

Stefano Dall'Aglio. *L'eremita e il sinodo: Paolo Giustiniani e l'offesiva medicea contro Girolamo Savonarola (1516–1517)*.

Il tempo di Savonarola 2. Florence: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2006. xii + 210 pp. index. append. illus. €44. ISBN: 88–8450–187–3.

The treasure trove of important documents essential for the study of Renaissance Italy still in private hands is not only vast, but also proverbially inaccessible. It is thus a pleasure to see a young scholar gain access to a private archive and produce a riveting monograph that sheds much-needed light on a much-debated question. In this case, the scholar is Stefano Dall'Aglio, whose earlier monograph *Savonarola e il savonarolismo* (2005) has already met with much deserved praise. The private archive is the Archivio del Sacro Eremo Tuscolano of the Camaldolese Order. And the *vexata quaestio* revolves around the attempts by Florentine authorities to counteract the continuing cult of Savonarola and the spread of his reformist ideas in the early sixteenth century.

Dall'Aglio's book draws its inspiration from the notes jotted down by the Camaldolese monk Paolo Giustiniani (*al secolo*, Tommaso, 1476–1528) in preparation for the planned reexamination of Savonarola during the meetings of the Florentine Synod of 1516–17, called for by Pope Leo X de' Medici and convened by his cousin, Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, Archbishop of Florence (and future Pope Clement VII). This is an unprecedented contribution, for these documents are, basically, not available to scholars. Admittedly, Giustiniani's papers had been made available in the mid-twentieth century to a scholar who was given exclusive access to them in anticipation of a planned nine-volume edition, but when only two volumes appeared and the process seemed to be moving along slower than molasses, the Camaldolese had recourse to the courts and took their manuscripts back. And so, today, Giustiniani's examination of Savonarola's writings remains not only in private hands, but also in its original format — an amorphous collection of thoughts and ideas that has never been whipped into shape by the need to transform them into a report, treatise, book, or even an edition. Fortunately for us, Dall'Aglio has examined these notes thoroughly and can now offer not only an examination of their content, but also an analysis of their context and of their author — all of which lead to valuable insights into Giustiniani's thoughts on Savonarola, his order's views on the reforming Dominican, the spread of Savonarola's ideas in the first two decades of the Cinquecento, and official attempts to halt such a spread.

Unlike his previous book on Savonarolism, Dall'Aglio's current monograph is addressed not to a general public, but to a very select readership of *conoscenti* and *aficionados*. Finely argued and meticulously documented, rich in direct Latin citations from the notes (unfortunately all left untranslated), this is a thorough analysis of Giustiniani's views on Savonarola and on the need for a reform of the Church. In so doing, the volume engages with the opinions of eminent contemporary figures such as the General of the Camaldolese order Pietro Delfin, the future cardinal and Catholic reformer Gaspare Contarini, and Giustiniani's close personal friend Vincenzo Quirini.

The volume opens with an introduction that provides information on Giustiniani's biography and his manuscripts. The first chapter is dedicated to an examination of Giustiniani's precursors in the debate on Savonarola carried out within the Camaldolese order at the end of the fifteenth century. Here we meet Pietro Delfin and read of his early admiration for Savonarola and subsequent change of mind, as well as Bernardino Gadolo and Paolo Orlandini, both priors of the Florentine monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli, but with somewhat diverging views on Savonarola. Chapter 2 looks at the *Renovatio Ecclesiae* advanced by reformers within the Camaldolese order, and here we meet Pietro Quirini (*al secolo* Vincenzo, 1479–1514), *amico di sempre* of Giustiniani. The third chapter examines the perceived threat to the Florentine political and ecclesiastical order posed by the “pseudoprophets” that began to make their rounds in Florence in the wake of Savonarola's demise. And here we meet curious figures such as Pietro Bernardino and his *unti*, the Bolognese Francesco da Meleto, and the “angelic pope” don Teodoro di Giovanni da Scutari (whom Dall'Aglio consistently refers to as “Greek” and once even as “Bosnian,” even though don Teodoro was born in about 1437 in Scutari, a city in modern-day Albania that the Republic of Venice had acquired in the late 1300s and lost to the Ottoman Empire only in 1474: clearly there is need for more work on don Teodoro and less modern revisionism of boundaries and nationalities). The fourth chapter looks at the Synod itself, focusing on Giustiniani's involvement in the posthumous anti-Savonarolan efforts of the Florentine leadership, on the unexpected advice in favor of Savonarola received by Giustiniani from Contarini, on the Synod's unexpected change of interest away from Savonarola's heterodoxy and toward Francesco da Meleto's irregularities, and on Ignazio Mainardi's late *Apologeticus* in favor of Savonarola. Chapter 5 brings the examination to a close by focusing closely on Giustiniani's own notes, his sources, the ecclesiological themes he develops, his patristic and scholastic cross-references, and his views on Savonarola's sermon on the *Renovatio Ecclesiae* and prophetic writings. The epilogue neatly and concisely summarizes the results of this examination, pointing out the “missed convergence” between two deeply motivated reformers, Savonarola and Giustiniani. As Dall'Aglio observes, “it is difficult not to be left with the impression that Fra Paolo's frontal attack on Fra Girolamo did not fit well with the shared values that characterized the two austere clerics” (180), an observation that could well serve as *filo conduttore* and digest for this splendid monograph.

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