because the emperor was said to have been suspicious of all clergymen, and he proclaimed himself in favor of tolerance to the few bishops to whom he granted an audience. The nuncio told the Secretary of State that the chancellor of Hungary had received instructions to support the practice of Protestantism, but the chancellor refused to obey them. In the nuncio of Vienna’s opinion, Joseph II’s choice for tolerance was not religiously motivated, rather reflecting his belief that religion was not a discriminating factor for belonging to a state:

It is not that His Majesty lacks a good basis in religion or that he is not deeply attached to it. However, he believes he ought to be indifferent to the religion of his subjects, many of whom already have religions different from the dominant religion, or new subjects who are settling in his states⁸².

His understanding jurisdiction and responsibilities of the Catholic Church was different; in the emperor’s opinion, this was anything but irrelevant to the

⁸⁰ “[...] mi è del tutto indifferente che il vescovo di Roma usi più o meno dei riguardi nei miei confronti.” ASV, nunz. Germ. 403, Garampi to Secretary of State Pallavicini Wien, 1781, March 10, ff. 72-77.

⁸¹ ASV, nunz. Germ. 398b, f. 125v122. Wien, 1781, March, 24 Garampi to Pallavicini.

⁸² “Non è già Sua Maestà non sia ben fondata nella religione e non vi sia anche attaccata di cuore. Ma crede di dover essere indifferente su di quella o de’ suoi sudditi, che già si trovino in diversa dalla dominante o di nuovi vincoli, che siano per stabilire domicilio nei suoi stati”. Ibidem.

state. Joseph II felt that the Church's jurisdiction and discipline outside of the Papal State should be subjected to laymen power. This conviction gave new impetus to those working in the various ministries. They took back projects that had been presented to Maria Theresa and which she had made them put aside. Many clergymen expressed their lack of faith in the new times, summed up in the expression: "There is nothing new that is not to be feared".⁸³ The regular clergy feared for their foundations, privileges and exemptions. The consistories of the dioceses were afraid of losing the scant jurisdiction they had; the parishes and the incumbents were nervous about their possession of properties, real estate and stole rights. The nuncio himself harbored fears about the exercise of the jurisdiction: "I also am uncertain in the hope of continuing the exercise of this nunciature's jurisdiction".⁸⁴ The nuncio decided to continue the same approach as the Secretary of State at the beginning of his mandate in Vienna. He tried to gain the emperor's trust in order to escape his prejudices against ecclesiastical authority. Garampi also suggested the Holy See take a similar approach. He noted that as it was no longer possible to expect the favors granted during Maria Theresa's rule, "Now a new page has been turned and we no longer look at the previous one".⁸⁵

A document that Garampi sent to the Secretary of State exemplifies and clarifies the attitude of the nuncio and particularly the Church to the new ruler.⁸⁶ According to the nuncio, it was first of all necessary to give the best interpretation to the decisions taken by the emperor. Secondly, one should

⁸³ ASV, nunz. Germ. 403, ff. 72-77.79-80.77v-78v.81. Wien, 10 March. 1781, Garampi to Pallavicini. "Non v'è innovazione di cui non possa temersi".

⁸⁴ "Quindi vacillo anch'io nel sperare la continuazione dell'esercizio della giurisdizione di questa nunziatura". Idem.

⁸⁵ "Si apre ora un libro nuovo, e non si guarda più il precedente". Idem.

⁸⁶ Idem.

respond positively and rapidly to the practices and recommendations that the emperor put to the Holy See. Thirdly, there should be a willingness to give reductions on taxes owed as Joseph II paid very close attention to the monies that left the boundaries of his empire.⁸⁷ Fourthly, respect should be showed to the regular clergymen as the emperor had, or appeared to have, a high opinion of their authority. In the diplomatic exchange between the Holy See and the Empire, reference should be made to the decrees of the Council of Trent rather than to papal documents because only the Council is recognized as applicable to the entire Catholic Church, whereas any other document can be ascribed to the Holy See's interest. Lastly, the Pope and Secretary of State should maintain good relationships with Cardinal Herzan, imperial minister at the Holy See. Garampi needed to win over Joseph II and he feared rifts in the relationship between the Cardinal and Holy See. He wrote that: "In truth, he is not inclined to please us as under the late empress; but he could be inclined to harm us, should it occur to him".⁸⁸ Garampi concluded by saying that in Vienna, research was being conducted about the power of the Holy See to grant ecclesiastical benefits (rents, land and real estate properties) in the archduchy of Milan.⁸⁹ The tactic of containment and defense that the nuncio adopted replaced the offensive approach in the middle of Joseph II's first year of rule.

⁸⁷ "The issue of the extraction of money is that which His Majesty keeps attentive watch over". Idem.

⁸⁸ "[...] non è egli in verità più in stato di giovarci come sotto la defunta sovrana; ma lo sarebbe pur troppo per nuocerci, se ciò potesse cadergli in mente". Idem.

⁸⁹ ASV, nunz. Germ. 403, ff. 72-77.79-80.77v-78v.81. Wien, 10 March. 1781, Garampi to Pallavicini.

2.5. Correspondence between the nunciatures and the Holy See.

The correspondence between the nunciatures and The Holy See was of great importance as a diplomatic channel between the papacy and the Empire.⁹⁰ In fact, prior to the visit of the pope to Vienna the extraordinary dispatches from the nuncio played a specific role in keeping the pope informed about imperial reforms as well as warning of potential dangers such reforms might create. After the pope's visit to Vienna the action of the nuncio played an active role in consolidating the Catholic front in the Austrian Empire. He attempted on several occasions to slow down the pace of imperial reform appealing, in the first instance, to the court in Vienna and secondly, to the population through the mobilization of the bishops and priests. For this reason the correspondence between the nuncios and the Holy See when compared with the official correspondence, gives us precious insight into the real relationship and politics developed by the pope with his Secretary of State to stand up to the Government of Joseph II. There is evidence, as we shall see, that some of the events of 1787 were related, in good measure, to actions previously undertaken by the nunciatures present throughout the empire, such as Vienna, Bavaria and Brussels.

2.6. The papal journey to Vienna.

The historical analysis of the pope's journey to Vienna would seem to be reduced to a simple description of an apostolic visit which, to all appearances,

⁹⁰ The apostolic nuncios, let us remember, were not only diplomats but also bishops with extra territorial power such as the right to dispense marriage licences. In this way, Owen Chadwick underlined the religious character of the nuncios' institutional tasks: "In Catholic countries the nuncio was more than a mere ambassador. Like an ambassador he represented Rome to the government, and sent back confidential reports on act opinion in the state to which he was accredited. But he was also an agent of the Catholic Church to see that the decrees of Trent were enforced". Chadwick, *The Popes and the European Revolution*, p. 318.

would not have made any radical changes to the policies of the emperor. And yet, an uncommon custom for the leader of the Roman Catholics, such as pastoral visit to his faithful (outside the Italian peninsula), came to assume a different political and religious significance when considered in the context of the historical situation in which it occurred. We will attempt to demonstrate the exceptional nature of the event supported by the opinions of historians such as Beales, Chadwick and Dall'Orto, who have underlined the importance of this journey. Beales believes that it was the reports that the papal nuncio Garampi sent the Secretariat of State to have caused the Pope's trip to Vienna. In one of his writings on the reasons of the visit, he quotes the dispatches of the 20th July and 18th November 1781.⁹¹ In these dispatches the pope's firm opposition to Joseph's ecclesiastical reforms was requested; the *casus belli*, according to Beales, is identifiable in the abrogation of the *Unigenitus*.⁹² This bull, apart from condemning Jansen's well-known propositions, had become a symbol of the papal supremacy against the bishops' requests for a greater autonomy and, as a consequence, against the requests coming from the governments that hosted their dioceses.⁹³ Chadwick, instead, focuses his attention on the popularity and great acceptance found by the pope in Vienna and in the Habsburgs' territories that caused the fear of an excommunication.⁹⁴ He does not say with any certainty why the Pope set out on this journey and only generically does he refer to Joseph II's ecclesiastical reforms.⁹⁵ Dell'Orto suggests a complementary analysis: the Pope had been hit by Joseph's new reformist cycle and by the tone of Garampi's

⁹¹ Beales, *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, pp. 258-261.

⁹² Idem.

⁹³ This subject had often put a stain on the relationships between the Holy See and Spain, France and the Habsburgs in the 18th century. Blet, *Histoire de la représentation Diplomatique du Saint Siège*, p. 439

⁹⁴ Chadwick, p. 418.

⁹⁵ Idem.

dispatches which, according to Dell'Orto, had obliged the Pope to take some form of action.⁹⁶ There are not many differences between Maria Theresa's and Joseph II's reforms. The latter only expanded and continued his mother's work with the remarkable exception of the Edict on Tolerance that had caused some friction between the two in the past. None of the above-mentioned analyses seems to believe that the Edict on Tolerance played a key role in Pius VI's decision to personally approach Joseph II. And yet the decision was made in 1781 after the Pope had consulted an extraordinary congregation formed by seven cardinals and by the secretary of State.⁹⁷ The cardinals who suggested to take a tough political line with the Emperor were Antonelli and Colonna. They were both open to the possibility of negotiations on all reforms except the Edict on Tolerance with regard to which they were inflexible.⁹⁸ If the Edict on Tolerance had played an important role on the Pope's decision to go to Vienna, his decision to deny equal dignity to all faiths within the Catholic monarchies could have been outlined more clearly. We will begin with the reactions and opinions of the Pontiff's contemporaries.

Although we found no signs of encouragement and even less so, appreciation, as regards this event in the correspondence between the nunciature and the Holy See, or between the imperial court and the nunciature, on the other hand we are able to record the existence of very relevant personal reactions in order to observe and evaluate the importance of the event.⁹⁹ In fact, a man as experienced and prudent as Giovannangelo Braschi observed that the simple presence of the pope in Vienna could have been an efficient deterrent in order to

⁹⁶ Dell'Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi 1776-1785*, pp. 305-10.

⁹⁷ Vittore Soranzo, *Peregrinus apostolicus*, pp. 163-64.

⁹⁸ ASV., vote of cardinal Antonelli, Roma, 10 december, 1781, Nunz. Germ. 753, ff. I-XLII. vote of cardinal Colonna, 2 december 1781, Nunz. Germ. 752, ff. I-XXIV.

⁹⁹ See ASV., Nunz. Germ. b. 406, 407, 408 and HHSTA, Brunati karton 195.

stop the reformist route undertaken by Joseph II.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, although they were strongly convinced of their political views, the emperor and Kaunitz showed signs of apprehension over the pontiff's arrival, and reacted by sponsoring and publishing a large number of pamphlets. They knew they would have to weigh each action carefully because, from the very beginning, the pope had shown that he was not easily controllable: in fact, he had chosen to stay at the nunciature and not at the Hofburg palace, a residence where he would have surely had to be at the disposal of the emperor and the prime minister.

From these unofficial reactions, we will proceed with the analysis of the event relying on the documentary sources and later interpretations made by historians: to make this closer examination convincing and comprehensive we will refer to two different interpretative aspects. The first is represented by the correspondence of Viennese nunciature. As underlined by Beales, the nuncio Garampi had requested the direct intervention of the pope several times: one of Beales' theories was that of Joseph II's possible excommunication and an inevitable schism.¹⁰¹ In any case, this motivation alone would be enough to consider the pope's visit worthy of historical analysis. In reality there is not enough evidence to support the theory of the Emperor being excommunicated (but on the other hand, there is not enough to exclude it either) except for the letters sent by Garampi to the Secretary of State in which hints of excommunication seem to be more an expression of the nuncio's irritation than actual intent. The second aspect concerns the disagreement between the pope and the Curia on the journey to Vienna. In fact, the Curia considered that the pope's journey served no purpose or at least was even dangerous: in his letters to

¹⁰⁰ ASV., Nunz. Germ. 680, f. 8v. Pallavicini a Garampi, Roma, 1782 January 12.

¹⁰¹ Beales, *Joseph II, II.*, pp. 214 – 226.

Kaunitz, the agent Brunati repeated that everybody, from the Secretary of State to the College of Cardinals, found the idea of the pope's pilgrimage was of no use and even presented certain risks.¹⁰² Therefore the pope's reasons were certainly not shared by the Curia and were discouraged by the Imperial Chancellery, so the pope's decision was not based so much on official reasons (to discuss matters with the emperor and Kaunitz) as much as an attempt to apply another type of political pressure by means that the pope thought that his presence alone would impact on the Catholic subjects of the empire. In addition, despite the firm determination of Joseph II and Kaunitz to continue with religious reforms, the pope's decision would have demonstrated both his *bona fide* as well as his open-mindedness regarding any type of agreement, no matter how iniquitous and symbolic. On the other hand, any further impedimento al viaggio di Pio VI by the imperial court could have been interpreted as a lack of loyalty towards the pope and the true faith. Therefore the voyage, the stops en route, and the masses celebrated in the presence of the faithful, who travelled to meet and see the pope along the route, seem to be a far more substantial and achievable objective than that of wanting to change the ideas of the Enlightened sovereign and his old minister.

The apprehension of Joseph and Kaunitz at the possible arrival of thousands of pilgrims in Vienna for the pope seems to confirm Chadwick's theory: The historian states that although Europe was at the peak of the Enlightenment during the second half of the eighteenth century, the spirit of the movement had not influenced popular feeling towards Roman Catholicism

¹⁰² Brunati referred to the possibility of Pius VI dying during his trip and to the destabilizing effects that this could have created. In the letter sent to Vienna he also described the measures that had been taken by the cardinals and the instructions that the Pope had given in the event of his own death. HHSTA, Brunati karton 195, ff. 29r-32v. Brunati to Colloredo, Roma, 1782, February 16.

which was still very strong.¹⁰³ The presence of the pope in Vienna and in the territories he crossed during his voyage had generated a series of initiatives in both the Italian peninsular and the imperial territories.

It is certain that the people on whom the pope focussed his attention were not Kaunitz and Joseph II, whom he knew were opposed to any form of return to the past; he concentrated his efforts on the population still faithful to him, and therefore he imposed his strong presence and participation on the Italian, German and Austrian bishops who were thus called to order and ordered to resist all worldly corruption.

In addition to the alarm signals caused by the new direction of Josephine reform sent to Rome by Garampi during the first year of the Emperor's reign in 1781, there were also the disagreements between the nuncio himself and the Prime Minister Kaunitz. In fact, it was only at the beginning of September in Vienna that the Pope pronounced against one of the reforms applied during that year. This "delayed" reaction gave the Imperial party the impression that that Pius VI would have tacitly permitted the bishops the faculty to conform to the new Imperial decrees.¹⁰⁴ In fact, action was taken from Rome following two directives. First of all, Joseph's decrees were by far the most important topic on the diplomatic agenda of the Roman Curia during the summer and autumn of 1781. There were discussions between Pius VI and Cardinal Herzan at the beginning of August concerning the decree in favour of tolerance. The Cardinal justified the decision of Joseph II, by referring to the religious upheavals that had occurred in Bohemia and Moravia. Tolerance would have represented the necessary judicial basis for a general pacification in that area, to the advantage of

¹⁰³ Chadwick, *The Popes and the European Revolution*, pp. 94-95.

¹⁰⁴ ASV, nunz. Germ. 680, Garampi to Pallavicini f.2v. Wien, 1781, June 3.

all the Emperor's subjects. Herzan's answer to Pius VI met with the full approval of the Prime Minister Kaunitz. Brunati, the Imperial agent in Rome, had communicated to Kaunitz that the emancipation decree in favour of the Jews had caused more indignation than that accorded to the religious orders: "The pacific, social and humane spirit of tolerance is not yet widely felt here".¹⁰⁵ During the month of November Herzan spoke to the Cardinals Pallavicini and Giraud on the principal topics of the Imperial government's agenda concerning religion, ecclesiastic benefices in Austrian Lombardy, religious freedom, the oath of the bishops, and the right to practise dispensation. The second directive which arrived from Rome, gave instructions to remain informed on the actions of the bishops in the Habsburg Monarchy, and to send warnings to some among them that they were not to follow the new Imperial directives. On 2 August 1781, the Pope wrote to Cardinal Pozzobonelli, the Archbishop of Milan, to invite him to respect canon rules and the constitutions of the different religious orders; in other words, he invited the prelate to disobey the new imperial regulations. The same instructions were sent to Monsignor Edling, Archbishop of Gorizia, and to two other Lombard bishops in Lodi and Cremona, who had contacted the Secretary of State. Interventions from Rome soon followed, addressed to the Archbishop-elect of Trier and the bishops of Basel, Constance, Coira and Brixen/Bressanone with instructions concerning matrimonial dispensations and the papal bulls *In Coena Domini* and *Unigenitus*. Furthermore, Garampi was advised by the Secretary of State to give the bishops of the Habsburg Monarchy all updates and directives. During the summer, the nuncio explained the position of the Holy See to the Cardinals Migazzi and Pozzobonelli, and various

¹⁰⁵ "[...] lo spirito pacifico, sociale, e umano della tolleranza qui non è ancora ben conosciuto". HHSTA, Rom – Korrespondenz 194, Brunati to Kaunitz, Roma, 1781, august 11, fasc. 2, f. 147v.

Hungarian diocesan ordinaries (bishops) in relation to the imperial decrees that had been issued.¹⁰⁶ The Secretary of State, Pallavicini, had advised the Pope to address Joseph II directly, but, at least during this initial stage of Joseph's reign, Pius VI decided to intervene indirectly by means of communications sent to the bishops on the subject of Joseph's first decrees. Although the Pope acted in rather a prudent manner with respect to the Secretary of State, on the whole, compared to the majority of the Curia, he did have a certain amount of faith in his ability to have some influence on the Emperor. Meanwhile, on 9 October 1781, Herzan delivered a second letter from Joseph II to Pius VI in relation to the benefices of Austrian Lombardy. The letter was in answer to the papal brief of 25 August. Joseph II reconfirmed his sovereign rights to confer ecclesiastic benefices in Austrian Lombardy. The Emperor considered it his duty to reclaim a right which his predecessors had relinquished. Not wanting to show signs of disrespect towards the Holy See, he preferred to address the Pope again to obtain consent to his request. The Pope did not want any conflict with the Empire: in the past, other popes had also waived certain rights but, up till that point, none had been related to churches located in Italian territories. This issue could have created a dangerous precedent. For this reason, much time was spent on drawing up Pius VI's answer to Joseph II's letter, and very probably a large part of the Curia was involved because of the importance of the subject. In the meantime a proposal arrived from Vienna from Garampi; he suggested a compromise: a pontifical concession would be issued, and some of the abbeys in Austrian Lombardy would be assigned to the Emperor for nomination.¹⁰⁷ At the same time that the negotiations were underway for the benefices in Austrian

¹⁰⁶ Dell'Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi*, p. 286.

¹⁰⁷ ASV, nunz. Germ. 405, Garampi to Pallavicini, Wien, f. 64 v.

Lombardy, the Secretary of State was working on the faculties for matrimonial impediment dispensations and the imperial decrees that had been issued up till that time.

In fact, after the decree on dispensations had been officially delivered to the nuncio on 11 October, Pius VI ordered the Secretary of State to send the nuncio the project for a ministerial brief. A transcription was drawn up of the innovations carried out by the Court of Vienna in 1781 directed at preparing the various propositions to be delivered to the cardinals nominated for an extraordinary congregation to discuss the affair of the Habsburg Monarchy. In this manner, the bases were laid for more widespread involvement on the part of Pius VI in the diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Court of Vienna between the end of 1781 and 1782. Relations between the Holy See and the Empire remained officially interrupted for about four months in 1781, between April and the end of August. In fact, on 10 September, the day when Garampi delivered Pius VI's brief to Kaunitz, diplomatic communications were normalised between the representative of the Holy See and the Chancellery of the Court, the Chancellery of the State and the Emperor. They were re-established completely a month later when Kaunitz delivered the matrimonial dispensation decree to the nuncio.

In the meantime, Joseph II's reform program went ahead rapidly. In the message that Kaunitz delivered to the nuncio it was announced that a brief would be sent to Garampi (destined for the Secretary of State), and the message was written in a tone that was very concerned and critical. However, in the advice given by the nuncio Garampi, he suggested that moderation and compromise were necessary because the stakes at risk were very high: Joseph II could give

“bad example” to other sovereigns, in particular the non-Catholic monarchs¹⁰⁸. A copy of the project drawn up by Garampi containing the criticisms expressed concerning the Emperor’s reform project was very probably intercepted by the imperial postal system. The meeting between the nuncio and the Emperor came to a very unsatisfactory conclusion for Garampi: in fact, Joseph II had not accepted a single request among those suggested by the Pope’s representative - and above all, among the topics discussed, the subject of the freedom of the press. The nuncio criticised the inappropriate behaviour of the censors who permitted the sale of books full of “errors” against religion. Joseph II defended the principle and the system he had adopted, stating that this would not have produced negative effects, but would have produced advantages for both the Church and the State. The Emperor told the nuncio of one point that went straight to the heart of the problem of freedom of the press: greater freedom would have improved and corrected much abuse caused by some aspects and people in the Church. The nuncio replied that this procedure could possibly scandalise unsophisticated people who were not able to distinguish between the fundamental aspects and accidental aspects of religion; people could run the risk of losing their faith and piety. Joseph II reassured the nuncio, telling him not to fear for the worst, since he, the Emperor, would personally watch over every aspect. In reality, the nuncio was far from reassured by the Emperor’s words; on the contrary, he considered them to be a double offence, in relation to the rights of the Holy See, and to the person of Pius VI.¹⁰⁹

With the continuation of Joseph’s reforms, which included the abolition of religious orders throughout the territories of the Empire (since they were

¹⁰⁸ ASV, nunz. Germ. 679, ff. 168-170.

¹⁰⁹ Vanysacker, *Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi*, p. 179.

considered as not necessary for the community), the situation reached a level of crisis never experienced in the previous forty years during the reign of Maria Theresa. Having considered all the opinions expressed by an extraordinary congregation of seven cardinals and the Secretary of State, Pius VI pronounced the desire to set up direct negotiations concerning all that was happening in the Habsburg territories. The Pope wished to find a solution that respected both the arguments of the Church and the rights of the Sovereign. The resolution was communicated to Joseph II before any others were informed, with a brief dated 15 December 1781. The Pope had already expressed his disagreement with the imperial decree to the heads of the religious orders and the various bishops, and now he wished to follow a route which, according to an expression used by the Secretary of State, was considered as being the only means possible in answer to the: “extremely urgent, tragic and extraordinary calamity that had befallen the Church”¹¹⁰. The brief was immediately sent to Garampi. The Imperial Ambassador to the Holy See, Cardinal Herzen, complained that he had not been informed as to the contents of the brief.¹¹¹

But the Pope wished to maintain the strictest secrecy concerning the proposal he had made to Joseph; he would have made the decision to travel to Vienna public, only after having received a positive answer from the Emperor. The nuncio in Vienna was instructed to deliver the brief to the Emperor personally, and to speak to Joseph as he transmitted the brief; in the case where this procedure would not have been possible, Garampi was to have placed it personally in Kaunitz’ hands, but he was to deliver an incisive speech as he

¹¹⁰ ASV, nunz. Germ. 679, Pallavicini to Garampi, Roma, ff. 194-195v.

¹¹¹ Naturally a great deal of curiosity arose concerning the contents of the brief: when it was made public, in other words, following the positive answer from the Emperor, Brunati commented that international diplomacy saluted this action as “one of the outstanding aspects of the pontificate of Pius VI” HHSTA, Brunati to Kaunitz f.15r, Rome 26th of January 1782.

delivered the brief. Therefore, at the end of 1781, after the words exchanged with the Chancellery, the nuncio was forced to limit his personal action, and the Pope entered the field, dealing directly in the relations between the Holy See and the Court of Vienna.¹¹² Garampi spent much time and effort in preparing for the meeting with the Emperor, taking great care to examine all the possible scenarios, and drawing up appropriate answers in the case that objections were raised against the various points in the document and the Pope's proposed voyage. While all the possible arguments were being prepared at the nunciature to sustain their cause during the audience conceded by Joseph II, the same preparations were being made at the Court Chancellery and the State Chancellery. Kaunitz, who had received a copy of the brief sent on 15 December from Garampi, advised Joseph II to be brisk and expeditious with the nuncio: to refer to the ministerial brief dated 19 December where all the fundamental principles has been set out, stating that it would be easier to obtain the answers to the objections raised by the Pope from the ministerial brief. He suggested that a personal answer should be given in reply to the brief by Pius VI; that the Pope should be thanked for his proposed offer; and lastly, to state that there was no valid reason for the Pope's voyage to Vienna, since it was impossible that the two parties would be able to reach an agreement. The meeting between the Emperor and the nuncio occurred on the morning of 30 December. Joseph II followed only part of Kaunitz' advice, maintaining a courteous friendly attitude towards the representative of the Holy See. The Emperor expressed his surprise and his gratitude for the Pope's proposal. Joseph II also stated that he was a little

¹¹² Vanysacker, *Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi*, p. 190. Although Vanysacker attributes the initiative of the papal visit to Garampi, on the contrary, Beales makes the following observation: "suggesting sarcastically as so often, that it was to counteract Garampi's extremism that the pope proposed his visit". Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. II, p. 221.

worried about the risks to the Pope's health in facing such an arduous voyage due to his advanced years, adding that he did not wish to expose the Pope to any danger solely on the Emperor's behalf. Garampi told the Emperor that he had received clear instructions: the Pope had made his decision and intended to proceed. The Emperor attempted to make Garampi understand that it was highly probable that the conference would be dissolved without reaching any conclusions; both parties, totally set in opposite positions would have each maintained their own convictions. In answer to this reasoning, the nuncio observed that they would have searched for room for diplomatic manoeuvre and they would have attempted to find solutions, but Joseph II repeated what he had already told the nuncio, considering the Pope's voyage unnecessary, and after receiving the brief, he closed the audience.¹¹³ Apart from the customary official expressions of courtesy and the invitation to reside at Court, in the correspondence that followed between the Emperor and the Pope, they did not even manage to create an agenda for the discussions to be held concerning the imperial actions challenged by the Holy See, because the Emperor did not once recognise the legitimacy of the contestations.

These were the conditions for the Pope's voyage to Vienna: although Pius VI had previously hesitated in assuming an openly hostile position against the imperial reforms, his voyage would have demonstrated that the positions assumed by the Emperor were not accepted by the head of the Church.¹¹⁴ The Imperial agent Brunati in Rome had informed Kaunitz of the reactions expressed

¹¹³ Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. II, p. 222.

¹¹⁴ As Brunati says: "Altre persone più perspicaci credono che la semplice proposizione d'andare a Vienna sia un colpo maestro, e come una disapprovazione solenne che il papa fa delle maestrosi, e come una disapprovazione solenne che il papa fa delle nuove determinazioni imperiali". Trans.: "other, more perspicacious people believe that the simple proposal to travel to Vienna is a masterly stroke, and seen as a solemn reprimand made by the Pope in relation to the new imperial decisions". HHSTA., Brunati to Kaunitz f.13v. Roma 26 January 1782.

by the Curia and the population of Rome concerning the Pope's decision to make a voyage to Vienna. In fact, on 23 January, he wrote:

[...] in spite of the fact that the Romans are familiar with the Pope's impetuous and enterprising personality [...] it would never have occurred to them that he would think of something as inconceivable as wishing to travel to discuss these aspects with the Emperor.¹¹⁵

And once again, in relation to the amazement caused by this initiative: "this seems such a strange and even incredible action to all classes of society, that even with the certain confirmation from the Pope himself who prides himself on this idea, many people still consider it a kind of dream".¹¹⁶ On the other hand, when speaking of the reasons that motivated the Pope to make this voyage to Vienna, Brunati repeated that:

[...] disapproval such as that which is considered necessary here, has resulted in the fact that his silence would be taken by many as an agreement, and disapproval using some other method would be dangerous, and his proposed voyage seems the only solution.¹¹⁷

In many of his letters, when sending news about the Pope's voyage, Brunati remained constant in his opinion, frequently stating that the Pope was stubbornly isolated in his decision to make the voyage, while the majority of the Curia would have preferred to search for an alternative solution.¹¹⁸ For most of

¹¹⁵ HHSTA., Brunati to Kaunitz f.13v. Roma 26 January 1782.

¹¹⁶ Idem.

¹¹⁷ Idem f.14r.

¹¹⁸ "Alcuni cardinali vorrebbero che il Santo Padre senza moversi dal Vaticano tuonasse con nuovi brevi". Trans.: "Certain cardinals would prefer that the Holy Father sent thunderous

the observers of that period, the Pope's voyage was considered as something exceptional, as the Secretary of State, Sir David Murray, wrote to the English Ambassador in Vienna: "The pope's visit may be reckoned as one of the most singular events which mark the history of the present times".¹¹⁹ He wrote in a similar manner in another letter to the Ambassador, who, after thanking him for having provided information and details on the Pope's visit, stated that: "The visit of the pope is a very singular event".¹²⁰ And of course, Joseph II himself could not fail to make a comment about the voyage, as he wrote to his brother Leopold: "C'est un singulier événement, nous verrons comment cela finira [...]".¹²¹ Once again Brunati described how the Roman population and the cardinals perceived the Pope's departure for Vienna: "extreme astonishment, bizarre and strange solution, amazed stupor" are the expressions that can be read in the documents.¹²² In fact, the voyage of a pope at that time was considered an exception: one only has to remember at the provision requested by Pius VI to draw up a bull for the conclave in the case of the death of a pope outside the confines of the state borders of the Church.¹²³ The consternation provoked by the decision of the Pontiff, considered by some of his contemporaries as being an "imprudent old man" because of the health problems that the voyage could have possibly caused him, was second only to the impression of the major part of the observers who felt that the Pope's visit to Vienna served no purpose given the

messages in new briefs without moving from the Vatican ...". HHSTA, Brunati to Kaunitz f.19r. Roma 26 January 1782.

¹¹⁹ BL, Add 35525, f.8rv., Murray David, 7th Viscount Stormont, 2nd Earl of Mansfield (1793). Secretary of State, to Sir R. M. Keith 1772-1785, Belfast, 1782, March 22.

¹²⁰ BL, Add 35525, f.60r., Harris James 1st Earl of Malmesbury (1800), Envoy at Berlin to Sir R. M. Keith 1772-1788. Berlin, 1782, March 31.

¹²¹ Arneth, *Joseph II und Leopold von Toscana, ihr briefwechsel von 1781 bis 1790, erster band 1781-1785* (Wien, 1872), p. 81.

¹²² HHSTA, Brunati to Kaunitz f.29r. Roma 16 February 1782.

¹²³ "Morendo il papa fuori di Roma, si debba ciò nonostante fare qui l'elezione del nuovo pontefice". HHSTA, Brunati to Kaunitz f.32r. Roma 16 February 1782.

strong difference of opinion between the Pope and the Emperor. It was easy to deduce from the Emperor's answers to the Pope's messages, that Joseph II did not wish the voyage to take place. But Pius VI remained firm in his conviction to travel to Vienna. It seemed that the Pope felt he was driven by a form of almost divine determination to undertake the voyage, convinced that the Emperor would have listened, not only to the voice of the Vicar of Christ, but indeed, the voice of Jesus Christ himself. In fact, he sustained that (Joseph) "would not be able to ignore the voice, not of Pius VI, but of Christ, which he felt was his duty to transmit and stimulate".¹²⁴ Brunati too underlined how much the Pope's choice was a solitary decision:

If Pius VI does not wish to listen to human reasoning to abandon this ill-advised action and venture, which has provoked the disapproval of the most judicious part of the Roman population, it will be difficult to manage to disassociate oneself from such a decision with a man who speaks or hears only through (divine) inspiration.¹²⁵

Other news gathered by the imperial agent stated that opinions were varied concerning the suitable nature of the voyage: "It is said that the prophesy of St. Malachy, *Peregrinus Apostolicus*, interpreted by the Pope as referring to his pontificate, is one of the most impelling reasons for this voyage". In a later, more concrete explanation, he added that: "It would be far worse, according to some people, if the true reason lies in some secrets of intelligence with the head clergy of Germany and other states".¹²⁶ On the other hand, in Vienna different opinions were circulating concerning the voyage of Pius VI. Although they

¹²⁴ ASV, nunz. Germ. 680, Pallavicini to Garampi, f. 8v. Roma, 1782, January 12.

¹²⁵ HHSTA, Brunati to Kaunitz f.32v. Roma 16 February 1782.

¹²⁶ Idem.

declared in advance that the Pope would have obtained nothing, those in opposition to the Church confessed their surprise at this action which had already been decided: they considered it was an exceptional example of apostolic zeal. The nuncio Grampi had his own opinion: the Pope should not retreat from a venture which had already begun. In fact, he felt that a negative outcome from any discussions would have attacked the prestige of the Emperor: in the eyes of the whole of Europe, he would have been perceived as the only person responsible for the harm inflicted on religion and the Church by the Habsburg monarchy. The Emperor and his ministers did not want the Pope to travel to Vienna, but on the other hand, they could not explicitly refuse the offer made by Pius VI, as this would have made them open to criticism by public opinion. For this reason, Joseph II and Kaunitz showed themselves apparently eager to receive the Pope, but manifested their thoughts on the great difficulties involved in implementing the voyage. They would have been able to “save face” only if the Pope decided to abandon the initiative. On 26 February, Garampi had an audience with the Emperor. The discussion lasted about two hours. Joseph II declared that he was satisfied with the Pope’s decision to undertake a voyage to Vienna; he then offered his own palace to host the Pope during his stay. While preparations were being made to receive the Pope, pamphlets continued to circulate focussed on religion and the authority of the Church. Apart from the reprinting of Eybel’s *Was is der Pabst?* (What is the Pope?) And the diffusion of a similar text entitled *Was is der Bischof?*, (What is the Bishop?), another pamphlet appeared entitled “Why Pius VI is coming to Vienna”. A short time before the arrival of the Pontiff, another pamphlet appeared: *über die ankunft des papstes. Fragment eines Briefes* written by Joseph Sonnenfels, professor of sciences and policy of the Chambers at the University of Vienna. The nunciature

judged the pamphlet in this manner, stating: “This too is filled with poison, but with a poison that is so subtle that the author seems to be more moderate, because he is far more insidious”.¹²⁷ At the same time as the arrival of the Pope in Vienna, Kaunitz expressed his fear to the Emperor that the presence of Pius VI within the territories of the monarchy could have provoked a subversive uprising. In fact, the edict on tolerance had provided many Catholics with the opportunity to change over to Protestantism; the initial abolitions of contemplative religious orders proved unpopular; furthermore there were rumours that the Pope was coming to Vienna to officially reprimand the Emperor during a sermon to be held on Holy Thursday. All these aspects created instability within the Monarchy. For this reason, the Chancellor asked the Emperor to prevent bishops and prelates from leaving their residences.¹²⁸ Joseph II did not consider these measures should be adopted. The fact of hosting the Pope in the Hofburg palace would have been sufficient to maintain the situation under control, and in any case, spontaneous demonstrations in favour of the Pope would have obtained very little.¹²⁹ Moreover, in order to influence public opinion just before the arrival of Pius VI in Vienna, Kaunitz charged professors and journalists to defend the State’s reform program, explaining the sense and value of the reform to the population. On Kaunitz’s suggestion, Marx Anton Wittola wrote a pamphlet on tolerance. In the text quoted by the nunciature, Sonnenfels stated that during the Pope’s visit the nation would have had to show the whole of Europe that they had accepted the innovative spirit of the

¹²⁷ ASV, nunz. Germ. 406, Caleppi to Pallavicini, Vienna 1781, March 21, f.93v.

¹²⁸ Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. II, pp. 224-26.

¹²⁹ *Idem.*, p. 225.

Emperor.¹³⁰ On the other hand, once again according to Sonnenfels, the Pope would have been welcomed warmly by the Emperor, on condition that the welfare of the State, the serenity of his subjects, and the dignity of the throne were not placed in danger.¹³¹

The participation of the best-known Viennese journalists and writers was unanimous and the literary work on the pope's visit was voluminous, both in prose and in verse. Aloys Blumauer's *Prophetischer Prolog* is one of the most characteristic texts among these political articles.¹³² On the pope's visit Eybel's pamphlet *Was is der Pabst?* reads: it was a conversation piece at home and in public¹³³, and, since we all think in a different way, the impressions it made on people were rather different. Some were stunned while others could not stop wondering what aims and consequences this visit could have.¹³⁴ Others compared the Middle Ages and its fights between the Papacy and the Empire to Joseph II's enlightened age.¹³⁵ The traders in Vienna hoped to make excellent profits; the believers strove for "a consecrated crown, a medal, a relic or *agnus dei*".¹³⁶ According to Eybel, all the religious and the believers who were neither politicians nor philosophers asked themselves the same question: What is the pope? "The humble people saw the pope as a supreme being, a demigod".¹³⁷ On the contrary: "the rakes burst out laughing and mocking him (the pope)" because

¹³⁰ Joseph von Sonnenfels, *Uiber die Ankunft des Pabstes. Fragment eines Briefs von ***** (Vienna, 1782), pp. 4-5.

¹³¹ Idem.

¹³² Blumauer Aloys, poet (Steyr 1755 – Vienna 1798). At first a novice among the Jesuits, he became a mason and zealot of Joseph II's reforms. He was very successful in the burlesque and satirical genre with his parody of the Aeneid: *Virgil Aeneis oder Abenteuer des frommen Helden Aeneas* (1783-86) where he attacked the Roman Curia and the Jesuits. www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/alloys-blumauer/ (11-02-2012).

¹³³ ACDF, CL 1786, no 10, Eybel Valentin, 1786, August 3, f. 1.

¹³⁴ Idem.

¹³⁵ Idem., ff. 1-2.

¹³⁶ Idem., f. 2.

¹³⁷ Idem.

they saw him as the representative of all the most extraordinary and absurd superstitions.¹³⁸ Eybel believed that between these two extremes the educated moderate Christians' opinion should have prevailed, even though "there are not many unfortunately".¹³⁹ The writer did not address learned people, but those who honoured both the holy texts and the Enlightenment. Like his contemporaries, Eybel did not have faith in common people because they did not pay attention to the truth or to its legitimate sources.¹⁴⁰ As pointed out by the historian Franco Venturi: "Joseph Valentin Eybel had repeatedly explained in the past what his opinion on the church and the pope was".¹⁴¹ When Eybel, who was one of the best-known intellectuals of the Empire, heard of the pope's visit, he felt the need to divulge his ideas and to make a qualitative leap from the academic environment to the squares and from erudition to propaganda.¹⁴² Most of his analysis in *What is the Pope?* came from the idea that the religious orders had held great power in the past. The debate on the ban on books was particularly fierce because Eybel saw it as a way to keep "the world" in the dark.¹⁴³ The author resorted to popular subjects such as the contempt for the wealth accumulated in the monasteries in spite of the idleness that monks and friars lived in. In his opinion, these truths were well-known even among "people of very low origins".¹⁴⁴ Commenting on the impression that the pope's arrival would have made on public opinion, he reassured the Empire that, even though the pope's visit would have attracted a great number of "simple devout people",

¹³⁸ Idem., ff. 2-3.

¹³⁹ Idem., f. 3.

¹⁴⁰ Idem., ff. 3-4.

¹⁴¹ Venturi, *Settecento riformatore*, VI, p. 670.

¹⁴² Idem., pp. 670 – 671.

¹⁴³ ACDF, CL 1786, no 10, Eybel Valentin, 1786, August 3, f. 4.

¹⁴⁴ Idem.

the public opinion would have continued to support the government's policy.¹⁴⁵ Finally Eybel asserted that the imperial authority was strong and wise enough not to give in to the pope's "fanatics" or to his most passionate detractors, who were unable to contextualize the laws and the work done by the popes in the past. "Thanks to their common sense, the people who really knew the pope had only one thing to do once they had been duly instructed on him: let the sovereign (Joseph II) decide how to welcome the pope who had just arrived in Vienna."¹⁴⁶ Historiographers are sure that Eybel's works had Joseph II's backing for a long time, to the point that the Emperor himself intervened to slip *What is the Pope?* through the net of censorship and allow it to be published.¹⁴⁷ The relationship between Eybel's work and the challenge that Joseph II's political plan had put out to the papacy was something different. The fact that behind this wave of antipapal pamphlets there was the Emperor's direct intervention, is often underestimated or not taken into account in the context of the contrast between him and the Pope. This contrast was often referred to as "schismatic" as "schismatic" were Eybel's words on papal supremacy which seemed to sum up Joseph II's and Kaunitz's thoughts.¹⁴⁸ The censor's brief report on Eybel's text reads: "the evil aim" was to challenge papal supremacy.¹⁴⁹ This "corrupt" work had no other purpose than to "make the believers lose respect for the Roman Pontiff as Head of the Church and to reduce his specific prerogatives, and also to

¹⁴⁵ Idem.

¹⁴⁶ Idem., f. 31.

¹⁴⁷ T.C.W. Blanning, *Joseph II*, p. 162.

¹⁴⁸ Denying the quality jump made by the Jansenistic press and the unprecedented support that the House of Habsburg-Lorraine gave them during Joseph II's ten-year leadership, would mean denying the conflict that the papal and imperial governments had to face. Even though words such as "conflict, secession, excommunication or schism" can often be found on many documents, these accounts have never been considered as part of a big conflict, but only as a normal series of regalist reform attempts made to increase the power of the crown in contrast to the papal prestige. ACDF, CL 1786, no 10, Eybel Valentin, 1786, August 3, f. 32.

¹⁴⁹ Idem., f.33.

deny his supreme authority that, for divine inspiration, is due to him in the regulations of the Church”¹⁵⁰. The text was therefore forbidden because it contained: “false, scandalous, hasty, insulting propositions which led to the schism and other errors that the Church condemned”.¹⁵¹ *What is the pope?* was the work that gave life to the papal bull *Super soliditate* (1786) and that was later used by the population of the Austrian Lowlands as a symbol of the autonomist claims of the country against Joseph II and his reforms.¹⁵²

The pro-imperial political journalism wrote in opposition to the so-called ultramontane press, which benefited from the actions of Garampi.¹⁵³ Updates on this “war on paper” were communicated by the auditor Caleppi, who had remained in Vienna as head of the nunciature; in fact, Garampi had left the city on 7 March for Gorizia. He wrote two letters to the Pope. In the first, he informed him that the Vice Chancellor Phillip Cobenzl would have offered the papal party hospitality in Gorizia, the first town in Monarchic territory to receive the Pope’s visit. In the second letter, Garampi informed the Pope of the latest news on Eybel’s pamphlet and told him that count Cobenzl had received instructions from the Emperor to discover the Pope’s intentions, which would be then referred to the Emperor himself to permit him to adopt the appropriate attitude in view of future discussions.¹⁵⁴ However, on the contrary, the Emperor’s decisions were well recognised: in a message sent by Joseph II to his brother Peter Leopold, the Emperor clearly explained his intentions relative to the Pope’s visit:

¹⁵⁰ Idem.

¹⁵¹ Idem.

¹⁵² T.C.W. Blanning, *Joseph II*, p. 162.

¹⁵³ Vansacker, *Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi*, pp. 184-185.

¹⁵⁴ ASV, nunz. Germ. 406, Garampi to Pius VI, Neustadt 1782, March 8, ff. 73 – 74v.

My dear brother, [...] I am very grateful to you for the list of the Holy Father's voyages that you have just sent me. At this time, during Lent, and in view of the arrival of their Royal Highnesses in Rome, this departure is a true escapade, and which seems unjustified and incomprehensible, unless attributed to this mystic desire in wishing to seem to save the rights of the Church, when nobody has done him any harm. However extraordinary his arrival here may be, and even though it is not possible to prepare oneself for everything that he will propose, do, or negotiate here, he will find me, I hope, a respectful son of the Church, a polite host towards his guest, a good Catholic in every sense of the term, but at the same time, a man who is not influenced by the fine phrasing and tragic theatricals that he could perhaps engender, but firm, sure, and unshakable in his principles, following what he feels is best for the State with certitude, and without any other consideration. I have strongly insisted that he reside at Court; it is in my better interests in any case, and if he is honest, I think it is the best solution for him as well.¹⁵⁵

Pius VI left Rome on the morning of 27 February after having said Mass at the altar of St. Peter's Basilica. The Pope's suite was composed of 25 people,

¹⁵⁵ "Mon chere frère. [...] Je vous suis infiniment obligé de la liste des voyages du Saint-Père que vous venez de m'envoyer. Dans ce temps, dans le carême, et vu l'arrivée de LL. AA. II. à Rome, c'est une vraie équipée que son départ, et qui ne se justifie ni ne son comprend que par cette envie mystique qu'il a de vouloir paraître le sauver des droits de l'église, pendant qu'on ne lui fait aucun mal. Quelque extraordinaire que soit son arrivée ici, et quoiqu'on ne puisse point se préparer à l'idée de tout ce qu'il proposera, fera ou négociera ici, il me trouvera, j'espère, un fils respectueux de l'église, un maître du logis poli avec son hôte, un bon catholique dans toute l'étendue du terme, mais en même temps un homme au-dessus des phrases, des actes tragiques dont il pourrait l'orlancer, ferme, sûr et inébranlable dans ses principes, et suivant le bien qu'il entrevoit avec certitude, de l'Etat, sans autre considération quelconque. J'insiste fortement pour qu'il loge à la Cour; cela me convient de toute façon et doit lui convenir aussi, s'il pense honnêtement" Arneth, *Joseph II und Leopold von Toscana, ihr briefwechsel von 1781 bis 1790, erster band 1781-1785*, p. 82.

including two bishops, mons. Marcucci and mons. Contessini, and other people of lesser importance. No cardinals accompanied the Pope, the presence of Garampi in Vienna being considered sufficient for any advice the Pope might have required.¹⁵⁶ The Pope crossed the Papal States, and everywhere he was greeted by crowds paying tribute and showing devotion. In Ferrara Pius VI received the letter in which Joseph II offered him hospitality in the apartments at Court. Pius VI answered the Emperor immediately accepting the offer. The Pope met Garampi in Gorizia. From that moment, the Nuncio accompanied the Pope as far as Vienna, informing him of the whole situation. From the moment when the Pope entered Imperial territory, both the Pope and the Emperor were very aware that a battle formation already existed in relation to the bishops who had or had not published the Patent of Toleration. Both the Pope and Joseph II showed their gratitude towards those who had followed their instructions.¹⁵⁷ On 22 March, during the last stretch of the route to Vienna, Joseph II met the Pope in the open countryside. The two exchanged greetings and the Emperor invited Pius VI to travel in his personal coach. Awaiting the Pope at the imperial palace were Kaunitz, all the ministers and dignitaries of the Court, State councillors, ambassadors, chamberlains, and Viennese aristocracy. Having shown the Pope and his suite to their apartments, the Emperor assigned the Grand Chamberlain and another chamberlain to the Pope's service, as well as several guards, for his personal apartments as well as to accompany his carriage during all visits. Although the schedule envisaged discussions with the Emperor as the major item on the agenda, Pius VI's time in Vienna was enriched with liturgical celebrations, meetings and visits. On Good Friday, the Pope was present at the

¹⁵⁶ Dall'Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi 1776-1785*, p. 336.

¹⁵⁷ See Soranzo, *Peregrinus apostolicus*, pp 264-266 and Kovács, *Pius VI. Bei Joseph II. Zu Gast*, p. 259.

liturgical service celebrated by Garampi and “prayed at Maria Theresa’s sarcophagus in the imperial mausoleum”.¹⁵⁸ The very same day the nuncio wrote that: “the streets and squares where the Pope passed, as well as all the churches, were crowded with people”.¹⁵⁹ On Easter Sunday, the last day in March, Pius VI officiated in the Cathedral of St Stephen, which had been magnificently prepared. Joseph II was not present, since he was afflicted with an eye ailment from which he had been suffering before the arrival of the Pope. All the streets around the Cathedral were controlled by soldiers; no carriage was permitted to enter the city, and those who rented out sedan chairs, as well as the proprietors of apartments with windows adjacent to the square, did excellent business. According to reliable estimates, more than 30,000 people from other towns were present in the city. Pius VI’s behaviour during his period in Vienna was quite the opposite of the suggestions sent to him in a signed letter from the auditor Caleppi. In the auditor’s opinion, the Pope should have kept his distance, granting audiences to a select few, according to the assumption that in order to maintain respect, one should not be too available and rarely show oneself to the public.¹⁶⁰ He felt that the Pope should have kept his residence at the nunciature, refusing the offer to stay at Court. On 22 April, almost at the end of the Pope’s stay in Vienna, Calappi himself made a note of two positive results after the Pope’s month-long stay in the Habsburg capital. First of all, the population had received the opportunity of unrestricted spiritual care from the priests, and the presence of the Pope had stimulated conversions and a renewal of Catholic zeal in the region. Secondly, the auditor drew attention to how positive the direct contact of the Pope had been with the bishops of the Habsburg Empire. In

¹⁵⁸ Von Pastor, *Pius VI*, vol. XXXIX, p. 456.

¹⁵⁹ Garampi to Pallavicini.

¹⁶⁰ Dell’Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi*, p. 341.

particular, Pius VI had had the opportunity to meet about twenty of the bishops of the Habsburg monarchy in Vienna. In the meantime, news of a different tone was sent to Kaunitz from Brunati in Rome. The imperial agent wrote that the scarcity of food in the Church States made:

[...] the Pope's return to Rome all the more urgent; given the current climate of discontent among the people, mainly because of the badly-smelling bread they were forced to eat, provoking serious illnesses; with each further prolongation of the Pope's absence, there was a danger that it could lead to open uprisings out of desperation [...].¹⁶¹

Moreover, again according to a report from Brunati, there even existed a small party of Illuminists who thought that: "on his return to Rome the Pope could introduce a reform in ecclesiastic orders, based on the example given by his Imperial Majesty"¹⁶². Naturally, apart from the official ceremonies, for Pius VI, the visits and meetings between the Pope and the Emperor were, or at least, should have formed the most crucial aspect of the voyage to Vienna. In reality, these meetings left the Pope so disappointed that he left Vienna on 16 April after the Emperor had written to the Pope expressing his opinions on all they had discussed. The negotiations had reached a stalemate, as Joseph II wrote in a letter to his brother Peter Leopold:

Our conversations having reached no conclusions on anything specific to be decided, the Holy Father took the option to write to me about different

¹⁶¹ "Tanto più necessario il ritorno del papa, che ogni poco che più tarda, stante l'attuale fermento di mala contentezza che regna in questo popolo, principalmente per il pane puzzolente che se li fa mangiare, e che cagiona delle gravi malattie, vi è da temere che la disperazione lo possa portare ad una aperta sollevazione[...]" HHSTA., Brunati to Kaunitz f.72r. Roma 13 April 1782.

¹⁶² "Che il papa al ritorno in Roma possa fare una riforma dell'ordine ecclesiastico sull'esempio di sua maestà imperiale". HHSTA., Brunati to Kaunitz f.73r. Roma 17 April 1782.

points of ecclesiastic policy [...] and in the end, neither of us was able to change anything in our reciprocal way of thinking.¹⁶³

In the meantime, discussions were resumed. The letters conserved among the nuncio's papers demonstrate an evolution in certain topics of primary importance.¹⁶⁴ Joseph II demonstrated a more open-mind regarding *Unigenitus*, the placet, censorship and oaths of the bishops. Moreover, the Emperor confirmed that he would concede the same "activities and authority" to the nunciatures in his territories. There was an exchange of further briefs on these topics, but in reality these were simply formal clarifications which, with all respect, did not change the situation to a great extent. However, Joseph II conceded almost none of the requests made by the Pope. After having demonstrated certain concessions he had granted, (the *Unigenitus* bull, the bishops' oaths, the dispensations and the benefits granted in Austrian Lombardy), Joseph asked the Pope to urge the clergy in Habsburg territories to cooperate with the measures adopted by the Court, and on his departure from Vienna, to issue a written declaration. The only tangible result that the Pope obtained from Joseph II before his departure from Vienna was to accept the Emperor's proposal to make the Pope's nephew count Onesti-Braschi, a prince of the Empire. If a large part of the international community was posing questions concerning the results of the discussions between Pius VI and Joseph

¹⁶³ "Nos conversation ayant abouti à rien à décider, le Saint-Père a pris le parti de m'écrire les différents points de police ecclésiastique. [...] et in fine finali, nous ne parviendrons à rien changer dans notre façon de penser réciproque". Arneth, *Joseph II und Leopold von Toscana, ihr briefwechsel von 1781 bis 1790, erster band 1781-1785*, pp. 100-101.

¹⁶⁴ Beales also underlined the importance of the private talks between the Pope and the Emperor: "As Kaunitz feared, both sides made generous concessions in friendly conversation [...]". Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. II, p. 233.

II, in the meantime from Rome, Brunati informed Kaunitz about the political atmosphere that pervaded the corridors of the Curia:

The cardinals are very irritated because they believe they have been unjustly neglected (not taken into consideration) by his Holiness, who is not consulting them about the negotiations he is conducting. The cardinals consider that popes should not undertake any negotiations of any importance with the Courts without prior consultation with the College of Cardinals which they call Sacred. Therefore, some of the more enterprising cardinals feel that during the next conclave that (before being recognised as Pope) the successor to Pius VI must write a bull stating that he and his successors must not determine serious affairs of State without consulting the Sacred College, and without obtaining the College's consent [...].¹⁶⁵

The Pope left Vienna on 22 April. Joseph II sent news to his brother Peter Leopold with these words: "I cannot hide that I am well pleased over his departure since this situation had become almost unbearable, especially over the past eight days".¹⁶⁶ Together with his brother, the Archduke Maximilian and other members of his suite, the Emperor had accompanied the Pope to the Augustinian church of Maria Brunn on the day of the Pope's departure. In the

¹⁶⁵ "Fremono i cardinali perché si credono ingiustamente negletti (non considerati) da sua santità, che li tiene all'oscuro, di quello che sta costì trattando. Pretendono l'eminente loro che i papi non possano intraprendere trattati di qualche importanza colle corti, senza la previa intelligenza del loro collegio, che chiamano Sacro. Pensano perciò alcuni dé più intraprendenti, d'obligare nel futuro conclave il successore di Pio VI (prima di essere riconosciuto per papa) a fare una bolla, che lui, e i suoi successori in affari gravi nulla debbano determinare senza consultare il Sagro Collegio, e senza il consenso del medesimo [...]". HHSTA., Brunati to Kaunitz f.76v. Roma 1782, April 20.

¹⁶⁶ "Je ne vous cache pas être bien aise de son départ, car ces derniers huit jours surtout la chose était devenue presque insupportable [...]". Arneth, *Joseph II und Leopold von Toscana, ihr briefwechsel von 1781 bis 1790, erster band 1781-1785*, p. 103.

church the Pope and the Emperor prayed together. Leaving the church the Pope embraced and kissed Joseph II; The Emperor received a last blessing from the Pope. Historians seem to agree in attributing a negative judgement concerning the pope's decision to travel to Vienna: As stated by Dell'Orto: "The main objective of the voyage was a "complete failure" in spite of the discussions between Pius VI and Joseph II, and no changes were obtained in relation to the reforms indicated by the emperor.¹⁶⁷ Even Pastor, in referring to the Viennese visit made by Pius VI, underlined with a certain participation that: "Unfortunately, so far as its real object was concerned, the journey had not been successful, and it was really little more than an episode".¹⁶⁸ If historical analysis leaves no doubt as to the lack of efficacy of the Pope's diplomatic attempt, it should not be ignored that the pope obtained enormous popularity with his visit to Vienna: Large crowds came to take part at the masses and religious functions celebrated by the pope, as well as each time he made a public appearance.¹⁶⁹ In other words, given this fact, a tribute to the presence of the pope and the homage

¹⁶⁷ Dell'Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi*, p. 360

¹⁶⁸ Von Pastor, p. 464.

¹⁶⁹ In spite of considering that the papal voyage to Vienna did not have any special effects, most historians underline, although without great enthusiasm, the strong participation of the people at Masses and benedictions by Pius VI, but without linking these events to actions of papal diplomacy in any way. "He (Pius VI) achieved a public relations triumph with the ordinary people of Vienna, attracting more than a hundred thousand to a public blessing". Blanning, *Joseph II*, p. 97. "The pious crowds that gathered to receive his blessings and qualify for indulgences were a phenomenon, but they made no clear impact on policy and were soon forgotten. The pope had had no notion of mobilising them and the emperor no intention of appeasing them". Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. II, p. 237. The only exception to those analysis are the comments of Caffiero, infact, she wrote: "Il viaggio del papa suscitò una vasta eco e vivaci discussioni negli ambienti colti, ma ebbe un grande rilievo, gravido di importanti conseguenze per il futuro, soprattutto sul piano della risposta e della mobilitazione popolari. L'entusiasmo e la devozione che suscitò lungo le tappe del percorso il "pellegrino apostolico" - come venne chiamato il pontefice, su suggestione delle popolari profezie sui pontefici che andavano sotto il nome di s. Malachia e come venne cantato da V. Monti in una sua poesia - confermavano il papa "come il capo di una opposizione crescente contro le riforme che venivano dall'alto a sconvolgere la vita tradizionale" (Venturi, *Settecento riformatore, IV. La caduta dell'Antico Regime (1776-1789)*, p. 674). Questo ruolo di guida prestigiosa dell'ondata crescente di reazione religiosa contro il regalismo e il riformismo dei sovrani rese, dunque, assai meno deludente il bilancio finale della visita papale". Caffiero, "Pio VI", *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, http://www.treccani.it/Portale/elements/categoriesItems.jsp?pathFile=/BancaDati/Enciclopedia_d_ei_Papi/VOL03/ENCICLOPEDIA_DEI_PAPI_Vol3_000288.xml (2 December 2010).

he was paid by the population of Vienna and all the other towns of the Empire visited by Pius VI, it is safe to state that under certain aspects, the pope's visit was a success that was totally unexpected. In fact, if it is easily imagined that the pope considered it an arduous task to be able to intervene in any way on the decisions of Joseph II, on the contrary, as stated by Duffy, he more than likely used his personal charisma as his instruments to underline his authority.¹⁷⁰ Very probably, the bond between the Catholic people and the Head of the Catholic Church was the arm used by the pope. If we read it in this sense, the pope's mission perhaps had the merit of moving Joseph II away from the political extremism of his Prime Minister Kaunitz, who on the other hand, wished to cut off most of the ties with the Holy See.¹⁷¹ From this point of view, the relief felt by Joseph II at the news of the departure of Pius VI from Vienna, is comprehensible. In fact, the number of pilgrims who desired to receive the pope's blessing was increasing day by day. Moreover, from the internal viewpoint, the pope could have completely ignored the Curia which had opposed his visit to Vienna, and which had managed the whole operation through its diplomatic structures, and especially through the nunciature of Vienna, a structure which, as was seen later, interacted directly with the pope and with the exclusive mediation of the Secretary of State. The next section will deal with the agreements established between the pope and the emperor, agreements which must have been widely disregarded and which more than anything else, represented the function of certifying that some aspect of importance had been agreed upon between the two parties.

¹⁷⁰ "Pius determined to go himself to Vienna, hoping that Joseph would succumb to his personal fascination". Eamon Duffy, *Saint and Sinners: A History of the Popes* (3rd edn., Yale, 2006), p. 252.

¹⁷¹ Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. II, p. 224.

2.7. Political consequences of the pope's journey to Vienna.

The visit of the pope to Vienna in 1782 did not contribute to the slowing down of the proposed reforms of Joseph II in the ecclesiastical field. In fact, the emperor did not modify his opinion with respect to the assignment of benefices within Austrian Lombardy. Let us take a brief look at how the regulations were applied after 1782: The application of the law regarding tolerance would remain the same. Furthermore, the emperor desired that the law be applied in full; including the measures regarding censorship. He maintained the royal prerogative to inspect seminaries and to suppress some religious institutions. This suppression mainly concerned the contemplative and mendicant orders, allowing orders which demonstrated having useful social roles to continue. This policy was applied until the law took its full effect.¹⁷² The same treatment was applied to all those monasteries whose congregations were outside the Habsburg lands. Small modifications were made to the law *placet*: this, in fact, should not have extended to the decrees of the Holy See that concerned dogma. He accepted that the bull *Unigenitus* could be introduced into lessons of theology with the explicit condition that the text was not used against other texts which were in contradiction. The bishops within the imperial lands swore allegiance to the sovereign but with a slight modification to the formula as agreed by the pope.¹⁷³ As far as the regulatory criteria on marriage were concerned, the pope gave dispensation to the bishops to decide on matters regarding close family members

¹⁷² The full effect consisted of the dissolution of all the monasteries dedicated to the contemplative life within the Empire. A part of the proceeds from the sale of all the buildings and goods would be used to pay pensions to all those who were unable to serve the state in other ways. Blanning reports that at the time of the death of the emperor in 1790: "While the 25,000 regulars were reduced to 11,000, the 22,000 seculars were increased to 27,000, a net reduction in the clerical population of about a quarter, involving the dissolution of 530 monastic institutions in the central lands (Bohemia, Austria and Hungary) alone". Blanning, *Joseph II*, p. 96.

¹⁷³ In the existing form of the oath of allegiance there is the swearing of allegiance to the emperor and the State. The new formula includes the swearing of allegiance to the pope.

hitherto the exclusive province of the nuncios. In cases of very close family relations (marriage between blood relations). It was necessary to ask the pope for a ruling and to obtain the imperial *placet*. Among all these measures the most relevant in economic terms was the suppression of the monasteries: It was expected that the funds expropriated from the convents and monasteries would be taken into the Treasury and redistributed among the needy populace and to the worthy and deserving institutions decided by the State.

From a general point of view these governmental edicts on censorship and tolerance naturally drew the attention of the church. Analysis of the extraordinary dispatches and other reports from the nuncio of Vienna has inspired many scholars including Derek Beales and Umberto Dell'Orto¹⁷⁴ – to consider that nuncio Garampi convinced the pope and the Secretary of State to intervene directly in affairs between Church and State and to determine the Pope's visit to Vienna in 1782.¹⁷⁵ In Rome neither the pope nor the Secretary of State, Cardinal Pallavicini, were under the illusion that to influence the emperor's reform programme would be an easy task. The official position of the pope towards his government and the College of Cardinals was one of optimism

¹⁷⁴ Beales, on two occasions, shows the correspondence between the Court of Rome and the nunciature to be the principal factor in convincing the pope to go to Vienna in person. The first occasion is in the article 'Nuncio Garampi Proposes to Excommunicate Joseph II, 1781', in a collection of documents with explanatory introductions in honour of Professor Éva Balázs: *Miscellanea fontium historiae europaeae* (Budapest, 1997) pp. 252-57, revised and corrected in *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth century Europe* (London, 2005), p. 256-261. The second indication states that: "Garampi informed Rome in July 1781, and again in November, that he could not square it with his conscience to administer the Easter sacrament to Joseph, the nuncio's traditional privilege, because his measures revealed him to be a Jansenist heretic. This suggestion clearly alarmed the pope and must have helped to induce him to make his famous journey to Vienna, where he arrived in time to administer Communion personally to the emperor on Maundy Thursday". Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 201.

¹⁷⁵ Although they do not consider Garampi responsible for Pius VI's decision to travel to Vienna, other historians do consider that the role played by Garampi in the whole situation was an important one. Vanyacker wrote that: "Garampi was thus present during all important stages. Elizabeth Kovács even calls the nuncio the diplomatic *régisseur* of Pius VI's journey. [...] Garampi's oft-repeated satisfaction that the Pope and the Emperor were ready to talk together indicates that he had been at work behind the scenes". Vanyacker, *Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi*, p. 191.

despite the news from Vienna that the emperor was continuing to introduce new ecclesiastical measures.

The pontiff never tired of repeating that the journey was fruitful, for example, the friendship that evolved between himself and the emperor would serve them both well in the future. From the Church's point of view an important result from the pope's journey was the avoidance of a schism between the Holy See and the Habsburg monarchy and the establishment of an exclusive diplomatic link between pope and emperor.¹⁷⁶ As a matter of fact, this optimism shown by the pontiff drew its origins from different factors: a reinforcement of collaboration with the bishops present in the imperial lands; the devotion shown to the pope by the population whilst in Vienna; concessions promised by the emperor regarding the dispensations, the bishops' oath and the bull *Unigenitus* and the assurance that the decree of tolerance would not close the door to evangelisation by the Church of Rome. All these factors opened the possibility of renewing, then and in the future, new negotiations between the Holy See and the court of Vienna. In this context the correspondence between the nunciature and the court of Rome assumed an important role both in the quality of the information and the expression of political opinion as well as the actions of the nuncios as representatives of the pope.

2.8. Correspondence between the nuncios and the Holy See from 1782 – 1786 concerning imperial reforms. Vienna

At the nunciature of Vienna from 1776 to 1785 nuncio Giuseppe Garampi was responsible for papal diplomacy. He was succeeded by Giovanni Battista Caprara (1785 – 1793). If the bibliography of Garampi is considered to

¹⁷⁶ Dell'Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi 1776-1785*, p. 359.

be extensive, one cannot say the same for that of Caprara although the latter found himself facing the diplomatic crisis tied to the revolt of the seminarists of Louvain in 1787.¹⁷⁷ With reference to the nunciature in Vienna and the importance of the role played by abbot Egisti, nuncio Garampi's secretary, we find the following report to the Imperial Chancellery:

The Vienna Nuncio is at the head of the whole ecclesiastical body, secular and regular, of the vast Habsburg Monarchy; and even if he has little occupation and capacity, he should be nonetheless smart enough to take advantage of any propitious moment and when necessary accordingly convince his members to accomplish his personal as well as Roman interests. His concerns extend to all aspects he thinks as belonging to ecclesiastical and religious matters. This category usually includes all the doctrines taught in the Monarchy schools and universities, to which Rome and its ministers demonstrate an incredible jealousy ... and interest.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ We have a vivid portrait of the two nuncios left to us by Pacca, the nuncio of Cologne, who wrote: "Monsignor Garampi fu nunzio a Vienna; e basta sol nominarlo per ricordarne la grande dottrina, la prudenza, e lo zelo nel trattare gli affari della Chiesa, di quell'uomo celebre. A Garampi successe Caprara il quale riputando forse nelle turbolenze della Chiesa esser miglior consiglio per un ministro della S. Sede l'inazione ed il silenzio, poco o nulla si occupava negli affari, cosa che non dispiaceva, anzi era gratissima a tutti quelli, che mal soffrivano la giurisdizione del Papa, e dei suoi ministri. Trans. "Monsignor Garampi was nuncio in Vienna; you have only to recall his name to remember this great man's careful manner, his zeal and great ability in the treatment of Church affairs". However, Garampi was succeeded by Caprara who thought that the Church's current difficulties would be improved by a minister of the Holy See by doing nothing and remaining silent". *Memorie Storiche di Monsignor Pacca. Garampi was not remembered only for his diplomatic abilities, but also for the scientific. As a matter of fact he was prefect of the Vatican Archive from 1751 to 1772. Bartolomeo Pacca, Memorie storiche di monsignor Bartolomeo Pacca, ora cardinal di S. Chiesa, sul di lui soggiorno in Germania, dall'anno MDCCLXXXVI al MDCCXCIV* (Modena, 1836) p. 60.

¹⁷⁸ "Trovassi il nunzio di Vienna alla testa di tutto il corpo ecclesiastico secolare e regolare della vasta Monarchia Austriaca; e per poco che abbia egli di attività e di destrezza, più di profittare di momenti opportuni, per muovere i vari membri a seconda degl'interessi propri e di Roma. Le sue cure si estendono a tutto quello ch'egli crede poter in qualunque modo riguardare l'ecclesiastico e il religioso. A questa categoria si vogliono fin ridurre le dottrine che s'insegnano nelle scuole e università della Monarchia, e sulle quali Roma e i suoi ministri stanno presentemente in una incredibile gelosia e sollecitudine". HNSA, F.A., Sammelbände 7, fasc. 1780, memoria dell'abate Egisti, f. 151-52.

Again Egisti underlined that a special consideration is then accorded to the representation of the Nuncio also from the Supreme Court over which he presides, and where as well as various economical measures which are taken in the case of urgent ecclesiastic events, as well as the graces and dispensations conceded, also judged in last resort are all those ecclesiastic and mixed lawsuits (such as matrimonial) which are presented in court.¹⁷⁹

All these matters, as portrayed by Egisti, upset the Primate of Hungary who found it irritating that the bishops deferred to the nuncio for many matters rather than to himself. He concluded his report noting that Vienna's geographical and political position made it interesting to the Roman minister, and the same applied to the two Nunciatures of Colonia and Bruxelles, and no less to the Bishops of the Milan State. Any disposition regarding the Imperial Chancery made by the governments of Milan and of Flanders that was displeasing to the Bishops was subject to analysis by the Vienna Nuncio upon the Court.

There is no event which occurs within the boundaries of the Empire that is not considered worthy of interest to Rome or the Catholics of Rome, and in the same manner there is no such business in the Imperial Chancery, in other words, any "beneficiant controversy" or, in any other way, in Court, inside the Imperial Chancery, which goes unnoticed by the surveillance and intrigues of the Vienna Nuncio.¹⁸⁰ A large part of the duties that were borne by the bishops were

¹⁷⁹ "Una special considerazione poi deriva alla rappresentanza del nunzio anche dal Tribunale Supremo ch'egli tiene aperto, dove oltre a vari provvedimenti economici che si prendono nelle occorrenti emergenze ecclesiastiche, oltre alle grazie e dispense che si concedono, si giudicano anche in ultima istanza tutte quelle cause ecclesiastiche e miste (come le matrimoniali) che sono ivi portate". Idem.

¹⁸⁰ "La posizione geografica e politica di Vienna rende il ministro di Roma interessante anche alle due nunziature di Colonia e di Brusseles, non meno che ai vescovi di Milano e di Fiandra, e che non piaccia ai vescovi, rendesi soggetta alla contraddizione del nunzio di Vienna presso la Corte. Non accade inoltre cosa nell'impero, la quale credasi disguardare o Roma o la comunione

examined with extreme precision by the nuncio whose task it was to control adherence to the principles of dogma. The new tasks of the nuncio even included controlling the loyalty of priests within the Empire, priests who were increasingly more subject to imperial control and pressure. If we take into account the fact that the reign of Joseph II is considered by historians as the apex of the turning point made by the Habsburg monarchy during the Enlightenment, we can understand more easily why the duties and the responsibilities of the nuncio increased accordingly. Even if, under many aspects, the reign of Joseph II was the continuation of the renewal of the State which occurred during the period of Maria Teresa, we must also consider two basic differences between the empress and the emperor: his cultural education (very different from that of Maria Teresa) and his refusal to accept compromise. These aspects made the reign of Joseph II an absolute innovation compared to the previous decades and the years that followed.¹⁸¹

Apart from the day-to-day business of the nunciature, one of the major problems he was faced with was over the *Geistliche Hofcommission*. This Ecclesiastical Commission was announced by Joseph II to Count Karl Friedrich Hatzfeld, state councillor and financial advisor, about a month before the official announcement of the 22nd July 1782. Then, only after this date did Baron Franz Karl Kressel, the commissioner, receive notification to proceed. The commission's guidelines were expressly laid down by the Emperor in a *billet d'instruction* sent to Baron Kressel. In his message the Emperor underlined that his project – as far as his own dispensations were concerned on the matters of

Romana, conforme non v'è affare di tal genere nella cancelleria dell'impero, ovvero controversia beneficiante o in qualunque altro modo aulica nel consiglio aulico, la quale sfugga la vigilanza e gl'intrighi del nunzio di Vienna". HHSTA, F.A. Sammelbände 7, 1780, December, Report of Egisti to Joseph II. Regarding the naming of the successor to Garampi, f.153 -54 recto.

¹⁸¹ Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. II, pp. 1-12.

ensorship and tolerance – should be realized and consolidated *in primis* in Vienna, thereafter to become the reference model for the whole of the monarchy. According to the intentions of Joseph II the tasks and rules driving the commission were as follows: firstly, to set up six parishes within Vienna and a suitable number in the suburbs; secondly, to close chapels and the smaller churches such as, for example, the chapel of St. Francis Xavier within the Court itself and the relics themselves sold; thirdly, the structure of the new parishes should include participation by members of the regular orders and the collegiates; fourthly, in the new parishes, masses and liturgical celebration should follow a timetable laid down by the emperor. For example, the masses should be celebrated from four a.m. to midday with a interval of a half-hour between each mass and then only on the high altar. Joseph II made other precise dispensations on liturgical matters. A fifth point states that the ecclesiastical commission would be responsible for the running costs and the number of personnel involved in the parishes. A sixth point states that at the introduction of the new liturgical and parochial set of rules in Vienna the number of necessary parishes to fulfill the needs of the population of Lower Austria, were determined precisely. A seventh point states that for the sustenance and maintenance of the new parishes the monarchy took into account the rich monasteries present at that time in Vienna and suburbs. A eighth point states that the “houses” of the religious families within Lower Austria in which images and icons which were venerated were to be found should be allowed to exist only if they transformed their status into parishes or if they would support a nearby parish. Finally, it was confirmed that the religious orders were not allowed to recruit new candidates; they were however allowed only to recruit in order to meet the specific needs of the parishes. All those ecclesiastical persons from other countries present in

Vienna must leave the city¹⁸². In July 1782 Garampi, was informed through informal channels of the project to establish an ecclesiastical commission, then he was to transmit to Rome some critical opinions regarding the matter. The criticisms stated that although he was fully aware of the diversity of cultures and languages within the empire, the emperor chose to ignore them.¹⁸³ The guideline to the various reforms promoted by Joseph II was that which had characterised the reign of Maria Teresa: created and strengthened a unitary state through increasing centralisation, equal rights for all subjects, equality between the various regions of the monarchy. This idea was perfected by certain personal convictions by Joseph II. First of all the emperor's reforms were modelled on the principle of utilitarianism and were strongly influenced by Enlightenment ideas. Secondly, Joseph II maintained the political dimension and social dimension closely united so that in all his reforms humanitarian tendencies became increasingly more evident, as can be seen in his care for the poor and the sick, widows and orphans, and for all those people who found themselves in a state of necessity.¹⁸⁴ In this manner, not only did the Habsburg state share the traditional charitable activities of the Church, but even replaced them. The reforms introduced immediately after the pope's voyage to Vienna were interpreted by the Roman Curia, after a few months, as a point of no return in the reformist policy of the Habsburg monarch, and a terrible danger for the papacy.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² ASV, Segreteria di Stato Nunziatura di Vienna 159, 1782, luglio 4, Giuseppe II to Kressel, Istruzioni per la commissione ecclesiastica. Copy [received The 6th october], f. 462-66.

¹⁸³ ASV, Segreteria di Stato Germania 409, 1782, luglio 4, Garampi a Pallavicini, Minuta di cifra [straordinario], f. 3-4.

¹⁸⁴ Hamish H. Scott, "Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1740 – 90" in Scott (ed.), *Enlightened Absolutism, Reform and Reformers in later Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Ann Arbor, 1990), pp. 145–87.

¹⁸⁵ During this period between 1782 and 1783 excommunication for Joseph II was often discussed along with the schism between the Church of Rome and the Empire. Beales, *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth-century Europe*, pp. 256–61. Having realised that decrees concerning ecclesiastical matters continued to be issued within the Empire, as informed

The period of time immediately after July 1782 didn't show any indications of delay in the introduction of reforms ordered by Joseph II, despite the criticisms received, not only from the nuncio but also from the many voices within the imperial chancellery and from the ecclesiastical commission itself. His behavior showed how convinced he was of the soundness of his plans. Furthermore, we can see that his zeal was most concentrated on these ecclesiastical matters to which he gave meticulous attention to detail. For example, his laying down the precise number of masses were to be held, even down to the actual number of candles to be lit during the ceremonies. Because of this, the King of Prussia, Frederick II gave Joseph a nickname – *mio fratello il sagrestano*.¹⁸⁶ Pius VI sought to profit from the assumed diplomatic channel to address some letters to the emperor regarding the censorship, tolerance, the expropriation of land and buildings belonging to the Church (principally the suppression of the monasteries) and the works of the newly instituted ecclesiastical commission. In particular, a letter sent directly to the emperor on the 3rd of August 1782 referred to the new commission but did not mention the commission by name. The Holy See tried to make Joseph II relent on one point – that the Church, and not the ecclesiastical commission, should continue to administer their lands and estates within the territories of the Empire. This letter was prepared based on the information gleaned by the nunciature in Vienna. A large part of the text, written in the best traditions of papal diplomacy, included teachings of the church fathers, and, naturally, quotations from sacred works.

The letter concludes with an admonition:

by the Secretary of State, cardinal Pallavicini, Pius VI, calmed his suffering through prayer, calling on the Lord to shed light on “quelli che ambulano in tenebris”. ASV, nunz. Germ. 680, Pallavicini to Garampi, Roma 1782, November 16, f. 290v.

¹⁸⁶ Moroni, *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica*, vol. XXIX, pp. 179.

If the emperor really means to take from the Church the ecclesiastical lands and goods in their possession and to administer them directly from Government, the whole world will know that the emperor did not listen to the warning from the Pope.¹⁸⁷

The reply from Joseph II was suitably diplomatic and guaranteed that the Church's goods and lands would not be touched, making assurance that the news that had so alarmed the pope was false. However, regarding the other reforms in the ecclesiastical field, the emperor reassured the pope by stating that he heard a voice: "that tells me that as lawmaker and protector of religion what I may do or not do, and this voice, with the help of Divine Grace and with the honesty and fairness that I feel, I am unable to make errors".¹⁸⁸ The context in which this letter was written, like other letters by Joseph II which have been quoted, is that of the Pontiff's failure to achieve the defence of the papal prerogatives in opposition to the Habsburg monarch.¹⁸⁹ Apparently this correspondence between the Emperor and the Pope demonstrates that both had only limited possibilities for manoeuvre in an attempt to maintain the apparent reciprocal respect for each other's role: therefore the pope tried to consolidate his prestige, and the emperor his reform program, to the detriment of the Church. The emperor worked to

¹⁸⁷ "Se Giuseppe II avesse realmente privato la chiesa e gli ecclesiastici dei beni da loro posseduti, per farli amministrare dal governo, tutto il mondo avrebbe saputo che l'Imperatore non aveva ascoltato i richiami del Papa." HHSTA, Rom, Hofkorrespondenz 27, 1782, august 3, Pius VI to Joseph II. Fasc. 5, f. 278-79v.

¹⁸⁸ "[...] Che mi dice quello, che come legislatore, et protettore della religione mi conviene di fare, o di tralasciare; e questa voce, coll'aiuto della grazia divina, e col carattere onesto e equo, che mi sento, non può mai indurre in errore." HHSTA, Rom, Hofkorrespondenz 27, 1782, agosto 19, Giuseppe II a Pio VI. Copia. Fasc. 5, f.301.

¹⁸⁹ The letter in question that Joseph wrote to the pope on the 19 August led to an immediate and rather severe reply from the pope who reprimanded the emperor for quoting the reasoning of Luther: "Costui (Luther) per indurre specialmente i principi a sottrarsi dalle leggi e insegnamenti della Chiesa, e farsi una legge a lor modo, suppose che ognuno fosse interprete d'Iddio a se stesso, tenendo per infallibil regola del suo credere l'interna ispirazione, che ciascuno in sé prova. E dove potrà sentirsi errore più manifesto di questo?". Dell'Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi*, p. 415.

remain within the Catholic world avoiding a schism, or worse still, an excommunication by a pope who was well aware that he was not able to sustain a battle in the open against a dynasty which had such a strong influence in the Catholic world.¹⁹⁰

Even more figures were to try and undermine the already fragile relations between the papacy and the empire. The examples presented in the following paragraph, and Eybel in particular, can be seen as emblematic and pertinent in the split that was evolving between the State and the Church, the pope and the emperor.

2.9. The Egisti affair and the Eybel case

The spies of the imperial chancellorship carefully observed the moves of their political adversaries, and increasingly so of the Church and the nunciature of Vienna in proportion to the progress of Joseph's reformist agenda in the ecclesiastical field. In 1776, at the start of his term in Vienna, Garampi already reported:

As much as my nunciature has been communicative in the past, I am equally so, and it serves me to be considered so today. I find myself in an atmosphere that is heavier and darker than before; and the paths to progress either cannot be seen or are uncertain, full of thorns and dangers. Speaking is dangerous and writing is much more so. A hundred eyes are everywhere

¹⁹⁰ Beales, *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth-century Europe*, pp. 258-61. In 1783 Joseph II seemed on the point of breaking off all relations with the Holy See. It seems probable that it was the ambassador Azara who convinced the emperor about the disadvantages that would result from a schism with Rome; Joseph II would have run the risk of being abandoned by the population and a large number of the bishops. An enlightened population and well-educated ecclesiastics were necessary to establish a national church, elements that the Hapsburg monarch did not yet have available. Raphael Olachea, "Kaiser Joseph II. vor der Frage eines Shismas (1783)", *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie*, 80 (1958), pp. 410-20.

to spy on my words and my actions. Certain opinions that are held about me, seeing me as a strict follower of the Roman church, multiply the suspicions and investigations of persons who are already highly suspicious.¹⁹¹

As Umberto Dell’Orto has suggested, Garampi then received confirmation that his correspondence was systematically spied upon. He brought the Secretary of State envelopes with letters not addressed to him, but to his acquaintances, clumsily mixed up by the agents of the court of Vienna, resulting in sending the post to the wrong recipient.¹⁹² From the beginning of his service until mid 1781, the nuncio’s secretary, abbot Egisti, copied and sent to the imperial chancellery the extraordinary dispatches of the nunciature as well as those written in cipher. This led the Emperor to say to his brother:

I must explain to you the case of a secretary to the nunciature named Egisti. Through a woman, this man brings me news of all the schemes that the nuncio, Migazzi, Herzan and the famous prelates devise, as well as what the nuncio plots against me. I would be unhappy if the nuncio were changed, as I would lose a source through which I receive exact copies of all the letters, even confidential ones.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ “Quanto sono stato loquace nella passata mia nunziatura, altrettanto sono, e mi conviene essere ritenuto nell’odierna. Mi trovo in un’atmosfera più pesante, e buia della precedente; e le vie per far cammino, o non si vedono, o sono incerte, e piene di spine e di pericoli. E’ azzardato il parlare, e molto più lo scrivere. Cento occhi stanno per ogni parte spiando i miei discorsi, e le mie azioni, e certa opinione che si vuole avere della mia persona, come di attaccata alle massime romane, moltiplica i sospetti e le indagini di persone già di per se stesse, e senza di queste sospiciosissime”. ASV, Germany Secretary of State 423, 1776, July 8, Garampi in Pallavicini, Transcription in cipher [extraordinary], f. 61-v.

¹⁹² Dell’Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi 1776-1785*, p. 53.

¹⁹³ “Il fait qui je explique le cas il ya un secretaire ici a la conciature qui s’apelle Egisti par le moyen d’une femme cet homme me fait parvenir tous les trepots que le nonce, Migazzi, Herzan, et les famouse prelates de tout genre fents ou ceque le nonce machine contre eno comme je serais fachè que le nonce renant a etre change je perdis en canal sure car je recois exactement la copie de toutesses lettres memes particuliers I must explain to you the case of a secretary to the

The secretary's behaviour was discovered and he was relieved of his position by the end of 1781, but it was considered best to postpone his dismissal until right after the pope left Vienna. On the return trip from Vienna to Rome, Garampi, following the Pope, tried to get rid of Egisti during his stay in Bologna. His plan was to send the secretary to attend to a task in Montefiascone, his episcopal see, where he would find a letter that required him to stay quietly in the country. However, Egisti foresaw the nuncio's intentions and had left for Vienna in the night. Garampi tried to stall for time by ordering the nunciature auditor, Caleppi to not let Egisti into his rooms. The matter ended with Egisti receiving imperial protection, and through the chancellor Kaunitz, he reclaimed all his possessions, including his furniture. The inventory that the nunciature made of Egisti's assets shows that the secretary had made copies of the nuncio's confidential extraordinary dispatches since the time of Garampi's nunciature in Warsaw.

The Egisti affair was the last of the many "tasks" taken on by Garampi indirectly related to the Pope's visit to Vienna. Garampi continued to promulgate the publication of books in favor of Rome, well-aware that the illicit reading of his extraordinary dispatches sent to Rome had helped turn Joseph II and the imperial court against him. During and after the pope's visit, one of the cases with which the nuncio was most concerned was the *Broschürenflut* case.¹⁹⁴

Religion was the main topic of the diverse publications that appeared after the

nunciature named Egisti. Through a woman, this man brings me news of all the schemes that the nuncio, Migazzi, Herzan and the famous prelates devise, as well as what the nuncio plots against me. I would be unhappy if the nuncio were changed, as I would lose a source through which I receive exact copies of all the letters, even confidential ones". HHSTA, F.A. Sammelbände 7, 1780, December, Joseph II to Peter Leopold, f.72 verso.

¹⁹⁴ *Broschürenflut* literally means "flood of pamphlets". The term is used to indicate the period after the censorship reform by Joseph II in which there was a considerable increase in Vienna of publications in a relatively short time.

ensorship laws were applied. For the first time in many years, the public was able to read some classics (especially anti-Jesuit libels of a Jansenist bent) that refuted Roman doctrine. On the 15th of February 1781, Garampi informed the Secretary of State that the Emperor had dismissed Leopold Clary as the president of censorship, replacing him with Johann Chotek, abbot Preitenau from the office of censorship for theological matters. The nuncio Garampi considered the new censor ill-suited for the job because he was a historian and publicist, and it was not known what background he had in theological matters.¹⁹⁵ In a missive dated 26th of February, the nuncio sent Rome a translation of an instruction that the Emperor gave the office of censorship. This instruction was not published, but distributed for information to the office's employees. It listed the twelve points the criteria they were to follow. The periodical *Notizie del mondo* described the application of the reform on censorship as follows:

The instructions described above comprise twelve articles, the third of which states that in the future it will be allowed to print all criticisms as long as they are not personal and do not degenerate into *pasquinades*, with the further exception of works on religion. His Majesty ended by stating that if these criticisms are bad they will be left to oblivion, but if they are good, they will serve to correct the author.¹⁹⁶

Censorship was to be applied only to books for sale. The private ownership of prohibited works could not be obstructed. Rule no. 5 stated that art and science books were exempt from censorship as long as they did not directly

¹⁹⁵ On the matter Garampi wrote the on 15th of February 1781 that: "egli però non è che storico e pubblicista; né si sa quale perizia abbia delle cose teologiche". Dell'Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi 1776-1785*, pp. 244.

¹⁹⁶ Venturi, *Settecento riformatore, IV. La caduta dell'antico regime (1776-1789)*, pp. 651.

address state or ecclesiastical rights. The nuncio could not make official protests because the instructions had not been made public. However, Rome started to receive signs of concern from the nunciature about the Imperial conduct. Garampi complained that: “The new freedom given the press and traffic in books has unfortunately had the effect that all good men feared. The libertines and irreligious men considered themselves invited, and even authorized to produce publicly”.¹⁹⁷ Books for and against Jesuits, which had been prohibited until then, were freely distributed, as were other important writings from the recent ecclesiastic controversy of Jansenist roots and other writings, including the *Retraction* by Febronius.¹⁹⁸ Other permitted publications included the works from the Protestant realm, Masonic writings and even works against anti-regalist ideas. The Church’s reactions to the laws about the freedom of speech and press were seen primarily in Cardinal Migazzi’s protests, since he was indignant at the usurping of his rights of censorship.¹⁹⁹ The silence that the Emperor placed on the papal bulls *Unigenitus* and *In coena domini* helped increase tensions between the two camps. Some published texts addressed current events: Joseph Valentin Eybel’s well-known pamphlet *Was ist der Pabst?* (What is the pope?) was widely distributed during the pope’s visit. The publication echoed Febrionius’s ideas about the pope’s role and authority.²⁰⁰ The pamphlet series also included: *What is the bishop?* and *What is the vicar?* Through these publications, described as Enlightenment educational writings, Eybel gained a certain degree

¹⁹⁷ “[...] la nuova libertà datasi alla stampe e allo spaccio de libri, ha purtroppo prodotto quell’effetto, che da tutti i buoni si temeva. I libertini e irreligiosi sonosi creduti come invitati non meno che autorizzati a prodursi in pubblico”. ASV, Germany Secretary of State 404, 1781, July 7, Garampi to Pallavicini, f. 57 v.

¹⁹⁸ Febronius was the pseudonym of Johann Nikolaus von Hontheim, auxiliary bishop of Trier.

¹⁹⁹ This reaction can be explained in light of the fact that the Cardinal-archbishop of Vienna, was the first to feel the consequences of Josephine reforms that started from Vienna and then spread throughout the empire.

²⁰⁰ Stella, *Il Giansenismo in Italia*, p. 392.

of influence and many would copy his style. The fact that he was inspired by writings by the bishop of Trier is indicative of his belonging to the camp that called for a reform of the papal office rather than its abolition. As I have stated before, Joseph II personally intervened with the censors to allow its publication, given that in Eybel's case, they would not have allowed the pamphlet to be published. The archbishop of Vienna, Migazzi, sent many complaints both about the lack of respect for episcopal prerogatives in censorship and about Eybel's writings. Many of these complaints received no response.²⁰¹ In turn, the nunciature made complaints about Eybel's essay *What is the pope?* Kaunitz's first response did not satisfy the nuncio. No punishment was planned for Eybel, but the way was left open to take measures if it was found that the writings included statements or ideas denigrating the Pope or Catholicism's dignity. The nuncio continued to express his dissent, bringing the Emperor himself into the matter. At this point, Kaunitz responded orally to the nuncio, assuring him that the Emperor had seen the writing and had not found any slander against the person of the Pope, finding only a discussion about papal dignity and that he himself was not concerned with similar writings about imperial dignity. The Emperor himself was attacked by the press. For example, a slanderous libel stated that Joseph II was "*Martin Luther's faithful disciple and successor*".²⁰² This libel was even reprinted at the Emperor's expense who thereby proved that he was not affected by personal attacks. Nonetheless, pornography, radical

²⁰¹ Blanning, *Joseph II*, p.162.

²⁰² Idem. The same positive comparison of Joseph II with Luther was made by Johann Leonard Nikolaus Hacker, *Ode auf die jetzige Reformation in Deutschland*, Wittemberg (Wien) 1782. "Come Lutero i templi e gli altari di Roma / Pieno d'alto coraggio a terra gettò / ed i tuoi dei (onore e vita all'uomo!) / dalle tue aule scacciò / Ora, dopo molti anni in verità, / Segue le sue tracce Giuseppe con la sua energia di comando (...)"

anticlericalism and political news about the Empire's territory continued to be censored.²⁰³

The nunciature did not remain uninvolved. Garampi personally saw to it that certain works were printed in favor of the rights of the Church of Rome, though they did not have the same controversial power and success as the opposition. The behavior of the Emperor's authority was not impartial. He was regularly supporting writers who wrote first against the Pope's authority, taking up many Jansenist themes (especially affirming the validity of many reforms made in the religious field) and then against the Catholic Church of Rome gradually usurping the power of the monarchy.²⁰⁴ The nuncio, faced with the reforms and a wave of anticlerical press, maintained a cautious attitude towards the Emperor, not being able to express formal complaint without worsening his already weak position in the court. The expulsion of the nuncio's secretary, who had asked for and received Kaunitz's protection and the events following this case clearly strained relations between the nunciature and the court government. Garampi decided to act indirectly in Vienna and the Empire's territories, drawing on the support of Cardinal Migazzi and loyal bishops in Rome. While on the one hand, the nuncio was concerned with effectively opposing the work of Eybel and other pamphleteers who wrote in support of imperial reforms, on the other, he informed the Holy See, sending copies of the writings and sharply commenting on their subversive nature. Of the nunciatures in the Josephine period, Garampi's seems to have been the most concerned and fiercest. The nuncio sent news of all the writings that circulated in Vienna, sending detailed reports that meticulously

²⁰³ According to Blanning, the emperor's sister Marie Antoinette, empress of France, was often depicted in the popular press and in some erotic books. In Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture, Old Regime Europe 1660 – 1789* (Oxford, 2002), plate 21. See also Simon Schama, *Citizens. A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York, 1990), plate 55 and 64.

²⁰⁴ PRO, FO 7/4 n.21, 1782, March 2, Hardwicke to Foreign Office, f. 57 verso.

addressed the actual writings. The attention focused on the jurist and pamphleteer Eybel was almost certainly the cause of the issue of the Papal Brief *Super Soliditate Petri* and the inclusion of some of his writings on the Index of prohibited books. The nuncio considered the work of the anticlerical writers as damaging to the cause of the true religion. In the case of the shoddy publication “Profession of faith for all religions”, which the nunciature of Vienna sent to the Secretary of State, who, in turn, sent it to an inquisition for the case to be examined, Garampi used these words: “Nothing better shows the license of these writers and the censorship itself than the enclosed publication bearing the title “Profession of Faith for all the religions”.²⁰⁵ He explained that religion in this publication was presented from a deist and Jansenist perspective, shorn of any dogma so as to be as attractive as possible to the majority of the population. The nuncio stated that now the Church was facing “a vast, irreparable breach” since Joseph II abolished censorship in 1781. With this same tone of alarm, he continued in his annotations about the abolishing of censorship and the proliferation of anti-Catholic writings: “This has already opened in the common people a vast, irreparable breach; now Deism can easily make its way among all kinds of people”.²⁰⁶ He concluded by noting who would benefit from this new situation:

It is a wonder how His Majesty, having last year developed an aversion to the so-called Israelites and sects, which, if not detected, would too easily seduce the masses, and need no churches, nor preachers, nor vicars; where they emigrated and dispersed in distant lands, and that any concern

²⁰⁵ The quotes are among annotations to Eybel’s book sent to an Inquisition official in Rome. These pages show Garampi as even more polemical than in his direct communications to the Secretary of State. ACDF, CL 1783-84, no. 10, Eybel, Valentin 1784, May 25, Nuncio Giuseppe Garampi to the Secretary of State, ff. 67r-71v.

²⁰⁶ Idem.

for bringing them back in any of the communions of the revealed Religion; I say it is a wonder that one does not realize that this sect is spreading itself everywhere and through the libel in question rooting in society's different classes without any difference other than it does not use the abhorred name of Israelite.²⁰⁷

Here, Garampi clearly expresses his opinions about the danger of tolerance; on one hand, his opinion of the first years of the law's application seems to strengthen the Jansenist positions and the Catholic *Aufklärung*. On the other hand, we find a position against Jews that clearly evokes the first brief by Pius VI *Inscrutabile divinae*, written a few months after he was elected pope on the 25th of December 1775.²⁰⁸ Other intellectuals serving the Emperor included Sonnenfels, who, although as Venturi has noted, was not a great writer, philosopher, jurist or economist, was the son of a converted Jew, skilled in his writings in spanning politics (deftly diminishing differences) from the age of Maria Theresa to that of Joseph II.²⁰⁹ This intellectual attracted the nuncio's attention who considered the writer even more dangerous than subversive writers

²⁰⁷ “Niuna cosa può meglio rappresentare la licenza di questi scrittori e della censura medesima quanto la stampa compiegata col titolo Professione di Fede per tutte le religioni... la breccia è ora divenuta felicissima; Onde va ormai stabilendosi tranquillamente il deismo in ogni condizione di persone. Fa meraviglia come sua Maestà avendo fin dall'anno scorso, concepita avversione contro i così detti Israeliti e setta, che escludendo ogni rivelazione, sedurrebbe troppo facilmente il volgo, e non necessita di avere ne tempi, ne predicatori, ne parrochi; onde gli fece emigrare, e dispergere in remoti paesi, e si che ogni sollecitudine per farli entrare in alcuna delle comunioni di rivelata Religione, fa dico meraviglia come non si accorga, che questa stessa setta va disseminandosi dà pertutto, e mediante il libello in questione radicandosi nelle varie Classi della società senz'altra differenza che di non usare l'aborito nome d'israelita”. ACDF, CL 1783-84, no. 10, Eybel Valentin, 1784, May 25, Nuncio Giuseppe Garampi to the Secretary of State, ff. 67r-71v.

²⁰⁸ Pius VI, *Inscrutabile divinae*, 1775, December 25. Bellocchi, *Tutte le encicliche e i principali documenti pontifici emanati dal 1740*, pp. 160-168. With his election Pius VI, born Angelo Braschi, had given signs against Enlightenment and the Jewish people held guilty of attacking true religion in its foundations of a rational nature and even trying to subvert them. This policy clearly diverged from that implemented by his predecessor who had tended towards political compromise and a softening of anti-Jewish measures of the Church state.

²⁰⁹ Venturi, *Settecento riformatore, IV. La caduta dell'antico regime (1776-1789)*, vol. 2, p. 653.

because his rather subdued, moderate style was more poisonous because it could more easily insinuate itself into weak minds.²¹⁰ Against this constellation of apologists and writers of shoddy books, Garampi set a group of “good pens”, made up of good writers and his many favored religious figures. Adding to the nunciature’s already many financial difficulties, mainly due to the loss of some offices, there were the costs of printing that the nuncio wanted to sustain to maintain a high level of opposition. Despite the financial problems, Vienna’s mode of action later became a model for all nuncios. For example, it is known that after having left Vienna, Garampi continued his political activities and maintained extensive correspondence with Caprara, his successor to the nunciature, and other nuncios in the administrative territories of the Habsburg empire.

This chapter has sought to analyze the different interpretations of the concept of “Tolerance” towards non-Catholic religions by the Habsburgs and the Church. For the imperial house, this was a boundary that could be shifted, whereas the Holy See was no longer willing to cede ground.²¹¹ Within the historic literature and documents, a considerable amount of agreement is seen on this point. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the debate is still open concerning the position of the Church and its representatives. Contrasting interpretations emerge in considering the figure of Garampi and his office in Vienna.

On one side, Derek Beales reports an excommunication indirectly suggested by the nuncio to the Secretary of State (there is no document to directly confirm Beales’ theory), perhaps overestimating the agitation and

²¹⁰ ASV, nunz. Germ. 406, Caleppi to Pallavicini, Vienna, 1781, March 21, f. 93v.

²¹¹ A classic example of the approach that the Church took is the reaction to the promulgation of the edict of tolerance that was made only after Maria Teresa’s death. The empress believed that this measure would upset the order and balance of the empire.

forceful statements written by the nuncio of Vienna about Joseph II in that particular period.²¹² On the other side, there is Elizabeth Garms-Cornides who suggests Beales be more prudent²¹³ and Umberto Dell’Orto, in his work on Garampi’s nunciature²¹⁴, who portrays the papal diplomat as eager to mediate between the papacy and the Empire. In Dell’Orto’s opinion, unlike some other diplomats, the nuncio was a politician as well as a faithful believer in the Holy See. He first attempted openness to the Viennese court and took distance from it only when he realized he was no longer able to:

[...] Create a synthesis (which did not always entail the sum of the parts) between values and shortcomings in human, religious, and cultural education and the values and limits in what happened within the monarchy in the period of the nunciature.²¹⁵

The documents presented in this chapter can be divided as follows: some were re-read from a different perspective²¹⁶; others, though already known to scholars, are presented and analyzed for the first time.²¹⁷ One of these documents is the written annotation on the text *Professione di fede per tutte le religioni*, which in Garampi’s own words delineates the figure of a nuncio who conformed in everything and all ways to the Papal dictate and the most impassioned *anti-Enlightenment* ecclesiastic discourses. From this document, which gives the reader a clear *anti-Josephine* portrait of Garampi compared with the same

²¹² Beales, *Enlightenment and reform in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, pp. 260-61.

²¹³ De Rosa, Cracco and Garms-Cornides (eds), *Il papato e l’Europa*, p. 285.

²¹⁴ Dell’Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi 1776-1785*.

²¹⁵ “[...] compiere una sintesi (che non implicava la semplice somma degli elementi) tra i valori e le carenze della formazione umana, religiosa, culturale e i valori e i limiti presenti in quanto accadde all’interno della monarchia all’epoca della nunziatura”. Dell’Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi 1776-1785*, p. 536.

²¹⁶ HHSTA, F.A. Sammelbände 7, 1780.

²¹⁷ ASV, Segreteria di Stato Germania, 404.

attitudes of other nuncios, the discussion will be extended in the following chapter to a wider political plan aiming to combat Joseph II's reformist era through the nunciatures in Vienna and throughout the territories of the Habsburg Empire and its satellite states.²¹⁸ This political action could not be effected on a local scale. It had to be necessarily conceived within the heart of the Church itself. Even Garampi's own career demonstrates this point: trained and destined for cultural tasks, at the moment of the fall of the Jesuits, he was removed from his position as prefect of the papal archives and to his great surprise, he was sent as nuncio to Poland. Then after Braschi's election as pope, he was immediately transferred to the very important and politically sensitive nunciature of Vienna. Indeed, the creation of new nunciatures was aimed at attaining the same objectives as the ultramontane Garampi's transfer to Vienna: in other words, controlling souls, combating heresies, and maintaining the respect for the pope. The next chapter will briefly describe the other nunciatures, and the manner in which they were involved in Pius VI's plan to defend and relaunch Catholicism. Moreover I'll describe in more detail the "Pamphlets war" between the Holy See and the Empire in Vienna where Eybel played an important part.

²¹⁸ Garampi's missive and his actions of resistance compared with those of other nuncios in the Empire showed greater uniformity than that described by either Beales or Dell'Orto.

Chapter 3 - The initial reactions of the Church of Rome against the Empire: 1782-1786.

Before delving into analysis of the correspondences between the papal nunciatures of Vienna, Brussels, Florence, Naples, Cologne and Lucerne it is deemed advisable to give a survey of the research conducted into the ecclesiastical reforms brought about by Maria Theresa and Joseph II. Some historians, among whom Garms-Cornides, have pointed out that the relation between popes and Habsburg rulers still lacks an in-depth analysis. Indeed, the papal nunciatures involved in the increased tension between the papacy and the empire during the decade 1780-1790 have never been studied or considered as a unitary corpus.¹

Therefore, the attention given in the second chapter to the “dispute over the nunciatures” and to the controversial position of the nuncio to Vienna Garampi must be considered in a wider context. Due to a series of detailed guidelines given by the Pope, there seems to be no space for personal interpretations of the nuncios’ activity which, up to now, have been confined to isolated historical studies.² The course of action taken by the Pope was the result of a strategic and very complex diplomatic tactic. The suppression of the ecclesiastical juridical courts and the dispute over the secular and spiritual jurisdiction of the nuncios are hotly debated in Germany and in many other territories within the Empire. It has been pointed out that from the 1780s onwards, that is after the problems caused to the Church by Joseph’s reforms, the

¹ Garms-Cornides, “Roma e Vienna nell’età delle riforme” in Citterio Ferdinando, Vaccaro Luciano (ed.), *Storia religiosa dell’Austria* (Milano, 1997) pp. 313-334.

² Among the studies available, in this thesis those which have been mainly taken into consideration are: Dall’Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi* and Vanysacker, *Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi (1725-1792): an Enlightened Ultramontane*.

Pope started to use the press and the apostolic briefs as a means of setting public opinion against the reformist wave. Both cases, namely the “crisis of the nunciatures” and the support given to the “good press” in defence of the True Faith, can be viewed as the result of the shrewd diplomatic actions carried out by Pius VI.³ In contrast to his predecessor, he was never intimidated by the ambassadors to the major Catholic powers and never appeared to move with the times or to pursue a policy of compromise; on the contrary, right from the beginning, he resorted to his briefs in order to condemn the Enlightenment.⁴

Nevertheless, even though his nuncios publicly condemned the governments which hosted them and even though the general tone used by the press – which he supported – were harsh and condemning, the Pope never failed to appear falsely modest when faced with his real opponents. During his visit to Vienna in 1782, which was quite an unusual event for the time, he was acting as an “apostolic pilgrim”, as he himself explained.⁵ The Pope’s intention was to use the press and the nuncios to turn the Papacy around and avoid a possible schism with the Empire (according to some scholars one of the main targets of the pope’s initiative was to contrast the edict on religious tolerance).⁶ In order to do so, and as a means of enhancing his own personal prestige and image, he gave orders for medals to be struck and embarked on a vast artistic campaign.⁷ Pius VI tried to avoid damaging his diplomatic relations with Joseph II and the

³ Various documents on this matter testify the diplomatic policy of Pius VI, on this matter see: Blet Pierre, *Histoire de la Représentation Diplomatique du Saint Siège, des origines à l’aube du XIXe siècle*, 2nd edn., (Vatican City, 1990), pp. 419-469.

⁴ *Inscrutabile divinae*, Roma, 25 dicembre 1775, in Bellocchi, *Tutte le encicliche e i principali documenti pontifici emanati dal 1740*.

⁵ Dell’Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi*, p. 318.

⁶ The schism and the Tolleranzpatent is discussed in Dell’Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi*, pp. 278 – 289 and in Beales, *Joseph II, II.*, p. 222

⁷ Among contemporaries, the Imperial agent Brunati is a very interesting source of information on the Pope’s programme of protection of artistic heritage in the Papal State, see HHSTA Brunati. Concerning this, Jeffrey Collins’ work needs mentioning: *Papacy and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Rome, Pius VI and the arts* (Cambridge, 2004).

Habsburgs and to defuse any crisis caused by the Emperor's divestments of church property and, above all, his threat of creating a national Church. According to contemporary historians, Pius VI and his way of dealing with the above-mentioned problems were marked by subtle inaction: Duffy describes him as an incompetent whose only merit was to die with dignity.⁸ As opposed to Duffy and to other Anglo-Saxon historians like Chadwick and Blanning, Marina Caffiero believes that his intention was to "renew the religious prestige and the awakening of Catholicism and the maintenance of its temporal power and [...] even help religion and the Church to be reintroduced into society".⁹ Caffiero contends that Pius VI's government was marked by some "dynamism", but also recognizes its failures, such as a mistaken economic policy, the institution of a nepotist regime and the restoration of powers unpopular with both the Curia and the people as they stood for the crisis which had hit the Papacy. Caffiero underlines the importance of the Pope's role as "patron of the arts" and as the advocate of "the return of the role of the Church and religion within society".¹⁰ However, she does not describe in detail the reasons which have led her to exalt Pius VI's Papacy. Again, referring to the pope's inability to face the challenges set by absolutist governments and then by the French Revolutionary government, Thomas Worcester wrote that Pius VI "looked backwards for inspiration".¹¹ In this way, Worcester rejected the idea that any form of progress had been made by the pope in blocking the reforms of Joseph II, and more generally, accredited the pontiff with an active role exclusively as a patron of the arts. In this

⁸ Duffy, *Saint and Sinners: A History of the Popes*, p. 260.

⁹ "[...] rinnoverà il prestigio religioso ed il risveglio del cattolicesimo finanche la conservazione del potere temporale ed il ritorno del ruolo della Chiesa e della religione all'interno della società". Caffiero, "Pie VI", *Dictionnaire historique de la papauté*, pp. 1330-1334.

¹⁰ "Il ritorno del ruolo della Chiesa e della religione all'interno della società". Ibidem.

¹¹ Thomas Worcester, "Pius VII: moderation in an age of revolution and reaction" in James Corckery and Thomas Worcester (ed.), *The Papacy since 1500, From Italian Prince to Universal Pastor*, (Cambridge, 2010) p. 108.

evaluation of opinions concerning Pius VI, Wright's analyses seems to represent an exception. In reality, while he confirms the main events that occurred during Braschi's pontificate, he mentions the initial diplomatic successes such as the treaty with Portugal and Pombal's dismissal from his office as Prime Minister and from all his official positions in Portugal.¹² Moreover, concerning his relations with the Emperor, he wrote: "he (Pius VI) visibly struggled to resist the pressures of Joseph II on the institutional Church throughout his (territorial) possessions".¹³ On the first reading, it seems more like a series of the Pope's failures and defeats in both foreign and domestic policy. In the next section I will try to provide a brief analysis of the role of the apostolic nunciatures and the changes in the duties assigned to them under the pontificate of Pius VI.

3.1. Correspondence between the nunciatures and the Holy See

Originally the nunciatures were neither permanent nor of fixed abode and papal legates were sent to the courts when important and localized circumstances required it. It was only at the beginning of the early modern age that a permanent papal diplomacy started to be institutionalized: in 1513 the nuncio to the imperial court of Vienna was instituted to represent the Holy See's interests in the entire Empire. After that, another two permanent nunciatures were established in the German territory, namely in Lucerne (1579) and Cologne (1584). Not only did they act in the Pope's stead in political and diplomatic affairs at the kings and princes' courts, but they also acted as actual controlling bodies within the Church and as spiritual superintendents of the local/regional episcopate. The nuncios retained their position as archbishops and, therefore, were above the bishops in

¹² Wright, *The Early Modern Papacy*, pp. 186–87.

¹³ *Idem.*, p.270.

the ecclesiastical hierarchy. A fourth nunciature was established in 1785 in Munich. It must be acknowledged, however, that in the decade 1780-1790, the nunciatures involved in the diplomatic game between the Empire and the Holy See were more than the ones mentioned so far: there was one in Brussels in the Austrian Netherlands; in Florence, where the Grand Duke Peter Leopold, the Emperor's brother, had been ruling since 1765; in Naples in the territory ruled by Maria Carolina Habsburg and one in Paris where Marie Antoinette, the Emperor's sister, had become queen in 1775.

Due to the political and administrative relations with the surrounding territory, all these nunciatures had to deal with similar issues, such as the abolition of the Inquisition and the fight against the wide-spreading Jansenism¹⁴. The importance of their role can be grasped by alluding to the action carried out by the Viennese nuncio to try and convince the Pope to visit the capital of the Empire. As has been seen in the previous chapter, the papal visit had not produced the desired effect and was even considered a diplomatic failure because, in spite of the people's enthusiastic welcome, the Pope failed to convince the Emperor to give up his reform projects. Strangely enough, during his stay in Vienna, new reform decrees were pushed through. In the territories under the direct rule of the Habsburg Monarchy and the ones that fell within Joseph II's sphere of influence - that is the Duchy of Milan and the catholic German States - there arose serious matters of temporal and spiritual nature which required the Pope's attention.¹⁵ Up to then, in order to hold back royal claims, the Papacy had resorted to the indispensable help of the Jesuits who

¹⁴ In France the situation was different, as a matter of fact the king had the privilege to choose the nuncio.

¹⁵ Vienna and the Duchy of Milan were chosen as "laboratories" for Joseph and Maria Theresa's reform experiments, see Günther Probszt – Ohstorff, *Shau- und Denkmünzen Maria Theresias* (Graz, 1970), p. 342.

acted as confessors and educators in the schools and universities of nearly all catholic monarchies. After the suppression of the Jesuits (1773, July 21), some religious intellectuals in the order who had once been very close to the monarchs acting as their private advisors had become university professors or had scattered themselves among other religious orders.¹⁶ After the Society of Jesus had been brought into disrepute along with its educational system and its most important figures in Vienna and the Empire, the Pope had relied on the institution of diplomatic representatives and nuncios to safeguard his prerogatives and “the True Faith”.

The years between the suppression of the Society of Jesus and the restoration effected by the Congress of Vienna (1773 – 1814-15) were marked by the political work carried out by the nuncios who sometimes used unorthodox diplomatic methods and often stood in for the bishops. As delegates of the Apostolic See, the nuncios had to make canonical visitations to the patriarchal churches, primates, metropolitans, cathedrals and minsters, to the male and female monasteries within the territory ruled by the Emperor, and then had to confirm or modify their status. Moreover, they could prepare cases for trial against the secular and regular clergy and they had the power to excommunicate and to impose an interdict. Even though the nuncio respected the bishops’ rights in the courts of first instance, subsequently he had the power of closing a trial as far as civil, criminal, matrimonial and notarial matters were concerned. He could admit orphans to the priesthood and this same prerogative allowed him to dispense people from legal different judgement and impediments granting them a *publicae honestatie* licence. As far as marriage was concerned, he had the power

¹⁶ See Trampus Antonio, *I gesuiti e l'Illuminismo, Politica e religione in Austria e nell'Europa centrale (1773-1798)* (Firenze, 2000).

of dispensing from consanguinity and affinity impediments up to the third degree of kinship. He could also confer benefices, permits linked with church practices and indulgences. It is no surprise, therefore, that the role played by the nuncios during Joseph II's reformist reign was regarded as troublesome. Concerning this, a well placed observer at the court of Rome, trusted by Kaunitz and Joseph II, again, was Francesco Maria Brunati, the imperial agent. On the crisis of the nunciatures he told the Prime Minister Kaunitz that:

Your Highness, it is a direct consequence of the illusions which reign in the current administration; of the claims made by Rome in the Catholic states in order to usurp the bishops' rights, especially in Germany, by means of the nuncios and other secret emissaries.¹⁷

Then again, Brunati (who legitimately, in his role as imperial agent in Rome, sided with Joseph and the Jansenist party when tackling the problem of usurpation) did not rule out the presence and cooperation of ex-Jesuits in European diplomatic affairs as they were still perceived as a very strong faction: "In this pontificate the Jesuit party is the strongest and will continue to be so".¹⁸ Indeed, the members of the dissolved Society of Jesus were credited with the latest diplomatic developments:

This (the Society of Jesus) is the viper which Pius VI is nursing in his bosom; which pushes him to take false steps and to make unwise claims in his

¹⁷ "Altezza Sono una conseguenza dello spirito d'illusione che regna in questa attuale amministrazione, le pretensioni che Roma va suscitando né stati de principi cattolici, per sostenere le sue usurpazioni sopra i diritti de vescovi principalmente di Germania, per mezzo de suoi nunzi, e d'altri suoi emissari segreti e coperti." Brunati to Kaunitz, Rom, Korrespondenz: 205 Brunati Berichte 1787 Jan – Juni ff. 22v-23r. Roma, 1787, February 3.

¹⁸ "Il partito dominante in questo pontificato è il gesuitico, che si cerca sempre più di fortificare in ogni promozione". Brunati to Kaunitz, Rom, Korrespondenz: 205 Brunati Berichte 1787 Jan – Juni f. 22v. Roma, 1787, February 3.

briefs, like in the one against Eybel and in the seditious circular of the nuncio of Cologne which is currently being discussed.¹⁹

Kaunitz was a reliable and invaluable source of information from Rome, but Joseph II also relied on the cooperation of his brother the Grand Duke of Tuscany.²⁰ Peter Leopold, second in line of succession and father of the future heir to the imperial throne, often advised his brother the Emperor to introduce more incisive measures against the nunciatures, as attested by a letter he sent on 6 March 1787. After commenting on the bishops' state of affairs in Germany, he made a firm stand against these papal representatives asserting that: "The nunciatures have to be suppressed and the nuncios treated as simple ministers without any jurisdiction otherwise nothing will ever be achieved".²¹ Ten days later Peter Leopold came back to the topic in a similar disapproving vein: after harshly criticizing the Pope for being in bitter contrast with the Habsburgs, the Grand Duke explained to the Emperor that, wherever they go, the papal nuncios create problems to the best interests of the Empire, like in Germany, Naples, in the Netherlands and even in Spain where an imperial agent reported that: "The papal nuncio is trying to change the order of succession with the mere intention of harming the King of Naples because of his friendship with you."²²

¹⁹ "Questa è la serpe che Pio VI si nutre in seno, la quale gli fa dare tanti passi falsi, e avanzare i più inconsiderati spropositi né suoi brevi, come si osserva in quello principalmente contro Eybel, e nella clamorosa e sediziosa circolare del nunzio di Colonia, che è attualmente il soggetto, e l'argomento de discorsi di tutte queste conversazioni". Brunati to Kaunitz, Rom, Korrespondenz: 205 Brunati Berichte 1787 Jan – Juni f. -23r. Roma, 1787, February 3.

²⁰ In a missive dated march 7 Kaunitz clearly showed his great esteem and consideration for Brunati's reports. Rom Korrespondenz: 196, Kaunitz to Brunati Vienna 1782, march 7, f. 24.

²¹ "Finché non verrà presa la parte di abolire tutte le nunziature e trattarli soltanto come dei semplici ministri stranieri senza alcuna giurisdizione, non si otterrà niente". HNSA – F.A., *Sammelbande* 24.1 – 25 kart. 9, 1787 march 6, f. 53r.

²² "Il nunzio del papa è nell'intrigo per cambiare l'ordine della successione e così fare del torto ai figli del re di Napoli, soltanto perché ha amicizia per voi". Leopold to Josef, HNSA – F.A., *Sammelbande* 24.1 – 25 kart. 9, 1787 march 16, f. 61r.

After four years and several attempted compromises greeted with scorn by the Church, Joseph II was in the middle of a real diplomatic crisis with Pius VI. The situation came to a head after the crisis of the German nunciatures in 1786 and the seminarists' rebellion in Leuven (March 1787) along with the expulsion of the nuncio there, Antonio Felice Zondadari. Meanwhile in Tuscany, the Emperor's brother had convened a national synod in Pistoia with the intention of creating a national Church and of proposing an "enlightened model of Jansenism". The open contrast between the Papacy and the Empire was felt very deeply by the Church that was even more eager to look squarely at their conflict. Regarding the relationship with the court of Naples the nuncio wrote to the State Secretariat that: "We could have gone very far without this war with Austria and Tuscany [...]".²³ Even the title used to address Joseph II changed in the nuncios' missives to Rome: if up to 1785 he was referred to as Caesar, in 1787 he became the Antichrist, the next Luther, our enemy.²⁴ Therefore it could be said that the moment of reconciliation between the Emperor and the Pope had reached its conclusion: Although attempts were made at various compromises, none of these obtained any political or diplomatic results. The object of the next section describes the decision of the Holy See concerning its desire to make use of diplomatic instruments (and in particular the nunciatures) as a defence and diffusion mechanism for the prerogatives of the Catholic Church.

²³ "[...] senza la guerra che ci si fa dagli austriaci e dai toscani, avremmo potuto lusingarci di andar molto avanti". ASV, Caleppi to Ignazio Boncompagni Ludovisi, S.S. Napoli 310, 1787 march 6, f. 75v.

²⁴ ASV, Caleppi to Ignazio Boncompagni Ludovisi, S.S. Napoli 310, 1787 march 8, f. 115r.

3.2. The opening of new nunciatures: the German example

The conflict between the imperial archbishops and the nunciatures starts in 1785, when Pius VI decided to institute a new nunciature within the boundaries of the Empire. In 1785 the Elector of Bavaria, Charles-Théodore had commissioned one of his agents in Rome to negotiate the foundation of a new nunciature in Munich. After carrying out the first surveys, on 11 April 1784, he presented a memoir describing the advantages of his plan: the nunciature was seen as a reference point for the National Church of Bavaria. Since Bavaria did not have its own archbishopric and found itself within the jurisdiction of several foreign Prince-Bishops in Freising, Ratisbon, Salzburg, Passau, Eichstatt, Augsburg or Bamberg, the intention was to appeal to the Pope in order to have a nuncio in Munich who could act as the bishops' leader and supervisor. Moreover, since the State administrative machine was overwhelmed by a great number of ecclesiastical disputes, it would be convenient to have a nunciature which could deal with these problems allowing the bishops to devote themselves to the cure of souls. This *affaire* was vigorously supported and on 7 June the Pope accepted an agreement which led, after some hesitation, to the appointment of Cesare Zoglio as Archbishop of Athens and Nuncio to Bavaria on 14 February 1785.²⁵

Those who did not approve of the existing nunciatures and of their jurisdiction, like the archbishop-electors of the Rhine, did not accept this decision. In this connection it must be pointed out that the archdiocese which would have been more affected by the creation of a new nunciature would have been the one in Salzburg, in the person of Hieronymus von Colloredo who knew

²⁵ Von Pastor, *History of popes*, vol. XL, p. 39-41.

he could count on the help of the Elector of Mainz and of his coadjutor Valentin Heimes. Since Friedrich Carl Joseph von Erthal, Archbishop-Elector of Mainz, was also Prince-Bishop of Worms - which fell within the borders of the duchy of Bavaria - on 3 March 1785 the Archbishop of Salzburg asked him to consult those who were under the jurisdiction of the new nunciature. Erthal replied that, if the nuncio to Bavaria was going to act as a mere representative of the Holy Father, he could not have made any objections to his mission, but if he was going to arrive endowed with *spiritual faculties* then that would have “been in contrast with the inviolable and inalienable rights of the Episcopal authority established by Christ”.²⁶ In this case a fierce resistance would have proved necessary. The archbishops’ intention of finding allies among the German bishops proved unsuccessful. The only one who completely agreed with them was the Bishop of Freising, the ordinary of Munich, while the others expressed their doubts, like the Archbishops of Trier and Cologne. The latter wrote to the Duke-Elector of Bavaria on 27 June asking him if a nunciature was really going to be instituted in Bavaria: on 12 July he received a confirming and categorical reply.

At the beginning of May 1785, the Episcopal courts of Mainz, Salzburg and Freising asked their agents in Rome to find out what the duties of the new nuncio were going to be and to point out that the presence of a nuncio with *spiritual jurisdiction* could prove troublesome. Not long after that, they were told that the nuncio to Munich was going to have the same rights and duties that the one in Cologne. Then, while the archbishops’ agents prepared a new memorandum, the prelates started looking for allies. Pius VI told the Archbishop

²⁶ “[...] contraddetto i diritti intangibili e inalienabili della potenza episcopale istituita da Cristo”. Von Pastor, *History of popes*, vol. XL, p. 33.

of Mainz that the new nunciature was neither violating the concordats nor encroaching on Episcopal rights. Meanwhile in Vienna the nuncio Garampi was asked to intervene with the Austrian bishops. It was also explained that the nunciature of Munich was simply carrying out the work of the nunciature of Graz and that neither the bishops nor the other nuncios were going to complain about it.²⁷

Since Pius VI was refusing to accept their requests, the archbishop-electors sought the Emperor's support through the help of Maximilian Francis Joseph, Archduke of Austria and brother to Joseph II. The Elector of Cologne, Maximilian Francis Joseph, had recently come into conflict with the nuncio Bellisomi on certain appeals made by the nunciature.²⁸ He allied with the Archbishops of Salzburg and Mainz and convinced his cousin, the Archbishop of Trier, to collaborate. Now the coalition was strong enough to appeal directly to Joseph II. The Archbishop of Mainz wrote to him on the 22nd. On 4 October it was the Archbishop of Salzburg's turn. In the meantime the Archbishop of Cologne went there in person to show him his memoir as well as the one written by the Archbishop of Trier.

For Pius VI, setting up a new nunciature in Germany represented a confrontational policy compared to the diplomatic policy which had been applied by previous popes.²⁹ The opening of the nunciature was a move contrary to the plans of Joseph II who desired the creation of a uniform and valid judicial system for the whole monarchy; and furthermore, as well as taking certain judicial powers away from the dioceses and local courts, the enforcement of the

²⁷ Blet, *Histoire de la Représentation Diplomatique du Saint Siège*, p. 427.

²⁸ Mainly matrimonial causes and testamentary dispositions.

²⁹ "The gentler Popes of mid-century, Benedict XIV and Clement XIV, tried to avoid such irritations". Chadwick, *The Popes and the European Revolution*, p. 319.

papal presence in the German territories imposed much greater and stricter respect for the rules set out in Council of Trent and pontifical authority. In fact, summarising the role of pontifical representation, the Secretary of State Boncompagni wrote to the nuncio of Bavaria Zoglio that:

Our candour and our diplomacy demands that we be scrupulous and zealous custodians of the rights of the diocesan bishops and the metropolitan bishops; but when the openly hostile behaviour of these figures jeopardise the whole hierarchy of the Church, and obscure the dogma of Roman supremacy, we are justified before God and before the world if we are forced to provide for our own defence and the defence of the well-known characteristics of the Church.³⁰

Therefore, this was the spirit in which the new nunciature in Bavaria was opened and there is no misunderstanding concerning the significance of the mission the nuncio was called to perform, in consideration of the exceptional nature of the period in question.

The Archbishop of Mainz maintained that Rome intended to send a nuncio to Munich “without informing the Emperor, the Empire and the Episcopate”. In this letter he also listed the fruitless efforts which had been made to oppose the institution of this new nunciature and begged Joseph II, “the Protector and Defender of the German Church”, not to let Rome send a nuncio to München. If

³⁰ “Il nostro candore e la nostra delicatezza esige, che siamo scrupolosi e zelanti custodi dei dritti dei diocesani e dei metropolitani; ma quando la contumacia di questi dovesse mettere a repentaglio tutta la gerarchia della Chiesa, ed ottenebrare il dogma del primato romano, saremo giustificati presso Dio e presso il mondo se dobbiamo provvedere alla propria difesa ed alla difesa delle note caratteristiche della Chiesa”. ASV, Segr. Stato Baviera 43, cardinal Boncompagni Ludovisi secretary of State to monsignor Zoglio nunzio in Monaco, Roma 1787, March 14, without folio number.

this could not be avoided he asked him to try to reduce the nuncio's role to one of mere diplomatic representation.³¹ On 12 October, Joseph II replied:

I have decided to inform the Papal seat that, just as I have never permitted that archbishops and bishops be harassed in the rights to which they are entitled before God and the Church in their dioceses, consequently, in the same way, I recognise the nuncios in the first instance simply as representatives of the Pope as Head of the Church; but I will not permit these nuncios to exercise jurisdiction, or operate a court.³²

Nevertheless, the Emperor made a decision which nearly spoiled the archbishops' plan: he asked them to obtain the consensus and agreement of their suffragans and of all the bishops.

In spite of this clause and of its potential consequences, the Emperor's reply was received positively by the prelates. On 30 October, the Archbishop of Mainz - who considered Joseph II's missive as a success - sent a circular to his suffragans denouncing the intrusions and abuses of the Roman Curia. The four confederate archbishops did the same and directed clergy from then on to address new appeals to the existing nunciatures. In any case, the bishops did not agree immediately. While the Bishop of Freising proved eager to join the metropolitans, August von Limbourg, Bishop of Speyer, became leader of the opposing party. In his turn, Pius VI commissioned his nuncios to defend the

³¹ Von Pastor, *History of popes*, vol. XL, p. 38.

³² "J'ai décidé de faire savoir au siège pontifical que même que je n'ai jamais permis que les archevêques et évêques fussent troublés dans les droits qui leur reviennent devant Dieu et devant l'Eglise dans leurs diocèses, que je reconnais par conséquent les nonces que comme les envoyés di Pape comme chef de l'Eglise, de façon immédiate; mais je ne permettrai à ces nonces ni l'exercice d'une juridiction, ni un tribunal". Blet, *Histoire de la Représentation Diplomatique du Saint Siège* (2nd edn., Città del Vaticano, 1990), p. 428.

rights of the Holy See and stated that the creation of a new nunciature was part of his prerogatives. The court of Munich placed no credit on the Emperor's letter and on the debate sparked off by the Pope and tried to convince the latter not to let the nuncio go since the public finances were in a difficult situation. The Duke wrote that, by the time the nuncio reached his destination, things would be back to normal and he would be allowed to exercise his jurisdiction, in spite of the prelates' opposition. On 20 May 1786, Zoglio arrived in Munich and presented his credentials to the court. On 26 May, the government announced the institution of the new nunciature which was going to deal with the affairs tackled up to then by the nunciatures of Vienna, Cologne and Lucerne.³³ The analysis made in this paragraph, which will be continued in the next as well, is based on the interpretation of the policy of Pius VI which can be defined as dynamic, a perception which is in conflict with previous historical analyses, like that made by Blanning who, on the contrary, describe it as a useless noisy protest against the Imperial reformist centralism by certain isolated high prelates.³⁴

3.2.1 The nuncio Pacca arrives in Germany. The Ems Punctation

About 15 days later, on 9 June, a new nuncio arrived in Bonn to replace Bellisomi. His name was Bartholomew Pacca. The reception he was given was hostile.³⁵ One of the episodes that best illustrates this state of affairs is the

³³ Von Pastor, *History of popes*, vol. XL, p. 41.

³⁴ Blanning, *Joseph II*, p.100.

³⁵ In his memoirs, Pacca wrote that: "Al mio arrivo sul tratto del Reno, gli arcivescovi elettori non vollero ne ricevere la mia persona in qualità di nunzio, ne accettare le credenziali pontificie, che io loro recava; proibirono ai loro sudditi il ricorso al mio tribunale, e dicastero e specialmente agli avvocati e procuratori, e si studiavano con ogni sforzo presso gli altri principi vescovi d'impedire l'esercizio della giurisdizione della nunziatura". Trans. : "Upon my arrival to this part of the Rhine, the Elector Archbishops did not want to receive me as nuncio, nor accept my papal credentials which I brought to them; they forbade their subjects from coming to my court, and ministry, and especially the attorneys and proxies. They worked with every effort so that the other Bishop-Princes would prevent the nunciature from exercising its jurisdiction". Pacca, *Memorie storiche di monsignor Pacca, ora cardinale di S. Chiesa, sul di lui soggiorno in*

dispute between the nunciature and Joseph II's younger brother, the Archduke and Prince-Elector of Cologne, Maximilian Francis. In November, an argument started between the archbishop-elect and the nunciature of Cologne about a matrimonial dispensation granted by the nuncio. The prince of Hohenlohe, Bartestein, asked and received from Rome a dispensation from the second degree of kinship to marry his cousin, the countess of Blankenheim. After the exchange of missives between Cologne and Rome, the granting of the papal permission was, of course, up to the nuncio. After Pacca had fulfilled his "duty", on 9 November he received a letter from the archbishop-elect, which read:

Sir, I have learned from a report of the vicar of Cologne that you have dispensed the countess of Blankenheim and the prince of Hohenlohe, Bartestein, from second degree of kinship. You will no doubt understand that there would be a situation of constant confusion if foreign bishops were to be allowed to exercise their jurisdiction in the dioceses of another, and interfere in the administration of his Episcopal functions. I trust that from now on you will abstain from the exercise of your jurisdiction in my archdioceses and will not force me to turn to more expedient means in order to maintain rights, with absolute respect and the utmost my affection, Maximilian Francis, Archbishop-Elector of Cologne.³⁶

Germania, In qualità di nunzio apostolico Al tratto del Reno, dimorante in Colonia. Con un'appendice su i nunzi (Modena, 1836) pp. 5-6. Pacca's memoirs were published after the French revolution and the Napoleonic age and the values of the Restoration as testify so well as the consistency shown by Pius VI's Church in its strong opposition to Jansenism and the Enlightenment.

³⁶ "Signore. da un rapporto del mio vicario di Colonia sono stato informato che voi avete dispensato la contessa di Blankenheim ed il principe di Hohenlohe Bartenstein nel secondo grado di consanguineità. Voi vi persuaderete senza dubbio, che nascerebbero continue confusioni se vescovi stranieri volessero esercitare una giurisdizione nella diocesi di un altro, ed ingerirsi nell'amministrazione delle sue funzioni episcopali. Io mi lusingo, che voi d'ora innanzi vi asterrete da ogni esercizio di giurisdizione nella mia archidiocesi, e non mi porrete nella necessità

Pacca's response was as sharp in tone as that of the Archbishop Maximilian's letter. After having conferred with Rome, he replied that he had not granted the dispensation as a bishop, but as a tool of the Pope and that, as there could be no Catholic church out of the primate's jurisdiction; "It exceedingly pained me to meet with Your Honour's displeasure, but I was obliged to fulfil the duties of my ministry, following the orders and the commissions of the Holy See".³⁷

However the ecclesiastical electors of the Rhine decided to convene a congress in order to attract all parties and to take advantage of the Imperial rescript of 12 October 1785. The city of Ems in the Rhineland was chosen as the meeting place for the princes' envoys. The Imperial court followed the preparations for the congress without much enthusiasm and asked them to vow not to make any decisions which could injure the Emperor's best interests; indeed Joseph II was aware of the ambitions of the Archbishop of Mainz. The preliminary negotiations took place during the first months of 1786 and the conference finally began on 24 July. The Archbishop of Mainz was represented by his coadjutor Heimes; the vicars-general of Cologne and Trier, Tautphoeus and Beck, had been sent by their archbishops; the ecclesiastical counsellor Bonicke was the person in charge from Salzburg.³⁸ He had received instructions

di ricorrere a mezzi più efficaci per mantenere i diritti, essendo colla più perfetta stima, Affezionatissimo, Massimiliano Francesco arcivescovo elettore di Colonia". Pacca, *Memorie storiche*, p. 66.

³⁷ "[...] che mi doleva sommamente d'incorrere nella disgrazia di sua altezza, ma che ero obbligato ad adempiere i doveri del mio ministero, eseguendo gli ordini, e le commissioni della Santa Sede It exceedingly pained me to meet with Your Honour's displeasure, but I was obliged to fulfil the duties of my ministry, following the orders and the commissions of the Holy See". Idem, p. 67.

³⁸ "The oldest member of the group was Tautphoeus, the deputy for Cologne, former Vicar general of Münster. He was seventy years old and hard of hearing". Von Pastor, *History of popes*, vol. XL, p. 44.

from Beck prescribing him to keep watch on the congress so that no privilege was granted to the bishopric of Mainz and so that some basic rules were abided by without incurring complaints from the Emperor and the other princes – these rules comprised the respect due to the Pope and the prohibition of forming alliances against other political powers. Nevertheless, the intention of the congress had clearly been stated: “to restore the archbishops and bishops’ rights... and to bring them to fulfillment”.³⁹ The negotiations which took place at Ems were kept secret and no discussions or conflicting opinions were put down in writing.

On 25 July they agreed on the plan and the next day they discussed the complaints brought against the court of Rome. The *gravamina* of 1768 was taken as a reference point: they resolved to reject all papal reserves and dispensations, the nuncios and papal notaries, the decrees of the Roman congregations, the records of information prepared by the nuncios on the bishops. The *annates* and *pallium* rights had to be reduced and, within each diocese, courts of appeal had to be created. On 28 July all complaints had been dealt with and the conclusions sent to the archiepiscopal courts to be ratified.

They were aiming at an internal reform of the Church which involved new ways of organizing and reforming the clergy, the abolition of all the immunities granted to ordinary bishops, the simplification of worship, the suppression of blessings, brotherhoods, processions and church ornaments. The contrasts between the Archbishops of Cologne and Mainz caused these projects to fail. The metropolitan of Trier refused with some indignation the idea of dispensing from reciting the breviary those priests who were too occupied with

³⁹ Von Pastor, *History of popes*, vol. XL, p. 45.

the ministry: according to the archbishop that would have given them “more free time to gamble and drink”. The archbishops did not even agree on the complaints which arose against the court of Rome and, from 3-8 September, they wrote to the Emperor asking him to send their petitions to Rome. If these turned out to be unsuccessful, they wanted a national council to be called: “to free the German nation at long last from all the forms of oppression”.⁴⁰ If even this procedure proved unfeasible, then they would have been obliged to appeal to the Diet. The conclusions reached in the congress were stated in twenty-two articles. Under Febronius’ influence, a distinction was made in the introduction between the Pope’s fundamental and this usurped rights. Moreover the primacy of the jurisdiction received confirmation. But the usurped rights, introduced by the “factious” decretals, had to be abolished and the Episcopal rights needed to be restored in its entirety.

“According to the first article the bishops, as successors of the apostles, could have been bound or not whenever the Church needed it”.⁴¹ All the people living within their dioceses would have been subject to them in matters of religion, and the diocesans – with the exception of their spiritual pastor - could not have appealed to Rome. Moreover the only exceptions to be acknowledged would have been the ones confirmed by an imperial privilege or by the Empire in general. The religious could not receive any orders or regulations by their generals or other superiors living outside Germany. With regard to the nuncios, the jurisdiction of the Pope’s envoys was completely suppressed.⁴² The nuncios were the Pope’s ambassadors “and had to abide by His authority after the Emperor’s statement dated October 12th 1785 which was based on the

⁴⁰ Idem, p. 48.

⁴¹ Von Pastor, *History of popes*, vol. XL, p. 49.

⁴² Ibidem.

fundamental rights of both the Church and the Empire, avoiding any act of *voluntary or contentious jurisdiction*".⁴³ Ecclesiastical cases had to be adjudicated by a diocesan court of first instance and then by a metropolitan court of appeal. "The Pope's nuncios should never interfere". For the third instance, the Holy See should have appointed judges *in partibus* and similarly, the nuncios should have been banned from accessing information on the appointed bishops.

As way of "revenge" the archbishops who were the promoters of the Congress of Ems gave the bishops the right to dispense from the impediments of marriage, of abstinence and of religious vows; the five-year faculties were all of a sudden abolished. The Pope's briefs and bulls required an Episcopal confirmation before they could be carried out within the dioceses. Others condemned the delayed reception of the holy orders after the comparison with the imperial and foreign benefices, and the bishops' sermons of loyalty to the Pope. When the bishops were finally able to exercise their rights they would be free to introduce a religious reform and, after two years, the Emperor would be asked to convene a national council.

Although these petitions shared certain similarities with the reforms which Joseph II was trying to introduce, his reaction was cautious. It is likely that the Chancellor Kaunitz had warned him against the consequences of such propositions and had suggested that he should ask the archbishops to reach an agreement with the entire German episcopate.⁴⁴ Kaunitz knew that this would prove impossible, given that the Archbishop of Speyer had sent him a strong

⁴³ On being granted his appointment, each nuncio was raised to bishopric status (if he was not already a bishop). This measure was adopted because the Holy See wished to send a papal representative of sufficient authority so that his powers were not limited to merely diplomatic status, but to the actual application of papal control over the territories that fell under the jurisdiction of the nunciatures.

⁴⁴ Von Pastor, *History of popes*, vol. XL, p. 50.

protest against the Ems Punctation. In the letter addressed to the Chancellor it was pointed out that the excluded bishops would have added up to the number of bishops who did not hide their discontent about the metropolitans' growing power. Aware of this state of affairs, on 16 June, Joseph II gave his complete support to the four archbishops provided they had received the support of their suffragans and of the other bishops. It is very likely that the Emperor laid down this condition because he knew that it could not be fulfilled. The archbishops tried to get their suffragans to adhere and, while the diocese of Salzburg seemed willing to do so, the Bishop of Liège was against it. The Prince-Bishop of Speyer, August count of Limburg Styrum, who had previously opposed the jurisdiction which the nuncios intended to exercise, sided against the metropolitans. Many prelates decided to wait and refused to take sides. However, the nuncio to Munich organized his nunciature and the exercise of his jurisdiction by appointing subdelegates who could deal with things more efficiently in Dusseldorf and Heidelberg. The bishops of the interested dioceses voiced their complaints, but the Bavarian government still refused to get involved. At that point the Empire intervened to help the bishops; on 27 February a *rescript* of the Aulic Council enjoined the Elector of Bavaria to thwart the appointment of a papal commissioner in Dusseldorf. Karl-Teodor strenuously defended his sovereign rights seizing the opportunity to put into print his memorandum with the title: *On the existence and jurisdiction of the nunciatures*.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ For the Landes-hoheit , in other words, the discussion concerning the territorial rights of the Holy Roman Empire in the XVIII century see: Walzer Mack, "Rights and Functions: The Social Categories of Eighteenth-Century German Jurists and Cameralists", *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (1978), pp. 234-251.

Soon the front of the allied Archbishops found itself divided due to the withdrawal of the Bishop of Mainz. After an illness, the Elector of Mainz tried to find a coadjutor and Prussia seemed very interested in the choice. Finally they agreed on Karl-Teodor of Dalberg, even though they knew that Rome would not have easily accepted him because his ideas resembled those of the archbishop. To win the Pope's approval, the archbishop decided to make some concessions on the articles. The court of Berlin commissioned Marquis Lucchesini to negotiate the settlement with Pius VI and on 2 May 1787 obtained the permission from Rome to proceed with the election of the coadjutor. This was offset by the decision to maintain the previous *status quo* with regard to the issues debated at Ems. Mainz decided to stop supporting the claims of the three other metropolitans, who had never received any help from Austria, Bavaria or Prussia. Pius VI took this opportunity to improve his relations with the Prussian sovereign, granting him the royal title which had been denied to him before.⁴⁶

The following year, the Diet of Ratisbon issued a vigorous denial of the metropolitans' claims. As a matter of fact, the deputies and princes of the main imperial cities declared at Ratisbon that: all the States within the Empire could receive a papal nuncio on their territories without previously informing the Emperor and without his agreement and approval. Therefore the bishops' consensus was no longer necessary. Then the Diet declared that failing to honour the prerogatives of the nuncios was a abuse against peoples' rights. It was also said that the nuncio's power could have been considered illegal and to the detriment of the bishops' activities only if the Pope had introduced a nunciature without the State's consensus. However, even in this case the only way to

⁴⁶ This had been interpreted by Joseph II as the umpteenth attempt to isolate the reformist policy of the Habsburgs.

intervene would have been through a congress or a concordat, never through a legal action.

However important and crucial the Diet's decision was, this did not prevent Pius VI from responding to criticism against the nunciature of Munich and all the other nunciatures within the boundaries of the Empire. The aim was double: to force the Prince-Archbishops to accept the existence of nuncios invested with papal jurisdiction and to refuse *in toto* all the libellous pamphlets which contested the rights of the Pope's legation.⁴⁷ Even though Pius VI had no intention of issuing a bull of condemnation against the Emser Punctuation, nevertheless the Holy See perceived it as their duty to officially refute the Episcopal document. The task of writing a book on the apostolic nuncios and the German controversy was assigned to the ultramontane ex-Jesuit Francesco Antonio Zaccaria. The Pope asked Garampi his opinion on the work written by Zaccaria. In a message that Garampi sent to the Pope on 9 September 1786, the cardinal stated that: "he would have preferred a less learned style, and that he would liked to see a few things added. Moreover, he desired to introduce corrections on a score of pages".⁴⁸ Garampi's reflections led to the drawing up of a new text, for which the sole responsibility was assumed by Pius VI. The Pope's reply appeared in the form of a brief addressed to the four Prince-Archbishops, the three Ecclesiastical Electors and the Archbishop of Salzburg. The original draft of the document is in the register number 297 of the collection

⁴⁷ To gain an insight into the extent of this battle of words it is interesting to notice that in a single library, the municipal one in Munich (the books were later transferred to other libraries in Munich, due to the increase of the holdings), in Munich only there were 140 writings on the problems relating to nunciatures. Von Pastor, *History of popes*, vol. XL, p. 56.

⁴⁸ Vanysacker, *Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi*, p. 237.

regarding the nunciature of Cologne⁴⁹. Folios 7-9 constitute the actual brief; the final formula in folio 9v reads: “in Saint Mary Major in Rome in the year of the fisherman”. But the following pages are like an additional part addressed to the Prince-Electors, either together or individually. The 386 folios which form the text look like a single brief – a brief which is one of a kind. The Pope’s intention was to reaffirm and define his right of legation and to defend it scientifically on historic and logical grounds, appealing to precedents and contesting the pamphlets. Giovanni Battista Montini, among many others, pointed out that in his brief the Pope proved himself to be a good archivist, historian, jurist, and theologian.⁵⁰ Moreover, the document was extremely innovative as it contained notes, quotations and cross-references to other documents, books and polemical pamphlets - up to then similar devices had only been used in scientific and historical works. According to Pierre Blet, Garampi was the real author of the document, but Pietro Stella’s suggestion seems more plausible, namely that Francesco Antonio Zaccaria, Michelangelo Monsagrati and many others had contributed to its success. In any case, to be truthful, Garampi did have all the qualities described by Montini; for a long time he had been the Prefect of the Secret Vatican Archives (1751–1772), and we also know that reference was made to him at international level as being a patron and scholar of numismatics and oriental studies.⁵¹ Furthermore, his considerable knowledge of the German situation made him essential in this controversy. The text was then reviewed by a committee of five cardinals, that is Gerdil, Albani, Antonelli, Campanelli and

⁴⁹Santissimi Domini Nostri Pii Papae Sexti Responsio ad metropolitanos Moguntinum, Trevirenses, Colonienses, et Salisburgenses super nunciaturis Apostolicis . Editio altera: additis binis litteris ad archiepiscopum, et ad capitulum Coloniae (Roma, 1790).

⁵⁰ Montini Giovanni Battista, *La “Responsio super nunciaturis” di Papa Pio VI* (Roma, 1933), p. 152.

⁵¹ Vansacker, *Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi*, p. 239.

Zelada.⁵² Furthermore there were several points of similarity between the brief and the document which the nuncio to Brussels, Zondadari, had sent to the Pope arguing in favour of the new nunciatures. Zondadari had then been obliged to flee his nunciature because the count of Belgioso, who held him responsible for the rebellion of the seminarists in Leuven, had drawn up a report against him.⁵³ It is, therefore, to be presumed that the Pope's well-structured brief had drawn much of its inspiration from Zondadari's document, submitted in 1788. Moreover, it is likely that the idea of writing a brief was not conceived by the nuncio of the Austrian Low Countries, but by the theologians and scholars who moved in the intellectual and polemical circles of Siena and who were close to the nuncio Zondadari.⁵⁴

The papal brief was divided into nine chapters. The first seven chapters confuted a series of objections raised by the archbishops and pamphleteers against the nunciatures of Munich and Cologne. The first chapter read: "On the people who create and exacerbate problems in order to suppress the nunciatures". In the second chapter the main argument was based on: "The reasons which have been set out in order to cause these imbalances, especially those of the nunciature in Munich".

Third chapter: "On the other usual complaint about the nuncio dispatched to the Elector of Bavaria". In the fourth chapter: "On the other complaint about the encyclical sent by the nuncio of Cologne". The fifth focused: "On the complaint of the Elector of Cologne about the refusal met by his intention of

⁵² Stella, "Appunti per una biografia di Giacinto Sigismondo Gerdil", p. 22 <http://www.storicibarnabiti.it/PDF/BS%2018%20STELLA.pdf> (19 April 2010).

⁵³ Belgien: DD: B, Abt. A, Berichte, (Fasz. 305). N°14, f.208 r.v. avec la declaration du Cardinal sur les affaire de la bulle previent qu'on interdira la cour au nonce, qui parut etre le seul coupable de l'introduction et publication de cette piece.

⁵⁴ Vanysacker, *Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi*, p. 258.

instituting a new court". The sixth was based on: "The arguments put forward by the Elector of Cologne in favour of the creation of a new court". The seventh: "On their last complaint about the right to defer the collection of the tithe". Half of the *responsio* is in the eighth chapter which is divided into seven sections. It is a defence - based on the Primacy of St Peter and on historical records - of the Pope's right to send legates and nuncios with permanent jurisdiction. The titles of the seven sections reveal the importance of this chapter. The first one reads: "On the right of the papal throne to send nuncios, both extraordinary and ordinary, with permanent jurisdiction". In the second section: "It is proved that it is the primate's right to send ordinary nuncios with permanent jurisdiction". Here the brief wants to prove that:

[...] it is the Pope's right to have people, especially in distant places, who act as his representatives, who exercise his jurisdiction and authority on a permanent basis and who take on his role with the primate's inner strength and nature, with the rights and prerogatives which he is entitled to, in the name of the constant discipline of the Church of the first centuries, with the authority of the ecclesiastical and imperial laws, and finally with the common judgment of the canons, the jurisconsults and the Protestants themselves.⁵⁵

In the third: "The right of the ordinary nunciatures is demonstrated with the usual discipline of the Church from its first centuries to the ninth century". In

⁵⁵ "[...] è diritto del pontefice romano di avere delle persone, soprattutto nei luoghi lontani, che rappresentino la sua persona là dove è assente, che esercitino la sua giurisdizione e la sua autorità in virtù di una delegazione permanente, infine che reggano il suo posto e tutto ciò con l'intima forza e la natura del primate, con i diritti e le prerogative inerenti del primate stesso, per la costante disciplina della Chiesa risalente ai primi secoli, con l'autorità delle leggi ecclesiastiche e imperiali, infine con il comune parere dei canonici e dei giureconsulti e degli stessi protestanti". ASV, nunz. Colonia 297, f. 213.

the fourth section the same demonstration is applied to the period that spans from the ninth to the fifteenth century and, in the fifth section, from “the fifteenth century to nowadays”. The brief also reports the change brought about by the nuncios’ jurisdiction when required by the Council of Trent. The clause “without the Ordinaries’ right to find out the petitions in the court of first instance” is found for the first time in the form of a brief in the letters of the calends of October (27 September) 1565 written by the nuncio Biglia to the Emperor. In the sixth section an argument *ad hominem* is introduced, because “the right to have stable nunciatures is recognized through the councils’ authority, the bishops’ example and, above all, through the metropolitans of Mainz, Trier, Cologne and Salzburg”. In the seventh section the same right is recognized through “the example of the Empire and Emperors and through the authority of the most famous German jurisconsults”. The last chapter reasserts what previously stated, showing that the facts and reasons usually provided against the nunciatures actually prove the Pope’s rights. Since the entire argument focuses on the primate, it is not surprising that the brief ends with a Pope’s defence:

The only aim of this supreme authority is to maintain the right order... All things would be corrupted and the Christian republic would come to great harm if, contrary to the divine institution, each bishop were allowed to do whatever he desired in his diocese free from the Pope’s authority. There would no longer be just one Church, one faith and one order, and there would be more Churches than.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ “Questa suprema autorità non tende a nient’altro che a mantenere il giusto ordine... Al contrario non si potrebbe evidenziare la più grande c di tutte le cose e la repubblica cristiana

The brief was criticized by Cardinal Pacca, among many others. It is common knowledge that cardinal Campanelli, who had been working in the Sacred Roman Rota for many years, drew up the document as a decree with the help of his colleague cardinal Gerdil. But the material had been prepared by a famous scholar, cardinal Garampi, who had conducted his researches in the Vatican Secret Archives which he probably knew better than anybody else.⁵⁷ In fact the drafter, or drafters, of the document had relied on his/their vast knowledge of nearly all the existing documents concerning the history of the Pope's delegation right from its beginning.

The historical and legal arguments illustrated in the *responsio* failed to convince the Archbishop of Cologne. In 1790, when Joseph II died and Leopold ascended the throne, he tried to introduce the old articles which opposed the nuncios' jurisdiction. In the electoral capitulation he also said that the Emperor had to keep watch on the nuncios' moves and put an end to their jurisdiction. In 1793, after Leopold's death, the same claims were made to Francis II. The convention armies crossed the Rhine and swept away nearly all the existing ecclesiastical principalities changing forever German geopolitics. By contrast, the nunciatures managed to survive.⁵⁸

In this section we have been able to observe how, despite their routine functions, the nunciatures, and especially the nunciature of Munich, were used to increase not only the direct control of the pope over the dioceses, but also to

subirebbe i più grandi danni se, contrariamente alla divina istituzione, era permesso ad ogni vescovo come invano lo pretendete, di fare qualunque cosa nella sua diocesi, senza alcuna dipendenza. Non ci sarebbe più una Chiesa, una fede, una disciplina, ma ci sarebbero tante Chiese più che vescovi” ASV, nunz. Colonia 297, f. 360-62.

⁵⁷ Garampi was a prefect in the Vatican Archives from 1751 to 1772, and created a “filing system” (the so-called ‘Schedario Garampi’) which can still be consulted today. On the Schedario Garampi see: ASV, Indice dei Fondi e relativi mezzi di descrizione e di ricerca (2010 – 2011) <http://asv.vatican.va/it/arch/schedgarampi.htm>, (15 November 2010).

⁵⁸ The nunciature of München ended in 1934, just after the administrative reorganization introduced by Hitler's government.

counter the Habsburg reforms. We sought to emphasise the harsh tones used in the conflict between the papacy and the empire, contrary to that which has been stated in the dominant secondary literature.⁵⁹ One of the renewed tasks of the apostolic nunciatures was certainly to contrast and contradict anti-papal writings, both through requests for censure, as well as the through publication of classical and new texts⁶⁰. The following section will analyse the most famous anti-papal pamphlets published in Vienna under the reign of Joseph II and the successive reaction by the Holy See. In this context I will analyse the development of the counter-reformist publications which were an integral part of the program of Pius VI, which aimed at relaunching the prestige of the Holy See, and in which, once more, the nunciatures were assigned to be the active instrument of papal policy.

3.3. What is the Pope? The success in Europe of the pamphlet by the Viennese jurist Joseph Eybel and the response of the Holy Father

The first change in government in the Habsburg Empire in forty years was enough to stimulate enormous public interest in public debate, but the prospect of an enlightened emperor provoked hopes for unlimited social and economic progress. A certain interest for intellectuals was generated by the faith that Joseph II showed in the free exchange of information. On taking the throne, Joseph II promptly reformed the office of censorship and publication. The cities of Vienna, Milan and other major cultural centres of the empire reacted with unusual rapidity increasing the diffusion of newspapers and publications in

⁵⁹ Blanning, *Joseph II*, pp. 100-101.

⁶⁰ Vansacker, *Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi*, p. 185.

general.⁶¹ The Holy See, from its viewpoint opposed decreased censorship. On analysing the funeral eulogies for Maria Theresa that appeared in Italy, Franco Venturi identified strong approval on behalf of the clerics concerning the restrictive regulations on censorship issued during the reign of the empress.⁶² Under the reign of Joseph II the situation changed radically: it became the State and no longer the Church which decided what was dangerous for public morals, and it was not limited only to this field. In this thesis, the theory concerning a “second counter-reform” is based on the various policies activated by the previous government, that is the government of Maria Theresa and those of Joseph II, and on the action taken by the Holy See against Joseph II. Therefore, before moving on to study the spread and diffusion of Eybel’s text “What is the Pope?” we will attempt to describe the previous situation in order to clarify what the differences were between the age-old opposition towards forbidden literature and the widespread commitment undertaken by Pius VI after the beginning of Joseph’s reign.

The advent of printing as a means used by the Church, and above all the outbreak of what can be considered an authentic “war of books”⁶³, provoked by the publication of confutations of texts included in the Index, constituted an extremely important instrument aimed at maintaining ecclesiastic intellectual hegemony in Italy and Catholic countries in the eighteenth century. During the reformist age of the Habsburgs the prevailing cultural and political matters were no longer the same and the literary production changed direction. This had new repercussions on the publishing field which was seen as the expression of the

⁶¹ Wernigg Ferdinand, “Die Erweiterte Pressfreiheit” in *Bibliographie österreichischer Drucke während der erweiterten Preßfreiheit* n. 35 (1781 – 1795) (Vienna, 1973), p. 17.

⁶² Venturi, *Settecento riformatore, IV. La caduta dell’Antico Regime (1776-1789)*, p. 611.

⁶³ Beales Derek, *Joseph II, II.*, p. 212.

Jansenistic groups which were active in France and Italy. In Italy, Pavia and Milan became the most lively publishing “workshops” promoted by Pietro Tamburini’s academic Mastership. Florence and Pistoia were the most important editorial centres of the movement whose protagonists in Tuscany were the Grand Duke Peter Leopold and the bishop Scipione de’ Ricci. Theology and spirituality continued to be dealt with in reprints and new works. It is possible to detect two prevailing characteristics in the publishing industry during the reformist period, the former concerns the powers of the political authority as far as ecclesiastical matters were concerned, the latter concerns the contestation of the powers usurped by the popes and the Roman Curia within the Church and in the State. The works published during those years in Venice and Naples were Van Espen’s *Jus ecclesiasticum universum*, the ones by Bossuet, Eustache Le Noble’s *Istruzioni intorno la Santa Sede* (1765), the *Dissertazione isagogica intorno allo Stato della Chiesa* (1765), the *De Antiqua Ecclesia disciplina* (1769) and the *Traité de la puissance ecclésiastique et temporelle* in Latin (1768) translated in Italian (1770) by Louis-Ellies Dupin; that is to say those works which paved the way for Eybel’s *What is the pope?*⁶⁴ The literary production autonomously created cultural stimuli. More than once it was the result of cultural changes and market principles. The purchasers, producers and addressees often acted independently of the Roman Catholic Church, the Enlightened movement and the intellectuals who were near to Joseph II and to the aims he pursued. For the papacy the publication of works that refuted the most heated pamphlets did not

⁶⁴ Le Noble E., *Istruzioni intorno la Santa Sede tradotte dal francese* (Venezia, 1765), original title: *L’esprit de Gerson* (Leiden, 1691); *Dissertazione isagogica intorno allo Stato della Chiesa e la podestà del romano pontefice e de’ vescovi* (Lugano, 1765), the text was put on the Index with the decree 15 Settembre 1766. Dupin, *De Antiqua Ecclesia disciplina* dissertations historicae excerptae ex conciliis oecumenicis et sanctorum Patrum ac auctorum ecclesiasticorum scriptis (Napoli, 1769).

represent new strategies, given the fact that already prior to this, during the post-tridentine period, the Church had played a predominant role in promoting sacred works to counter Protestantism, ranging from Catechisms to the lives of the Saints.⁶⁵

Later it was emphasised how much of the ecclesiastic arsenal used for propaganda purposes relied upon the instruments in the battle against Protestantism, and exactly how much Enlightenment was interpreted, in reality, as a form of "return" or "revival". It is also true that this return was confirmed even further with the reprinting of manuals such as *Della educazione cristiana* by Silvio Antoniano, "adattato per i nuovi increduli".⁶⁶ This was supported by the conviction that there were strong and forceful ties between heresies that existed in the early modern era and incredulity, which tended to be associated with the Enlightenment movement.

In any case, it is necessary to refer to certain changes and in this way illustrate the particular aspects of eighteenth-century history in relation to the ecclesiastic control of reading matter. In order to explain the increasing importance of printing, especially in the 1760s and 70s, first of all, attention should be drawn to the progressive awareness on behalf of the Church, which realised that it was impossible to impede the flow of prohibited books using the coercive methods applied during the Counter-Reformation period.⁶⁷ This

⁶⁵ Ditchfield, *Liturgy, Sanctity and History in Tridentine Italy*, pp. 18-20.

⁶⁶ Antoniano Silvio (1540-1603), *Educacione Christiana dei figliuoli, tre libri scritti da Silvio Antoniano poi Cardinale della Chiesa Cattolica per intercessione di Carlo Borromeo* (Verona, 1584).

⁶⁷ Che i predicatori fossero chiamati a un nuovo compito era cosa di cui i contemporanei mostravano una chiara consapevolezza: "Gli antichi non avevano, che a convertire peccatori, i nostri hanno a combattere increduli; e siccome [...] una folla di libri sacrileghi fa serpeggiare l'empietà per ogni dove" dai pulpiti bisognava "provare con sodi argomenti, quanto sia rea, pericolosa la lettura di tali perfidi libri, mescolandovi ritratti satirici di qualche capo della moderna filosofia, e premurando insieme i suoi uditori contro le insidie, e le follie della medesima". Delpiano, *Il governo della lettura*, p. 205. Trans. "Contemporaries were fully aware

examination of conscience originated with the crisis provoked by the Inquisition and the Jesuit order⁶⁸; this weakness opened up narrow openings to an increase in the market of books included in the Index. Moreover, during the eighteenth century, the greater capacity for printing in terms of cost and production provided considerable encouragement in developing methods which became increasingly more systematic, both to the Church itself as well as to its detractors. Although it certainly did not relinquish the instrument of the traditional oral sermon, the eighteenth-century Church therefore also faced many of its adversaries on the battle-field of the printed page. Comments by contemporaries of the period demonstrate that this was a programmed objective, as well as being a widely shared conviction.⁶⁹ The situation began to change halfway through the eighteenth century: it was stated that even though preaching and readings remained valid instruments for salvation, the *verba volant scripta manent*, in other words, the content understood through successive and well-meditated reading provided by the written word represented the intrinsic advantage of the printed page.⁷⁰

of the fact that preachers were called to perform a new task: "In former times, preachers' work was limited to converting sinners, while at present times, they have to convince unbelievers; and since [...] great numbers of sacrilegious books were spreading blasphemy in every direction" from the pulpits it was necessary to "counter with strong argument, demonstrating the danger of reading such deceitful books, introducing satirical portraits of certain figures of modern philosophy, and urgently warning listeners against their deception and aberration".

⁶⁸ On the matter Eckhart Hellmuth wrote: "First, the reduction in the influence of the Jesuits made possible a reorientation of higher education, especially the universities and the Gymnasien (grammar schools)". Hellmuth Eckhart, 'Reforms and reform movements in Britain and Germany in the second half of the Eighteenth Century', in Blanning, Peter Wende (eds.), *Reform in Great Britain and Germany 1750-1850* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 13.

⁶⁹ For example, refer to the activities of the papal nuncio Garampi in relation to printing, quoted in the previous chapter.

⁷⁰ A revealing source of the efforts made by the Church in its attempt to launch a crusade against the diffusion of Enlightenment can be found in the Archives of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede (ACDF), Censura librorum (C.L.), II. a. I Protocolli b. Atti e documenti cause celebri. The war waged in the printing houses was above all a series of clashes fought through the confutation of texts in the Index.

In the 1780s the relationship seemed to be completely reversed compared to the beginning of the century: at this point the most efficient weapons against “*bad books*” obviously seemed to be “*good books*”. Many of the clergy who waged this “battle with a pen” interpreted the situation as an actual war in the true sense of the word. Writing in relation to the commitment of good Christians in the production of “*good books*”, Nikolas Albert von Diessbach, by that time an ex-Jesuit, defined it as follows: “a war that has become even more relentless”.⁷¹ He had no doubts on the subject, since he raised a call to arms: “All generous lovers and defenders of truth, must raise arms and come forth”. They were called to “avenge God” with “the pen” and not only with their voices. He found that reading, rather than listening, seemed a better antidote, first of all because of the wider public that this was able to influence, since everybody could have access to “pious reading matter, according to choice, suitable to lead us to God”; and in addition, reading seemed able to facilitate “the very meditation of divine truth”, which in the absence of daily contact with the written word, was at risk of “becoming weak”.⁷² The ex-Jesuit Alfonso Muzzarelli emphasised this concept even further when he wrote: “Incredulity was not revealed through a single volume. It drew up troops against us in a tempting army of small concise, elegantly-written books. And therefore, we must fight them with the same weapons; we must combat their books with other books”⁷³.

⁷¹ Nikolas Albert Diessbach (1737-1798), *Il zelo meditativo di un pio solitario cristiano e cattolico espresso in una serie di riflessioni, e di affetti dal sacerdote Alberto Giuseppe Niccolao De Diesebach* (Torino, 1774), p. 29.

⁷² Idem, pp. 29-36 and p. 49.

⁷³ Alfonso Muzzarelli, *L'Emilio disingannato Dialoghi filosofici*, 4 vols., (Siena, 1782-1783), p. 3.

If, during the 1780s “*instructions*” in relation to incredulity and ungodly books by French clergy were translated several times, the following decade led to the translation of far more complex and well-structured works such as the “*Historical treatise*” by Bergier and all nineteen volumes of the “*Critical letters*” by Gauchat within the context of a publishing project entitled *Apologists of the Christian religion, or collection of works against incredulists*. Printed first in Rome, then in Venice over a period between 1784 and 1790, this work was promoted by Pius VI with the objective of “confounding the crowds of modern thinkers”.⁷⁴

The interwoven relations between institutional censorship and the practice of confutation promoted or openly supported by the heads of the Church were closely connected, as is demonstrated very obviously by the numerous dedications to be found in Catholic publications, and in an even clearer manner in the indications present in the files of the Archive of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome. In fact, the army of confutation was no private army, but was often involved in answering to calls from superiors. The existence of patronage relationships between Catholic writers and the ecclesiastical hierarchy is hardly surprising in a publishing context where patronage and commissioning performed an essential function in conditioning and sustaining the difficult work of every man of letters. The confutation of the text by Eybel in 1782 *Was ist der Papst?* translated into Italian the following year, was consigned to the Index, an obvious sign of the importance of the role of the Roman

⁷⁴ The association which had advocated the publication of the texts had published a manifesto which was printed in first part of volume four of the Venetian edition and at the end of the volume it states: Pius VI “had not only commended a project of such importance, especially in times such as these; but had even promoted the execution (of the work) with examples of his sovereign generosity”. Gauchat, *Lettere critiche o analisi, e confutazione di diversi scritti moderni contro la religione*, 19 vols., (Venezia, 1784-1790), p. I.

ensorship Institute in the orientation of religious publishing⁷⁵. The text was immediately counter-attacked by the papal nuncio in Vienna, Garampi, when it was published; however to no avail, and its success was extraordinary for that period, so much so that it was translated and published in other languages within a very short time. And it was for this very reason that the Holy See could not refrain from publishing a retaliation: in fact, in 1786 the Papal Bull *Super soliditate* was published with the aim of confuting each point of the pamphlet one by one, and to strongly reconfirm the principle reasons for the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome. However, in spite of the Bull, it was considered necessary to have recourse to a book which would avoid the hostility provoked by a papal Bull in other countries. Once again, the author of this text was Tommaso Maria Mamachi, who, after a period of intense activity at the beginning of the second half of the eighteenth century, had been summoned by Pius VI to attack Febronio⁷⁶. In his role as consultor of the Congregation of the Index, Cardinal Gerdil also played an important part in condemning the works of Eybel, and published “*Confutazione di due libelli diretti contro il breve Super soliditate l’uno intitolato: La voce della verità e l’altro: Riflessioni sopra il breve del sommo pontefice Pio sesto, in cui si condanna il libro di Eybel: Che cosa è il papa?*” The incident of the pamphlet by Eybel and its diffusion, above all in Italian territory, remains linked with Tuscany and Lombardy because of several connections that were formed between Enlightenment reform and certain claims of Jansenism; this was due to the rules and regulations between initiatives for

⁷⁵ This was published with the aim of reinforcing the Papal Bull “*Super soliditate*” issued on the 28th of November 1786, and also reprinted with the volume edited by Tommaso Maria Mamachi: *Pisti Alethini epistolarum ad auctorem anonymum opusculi in scripti Quid est papa?* (2 vols., Roma, 1787).

⁷⁶ Tommaso Maria Mamachi, *Epistolarum ad Justinum Febronium iurisconsultum de ratione legenda christianae reipublicae, deque legitima romani pontifici potestate* (3 vols., Roma, 1776-1778).

ecclesiastic reform advocated by various bishops during the 1780s, and the more complex political and civil reform initiatives promoted by the governing heads of the two Italian states. It was Stella who recalled the importance of Eybel's *Was ist der Pabst?* In his second volume on Italian Jansenism, where he considered the Viennese pamphlet more influential than the *De statu Ecclesiae* by Febronio, he argued that it contributed towards accelerating the radicalisation of Jansenist ecclesiology with a Gallican influence.⁷⁷ In his statements he lists some of the publications which were printed after the successful pamphlet by Eybel, including *Cosa è un appellante?* (1784) recalling the title, and the *Vera idea della Santa Sede* (1784) and *Riflessioni* by Natali (1787) against the author of the Bull *Super soliditate*, whom Stella identifies as Cardinal Giacinto Sigismondo Gerdil⁷⁸. On the other hand, the Imperial agent in Rome, Brunati, sustained that the response bull *Super soliditate* and even more so, the text by Mamachi would have provoked an avalanche of publications in favour of Eybel:

And therefore, by placing themselves in a controversial position which is without a doubt still held by the large majority of Christian bishops at this time, this Bull could open up a wasps' nest of further books, and personalities against Rome, and even more so by the aforesaid work by Mamachi, should he come to the decision to confute the book by Eybel in the Arabic or Chinese language (...).⁷⁹

There is no doubt that on the printed page, a war was fought which would soon have serious political consequences in the relations between the Empire and

⁷⁷ Stella, *Il Giansenismo in Italia*, vol. 2, p. 392.

⁷⁸ Idem.

⁷⁹ Francesco Brunati imperial agent in Rome to Kaunitz, HHSTA, Rom, Korrespondenz: 204 Brunati Berichte 1786 f. 207 v. Roma, 1786, december 22.

the Holy See. Two important episodes concerning the diplomatic history of the Holy See have been dealt with in this chapter: the first relates to the question of the nunciature in Cologne, which represents one of the most serious problems faced by the Church in the German territories. The second refers to the escalation in the confutation of the texts included in the Index. It seemed appropriate to introduce a short *excursus* concerning the press against the Enlightenment movement because it was shown to be useful in understanding both the attitude of the monarchic states (in particular with reference to Joseph II and the Empire) and their tolerance in permitting the diffusion of texts on the Index, as well as that of the ecclesiastic initiative, promoted and pursued with particular zeal by Pius VI, aimed at countering these texts with others sustaining the opposite viewpoint.⁸⁰ In fact, the importance that printed texts assumed during this period, as well as the quality and quantity of the observations they contained, should be considered as an essential introduction to the object of the next chapter: the reactions and questions linked with the publishing of the *Super soliditate* brief in Imperial territories, printed by the nuncio Zondadari.

⁸⁰ In this sense I would tend to agree with Elena Brambilla's opinion, according to which the monarchy should be identified: "not in the expansion of the State but in its withdrawal, not in an increase in restrictive efficiency, but in its refusal to be repressive". "non nell'ampliamento dello Stato ma nel suo ritiro, non in una accresciuta efficienza repressiva ma nella rinuncia a reprimere". Brambilla Elena, *La giustizia intollerante, Inquisizioni e tribunali confessionali in Europa (secoli IV-XVIII)* (Roma, 2006), p. 237.

Chapter 4 - Zondadari's short-lived nunciature: the rebellion of the seminarists of Leuven and the distribution of the brief *Super Soliditate*.

In this chapter I will attempt to illustrate the political role of the main European nunciatures in 1787 in the light of the most extensive political-diplomatic papal counter-offensive brought against Joseph's reform policy. A paradigmatic example of the attitude assumed by the Roman Church is offered in this chapter as I pause and focus my attention on Zondadari's case and on his expulsion from Austrian Netherlands on 14 February 1787. Zondadari's case is analysed here through the correspondence of the incoming and outgoing nunciatures, and also the imperial correspondence between Joseph II and his brother Peter-Leopold, grand duke of Tuscany. Other sources of lesser political importance are also considered, and they were no less interesting, including despatches of the Imperial agent in Rome, Brunati, and the reports of the English Ambassador, Sir Murray Keith, in Vienna. This research covered a chronological period between the second half of 1786 to the first half of 1788. Recently no significant contributions have cast a light on Zondadari's nunciature in Brussels. Therefore, the main secondary sources of information on this subject remain the works by Pastor, Davis and Venturi together with the encyclopaedia entries edited by Gaetano Moroni in the second half of the nineteenth century; and, most recently, the figure of the nuncio has also been briefly outlined by Marina Caffiero¹. Some references to the rebellion of the General Seminary of Leuven

¹ W. Walter Davis, *Joseph II: An Imperial Reformer for the Austrian Netherlands* (The Hague, 1974). Venturi, *Settecento riformatore, IV. La caduta dell'Antico Regime (1776-1789), vol. 2. Il patriottismo repubblicano e gli imperi dell'Est*, pp. 726-28. For the historical reconstruction of this episode Venturi does not rely on archive sources but on the coeval "Notizie del Mondo" and

can be found in the works of Belgian scholars, such as Vernhagen e Delplace, who, however, address this event in the wider context of the birth of Belgium as a modern State and at the same time analyse the local Church from an historical point of view within the more general events related to the Church of Rome.²

The historical reconstruction of Zondadari's expulsion seems to converge on certain points with the one offered by his contemporaries. Although Zondadari was aware of the prohibition against printing enforced by the government of the Austrian Netherlands, he had the *Super Soliditate* brief personally printed in Brussels³. Rome was given as the origin of the printed briefs. Taking them with him, the nuncio travelled first to the archbishop of Malines, and then on to the seminarists at Leuven to distribute the printed briefs. After their diffusion, there was a general uprising by the students against their new professors imposed by Joseph II who adhered to the philo-Jansenist teaching which conflicted with that of the Holy See's. Zondadari was expelled because, in the light of reports which reached Vienna, one of the most influential of them was that sent by Count Belgioioso; he was judged as being responsible by Kaunitz and Joseph II who promptly had him expelled on 14 February 1787 from Austrian Flanders territory. The emperor then considered the nunciature itself as being superfluous declaring that the nunciature of Vienna would also be

"Gazzetta universale" both edited in 1787. Von Pastor, *The History of the Popes, vol. XL Pius VI. (1775-1779)* (London, 1953), pp. 66-72. Moroni, *Dizionario di Cultura Ecclesiastica*, vol. CIII (Venezia, 1861), p. 480. Caffiero wrote the entry on Pius VI for the *Dictionnaire Historique de la Papauté* in which she briefly hints at the Pope's role during the uprising in Austrian Flanders, while for Treccani she alludes to cardinal Garampi's political involvement in the "Zondadari's case" without quoting any sources. Caffiero, "Pio VI", *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, pp. 492-509.

² Verhaegen Arthur, *Le cardinal de Franckemberg* (Lille, 1889) e Delplace Louis, *Joseph II et la révolution brabançonne* (Bruges, 1891).

³ The archives in Vienna and in the Vatican City (ASV e HSSTA) do not disclose any further details on the printer. The name of T'Serstevens as being the printer of the brief in Brussels, appears in the text of E. Hubert, where he quotes the source: "Discours prononcé à l'assemblée des États de Brabant, le 20 juin 1787". Hubert Eugène M., *La mission et les papiers du nonce Zondadari (1786-1787)* (Bruxelles, 1920), p. 24. As a matter of fact, Hubert's text is focussed on the nuncio's private papers and not on his nunciature.

officially responsible for the Austrian Netherlands. Even though he was the object of this sanction, after his return from his “ill-fated” mission, Zondadari was rewarded by the Pope and experienced no problems at all in the advancement of his career.

The historiographical debate concerning these events is not recent, with the exception of Caffiero.⁴ This scholar attributes the ultimate responsibility of the events to the animosity and resentment on the part of Garampi against Joseph II when he was nuncio in Vienna (1777-1785) and who, from his “exile” in Montefiascone, kept very close correspondence with all the nunciatures in the Habsburgs territories.⁵ With regard to where the brief was printed, Pastor suggests: “*Incidentally Rome, not Brussels, was given as the place of publication*”.⁶ It should be emphasised that the practice of changing the location of the actual printing place was common at that time for printers, not only as a precaution, but above all, in cases where they were well aware that it was against the law.⁷ Venturi in, *Il settecento riformatore*, expressed admiration for the ability to collect and combine documents and encyclopaedic nature of Pastor’s *History of the Popes*, but he stated his scepticism in relation to its scientific content. In fact, he felt that both the falsification of the brief’s printing location and the distribution of the pamphlet to the seminarists were intentional. This is proved by the discussion which arose on this subject between Boncompagni and

⁴ Caffiero, “Pio VI”, *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, p. 497.

⁵ Von Pastor, *History of popes*, vol. XV, p. 256. Vanysacker also commented on the influence and the role assumed by Garampi: “he remained the brain behind an ultramontane ‘internationale’, just as he had been in his time as nuncio in Vienna. His ‘falcon’s aerie’ in Montefiascone and later on, the German-Hungarian College in Rome were actually strongholds of information. His extensive correspondence network kept him well-informed on international developments in politics of Church and State”. Vanysacker, *Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi*, p. 236.

⁶ Von Pastor, *History of popes*, vol. XV, p. 67.

⁷ Infelise, *I libri proibiti*, pp. 105-14.

the archbishop of Malines.⁸ Furthermore, the evidence given by Zondadari and the archbishop did not help clarify and define the actual situation. In fact, when interrogated on the subject, both declared that they did not understand how the pamphlets had managed to come into the possession of the students. There were many contradictions and inconsistencies in the evidence given by the archbishop to Kaunitz and the Emperor after having been urgently summoned to Vienna.⁹

In chapter three we examined the strategies used by the Holy See in an attempt to suppress the offensive of the regalist policy, and especially the reform policy of Joseph II. The extension of the Imperial territory, as well as the “multi-ethnicity” of its subjects made the empire a vast laboratory in which the Emperor’s reformist programmes could be tested. Therefore printing, and the use of the nunciatures would have played an important role in what could be considered as a “second counter-reformation” thanks to the tenacious and guarded direction of Pius VI¹⁰. The term “Counter-reformation” was introduced by a German jurist from Gottingen in 1776 (exactly a year after Giovanni Braschi’s rise to the pontificate with the name of Pius VI) to indicate the strategy of the Church of Rome, directed at holding back Protestantism with every means possible. Pius VI’s first brief *Inscrutabile divinae* comes in the form of a religious-political manifesto, a sort of “second Counter-Reformation” aiming at overturning the Jansenistic heresy, the Enlightenment and the contamination with

⁸ ASV, Segreteria di Stato, Cardinali 171, Frankenberg to Boncompagni Ludovisi, Bruxelles 1787, february 12, f. 78.

⁹ The archbishop of Malines gave this evidence: ASV- S.S. Vienna 199, f. 123.

¹⁰ In the 18th century the situation changed, since with the increase of printing capacity there was a proportional increase in the number of readers. The Church “*usual propaganda*” was supported by a weapon (the press) which, although not new, had undergone enormously perfected improvement. On this matter see Cavallo Guglielmo, Chartier Roger, *Storia della lettura nel mondo occidentale*, (Roma, Bari, 1995), pp.98-101. Eisenstein Elizabeth, *La rivoluzione inavvertita. La stampa come fattore di mutamento* (Bologna, 1986), pp.75-77. Cavaciocchi Simonetta, *Produzione e commercio del libro e della carta* (Firenze, 1992), pp. 53-58. Berkvens-Stevelinck Christiane, Bots H. and Hoftijzer P.G., *Le magasin de l’univers. The Dutch Republic as the Centre of the European Book Trade* (Leiden, 1992), pp. 45-49.

the “subversive” Jew.¹¹ Therefore, it is not inappropriate to speak of a “second Counter-Reformation” since the text by David Sorkin *The Religious enlightenment*, also refers to a “counter–Counter-Reformation” that was taking place in Southern Germany and the Habsburg territories. In fact, Sorkin, observed that: “Reform Catholicism in the southern German states and Habsburg lands was an indigenous effort at intellectual and religious renewal. Drawing inspiration from Catholic humanism, and especially the works of the Italian theologian and historian Ludovico Muratori (1672–1750), it was a “counter-Counter-Reformation” that navigated between Jesuit baroque piety and the controversial Jansenist movement”.¹² If we can state that a compromise existed with so-called “Enlightened Catholicism” under the papacy of Clement XIV, the “peacemaking” pope, it is not possible to sustain that the same situation existed under Pius VI, who, on the contrary, was to choose a drastic change in policy compared to that of his predecessor.¹³ It is very likely that the brief influenced many of the contemporary political commentators, especially after the “weak and procrastinating” pontificate such as Clement XIV’s proved to be. Certainly, in the political view of the Pope, printing would have been able to counter the anti-papal pamphleting widespread at that time, and to enflame the faithful against the “*novelli riformatori*”; on the other hand, diplomacy would have had to repair the damage done by the bishops with Jansenist leanings or faithful to regalistic policies, and lead the majority of the bishops back onto the straight and narrow path, in other words – obedience to the bishop of Rome. When reference is made to the wishes of Pius VI, it is well to remember that there are no extant orders or

¹¹ Biblioteca Casanatense, Per.est. 18 - 76.98, f. 3. Editto a stampa, Roma, 1775, April 20th.

¹² Sorkin David, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna* (Princeton, 2008), p. 10.

¹³ Moretti, *Clemente XIV Ganganelli, immagini e memorie di un pontificato*, pp. 183-94.

correspondence signed by the Pope in relation to any regulations, unless we consider the programmatic points expressed in papal Bulls and edicts.¹⁴ A large part of the opinions expressed may be deduced from facts such as the financing of a text or the erection of a monument. Furthermore, a large number of documents from the Secretary of State exist, where he wrote: “secondo la volontà del pontefice” according to the Pope’s wishes” or “according to the wishes of the Holy Father - His Holiness”; these forms, commonly used in ecclesiastic circles, assumed an importance which was different from the sense used in other environments, such as diplomatic contexts. Before the public Pius VI excelled for his prudence in treating certain questions, acting in complete contrast with his political action.¹⁵ However, the absence of direct orders from Pius VI should also be read from the viewpoint of the personal policy of the pontiff who, at least partially, removed some of the authority of the Curia in its normal spheres of influence, and who created a party of extremely faithful followers who answered directly to him¹⁶. Therefore, after the suppression of the Jesuit order, the Holy See relied on the work of the apostolic nuncios as far as the relation with the Catholic monarchies is concerned, the latter acquiring greater influence as a result. The increase in the power of the nuncios depended upon various factors. From researching documents it is obvious that the proximity of the nuncios to the Pope gave them greater security compared to the archbishops, who often acted as reigning heads or on behalf of sovereigns. It

¹⁴ On the contrary there are accounts given by people who had direct contact with the Pope and sustained Caffiero’s thesis according to which the Pope, far from having a supine attitude towards Joseph’s reforms, as most historiographers claim, followed an interventionist policy.

¹⁵ A case of this type was described by Elizabeth Garms Cornides: at the time of the funeral of Joseph II, the Curia was not in favour of a reconciling homily/sermon towards the Habsburgs, but because of the Pope’s wishes, the Emperor was treated with dignified respect. Garms-Cornides, “Il papato e gli Asburgo nell’età delle riforme settecentesche” in de Rosa and Gracco (eds.), *Il Papato e l’Europa* (Catanzaro, 2001), p. 294.

¹⁶ Menniti, *Il governo dei papi in età moderna*, p. 26.

must be remembered that, particularly in the German-speaking lands (as well as France), the upper clergy was composed almost exclusively of the aristocracy, for whom the bishoprics were reserved.¹⁷ One case mentioned by Antonio Menniti Ippolito is that of Cardinal Coscia, the *man of trust* of Benedict XIII (1724-1730), who had his cardinal's powers removed and was thrown in prison after the death of the Pope, (as happened sporadically with the cardinals during periods of Renaissance and more often during the period of Baroque nepotism).¹⁸ Compared to a general vision of eighteenth century episcopacy involved in conflict within the Curia and in tax collection, the analysis by Mario Rosa describes an episcopacy that had "matured" under the influence of the Council of Trent, from both a spiritual and a secular point of view. Rosa recognised that in the episcopal election system during the early-modern age there was a system that favoured: "the constitution of an upper clergy who was more faithful to political power than to the authority of Rome".¹⁹ In the following analyses of cases concerning the Prince-bishops of the empire and the hereditary Habsburg territories, Rosa stated that there was a strong difference in comparison to the Italian episcopacy. In fact, he underlined the strong loyalty of the Italian episcopacy compared to that of Germany. Indeed, in the German territories the bishops adhered completely to the elimination of religious practices considered as being superstitious, such as pious practices like: "indulgences, processions, confraternities and pilgrimages, and also «devotional excesses», such as the large number of annual feast days according to existing precepts [...], which led to

¹⁷ Rosa, *Clero cattolico e società europea in età moderna*, pp. 23-26.

¹⁸ Menniti, *Il tramonto della Curia nepotista*, pp. 155-56.

¹⁹ "[...] la costituzione di un alto clero fedele più fedele al potere politico che all'autorità romana". Rosa, *Clero cattolico e società europea nell'età moderna*, pp. 3-4.

abstaining from working days”.²⁰ Moreover, Rosa continued that although this adhesion by the bishops to Imperial reforms was undoubted and apparently voluntary under the rule of Maria Theresa, certain provisions made by Joseph II, such as the Edict of Tolerance and the suppression of some seminaries in favour of centralised seminaries sometimes met with considerable opposition.²¹ In spite of this aspect, the majority position of the bishops of the Empire was uncertain, and in some cases, it was openly hostile to the Holy See, as in the case of the Punctuation of Ems.²²

Certain examples have provided further material for reflection and for establishing a comparison between the diplomatic/institutional role of the nuncios and those bishops who had assumed a decisive role (influenced by Jansenism), attempting to once more emphasise the difficulties endured by the Holy See in maintaining a common diplomatic-political policy during the XVIII century, and precisely, through the body of bishops. In spite of these serious inadequacies in the ecclesiastical body, the service of caring for the souls of the faithful was performed by an insufficient number of priests, and as described by many scholars, the great majority of the population of the *ancien regime*, accepted the dogmatic truths of Catholicism.²³ In fact, the analysis in the previous chapter demonstrates how the role of the nuncios were defined by the Holy See as vital for the defence of the Church’s prerogatives in other countries.

²⁰ “[...] le indulgenze, le processioni, le confraternite e i pellegrinaggi e contro gli «eccessi di devozione», come il gran numero di feste annuali di precetto esistenti [...], le quali comportavano l’astensione dal lavoro”. Idem, p. 28.

²¹ On the contrary, the suppression of the rich monasteries by Joseph II should have been met with some favour by the bishops give that in many cases it would have eliminated conflicts concerning territorial administration that had existed for many years between dioceses and monasteries. Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder*, pp. 295-96.

²² In that case, Joseph II was uncertain about attributing certain prerogatives to the bishops or whether to leave the territorial-judicial administration to the Holy See. Blet Pierre, *Histoire de la Représentation Diplomatique du Saint Siège*, pp. 431-32.

²³ On this subject, see Chadwick, *The Popes and the European Revolution*, pp. 94-95; Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder*, pp. 1-9.

This choice increased the actual influence and power of the papal envoys, but firstly the “nunciature crisis”, followed by the expulsion of Zondadari, the nuncio of Brussels, then made it urgent to draw up a written code that would clarify and standardize the prerogatives of the nuncio no longer simply at local level.

The initial text produced in the period immediately afterwards was the report that Zondadari delivered to the Holy See. The second, as referred to in the second chapter, is that by the commission specifically set up in 1788 by Pius VI, and consists of a far more complex and sophisticated text. These documents preceded the definition of the powers of the apostolic nuncio ruled by the Code of Canon Law by almost a hundred and fifty years. In fact, the comparison between the Code of Canon Law and the publication of “*responsio super nunciaturis*” demonstrate a strong similarity and an affinity of intent in spite of a difference in time of two hundred years.²⁴ In this sense it could be confirmed that the juridical position of the papal envoys and that of the Pope were directly proportional in size: when one became stronger, the other also increased in strength and power.

²⁴ Below we introduce some points of current canon law concerning the position of the diplomatic representatives of the Holy See. The points listed in the current code are the results of the conflicts between the Holy See and the monarchies of the period in question. Therefore, because of their universal judicial nature, certain points entered into conflict with laws that had been applied for centuries. For this reason we thought it useful to list them below: Can. 363 §1. To the legates of the Roman Pontiff is entrusted the office of representing the Roman Pontiff in a stable manner to particular churches or also to the states and public authorities to which they are sent.

§2. Those who are designated as delegates or observers in a pontifical mission at international councils or at conferences and meetings also represent the Apostolic See.

Can. 364 The principal function of a pontifical legate is daily to make stronger and more effective the bonds of unity which exist between the Apostolic See and particular churches. Therefore, it pertains to the pontifical legate for his own jurisdiction:

1/ to send information to the Apostolic See concerning the conditions of particular churches and everything that touches the life of the Church and the good of souls;

Citta' del Vaticano, 20 March 2009, <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P1B.HTM>.

In support of what has been said so far, there is an aspect which stems from the ecclesiastical nature of the Holy See, that is the episcopal character of most papal representatives; for instance, at the time of the *collectariae* many of the Holy See agents were laymen.²⁵ On the contrary, it was the duty of the episcopate to stress the close connection between the Supreme Pontiff and the various bishops of the local churches. Indeed, it was essential that the status of the pope's representative was equal – but with different roles and different jurisdiction – to that of the bishops who lived in the same areas of action as the nuncios.

4.1. Zondadari: his ecclesiastical career from his period in Malta until his departure for Brussels

The office of the Maltese Inquisition under Zondadari is being analyzed for two main reasons. The former is linked to the brevity of his nunciature of Brussels. Indeed, his period of office lasted from 1786 to 1792, but Zondadari only stayed in Brussels from July 1786 to February 1787.²⁶ It is believed that in order to understand Zondadari's operational procedures in Brussels as a nuncio and a man, it is necessary to take into account his previous actions as an Inquisitor and as the diplomatic representative of the Holy See in Malta (approximately for seven years).²⁷ Moreover, our interest in his office in Malta springs from his intervention as an Inquisitor to foil the Neapolitan plan to cede

²⁵ The *collectarie* are fiscal circumscriptions that include the dioceses and the majority of the ecclesiastic provinces. The dispositions that controlled them often varied over the course of time. See Guyotjeannin Olivier and Uginet François-Charles, "Collecteurs", in Levillain (ed.), *Dictionnaire Historique de la Papauté* (Paris, 1994), pp. 410-11.

²⁶ After his expulsion, the nuncio and his office moved to Saint-Trond and then to Liège. He went back to Italy in 1791.

²⁷ Formally, Zondadari was nominated nuncio between 1786 and 1792, but in reality, as we have already observed, his presence in Brussels as nuncio lasted a period of about seven months.

Malta to the Russians. This diplomatic success may have helped him to gain the Pope's favour and, consequently, to be granted the nunciature in Brussels.

The first important position in the career of Anton Felice Zondadari was that of Inquisitor of Malta from 1777 to 1785. In fact, as the head of the Maltese Tribunal and Apostolic Delegate Zondadari had the chance to start his *cursus honorum* which he envisaged as giving him the opportunity to gain a more prestigious position in the future following his term of office in Malta. It should be remembered that the Zondadari family had certain interests on the Island for a considerable period²⁸. A large part of the Zondadari correspondence as Inquisitor is kept in the Vatican Archives (ASV).²⁹ Through the writings of the Inquisitor we became aware of the vast number of contacts his family had on the island, particularly among the senior church figures according to the senior nuncio of Brussels. Furthermore, it should be remembered that the correspondence sent from the Inquisitor was regularly filed in the archives of the Secretary of State, while the letters sent to the Inquisitor from the Secretary of State are often absent. Therefore, this missing documentary evidence creates a problem of historical analysis. However it is possible to suggest an explanation for this practice which seems somewhat unorthodox: it is supposed that the correspondence with the Secretary was of a private nature. So according to this principle, once he boarded ship to leave the island, each Inquisitor took all written documents with him and, hopefully in the best event, he would place the correspondence among the manuscripts in the family archives.³⁰ The situation

²⁸ We should remember that the office of Inquisitor in Malta was previously held by his uncle, Alessandro Zondadari, while his Great Uncle, Marc'Antonio Zondadari was Grand Master of the Order of the Knights of Malta (1720 – 1722).

²⁹ ASV, Segreteria di Stato Malta 1777 to 1785.

³⁰ Among the many attestations on this subject, we propose that of the Inquisitor Raniero Pallavicini (1672-1676) which seems particularly interesting. Pallavicini concluded his period as

facing the new Inquisitor was not easy. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Grand Masters of the Maltese Order were fighting for the abolition of ecclesiastical immunity in order to reduce the powers of the Inquisition in judicial matters. In fact, at the beginning of 1770 the opposition of Grand Master Ximenes to Inquisitor Manciforte nearly brought the relationship between the Church of Rome and the Order to breaking point. The arrival of the more “diplomatic” Inquisitor Antonio Maria Lante in 1771, heralded the reconciliation of both parties.

Despite his success in establishing normal relations between the Maltese Order and the Church, the Inquisitor was replaced by Zondadari. The actual reason why Lante was removed in 1777 was because of his relationship with Marquis Tanucci, the prime minister of the King of Naples who used Lante as a secret agent³¹. The Kingdom of Naples claimed certain rights and influence in Malta opposing the official position of the Church. In a series of circumstances Lante found himself in the disturbing position of having to obey instructions from Rome whilst at the same time having to show favor to Tanucci. Moreover, another conflictual element was introduced by the fact that shortly after the Seven Years War, Naples entered the Habsburg orbit, leaving the protection of Spain, and therefore increasing the presence of Vienna in the Italian peninsula to a considerable extent.³² In 1768 the marriage between Ferdinand of Naples and one of Maria Teresa’s daughters, the archduchess Maria Carolina, ideally

Inquisitor away from the island because of ill health, and in his instructions sent to the pro-Inquisitor Ludovico Famucelli, he stated the following: “Trattenghi per me quelli della Segreteria di Stato, per rimetterli a più pronta e sicura occasione, e gl’altri del S. Officio resteranno nei soliti registri”. ASV, Segreteria di Stato Malta, 27D, f.61r.

³¹ On this topic, see Frans Ciappara, *The Roman Inquisition in Enlightened Malta* (Malta, 2000), p. 51.

³² “Maria Carolina’s brother, the emperor Joseph II, escorted her on her nuptial journey to Naples. Another brother Peter Leopold, was Grand Duke of Tuscany, while her sister Maria Amalia was married to the Duke of Parma, Don Felipe of Bourbon, who was the first cousin of the king of Naples”.

represented a fracture between the Spanish and Austrian periods, even though the Queen had to wait for the birth of her first-born son before she was permitted to become a member of the Council of State.³³ It was clear that through the Queen's active participation in the politics of the State of Naples, that the kingdom would soon be aligned with Joseph's ideas on reform.³⁴ If the Spanish party represented by Tanucci was a source of worry for the Church, the introduction of anticlerical and reformist politics by Maria Carolina represented an acceleration in the strong contrast between Rome and Naples. This was the scenario in which Zondadari found himself in Malta on the 9th July 1777.³⁵ He was quite a different prospect from his predecessor. He had no ties with the court of Naples, indeed a large part of the Chigi-Zondadari family business and income was derived from concessions and privileges accorded by the Church. These ties made Zondadari a convenient and useful instrument for operating in the interests of Rome. Girolamo Graziani, who accompanied the Inquisitor Zondadari to Malta in his role as Auditor, corresponded regularly with Garampi.³⁶ He was indebted to the nuncio of Vienna for this position: and it was due to his "gratitude" if almost all the more important information that reached the Secretary of State from Malta, also made its way to Garampi through the hands of the Auditor. During these eight years in Malta the juridical activity of

Davis John A., *Naples and Napoleon, Southern Italy and the European Revolutions 1780-1860* (Oxford, 2006), p. 23.

³³ Davis John A., *Naples and Napoleon*, p. 23.

³⁴ "The young queen's aim was to imitate the reform being introduced in Vienna by her brother, the emperor Joseph II, and she needed a minister willing to assert the power of the monarchy over the feudal nobility and the Church and build a dynastic army and navy. She found her man in 1778 when her brother Peter Leopold sent an energetic administrator named John Acton to Naples to advise on building a navy". Davis John A., *Naples and Napoleon*, pp. 23-24.

³⁵ ASV, Segr. Stato Malta 138, f. 60r, 1777, July 9, Inquisitor Lante to secretary of state cardinal Pallavicini: "Nella mattina del 9 corrente e' felicemente giunto con una polacca francese monsignor Zondadari, il quale condurro' questa sera dall'eminetissimo Gran Maestro", trans.: "In the morning of 9th inst ms. Zondadari arrived safely in a french ship and I will bring him this evening into the presence of the Grand Master".

³⁶ "Credo mio dovere indispensabile di parteciparle il mio arrivo in quest'isola". ASV, Fondo Garampi 281, Girolamo Graziani to Garampi, f. 153r. Malta, 1777, August 18.

the Inquisitor showed his involvement with the Grand Master Rohan. For example, Rohan's Knights of Malta were not formally accused by the Inquisition despite their sympathetic adherence to Masonic ideals, in order to avoid confrontation with the Order (Masonry was one of the ideological movements considered with major disapproval by the Church).

In the case of extraterritoriality of the Church-owned areas, Zondadari maintained a strict line, opposing all requests from the Knights of Malta to agree to the return of all slaves and fugitives who sought sanctuary in church lands and premises so they might be judged under the Order. As far as the slaves were concerned, many of whom were from Islamic North Africa, the Inquisitor saw a chance to convert them to Catholicism. In relation to the presence of the Jewish minority living in Malta, Zondadari was particularly zealous in denouncing certain Jewish merchants, demonstrating his prejudicial attitude towards Judaism, in line with the most conservative and reactionary party of the Church³⁷. In addition, Zondadari's term of office differed from that of his predecessors because of his different approach to military matters. Furthermore, he showed little interest in monitoring and reporting the comings and goings of important figures except military personnel traveling within the island.³⁸ In fact, he sent reports to the secretariat on the exact number of ships passing through Maltese waters, together with information regarding the ships' armament as well as names of commanders and senior officers.

These reports which were normally sent to the Vatican were extremely precise, for example, in a report dated 25 April we see: "Fighting in Maltese waters between French and Turkish forces. The Turkish defeat was caused by the

³⁷ ASV, Segr. Stato Malta 141, f. 13r, 1783, January 18, Inquisitor Zondadari to Secretary of State Cardinal Pallavicini.

³⁸ ASV, Segr. Stato Malta 139 – 142A.

unrelenting firepower of the French muskets”.³⁹ We also have reports showing the types of weaponry used along with other technical information. Much of this was gleaned from wounded soldiers found in the Maltese hospitals. In this context, let us also remember the position of the Auditor Graziani who can be considered a parallel source of information: he also sent strictly military information to Garampi: for example he sent a report on the naval expedition sent to Algiers by the Neapolitan fleet, together with the fleets of Spain, Malta, and Portugal.⁴⁰ But perhaps the most delicate moment during his term of office came when, thanks to his information network, Zondadari discovered a secret plan by the court of Naples in the middle of 1784 to sell the sovereignty of the Isle of Malta to the Russians.⁴¹ Even if the assignment of the island had brought economic advantages for the Kingdom of Naples, very probably this decision must be considered in the general diplomatic picture, and according to the influence that Joseph II could have had over his sister because of the alliance that the Habsburgs had stipulated with the Zarina, Catherine of Russia.⁴² Before this

³⁹ ASV, Segr. Stato Malta 141, f. 144r – 145v, 1783, April 25, Inquisitor Zondadari to secretary of state cardinal Pallavicini, trans. “Combattimento nelle acque maltesi tra francesi e turchi. Sconfitta dei turchi a causa del nutrito fuoco di moschetteria francese”.

⁴⁰ The existence of an alternative information channel does not seem to have changed the action of the Inquisitor in Malta; on the contrary, in some ways it would seem widely tolerated by Zondadari himself, as he had been a friend of Garampi’s from the very beginning of his ecclesiastic career. ASV, Fondo Garampi 281, f. 187rv., Girolamo Graziani to Garampi, Malta, 1784, august 21.

⁴¹ Russia had been trying to assure itself a base in the Mediterranean. Taking advantage of her role as a possible diplomatic mediator in the conflict between the English and the Americans, the Russian empress Catherine let the English government know – through prince Potemkin’s good offices - that she wanted Minorca. The English cabinet - which was trying to settle the matter concerning the American colonies as smoothly as possible aiming at a “favourable peace” - found the offered intercession very interesting. This agreement between England and Russia came to nothing because of George III’s flat refusal: “for he declared that he would never cede a possession which had not been conquered by the enemy”. Mackesy Piers, *The war in America 1775-1783* (London, 1994), pp. 382 – 383.

⁴² In particular, the combined plans for attacking the Ottoman Empire should be remembered; different information concerning the presence of the Russian fleet in Livorno can be found in: Wandruszka Adam, *Pietro Leopoldo, un grande riformatore* (Firenze, 1968), pp. 300-311. In addition, other general information on Austro-Russian military and diplomatic plans can be found in: Brückner A., *Caterina II* (Milano, 1910), pp. 444-497; de Madariaga Isabel, *Caterina di Russia* (Torino, 1988), pp. 507-578; Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. II, pp. 555-582; Shaw J. Stanford,

plan could succeed, in his role as the official representative of the Church, through diplomatic channels Zondadari informed all the Catholic states in Europe of this intention to sell the island. Thus he was able to form a powerful coalition of opinion opposed to the idea of Russian presence in the heart of the Mediterranean. Naples was forced to take a step back forced by strong European political pressure. For the Inquisitor of Malta, this was indeed the peak of his career.⁴³

Only a few months later, on the 15th of February 1785 he was informed of his next appointment as nuncio to the Austrian Netherlands and that the next Inquisitor of Malta, was to be monsignor Gallarati Scotti. On 19 March 1785, Zondadari wrote to Boncompagni Ludovisi thanking him: “I have every reason to thank you for having the honour of your protection which I scarcely merit and for presenting myself to his Holiness”.⁴⁴ At the same time Graziani attempted to preserve his position as Auditor under Zondadari requesting Garampi to intercede on his behalf with the Pope. In June, the Auditor informed Garampi that he would not have obtained the position another time because: “the prelate (Zondadari) led me to understand that because of the lack of a court there, he would no longer require my services”.⁴⁵ With the cardinal’s intervention, the Auditor Graziani managed to maintain his position with Zondadari, but only a

Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III. 1789-1807 (Harvard, 1971), pp. 323-340; Bagis Ali Ihsan, *Britain and the Struggle for the Integrity of the Ottoman Empire 1776 – 1794* (Istanbul, 1984), pp. 51-56.

⁴³ We should remember that the Island of Malta and its Knights were vassals of the pope, but were economically and geopolitically dependent on the Kingdom of Naples. Moreover, it must be remembered that during that period Russia was being militarily harassed on its Northern borders by Gustav III of Sweden. This reason could have reduced the Russian ambitions concerning maintaining a permanent fleet in the Mediterranean.

⁴⁴ “[...] io ho tutti i motivi di riconoscerne il favore della protezione, colla quale ha voluto superiormente ai miei meriti , far presente la mia persona a sua santità”. ASV, Segr. Stato Malta 142 A, f. 46r, 1785, March 19, Inquisitor Zondadari to secretary of state cardinal Boncompagni Ludovisi.

⁴⁵ “Per mancanza colà di tribunale mi fece intendere il prelato (Zondadari), che non avrebbe egli avuto bisogno di me” ASV, Fondo Garampi 281, f. 192rv. Girolamo Graziani to Garampi, Malta, 1785, June 6.

year after the decision to send Zondadari to Brussels (it should be remembered that Zondadari did not reach Austrian Flanders until a year after his nomination). The letters which the auditor, Graziani, sent to Garampi after confirmation of Graziani's position demonstrate the common practice of the client system in the Church States. As well as the intelligence work the Auditor would have continued to perform for the Cardinal, the sense of gratitude towards his Patron was such that, to enhance the virtues of Garampi, he even made comparisons and parallels with the saints: "May God preserve him because if his presence were lacking in these times it would be a very great disadvantage. Without fear of error, he can be compared to a St. Francis de Sales, or a St. Charles Borromeo of our time".⁴⁶ Moreover, the fact that Garampi had approached the Secretary of State to reinstate Graziani as Zondadari's auditor would lead us to think that the new position of the priest from Siena was considered of great importance. In fact, the pope had been worried for some time about the introduction of Joseph's reforms in the Austrian Netherlands, and by sending an auditor who could control the actions of the new nuncio it would have been possible to provide a stronger guarantee of the positive work performed by the nunciature, or rather, its control by Rome. With the arrival of the new Inquisitor in Malta, Zondadari embarked on a long trip to take up his post as nuncio in Brussels.

4.2. Zondadari's long journey from Siena to Brussels: the nunciature's documents in the Vatican Archives

Having first presented the new Inquisitor, Gallarati Scotti to the Grand Master, Zondadari quickly took his leave of the knights and his friends and

⁴⁶ "Iddio ce lo conservi, perché la sua mancanza nei tempi presenti non sarebbe, che di grandissimo svantaggio. Si può egli dire senza timore di sbagliarsi un San Francesco di Sales, un San Carlo Borromeo dei nostri giorni". ASV, Fondo Garampi 281, f. 196v. Girolamo Graziani to Garampi, Bruxelles, 1786, September 19.

acquaintances and he sailed to Sicily on a *speronara*⁴⁷, from where he continued his trip to Naples, finally landing at Civitavecchia near Rome. At Rome he was given the opportunity to meet the most important dignitaries of the Curia and have a private consultation with the Pope who wished to brief him personally about his new post.⁴⁸ The journey continued with a month long stay in his native Siena, after which he continued a journey through Italy and France visiting many of the major dioceses. Several of these dioceses, such as Utrecht, were considered as strongholds of European Jansenism, during that period. In the meantime the situation in Austrian Netherlands was tense because of the controversial dispute over the navigation rights in the waters between Austrian Netherlands and the Dutch Republic. The Church could foresee the possibility of a conflict between the Empire and Holland but maintained a neutral position. Meanwhile Zondadari reported back to the Secretary of State concerning numerous contacts and testimonies of support from the ecclesiastical community. As well the *internuncio* Causati⁴⁹ in the first half of 1786, the current nuncio in Brussels, for the whole of 1785, Ignazio Busca continued to send dispatches concerning troop movements from Austria to the border with Holland, and numerous attempts at diplomatic mediation were made by the French when all threats of war by Joseph II failed.⁵⁰ Probably, it was the failure of the political stance adopted by Joseph II that allowed Kaunitz to rekindle the project of

⁴⁷ A *Speronara* was a kind of boat which plied between Malta and Sicily.

⁴⁸ Moroni, *Dizionario di Erudizione Ecclesiastica* (Venezia, 1862), vol. CIII, pp. 328-36.

⁴⁹ Causati was Busca's auditor of the Brussels nunciature; Because of Busca's illness and after his dismissal, he assumed the position of internuncio. For a definition of the internuncio's functions, refer to Moroni, *Dizionario di Erudizione Ecclesiastica* (Venezia, 1862), vol. XXXVI p. 59.

⁵⁰ In relation to this, the news that arrived from the English diplomats concerned the influence that the French exercised over the Austrians, and were expressed thus: "The success of this intervention or intercession is said to have been much greater than could have been well expected after the emperor had held so firm a language, and it serves to prove the weight which the French Council confirme (unfortunately) to have with this monarch". PRO, FO7/4, n. 39.

exchanging the Low Countries with Bavaria.⁵¹ The “Scheldt Affair” embarrassed the French who did not wish to undermine their good relationships with the Dutch, while also fearing to estrange the Austrians at the same time. At that time, it was possible for Joseph II to try and pressure the French to manifest their good intentions towards the Austrian monarchy. It was necessary to ask approval from the French for the original plan that had failed in 1778: the exchange of Belgium for Bavaria. In this case Joseph would not have raised any further objections to the Dutch closing the Shelda to the Belgian traders. Besides, Russia had an obligation to Austria because of the war with the Ottoman Empire: it was now able to return the favour by supporting the exchange plan. If Russia were to exercise pressure on France, Prussia and on the elector of Bavaria, the affair could be concluded in terms presenting few particular risks. In reality, France secretly showed her its opposition to the project and did everything it could to make the project fail as it felt it would be against its own interests. Moreover, the old king of Prussia proclaimed himself as the head of the German princes publicly establishing the *Fürstenbund* (Confederation of the German princes) thereby forming a league to defend the status quo in Germany. In addition, Frederick II had the details of the plan published in the Belgian press.⁵² In this way, he succeeded in alienating the Belgian merchant bourgeoisie against Joseph II. This segment of the population was the only social class that considered the reform of the emperor favourably before the publication of the plan. Joseph’s diplomatic failure jeopardized his authority in the Hereditary Provinces and

⁵¹ When in 1777, Charles Theodor became Elector and Duke of Bavaria and moved his residences to Munich, later he put a proposal to Joseph II to exchange some of his territory in Bavaria with some Austrian dominions along the river Rhine and land in what is now Belgium. Such proposals brought about a diplomatic crisis that led to the so-called War of Bavarian Succession between Austria and Prussia ending in the Peace Treaty of Teschen in 1779.

⁵² The political manouvre of Friedrich II against the Josephest proposal of state exchanges is present in Ritter Gerhard, *Federico il Grande* (it. edn., Bologna, 2000) p. 242.

Hungary, where the nobility openly protested against the census and against the administrative reforms. The only consolation for the emperor was a restitution by the Dutch and his extrication from this “miserable irritation”.⁵³ Since Joseph had not succeeded in exchanging Flanders with Bavaria, the objective he proposed was to turn Belgium into a model state becoming a rival to France and Holland as an industrial, commercial and maritime entity. In 1781 Joseph II, visited the Austrian Low Countries disguising himself as the well-known Count Falkenstein. In this way the Emperor could avoid the pompous welcome prescribed by the protocol and, at the same time, be dispensed from swearing to maintain his people’s rights and liberties. The Emperor’s visits took place during the American and the Anglo-Dutch wars. It is precisely in this lapse of time that the Austrian Low Countries experienced a brief commercial boom thanks to their neutrality which gave them the opportunity to trade with both the belligerent powers. In this context, a series of tolerance acts in favour of the non-Catholics were issued to guarantee their civil and working rights. This attracted foreign capitals and traders (including business transactions between the English and the Dutch). The peace treaties between 1782 and 1784 caused the boom to decline and finally end. The events that followed can, therefore, be seen in the light of these problems, that is the pauperism of the urbanization of Austrian Netherlands and the consequent neglect of part of the agricultural production. In March 1783, in compliance with the scheme which had already been tried out in Vienna, Joseph II ordered the closing down of the religious buildings which were of “no public utility” (schools and hospitals were not included). In 1784 torture as a judicial act was abolished together with the restriction in the number of

⁵³ Joseph to Leopold, HHSA – *F.A.*, *Sammelbände* 24.1 – 25 Kart.9, 1786, January 21, ff. 12-13.

apprentices and workers that could be employed by a craftsman.⁵⁴ Several new reforms followed, including ones on hygiene and health, but it was the ecclesiastical ones which encountered the fiercest ostracism.⁵⁵ Already in the 1786, the Secretariat of State sent a dispatch concerning the necessity to oppose all reforms and the moral danger represented by not observing Lent and the ecclesiastical fast.⁵⁶ In the “draft or detail of the letter that was to be written by the (Monsignors) apostolic nuncios of Lucerne and Brussels to the respective bishops of their district”, the wish of the pontiff was announced clearly.⁵⁷ In very plain words concerning discipline, he appealed to the bishops saying: “Our felicitous ruling Lord, deeply deploring the corruption of the customs and the non-observance of the ecclesiastical precepts, expressly commands me to encourage pastoral vigilance”.⁵⁸ Pope Pius VI concluded his message with an appeal to the dioceses to faithfully observe the doctrine and to condemn: “those abuses so easily taken up by the populace who have almost abandoned both the old and the recent ecclesiastical laws”.⁵⁹ From documents kept in the Vatican Archives I found evidence that since 1786 the State Secretariat had been well aware of the details of the intended reforms of the Empire, insofar as it concerned the government reorganization of the provinces as well as religious

⁵⁴ This limit was imposed by the various craftsmen’s guilds over several centuries.

⁵⁵ Arblaster Paul, *A History of the Low Countries* (London, 2006), p.169.

⁵⁶ There were numerous communications from the nunciatures concerning the observance of certain precepts of the Church and on the Reforms that Joseph II would have preferred to apply instead. According to the intentions of the Reformers, these new rules would have drawn the population closer towards a greater participation in Christianity, and at the same time, would have kept at a distance the necessary intervention of the Pope in the case of conceding special religious dispensations. ASV, Segr. Stato Fiandra 135 S.s. f.15 r.

⁵⁷ ASV, Segr. Stato Fiandre 135 S.s., 1786 February 18, f. 27r. “piano o sia dettaglio di lettera da scriversi dai monsignori nunzi apostolici di Vienna, di Lucerna e Brusselles ai rispettivi vescovi di loro distretto”.

⁵⁸ ASV, Id. F. 29r.

⁵⁹ Idem.

organization.⁶⁰ The various provincial Councils and the private Council, that of Finance and the Chamber of Accounts were to be eliminated in favour of a single new body called “Royal Council”. This council would have no longer consulted the regional bodies but would have had direct contact with the plenipotentiary minister, thus centralising all power in a single capacity.⁶¹ Religious aspects, and in particular the abolition of the monasteries and charitable institutions run by the Church made Causati fear for the future of Austrian Flanders, feeling afraid that it would soon follow the same fate as England. In fact, he wrote that: “[...] we have heard from England that there are general complaints, that charitable aid for the poor has been considerably reduced, and through lack of aid, the poor have to depend on the State”.⁶²

The Auditor of the Brussels nunciature continued by analysing the causes. According to his opinion:

It has also been observed that charitable aid has been diminishing gradually over the past two centuries. This was caused by the destruction of the clergy during the Religious Revolutions. At that time, it was the clergy who assumed the main charge of maintaining the poor, but after they were destroyed and their property was given over into secular hands [...] they no longer took care of the poor.⁶³

⁶⁰ The missive sent by Causati dated 28th of March 1786 to the Secretary of State, Boncompagni, illustrated in detail the main reforms that were planned, as well as the structures of the new organisms of the government of Austrian Flanders. ASV, Segr. Stato Fiandre 135 S.s, Causati to Boncompagni Ludovisi, Brussels, 1786 March 28, ff.115-16r.

⁶¹ ASV, Segr. Stato Fiandre 135 S.s, Causati to Boncompagni Ludovisi, Brussels, 1786 March 28, f.115r.

⁶² *Idem.*, f. 116r.

⁶³ *Idem.*

Causati concluded saying that: “If we were to make these comments in other sovereign states where they also seek to destroy the clergy, perhaps it would be recognised that the clergy are by no means harmful, but very useful for the public good”.⁶⁴ Joseph II, described by the nunciature auditor as a new Henry VIII, had created a situation that both his mother and Haugwitz, and later Kaunitz, had attempted to avoid.⁶⁵ On the subject of the impact that the latest Imperial measures would have had on the small population of Austrian Flanders, Beales observes that in few parts of the Empire the population and laymen defended their clergy with much tenacity.⁶⁶ Soon after, instead of trying to defend “the ancient and recent laws” altogether, the nunciature of Brussels suggested preserving the whole body of judicial law of the Church by simply defending the papal bull “Unigenitus”, and claimed that the Church of Flanders was the sole source of support for the poor of the country (through the various parishes, charity homes and confraternities).⁶⁷ The cardinal of Franckenberg objected to the amendment of the oath imposed on bishops and beneficiaries, which intended to pass over in silence the bull *Unigenitus*. During his voyage to Austria, Pius VI had been granted some concessions, among which the right for the professors of theology to explain the significance and the theological importance of the bull. On 19 August 1782 the concession was revoked in the

⁶⁴ *Idem*.

⁶⁵ Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. II, p. 501.

⁶⁶ Beales quotes the figures for Vienna and Brussels, revealing that in spite of having only a third of the population of Vienna, it had the same number of clergy. Moreover, he adds that: “One in thirty of the inhabitants of the University town of Louvain was a priest, monk or nun”. Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. II, p. 502.

⁶⁷ In fact, great importance was given in a missive from the nuncio concerning the opening of an orphanage in Amsterdam. In this file concerning the subject, we found a lithograph showing the building in question. This is one of the rare examples where an illustration is included in a nuncio’s report. ASV, Segr. Stato Fiandre 135 S. s. f.228 v.

Austrian Low Countries. Indeed, the resistance that the clergy put up to the issues relating to the episcopal power was weak up to 1786.⁶⁸

In 1787, the imperial proclamation of the Edict of Tolerance and the suppression of the bishops' seminaries in the Austrian Netherlands provoked strong resistance on behalf of the emperor's subjects, which surprised Joseph II as he considered himself to be acting in the general interest.⁶⁹ In this section, by studying the documents of the nunciature of Brussels, we have taken into consideration to what extent society in the Austrian Netherlands was based on very old traditional foundatory pacts between important local figures and the clergy. This social-political bond that Joseph II wished to break in favour of rationalisation of resources and centralisation of the State had ended up creating a vast area of opposition. In the despatches sent to Rome, the nunciature constantly recorded the general discontent as well as any other news connected with the religious reforms that the Emperor would have introduced in the Austrian Netherlands sooner or later. In fact, the next section underlines the effort made by the empire to reform the Catholic Church in those territories; a reform that also foresaw the replacement of the seminaries controlled by the bishops by the setting up of a large state seminary which would have tutored the theological training of the local clergy.

⁶⁸ This is the conclusion drawn from the text by Verhaegen, *Le cardinal de Franckemberg* (Lille, 1889) p. 69.

⁶⁹ "I know [...] his extreme affliction at this changes of system". PRO, FO7/12, f.207r. Murray Keith to Foreign Secretary Camarthen, Vienna, 1787, July 9.

4.3. From various sources of news concerning the reforms “to be applied” in Austrian Flanders , to the news of the promulgation of the Imperial decrees

“Already for some time there have been rumours of a great change in the system to be kept in the regulations of Internal affairs”⁷⁰. Furthermore, it was reported that (as we discussed in the previous section), according to the intentions of the Emperor, three very old institutions of the country were to be suppressed, namely: the Private Council, the Financial Council and the Chamber of Accounts. All business treated in these tribunals would be directed to a single governing body and that this institution would have its name changed to the new title of Royal Council. To head this new Institution (as usual, according to the indiscretions reported by the internuncio Michele Causati) would be the Minister plenipotentiary *pro tempore* in residence on behalf of the Habsburgs. The internuncio Causati expressed some perplexity concerning the rumours he had heard up to that point: “No innovation have been made, although it is said that the desired change was to have been effected in the new year”⁷¹.

The attention of Joseph II would have soon been influenced in that direction because of events, as the possibility of the conflict with Holland had been laboriously reassembled with the help of France. Furthermore, if Flanders could not be ceded for exchange for Bavaria, the already prosperous Habsburg state needed to be economically relaunched with a range of Enlightenment reforms, in order to liberate it from the system of medieval privileges. But, if the

⁷⁰ ASV, Segr. Stato Fiandra 135 S.s., Bruxelles 1786, January 3, f.5 r., Michele Causati to secretary of state cardinal Boncompagni Ludovisi. “E’ gia’ da qualche tempo, che qui corre la voce d’un gran cambiamento nel sistema da tenersi nel regolamento degli affari interni”.

⁷¹ ASV, Segr. Stato Fiandra 135 S.s., Bruxelles 1786, January 3, f.5 v., Michele Causati to secretary of state cardinal Boncompagni Ludovisi. “non si e’ fatta alcuna innovazione, sebbene si dicesse, che doveva aver luogo il voluto cambiamento col principiar del nuovo anno”.

Emperor felt that changes needed to be made, the Pope had been battling for some time to restore worship in more “appropriate” forms. Among a great deal of correspondence dated January 1786 on religious observance reported by the nunciature of Brussels, there is a document that is very useful to our research for two reasons. The first is the fact that the Pope was not addressing only one nuncio, but all the nuncios present in the Imperial territory, in this way demonstrating a far more general desire for action, just as our research tends to interpret his attitude. In fact the text states:

That on the 15 January 1778, an order was written on behalf of Our Lord, to the nuncios in Vienna, Cologne, Brussels, and Lucerne, sending the layout of a letter for the Bishops of the districts of those nunciatures to direct them that failure to observe Lent was not to be tolerated, and to also be informed that dispensation for a community, a population or a diocese from observing Lenten fasting, whether eggs or cheese, or meat, was the exclusive right of the Sovereign Pontiff.⁷²

Once again the Church intervened in order to bridle the Jansenistic tendencies promoted by the imperial government to the advantage of a stronger episcopate which could be less dependant upon Rome.

The second element worthy of consideration is the opposition promoted by Pius VI against that freedom of the Jansenist influence that the bishops

⁷² ASV, Segr. Stato Fiandra 135 S.s., Bruxelles 1786, January 18, f.15r., Michele Causati to secretary of state cardinal Boncompagni Ludovisi. “Che ai 15 gennaio 1778 d’ordini di Nostro Signore fu scritto ai nunzi in Vienna, Colonia, Bruxelles e Lucerna, e mandato loro un piano di lettera de Vescovi del Distretto di quelle nunziature onde a portarli a non tollerare l’inosservanza della quaresima, e far loro riflettere altresì, che il dispensare una comunità, un popolo, una diocesi dall’osservanza della quaresima, sia in uova e latticini, sia in carne, era riservato al Romano Pontefice”.

assumed by no longer addressing Rome for permission to dispense their own flocks from observing Lent. Therefore the Pope decided to call all the bishops to order and this he performed through the nuncios, who, as we have emphasised several times, represented the best possible means of intermediation between the Pope and the population of the Church. This document, dated 20 March 1785 was quoted by the nuncio in the general picture of the increased influence of the Bishops in Flanders and in the Imperial territories. In fact on 18 January 1786 Causati wrote: "For some time in countries under Austrian rule, it has become the habit to submit to the judgement of the Bishops".⁷³

Later in January, and during the following months, a great deal of information was sent from the nunciature of Brussels concerning the suppression of birthright and lay confraternities. In relation to birthrights, the information from Brussels clarified that if they were applied, this would have created great displeasure among the most important families in the country. The suppression of the confraternities was seen with disapproval by the internuncio because, even if there were too many of them, these religious institutions served a social purpose: "there are a large number in this Austrian dominion, and even sufficiently numerous therefore, it is not known whether any substantial unrest exists, but rather, they make themselves useful to their fellow men".⁷⁴ The General Seminary that was to have been constructed remained the principle topic in the information sent to Rome. Naturally the Abbot Causati was well aware of the link between the education received in the General Seminary and the possible diffusion of Jansenist and Febronian ideas in the Austrian Flanders. In fact, he

⁷³ Idem f.16r. "Da qualche tempo si e' usata la condiscendenza di rimettersi ne paesi di dominio Austriaco all'arbitrio de vescovi".

⁷⁴ "Sono in gran numero in questo dominio austriaco, ed anche in parte bastantemente sicche' non si sa, che vi siano in esse disordini sostanziali, ma piuttosto si rendono utili al prossimo". Idem, 1786, marzo 17, f.59v.

noted with a little apprehension: “I am even further convinced of the importance of his Holiness maintaining a strong stand concerning the promises made to him by the Emperor, that the points included in the *Unigenitus* bull will not be touched in this country [...]”.⁷⁵ The internuncio then pleaded with the Holy See to protest against the “muted violence against new bishops to force them to omit the *admissione* (this refers to the oath that the bishops had to take, swearing obedience to the *Unigenitus* bull) before taking sacred orders”⁷⁶. The problem was seen in perspective: Causati feared that the institution of the new General Seminary would have been able to negatively influence the practice of *admissione* for the new bishops, and as a consequence, could have placed the nunciature and his own personal position in a seriously embarrassing position with Imperial authorities.⁷⁷

4.4. The general seminaries

In the Emperor’s plan for new reforms, the reorganization of the teaching of theology held a prominent position. Following an edict dated 16 October 1786, two general seminaries were created in Leuven and Luxembourg. All those wishing to join the secular and regular priesthood had to attend their courses. A new edict, issued not long after the first, introduced the course of studies and appointed the professors. These reorganizations had the effect of unsettling the internal stability of the diocesan organization and an outspoken opposition soon arose. The government stood its ground and accommodation facilities which

⁷⁵ “Mi è venuto un riflesso che confermerà sempre più quanto sia importante, che sua Santità tenga fermo sulla promessa fattali dall’imperatore di non toccare in questi paesi il punto della bolla *Unigenitus*”. Idem, 1786, marzo 21, f. 104r

⁷⁶ “Violenza sorda, che si fa ai nuovi vescovi per sforzarli a tralasciare l’*admissione* (fa riferimento al giuramento che i vescovi dovevano pronunciare circa l’ubbidienza dovuta alla bolla *Unigenitus*) prima della collazione degli sagri ordini”. Idem.

⁷⁷ Idem.

could lodge six hundred seminarians were created in Leuven for the opening of the academic year in November 1786.⁷⁸ The cardinal of Franckenberg, torn between his obligations towards the Holy See and the Emperor, managed to reach a compromise between the old and the new. Joseph II accepted his request, namely that after five years' general study the clergymen should serve their apprenticeship in the old seminaries converted into presbyteries. He was also authorized to send one of his delegates to Leuven in order to check the quality of the teaching.⁷⁹ Apart from the episcopate of Namur, all the bishops sent their seminarists to the general seminary. The lessons therefore started against a background of negativism. The students were prejudiced against the superior of the seminary in Leuven Stoger, and the three vice-rectors, Lajoie, Vonck, Copine and the canonist Leplat.⁸⁰ The superior of the seminary and the vice-rectors had become well-known for their theological publications similar to Joseph's position on reform. In particular, Josse Leplat had been mentioned as a libeller in the 'gazettes' contrary to the Church.⁸¹ Therefore these figures were the object of the students' general indignation from the time of the very first lessons. The reaction to these changes did not go unnoticed. Accounts and details of this event were reported in the press. In Venturi's work, two of the main sources of information on this period are the gazettes: *Notizie dal Mondo* and *Gazzetta Universale*.⁸² These "reports" gave voice to the discontent of the seminarists and professors of theology who had been sent away or replaced by those who were in

⁷⁸ Government estimates foresaw that the number would be increased later as far as a total of 1400. Verhaegen, *Le cardinal de Franckemberg*, p.157.

⁷⁹ Idem, pp.159-60.

⁸⁰ Idem, pp.158-60.

⁸¹ Garampi always took great care to identify the texts and Pamphlets against the Holy See (through the vast network of his acquaintances in the imperial area) and he also directed the publication of the answers to reform publications from his seat in Montefiascone. Vanyacker Dries, *Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi*, pp. 260-62.

⁸² Venturi, *Settecento riformatore*, IV. 2, pp.726-27.

favour of Joseph II's reformist radicalism. The debate on what was happening became more and more heated:

The new laws and regulations introduced to replace those which existed previously did not please certain members of the University of Louvain, and although the whole of Europe had applauded the reforms introduced by the Emperor, there were certain directors of this famous school who were not enthusiastic and who believed that their privileges had been attacked; since all of them had a great deal of influence on the zealous hearts of the young students it was not difficult to incite them towards a protest⁸³.

The seminarists' protest (which had become an open rebellion by then) reached its peak when Pius brief *Super Soliditate* – was distributed by Zondadari with the help of the cardinal of Franckenberg. In the first part of the Count of Belgioso's report – dated January 16th 1787 - to the Prime Minister Kaunitz there was news on the help given by the Primate of Flanders to the *affaire* of the rebellion of the General Seminary through the distribution of the Pope's brief printed in secret.⁸⁴ The entire blame for the events was placed on Zondadari in a later report dated 27 January 1787: "I enclose a copy of an official report from Malines with the declaration of the cardinal concerning the matter of the bull; the

⁸³ "Le nuove leggi, i nuovi regolamenti sostituiti agli antichi non incontrarono il genio (gradimento) di alcuni membri dell'Università di Lovanio e quantunque tutta l'Europa abbia applaudito alle riforme introdottevi dall'imperadore vi furono certi direttori di questa famosa scuola li quali, in vece di prestarvisi di buon grado, han creduti violati i loro privilegi e siccome hanno tutto l'ascendente su gli animi ardenti della gioventù non vi volle gran pena ad eccitarli alla rivoluzione". Idem, p.726.

⁸⁴ HHSTA, Belgien, count of Belgioioso to Kaunitz, f.167r.

nuncio will be forbidden at Court, since he seems to be the sole person guilty of introducing and publishing this document”.⁸⁵

The nuncio of Baviera provided his own account of the event: “He (Joseph II) became even angrier with him (the nuncio) on discovering that he had printed quite a number of copies of the *Super Soliditate* brief which forbade the work by Eibel *Quid est papa?* and that he had sent copies to bishops in Holland and England, who were subject to his nunciature; in addition he had had about a hundred copies printed for his personal use”.⁸⁶ It continued to say that the typographer had printed more copies on his own behalf putting them up for public sale. Others reissued the papal brief which was distributed countrywide throughout Austrian Flanders. The brief immediately attracted the attention of the seminarists and of the people who saw in it a symbol of the disobedience due to the sovereign for the fact that the emperor’s behaviour had contrasted with the Pope’s brief. Zondadari and the secretary of state Boncompagni Ludovisi agreed that the nunciature in Brussels had probably been suppressed as a reaction to the non-archiepiscopal election. Some time before the Pope had refused to elect Joseph II’s candidate, Herbestein bishop of Laibach, as archbishop. If what some scholars believe is true, namely that Joseph II was looking for an excuse to

⁸⁵ “Joins copie d’un raport official de Malines avec la declaration du cardinal sur l’affaire de la bulle prévient qu’on interdira la court au nonce, qui parvit être le seul coupable de l’introduction et publication de cette piece”. Ibid, f. 200r.

⁸⁶ “Questi (Joseph II) s’irrito’ maggiormente contro di lui, quando seppe che aveva fatto stampare parecchie copie della bolla *Super Soliditate* la quale proibiva l’opra dell’Eibel: quid est papa? E che ne aveva spedite alcune ai vescovi d’Olanda e d’Inghilterra, soggetti alla sua nunziatura; di più si era fatto tirare per conto proprio un centinaio di esemplari”. ASV, Segreteria di Stato, Baviera 43, Pacca to Boncompagni Ludovisi, Munich 1787, February 26, f. 213r. The same version of these facts was then told by Pacca in his memories years later, without the caution used in this missive. In fact, he related that: “Quel degno prelato morto poi cardinale, ed arcivescovo di Siena fece stampare poi in Bruselles la bolla *super soliditate petrae*, in cui si condannava l’impertinente opuscolo di Eybel, *Quid est Papa*, per inviarne varj esemplari agli arcipreti delle missioni d’Olanda, delle quali era superiore il nunzio di Bruselles.[...] Si erano accese allora appunto in Lovanio grandi controversie e questioni fra gli studenti Teologia del seminario generale, ed alcuni professori e maestri imbevuti di massime scismatiche, ed infetti di Giansenismo”. Pacca, *Memorie Storiche di Monsignor Pacca*, p. 86.

suppress the nunciature of Brussels because the one in Vienna could have easily dealt with the problems relating to the Austrian Netherlands, the same could be said for those parts of the society that opposed the emperor's reformist process. Those who defended the old political institutions and laws took advantage of the seminarians' rebellion and of the expulsion of the nuncio to oppose the symbols of faith and religion to those of the imperial government.⁸⁷

Therefore, the seminarists' opposition to the imperial reforms was indirectly supported by the Church.⁸⁸ The French diplomatic envoy Jolivet had no doubt that the nuncio had been involved in the disorder which occurred in the general seminary and, even though Zondadari had been sent away from Brussels, he reported in Paris that: "The nuncio who has here taken refuge (Liège), is working with some ex-Jesuit against the government of the Austrian Netherlands."⁸⁹ The most heated articles and pamphlets that are going around in the Austrian Netherlands have been published here.⁹⁰ On 6th March Jolivet, talking about Zondadari, said: "The nuncio is in charge of everything".⁹¹ He also claimed that Zondadari had used his domicile to bind the propagandistic articles

⁸⁷ Hubert E., "Les papiers du nonce Zondadari" in *Bulletin de la Commission Royale d'histoire*, LXXXIV (Bruxelles, 1920), p. 157.

⁸⁸ On this matter see Arblaster Paul, *History of the Low Countries*, p.169 and Blanning, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1996), 14 -16 both authors sustain that the appearance of a rebellion in 1787 and an open uprising in 1788 first of all involved the reactionary forces of the country, and among these, the Church above all. This was before Blanning changed his mind and wrote in his book *The Pursuit of Glory* that the Rebellion in Flanders broke out because: "Encouraged by the outbreak of the revolution in France a full-blown rebellion erupted in the autumn of 1789". Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory: Europe 1648-1815* (London, 2007) p.614.

⁸⁹ The territory of the independent prince bishopric of Liège splitted the Austrian Netherlands into two parts. The abbot François-Xavier de Feller, a well-known polemicist and writer living in Liège from 1781 to 1794 could have been among the ex-Jesuits mentioned in the article. D. Bodart, P.J. Van Kessel, "La collection Zondadari" in *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome*, 41 (Rome, 1970), p. 600.

⁹⁰ "Le nonce, réfugié ici, travaille contre le gouvernement des Pays-Bas avec quelques ex-Jésuites. C'est du foyer existant ici que sont sorties les pièces les plus chaudes qui aient paru à ce sujet aux Pays-Bas". Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères à Paris. Correspondance de Liège, reg. LXXII, f. 270. envoy Jolivet to Minister of Foreign Affairs Armand Marc, comte de Montmorin, Liège, 1788, February 26.

⁹¹ "Le nonce est à la tête de tout". Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères à Paris. Correspondance de Liège, reg. LXXII, f. 274. Jolivet to Montmorin, Liège, 1788, March 6.

against the imperial policy in the Austrian Netherlands.⁹² According to the English business agent in Liège, nearly everybody in Flanders experienced a sort of: “aversion which the priests have instilled into them, to the emperor”.⁹³ After the first denials, the Church acknowledged the intervention of the nuncio, but not the distribution of the brief among the seminarists. At the same time the Church stressed that the nuncio and the cardinal of Franckenberg had done nothing to instigate the prelates in Leuven. As far as the Church was concerned, the General Seminary remained an Institute to be demolished or reformed. In 1788, writing from Lièges, Zondadari informed Garampi that an “orthodox” group of professors from the General Seminary had gone to the Viennese Court to plead that the study programmes that existed before Joseph’s reign be reinstated, in spite of the risks caused by these actions:

Even though the gazettes did not give much coverage to the representation sent to the Sovereign from the last of the Brabant territories concerning the General Seminary and the professors of Louvain, it is certain that this representation did exist, and furthermore, it seemed that it was strong and well conceived. It was sent by dispatch rider to Vienna, from where an answer was expected; however the answer has been long in coming, which is what I envisaged. Therefore the matter remains unresolved, although work continues at the ill-designed edifice of the enormous seminary. Please God, the representation will not be blown up by some bomb.⁹⁴

⁹² *Idem*, f. 285. Liège, 1788, April 8.

⁹³ British Library, Hardwicke papers ADD 35538, Liege 1787, July 10, f.268r.

⁹⁴ “Quantunque le gazzette non abbino fatto motto della rappresentanza inviata al sovrano dalli ultimi stati del Brabante sul Seminario Generale, e sui professori di Lovanio, pure essa rappresentanza è certa, ed anzi, si sente che sia forte, e ben concepita. Fu inviata per staffetta a Vienna, da dove se ne attendono sempre le risposte, le quali tardano assai à ritornare, come io

It must be acknowledged, however, that the Church knew how the events had actually taken place.⁹⁵

4.5. The papers of the nuncio Zondadari

Back in Rome the nuncio took with him a collection of booklets, brochures and pamphlets on the events that marked the history of the Austrian Netherlands between 1785 and 1790. This material was remarkably interesting for Belgian historiography and for the relations between Church and Empire. It could be possible that Zondadari collected this material for a legitimate diplomatic activity and as a way of justifying his nunciature. In the collection there is, indeed, a group of antireligious subjects which had been partially printed by the Austrian authorities. In Italy the collection was sold or given to the cardinal Zelada who became the new secretary of state when Boncompagni resigned.⁹⁶ Zondadari divided the printed works into two main sections: “political matters” and “ecclesiastical matters”. It goes without saying that the latter had been widely influenced by the political situation during the last years of the Austrian government. That is why the division is not very strict and many cross-references must be taken into account in the analysis of these documents. This is also due to the adopted filing system of the material, namely year by

prevedeva. Le cose adunque restano in sospenso, ma si lavora sempre alla fabbrica male architettata dell’immenso seminario. Faccia il cielo, che la rappresentanza non sia portata all’aria da qualche bomba”. ASV, Fondo Garampi 291, f.508–509. Zondadari to Garampi, Liegi, 1788, July 8.

⁹⁵ The document delivered by Zondadari in his defence, is obvious proof. “Dove vedrà la maestà vostra, che dice di non potere il vicario di Cristo senza i nunzi esercitare il suo pastorale officio colli suoi sudditi: ed il contravenire [...] ad una ragione così potente, come questa, coll’espulsione sarebbe come dice il pontefice Alessandro I [...] turbare, ed alterare il governo della Chiesa, ed impedire al vicario di Gesù Cristo il poter fare la causa di Dio, e privare li figli della Chiesa di questo regno, del beneficio, che ricevono dai legati di sua santità [...]. BAV, Memorie relative alla partenza del nunzio cacciato di Bruxelles 1787. Cod. Vat. 8652, f. 56v.

⁹⁶ Mercati G., *Note per la storia di alcune biblioteche romane nei secoli XVI-XIX* (Città del Vaticano, 1952), pp. 64–84.

year. At the end of the inventory there are three extra sections – the last, named “Atlante” groups together all the iconographical material on the engravings that illustrate the *Révolution brabançonne*.

The printed material backing the Church and hostile to the Habsburg monarchy (ecclesiastical matters) features two main types of images, the former describes the Habsburgs and above all Joseph II as a thief of ecclesiastical properties, while the latter refers to his defence of the Faith against the religious reforms wished by Joseph II. At the beginning of the Eighties the abolition of the censorship and the freedom of the press in the Habsburg Empire was seen by the nuncio of Vienna Garampi as “one of the most serious things that could happen”.⁹⁷ In the pamphlets the comparison between the papacy and the Habsburgs was especially directed on how money was used. One of the prints with allegorical drawings that was very successful in Vienna, “The Allegory of Joseph II’s reforms” showed the ecclesiastical innovations introduced by the Emperor.⁹⁸ The print depicts the sovereign on the top of a mountain next to St Peter thus representing the order and the most important religious authority (namely the pope). As a matter of fact, the two figures are just below the sign of the trinity and they are both holding a net that frees the souls going to heaven. While on one side of the mountain a Mason casts light on a group of poor people, a large part of the scene is taken up by religious who pile up money in a net. Rosary beads, ex voto, instruments of penance and devotion, confraternity banners are abandoned at the foot of the net. This money collection is overseen by two clergymen with rochets who have been identified with the nuncio and archbishop of Vienna. This print aimed at showing how the possessions of the

⁹⁷ ASV., Nunz. Ger. 410, Garampi a Pallavicini, Vienna, 1783, February 28, ff. 118-19.

⁹⁸ Historisches Museum der Stadt Wien, Allegoria delle riforme di Giuseppe II., I. N. 31.726.

Church could be positively used for the poor and how religion could become purer without external devotions. It was widely distributed and this proves that the war of images and pieces of writing leading up to Joseph II's reforms had attracted the attention of a fair chunk of population.⁹⁹

The clergy and Brabant's revolutionaries (backed by Zondadari and by bishop Frankenberg) often confronted the supporters of Joseph's reforms with these prints and their allegorical drawings. Garampi's experience as a nuncio in Vienna set a standard for the "observance" of the pamphlets against the Pope and for the promotion of publications which opposed its effects. These images, collected by the nuncio, tell a biased but nonetheless representative story about part of the society of the Austrian Netherlands which was experiencing difficulties because of the introduction of the new imperial corpus of laws.



Fig. 1.

⁹⁹ Dell'Orto, *La nunziatura a Vienna di Giuseppe Garampi 1776-1785*, pp. 444-46.

This image explicitly refers to the tenth commandment, it shows the symbols of a church in ruins, ravaged by the imperial eagle which is defended by the lion, symbol of the Austrian Netherlands. In the distance, a prosperous land protected by walls and other lions can be seen, as if to underline the participation and the surveillance of the people against the provisions enacted in Vienna.



Fig. 2. “The property of others shall not be coveted in order to obtain it unjustly”¹⁰⁰.

In the third image, the lion sets fire to the texts imposed by Joseph II to the General Seminary, once again fire is the mean to purify the Catholic Church from idols and false prophets. The first volume that catches fire is from Eybel, the name of the author appearing on the back of the volume as a generic title, without the title of the work itself. This element, together with the caption, suggests a symbolic identification of text and author.

¹⁰⁰ BAV., Stampati, Cicognara V. 2013, 21.

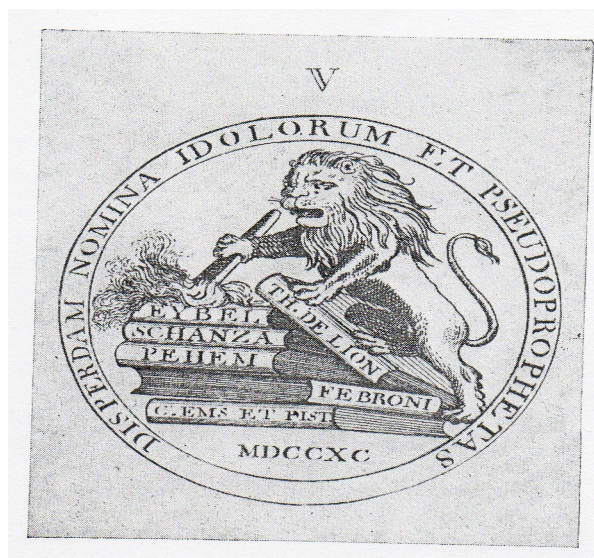


Fig. 3. "Let the name of idols and false prophets be dispersed"¹⁰¹.

The fourth image directly refers to the General Seminary, a thunderbolt striking the building thus provoking, once again, a purifying fire. The General Seminary is compared to a small Babel doomed to a *damnatio memoriae*.

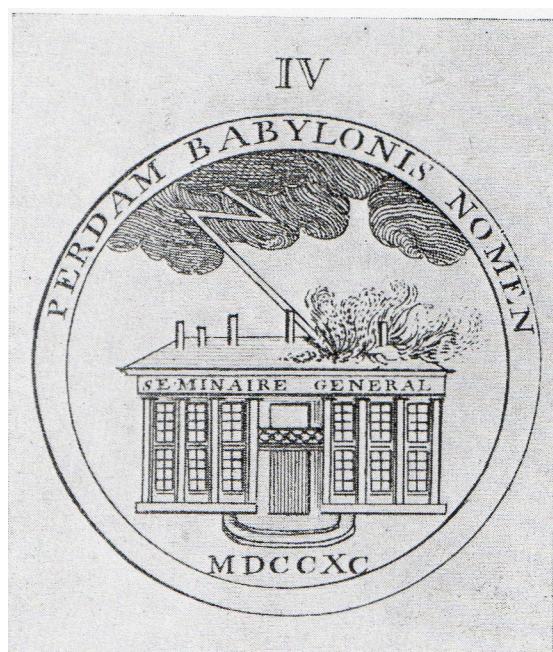


Fig. 4. "Perdam Babylonis nomen"¹⁰².

¹⁰¹ Idem., 23.

¹⁰² Idem., 24.

The fifth image shows the General Seminary building on fire and a handful of scholars struggling to support it, while an elegantly dressed lady offers them a tray with some chalices on it. On the other side of the building, Ernestus van Keuremenne (pseudonym of Jan Joseph Van Den Elsken) author of a satirical libel on the new personnel of the Leuven Seminar, appears to have caused the destruction of the building by means of his writing feather.

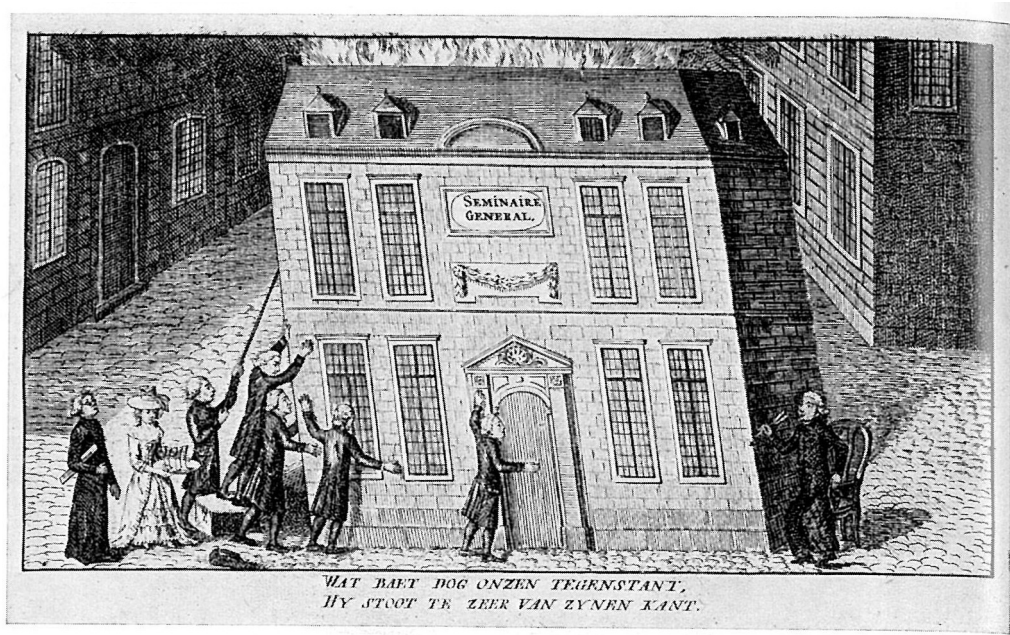


Fig. 5. "Brief van Ernestus van keuremenne"¹⁰³.

¹⁰³ Idem., 30.

The sixth image celebrates the victory of the rebels against the tyranny perpetrated by Joseph, the reference to Costantine prevailing on Maxentius (In hoc signo), and by inference, the victory of Christianity on Paganism is used in this context to celebrate the freedom of Catholicism from the Imperial oppression. At the same time it stands for Joseph II straying from the path of true faith. This is an example of the well-known press that described the Emperor as the “enemy of the Church”.¹⁰⁴

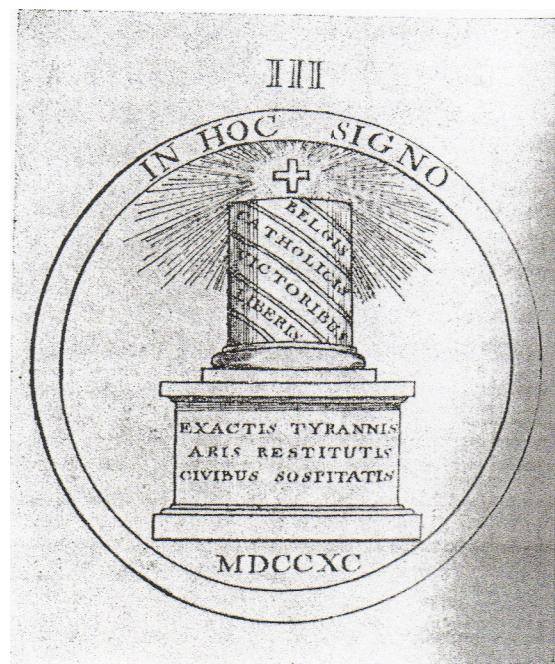


Fig. 6. “In hoc signo”¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰⁴ Venturi, *Settecento riformatore*, IV/2, p. 744.

¹⁰⁵ BAV., Stampati, Cicognara V. 2013, 33.

The seventh image refers to Joseph II depicted as: “impious, mean, perjurer”. The obverse side of the medal shows the Emperor wearing a mask, thus representing the ambiguity of his government. In fact, on the reverse side, the emperor violently destroys the symbols of justice and religion, which, for the rebels, are fundamental for a good government.

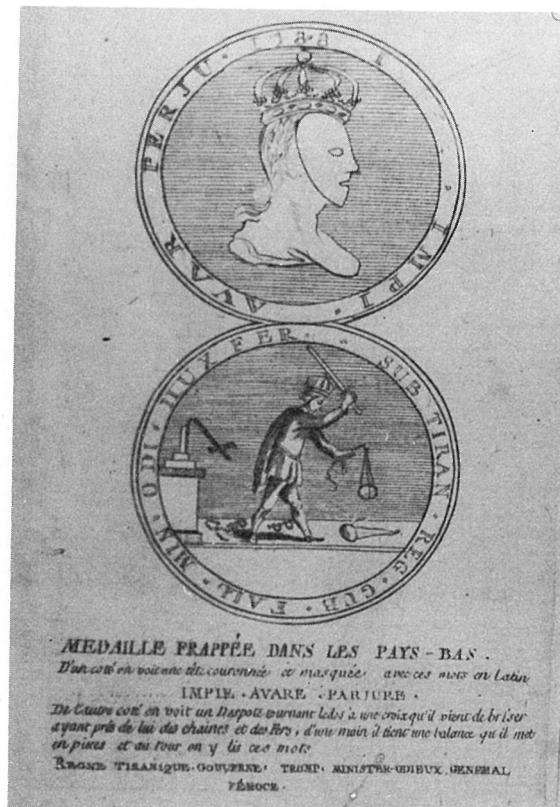


Fig. 7. “Medaille frappée dans le Pays Bas”¹⁰⁶.

The eighth and last image hereby proposed depicts the Empress Maria Theresia (dead by then and therefore in heaven) looking benevolently at her

¹⁰⁶ Idem., 40.

subjects from the clouds. The identification of the Empress with the cause of Catholicism is indirectly in contrast with her son's acts, although Joseph II and Kaunitz were actually continuing the reform process that she had started.



Fig. 8. "Quis desideris sit pudor, aut modus Tam chari capitis"¹⁰⁷.

An interesting datum arising from this collection of images gathered by Zondadari is the prevalence of the representations against the emperor. The satirical plates attacking the Church represent only a small part of the collection. On the contrary, a few years before, Garampi, the apostolic nuncio in Vienna, had gathered a remarkable series of plates against the papacy and the religious orders.¹⁰⁸ The collections of prints - as the libraries - are characterized by an element of voluntariness and, even though in this case the nuncios' task is to

¹⁰⁷ Idem., 46.

¹⁰⁸ Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder*, p. 198.

report moods and political atmospheres, the presence of a subject in the aforementioned collections partly describes not only a scenario but also a political will. The image of “Luther’s faithful disciple and successor Joseph II”, that some of his critics had foreseen in the religious reforms he had promoted at the beginning of his reign, was gradually taking shape.¹⁰⁹

4.6. Reactions to the expulsion of the Nuncio

In the previous section, by comparing the sources from the Holy See and those of Joseph II, it was possible to observe how the facts concerning the rebellion of the seminarists demonstrate the direct involvement of Zondadari and the primate Frankenberg. However, the opinions concerning the facts in question are different: these change according to whether they are expressed by one faction or the other. In this section, which will deal with the expulsion of the nuncio, we will examine the opportunities of other nunciatures and the possibility of printing the pope’s brief in Imperial territories and their satellite states, in the light of what occurred in Brussels. Finally this leads us to the conflict which began as soon as the pope left Vienna.

Following the reaction of Joseph II to expel the nuncio Zondadari, the Secretary of State immediately expressed his opinions concerning the imprudent nuncio in very strong terms, in a letter which was quoted by Von Pastor.¹¹⁰ As the days and weeks passed it became obvious how much the Secretary of State’s position was isolated and that the criticism had been directed not so much

¹⁰⁹ T.C.W. Blanning, *Joseph II*, p. 162.

¹¹⁰ In reality, the selection made by Pastor omitted certain parts of the text of the letter which demonstrate Zondadari’s responsibility more clearly. Von Pastor, *The History of the Popes, vol. XL Pius VI. (1775-1779)*, pp. 66.

towards the contents, as much as the imprudent and rash methods used to have the brief infiltrated.¹¹¹ As the diplomacy of the Holy See attempted to lessen the tension between the two courts, the first admissions of guilt began to appear in internal correspondence between the nunciatures and the Secretary of State and sometimes between one nunciature and another. In fact on the 21st of February 1787 Boncompagni wrote to the nuncio of Vienna Caprara: “only for the missions as you stated yourself, and those copies which entered the General Seminary of Louvain, where they contributed considerably towards increasing disturbances”.¹¹² The nuncio in Paris, who had no problems about expressing his opinion on the matter, in spite of the presence of the Hapsburg Emperor’s sister Marie Antoniette, as Queen of France, informed Boncompagni that he would not waste time *nell’abbocarsi* (creating favourable contacts) at Court to *insinuare* (insinuate) a version of the facts concerning Zondadari in “that opinion which complies with justice and with the truth”.¹¹³ The action by the nuncio of Paris must have been relatively straight forward, if we are to judge from the words exchanged between the Pope and Louis XVI. In fact, at this particular historical moment, in a letter borne by the nuncio in Paris, the Pope defined the French Sovereign as “The most solid support of the Church”.¹¹⁴ Apart from these reciprocal compliments between the Courts, the mediation by the French Monarchy between Church and Empire is evident and proven by the diplomatic correspondence conserved in the Archives Nationales and by the disappointment

¹¹¹ In a letter to Boncompagni, Caprara explained that whatever faults Zondadari may have committed, it was necessary to answer defending the action of the nuncio because of: “riguardo a nostro signore...” ASV, Segr. Stato Fiandra 135 S.s. f.27r.

¹¹² “Soltanto per le missioni com’egli affermo’, e quelle copie erano penetrate anche nel seminario generale di Lovanio, dove avevano notevolmente contribuito ad accrescere i disordini”. ASV, nunz. Germ. 684-685, Caprara to Boncompagni Ludovisi, Wien 1787, Feb. 21.

¹¹³ “quella opinione che e’ conforme alla giustizia, ed alla verità”. ASV, S.S. Francia 570°, f.48, Parigi 1787 marzo 26.

¹¹⁴ “L’appoggio piu’ solido della Chiesa”. Idem.

expressed concerning the correspondence by the English diplomatic envoys.¹¹⁵ However, in Naples the Nunciature stated their maximum disappointment concerning the *nostri nemici* (in other words the House of Habsburg) in the letters sent to the Secretary of State: they were, in fact, worried about the reaction of the sister of the Emperor Joseph II, the Queen of Naples, Maria Carolina. Once again referring to the need to print a pamphlet against Eybel at the same time as the Louvain affair, the Neapolitan nuncio stated that if: “before beginning my brief, I had been given news of what had happened to poor Zondadari, I would not have presented it, or I would have presented it in different terms. For fear of the action of our enemies [...]”.¹¹⁶ The nuncio Pacca in Munich was also in a difficult situation: commenting on the expulsion of Zondadari, he wrote that he fully understood the affliction of the Holy Father, but felt that in spite of prohibition involving printing by the Empire and the violent reactions which were threatened against the Church, the Pope would have defended his prerogatives in any case. He stated that: “he would never be induced to deny the basic rights of his supremacy”.¹¹⁷

This supremacy was totally coherent with the action performed by the nuncios as his direct representatives. According to Garms Cornides, even more than the popes who had preceded him, Pius VI practiced a policy giving himself an absolute autonomy from the Curia in his relations with the Habsburgs.¹¹⁸ Evidence in this sense seems to also have come from dispatches that the Imperial

¹¹⁵ Paris, Archives Nationales, Correspondance Consulaire Consulats. Mémoires et Documents, Affaires Etrangères, BI 967. f.32v.

¹¹⁶ “[...] prima di dar corso alla mia memoria avessi avuto notizia di quanto e’ accaduto al povero Zondadari o non l’avrei data, o l’avrei data in termini diversi. Temendo l’azione dei nostri nemici [...]”. ASV, Napoli 310, f. 146.

¹¹⁷ “[...] non l’indurrebbero mai a rinunziare il diritto essenziale del suo primato”. ASV, Segr. Stato Baviera 43, Pacca to Boncompagni Ludovisi, f12.

¹¹⁸ Garms-Cornides, “Il papato e gli Asburgo nell’età delle riforme settecentesche” in de Rosa and Gracco (ed.), *Il Papato e l’Europa* (Catanzaro, 2001) p. 294.

agent Brunati sent to Kaunitz from Rome. In fact Brunati wrote that: “The criticisms of the Pope’s cardinals are justified, not so much for the little heed that he pays them, making all decisions in an arbitrary manner without consulting him, but because this lack of respect is worsened even further by the insulting behaviour of demeaning them in public [...]”.¹¹⁹ Once again in his letter to Kaunitz, Brunati emphasised the embarrassment felt by certain ecclesiastics concerning the events which occurred in Brussels, he stated that:

The subject of all these discussions is the affair concerning Monsignor Zondadari Pontifical Nuncio in Brussels. His behaviour is the subject of general disapproval, as well as by Cardinal Ghillini and Monsignor Busca Governor of Rome, both of whom were Zondadari’s predecessors, who have openly stated that in a similar case they would have behaved in a different manner, to ensure that they would not have attracted the justified indignation, well-deserved by the aforesaid Monsignor Nuncio, which was even worse than his conduct in Cologne.¹²⁰

This period of conflict between the Empire and the papacy changed the internal dialectics in the diplomatic circles of the Church. The result of this change can be read in the terms reserved when speaking of the Habsburgs: Not

¹¹⁹ “Non si lagnano a torto i Cardinali del Papa, non tanto del poco conto che di loro fa, operando in tutto arbitrariamente senza consultarli, quanto perché a questa disistima aggiunge ancora l’insulto di avvilirli nel pubblico [...]”. HHSTA, Brunati ROM , Korrespondenz 206, Brunati to Kaunitz f.13.

¹²⁰ “Forma l’oggetto dè discorsi di tutte queste Conversazioni il fatto di Monsignor Zondadari Nunzio Pontificio in Brusselles. Generalmente si disapprova la di Lui condotta e non meno il Signor Cardinale Ghillini che Monsignor Busca Governatore di Roma, ambedue già Nunzi predecessori al suddetto, dicono apertamente, che in un caso simile si sarebbero diversamente regolati, per non attirarsi quella giusta indegnazione, che si merita il predetto Monsignor Nunzio, peggio ancora di quello di Colonia”. HHSTA, Brunati ROM, Korrespondenz 206, Brunati to Kaunitz f.37r.

only the nuncio of Naples referred to the Habsburgs calling them the enemy, but a large part of the papal diplomatic corps also called them the enemy. There are several examples of evidence showing how greatly the hostility towards the Empire was widespread in ecclesiastical circles close to the Pope. In writings by the nuncio Pacca, it is possible to read the same sentences and same common expressions used against the House of Habsburg. From Munich, Pacca wrote quite explicitly to his brother: “The Court of Vienna is our enemy and this is a very great problem given the influence of the Head of the Empire”.¹²¹ 1787 was also the year of the national council celebrated in Florence following the decisions approved during the Synod of Pistoia by the “Jansenist” Bishop Ricci supported by the Tuscan Sovereign, Pietro Leopoldo, the brother of Joseph II and second in line for the throne of the House of Habsburg.

The deterioration in relations between the Habsburgs and the papacy reached their nadir in 1787, when the Emperor himself was described by the English envoy as being well aware of the influence of the clergy in the recent events which had occurred in Flanders, and in fact he reported that: “He is also very aware that the Clergy and especially the clergy of Liege, are at the bottom of all this commotion, and very prudently makes a distinction between the cause of liberty, and that of fanaticism”.¹²² The envoy then concluded saying that the population which had rebelled would fall: “under the government of a bigotted and ignorant Priest”.¹²³ Furthermore, the German jurist, Friedrich Carl von

¹²¹ “La corte di Vienna e’ nostra nemica e questo e’ l’osso piu’ duro atteso l’influenza del capo dell’Impero”. ASV, Segreteria di Stato, Baviera 43, Pacca to his brother, Munich 1787, March 16, f. 278r.

¹²² British Library, Hardwicke papers ADD 35538, Liege 1787, July 10, f.268r.

¹²³ Idem.

Moser, wrote the following definition in 1788, in open controversy against the nunciatures:

In the past two centuries Italy has sent us atheists, Machiavellians, the latin disease [syphilis had been called the "French disease" in Italy, Poland, and the "Italian" or "Latin disease" in France and Germany] and the Jesuits; the good and the bad that we have received have been lemons, bitter oranges, pasta, saintly relics, the Genoese lottery, the castrati and the papal nuncios. None of these importations has been more costly for Germany than the latter [the nuncios]: not only have they stolen wealth from Germany, but also [...] part of its intellect and [...] liberty.

The conclusions drawn by Moser were that:

The nuncios must be a class that it is possible to challenge without affronting the Pope, a protuberance growing on the ecclesiastic body, like the so-called ulcers, goitres, and other fungal growths that can be cauterised, cut off, and removed without abusing the body or causing harm.¹²⁴

The hostile language used by both oponents changed somewhat following international events and ceased after the death of the Emperor Joseph II. The

¹²⁴ “[...] negli ultimi due secoli l’Italia ci ha mandato ateisti, macchiavellici, peccati latini e i gesuiti; il buono e il cattivo che abbiamo ricevuto sono stati limoni, arance amare, pasta, reliquie, il lotto di Genova, i castrati e i nunzi papali. Nessuno di questi prodotti è costato più caro a noi tedeschi di questi ultimi [i nunzi]: non solo hanno derubato la Germania del suo denaro, ma anche [...] del suo intelletto e [della sua] libertà [...] I nunzi devono essere una stirpe che è possibile contestare senza oltraggiare il papa, un’escrescenza del corpo ecclesiastico, come i cosidetti comedoni, i gozzi ed altre escrescenze fungiformi che si possono cauterizzare, tagliare via ed estirpare senza oltraggiare il corpo o senza fare danno”. Moser Carl Friedrich, *Geschichte der Nuntiaturen, Geschichte der päpstlichen Nuncien in Teutschland* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1788), pp. 23 – 24; cited in Feldkamp Michael, *La Diplomazia Pontificia, da Silvestro I a Giovanni Paolo II un profilo* (Milano, 1995), pp. 70-71.

cardinal of Malines, Frankenberg, described Joseph's departure from the scene to Garampi in this way: "and this is how Divine Providence now enables your excellence and all the zealous defenders of Religion and the Church [for restoration] to enjoy a little serenity after the many distressing afflictions endured during these ten years [...]".¹²⁵ This chapter emphasises the role of the nuncio Zondadari as a diplomatic agent for the Holy See, and that of cardinal Garampi as the leader of an "Ultramontane" network. In fact they were connected with the action of the nuncios who acted in direct zones and in zones of influence of the Empire (in the case of Zondadari: the Austrian Netherlands). Their political-diplomatic action synthesized the evolution of the relations between the papacy and the empire, as can be seen in Zondadari's nunciature briefs and Garampi's correspondence where diplomatic intervention can be seen to be taken to extremes. There is no doubt that the fact that the nuncio Zondadari belonged to the so-called "ultramontane" group placed him in contact with a vast network which was a majority under the papacy of Pius VI.¹²⁶ It should be recalled that Garampi was a leading figure among these ultramontanes, and his role as mediator and representative of the pope was described briefly in the second chapter. After his prestigious appointment to the nunciature of Vienna, he was created cardinal, but the position of Secretary of State, which many felt was a foregone conclusion, eluded him. The newly elected cardinal Garampi was not

¹²⁵ "[...] ecco come la divina provvidenza fa ora gustare a vostra eccellenza nonché a tutti i zelanti della religione e della Chiesa [per il ripristinare] di tranquillità dopo tante e gravi afflittive tribolazioni che avea per questi dieci anni [...]". ASV, Fondo Garampi 290, f. 378 rv. Frankenberg to Garampi, Bruxelles, 1790, March 20.

¹²⁶ This ultramontane network reached its maximum expansion after the failure of any possible agreement between Joseph II and Pius VI in 1787. The main publication of the ultramontane movement was the *Giornale ecclesiastico di Roma* which was established by Garampi in 1785. In the words of Giuseppe Pignatelli, the *Giornale*: "was a fine example of that reactionary Catholicism which, under Pius VI, finally moved beyond theological discussions of a scholastic type to the defence of a commonly held ideal of an ultramontane model of Church and Society". G. Pignatelli, "Le origini settecentesche del cattolicesimo reazionario: la polemica antigiansenista del *Giornale ecclesiastico di Roma*", in *Studi storici* XI/4, (1970), pp. 755-82.

popular with Joseph II or with Kaunitz at the Viennese Court, and so it was Cardinal Ignazio Boncompagni Ludovisi (well accepted in Vienna because of his enlightened views, especially in the economic field) who was granted the position which, under the papacy of Pius VI, was to lose a great deal of its power.¹²⁷ The pope acted strongly when dealing with the essence of matters, but with diplomacy when dealing with form. In his bishopric in Montefiascone, Garampi might have seemed excluded from the international diplomatic scene. However, on the contrary, his consulting role for German affairs and his theological work for the papal primacy was persistent¹²⁸. Even though the link between these two figures was particularly strong, and in spite of the fact that that they both belonged to the same project aimed at restoring a strong papacy, the nuncio of Brussels did not have the mandate nor the capacities required of a diplomat like those possessed by Garampi. Zondadari was only required to act in the name of the Pope and was not expected to search for a diplomatic solution between the Holy See and the Empire. Zondadari was a controller, controlled in turn by Garampi with whom he maintained correspondence in the form of an exchange of reports, and with his auditor Graziani, who with his parallel reports controlled and completed those of the Inquisitor. He (Zondadari) wished to be rid of the auditor, but Garampi appealed to the Pope and the auditor remained in his position. When Zondadari was destined for his position in Brussels, the situation between the Empire and the papacy has reached a point of crisis that

¹²⁷ In a memorandum on the rights of the Church which Garampi sent to Kaunitz, there is an implicit reference to Joseph II that the Chancellor found intolerable: “[...] niuno dei tanti principi del vasto Impero Germanico rimasto nella comunione Cattolica, vi fu mai che osasse d’avanzare l’esercizio della sua podestà fino a disporre delle proprietà delle chiese e delle loro rendite [...], e estinguere istituti religiosi solennemente approvati dalla Chiesa, a mettere i sudditi a cimento [...] e finalmente a disporre dei diritti, che competono al Sommo Pontefice nel governo della Chiesa Universale, e volerli rendere per modo di regola comuni ai vescovi. ASV, ANV, 192, ff. 159r – 161r.; as cited in Vanysacker Dries, *Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi*, p. 181.

¹²⁸ Vanysacker, *Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi*, pp. 266-73.

was in danger of becoming even worse. Pius VI chose Zondadari for that position, while keeping Garampi as an advisor, and the new nuncio exclusively as an interpreter for the new political plan of the Holy See. However, Zondadari belonged to the ultramontane group, both because of his cultural background and because of the interests he had in common with Garampi. At the same time, during the period when Zondadari was nominated to go to Brussels, documents show how criticism and attacks against the nuncios had reached a very efficient level and were widely diffused. Colonel Pietro Gaddi wrote in a letter to Garampi:

Every day the writings that are published to discredit Rome and the nunciatures are pitiful efforts. I read them all; and although I have found only absurdity and insolence, I have noted that these writings make an impression on those who wish to believe them, and on superficial persons... You will already be aware of the ban placed on the nuncio of Brussels and the other consequences.¹²⁹

As I sustained previously, in the years between 1785 and 1787 there were strong signs of rupture in contrast to the Habsburgs concerning the politics that had been attempted by the Holy See previously and during the voyage of Pius VI to Vienna. However in spite of this situation, the Catholic faith continued to be defended in Europe, and in particular, in Italy and the areas controlled by the Empire. We observed how this crisis involved the papacy during the period in

¹²⁹ “Sortono giornalmente scritture che screditano Roma, e le nunziature a far pietà. Io leggo tutto; e sebbene non trovi che assurdità e impudenze, vedo però che tali scritti fanno impressioni presso chi è disposto a crederli, e per quelli che pensano superficialmente... Già saprete il bando seguito al nunzio di Bruxelles e le altre conseguenze”. ASV, Fondo Garampi 280, f. 314-15rv. Pietro Gaddi to Garampi, Roma, 1787, March 17.

which the absolute monarchs battled to modernise the state apparatus, although not all with the same severity. Therefore it is easier to understand how it was possible to form an “international ultramontane” movement that was linked with the Church whose main and ambitious objective was to re-establish the anti-enlightenment status quo.

The analysis of the social and political effects of Pius VI’s political action against any person who proposed reforms against the Catholic Church exists within historiographical contexts which have already been discussed at length. Furthermore, the aspects linked with the struggle against the enemies of Catholicism and achieving the objectives established by Pius VI during the second counter-reform will be the object of the concluding reflections of this thesis.

Conclusion

I have traced the various aspects of Pius VI's direct and indirect involvement in shaping what I have defined as a "Second Counter-Reformation". Basing this study on published and unpublished source materials subject to a new reading and on historiographical texts, it is possible to gain a better and more realistic insight into Pius VI's policy. The urgencies at the time were many: the sensational advent of modernity (real and theoretic distinction between Church, State and society), the autonomist tendency of national churches (Gallicanism and episcopalism), the State jurisdiction that created problems to the communion between the bishops and Rome and the tolerance towards religious minorities in the territories controlled by the Habsburgs (Josephinism), the theological emergency concerning papal supremacy that had to coexist with a local and autonomist praxis and theory (the prevailing mentality created by Jansenism must be taken into account). The Pope tried to give proactive answers to these problems and he was never hesitant about playing an active role in solving the issues brought about by Joseph II (his trip to Vienna in 1782). And yet Pius VI is not widely recognised as having taken concrete steps to oppose the Enlightenment, or for having stopped the waves of reform attempted by Joseph II or other internal reforms (in particular those of the philo-Jansenist movement). In history, Pope Braschi has become "the martyred pope", the pope imprisoned by the French Revolutionaries, while Eamon Duffy (one of his most severe judges) considered the pontificate of Pius VI: "the longest and one of the most

disastrous since the papal office had begun”.¹ The opinion of Jeffrey Collins, who studied Braschi’s pontificate from the aspect of his artistic patronage, has been confirmed since the Roman artistic world found in the pope one of the greatest art patrons of the period, even though in Collin’s analysis there is no trace of any true interaction between politics and art in the government of Pius VI. Lastly, according to the American scholar, the pope was prisoner of a past influenced by the Renaissance, and who loved to take refuge in the world of art, to the point that, in the concluding pages of his research, Collins wondered whether the pope actually had a realistic political agenda, or whether “Pius was somehow at war with history itself”.² In my thesis, I have considered Pius VI’s “excessive” attention to the arts as an instrument which he used to recover the prestige and moral-spiritual primacy which had been threatened from many directions for some time. Although there were moments of pause, the decline of the Church in the eighteenth century seems to have been relentless and as it has been stated several times previously, this movement reached its peak with the suppression of the Jesuit Order. In particular, during the reign of Pius VI beginning in 1781 under the strong influence of Joseph II, a series of changes were introduced in the Empire and throughout a large part of Catholic Germany which were so radical that certain scholars have stated that this can be considered an authentic “Second Reformation”. Contrary to the opinion stated by many historians, the image of an indolent and insecure pope is not consistent with the various initiatives the pope undertook to defend his throne. From the pope’s journey to Vienna, through to his energetic promotion of Anti-Enlightenment publications, developed at the same time as the opening of new nunciatures in

¹ Duffy, *Saint and Sinners*, p. 260.

² Collins, *Pius VI and the arts*, p. 290.

Germany, this evidence demonstrates the vigour of the pope's response in answer to Joseph's reforms. Pius VI's desire to oppose heresy and modernism led to the birth or revival of anti-Jewish legislation which strongly limited the contact between Catholics and Jews, and furthermore also placed strong limits on Jewish activities. The Patent of Toleration extended by Joseph II towards the Jews, and later, the consequences of the French Revolution, seemed to give body to Pius VI's fears. He feared that Catholicism could stop being the only legitimate religion in the Habsburgs' territories and, subsequently, in the rest of Europe. Braschi, apart from stirring up the Catholics' hostility towards the Jews, determined that there was a link between the Jews and the "International" movement of the Enlightenment, thus resulting for the first time in the accusations against Judaism seen as the natural ally of the subverters of natural order (in other words the alliance between the Church and the Monarchies). There is no doubt that a part of the European Jewish population looked towards the French Revolution and the Habsburgs with the hope of obtaining civil emancipation, but it was that very liberty which was appearing on the horizon during that period which provoked in the heart of the Church, and during the papacy of Pius VI, the synthesis of "revolutionary-Jewish subversion". Documents from the nunciatures are rich in opinions on this aspect; in particular, tolerance towards other religious persuasions was considered unacceptable by almost all the diplomats of the Holy See. A culture of suspicion arose, directed with particular acrimony at those Catholic intellectuals and reformists of Jewish origin like Joseph von Sonnenfels. The theory of linking Judaism with the Revolution, and the rigid enforcement of the Edict on the Jews resulted in a large number of terrible consequences. The policy followed by the Popes who came before Pius VI had been different: even though they had left the Jews in their

ghettoes, they had been able to make them convert resorting to rather unorthodox methods. Judgements were just as severe against Joseph II, whose radical modernisation of the State was not able to continue the projects for reform begun by his mother, the Empress Maria Theresa. Most historians, who have analysed his governance of the Catholic Church, consider that Joseph II was misunderstood by the very people he aimed to help, namely his own subjects. And yet, under the direction of Joseph II, Vienna and the major cities in the Empire saw a rapid transformation from conservative monarchical centres to cities with a small but interesting intellectual scene, with various repercussions in publications, intellectual friendship, international exchange and associational life. In perceiving the Enlightenment as an intellectual, social, and cultural program, the zeal and the passion of its promoters became undeniably evident, and, as we have seen in the previous pages, it reached the point where the Church of Rome compared the emperor to a new Luther.

Joseph II's reforms could have split up the Catholic Church even further through the setting up of different national churches in countries such as the Austrian Netherlands or those leading to the Italian States governed by the emperor's brothers. The counter-moves by Pius VI against the development of these reforms, often accompanied by the autonomous tendencies of German philo-Jansenist bishops, was vigorous and decisive. As demonstrated in nunciature documents, in both imperial territories and satellite states the nuncios assumed the responsibility for establishing control, ensuring that Roman directives were observed, and gathering around the nunciatures those bishops who were faithful to the pope, in order to defend papal primacy. According to the Curia and the Ultramontanes, because of its internal logic (whether understood by its leaders or not) Episcopal policy would have led the Church to

oppose progress and engage in the defence of special privileges. This became more evident after the French Revolution, since Jansenism and the temperament of the bishops revealed themselves less suitable than the papacy for dealing with the great social upheavals of the eighteenth century.

The pontificate of Pius VI is worth researching for several reasons; first of all because of his refusal of modernity on which he laid his foundations. He should also be considered important for the role that he attributed to the Jews as agents of a “false philosophy” subverter of the established order. New accusations were made against the Jews because there was the fear that, as an effect of Joseph’s edict which allowed them to get married with less restrictions, they could have “more easily appealed to the common people”. This judgement provoked a large number of negative consequences. Furthermore, by engaging in extreme conflict with whoever demanded change and reform, he succeeded in his aim of provoking popular uprisings to create pressure on Reformist governments, as in the case of Tuscany under Peter Leopold.

The uprisings, created with the involvement of the bishops close to the pope, were in fact the rehearsals for later, large-scale, reactionary and anti-revolutionary revolts, in particular, those of the “Viva Maria”, which exploded with great violence throughout Italy (1799) In almost twenty-five years of pontificate, Pius VI and his political agenda demonstrated their effective importance, not only for the history of the Italian peninsular, but also for Europe, blocking a schism that could have been possible with an arbitrary policy applied by a weaker papacy. Therefore, I do not agree that Pius VI was “a man born too late”, as sustained by Jeffrey Collins, but rather a pope who recognised a serious danger at a specific moment (from the viewpoint of the Catholic Church) and

who was capable of opposing it, often successfully, with all the means in at his disposal.

The methodology that I applied to the present study has led to new acquisitions: the choices made by Braschi for the church, the real relationship between the papacy and the Habsburgs in the Eighties (18th century), Pius VI's policy and the analysis of the many data gathered by historiographers which have never been connected with one another. Many of the unpublished documents presented in this thesis come from the Archive of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (ACDF) (the collection on Eybel and on the Jews) and from the Archivio Storico della Comunità Ebraica Romana (ASCER), (the collection on the "suppliche" and on the relationships between Jews and Christians). These documents show how Pius VI's policy was different from the policy followed by his predecessors because he dealt with the Jewish question with greater resolve and opposed the Episcopal legal particularisms, concentrating in his own hands those powers which before had been granted to the bishops.

Furthermore new historiographical paths have been suggested. I believe that the vacuums in the biographies of important figures such as the cardinals Gerdil and Zondadari, and the pope Pius VI should be filled. It would be desirable to carry out a systematic work on the decline of the Jewish communities under Braschi's pontificate and to consider the effects of the anti-Jewish jurisdiction beyond Rome, analyzing the representations of Hebraism produced by the papal propaganda in the catholic European countries. It must also be underlined that there are not enough documents on the relationship between the pro-Jesuit party and the Pope. The information on the attempts made by the papacy to restore the Company of Jesus is fragmentary and only concerns

the survival of the Company in Prussia and Russia. A lot has been written, instead, on the activities carried out by the ex Jesuits, but no direct connection has been established between them and the Pope. There is still a lot of work to do...

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