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**Toward the Union of Brest: Gian Vincenzo
Pinelli between the Roman Inquisition, the
Ruthenian-Orthodox**

Dennj Solera

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12 Toward the Union of Brest: Gian Vincenzo Pinelli between the Roman Inquisition, the Ruthenian-Orthodox and the Venetian Greek-Orthodox

Dennj Solera

For the Catholic Church, the presence of so many baptised people in Eastern Europe, a region where populations of other Christian confessions or Islam were overwhelming, was one of the most urgent problems, particularly if we consider the geopolitical context of the late sixteenth century, characterised by the establishment of the Reformation, wars of religion and the resumption of Ottoman expansion. Detailed studies have reconstructed the negotiations arranged by Rome to extend the Catholic ecumene against the Patriarch of Constantinople or the Patriarch of Moscow.¹ After careful negotiations, the Union of Brest of 23 December 1595 sanctioned the entry of the Ruthenians into the Catholic Church, which was then made official with the abjuration of the four bishops who had come to Rome and the Papal bulla *Magnus Dominus et laudabilis* of 1596. This is a central event in religious history, better known today thanks to the 1970 printed edition of numerous documents produced between 1590 and 1600 in reference to the Union. These sources testify well to the interest nurtured in the ongoing negotiations by the Congregation of the Inquisition and specifically by some of its members such as Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santori. While it was essential to reintegrate those who were baptised,

¹ Laurent Tatarenko, *Une réforme orientale à l'âge baroque. Les Ruthènes de la grande-principauté de Lituanie et Rome au temps de l'Union de Brest (milieu du XVI^e siècle – milieu du XVII^e siècle)* (Rome, 2021). I also refer to this fundamental text for the updated and extensive bibliography on the subject.

it was also necessary to safeguard Catholic doctrine and to accept with great caution the demands about rite and practices made by the Ruthenians.²

Some of the most important documents in this collection, relating for example to the *XXXII Articles* (the requests made by the delegation), or the active role played by the cardinal-nephew Cinzio Passeri Aldobrandini during the negotiations, reference by name the Neapolitan scholar Gian Vincenzo Pinelli. Three letters are addressed to him in 1595, in which an unknown hand describes the arrival of the Ruthenian delegation in Rome, the reception reserved for them by the Curia and the contents of the *Articles*. The author is defined in the 1970 edition as ‘*unus ex familia Cardinalis Aldobrandini (Agucchia)*’, suggesting without any sources that he might be Girolamo or Giovanni Battista Agucchi, brothers who were nephews of Cardinal Filippo Sega and known collaborators of Pietro Aldobrandini.³ As we shall see, this identification is completely wrong. On Passeri’s instructions, the unknown person invited Pinelli to inquire about the Greek Orthodox of Venice, who were guilty of being too interested in the Ruthenian delegation, perhaps with the intention of sabotaging it. The texts addressed to Pinelli are of high historical value as they contain unique information, unattested in other sources, about the negotiations that took place. Therefore, it seems necessary to pay more attention to these documents in order to understand hitherto unexplored aspects of this complex affair. Who is behind the unknown informant? Was it the same person who drafted the three letters? Why did the cardinal-nephew choose him as an intermediary? Why ask Pinelli, a philologist living in Padua, and not a prelate? To sum up, how is it that a prince of letters (as Marc Fumaroli defined him)⁴ appears in negotiations that were decisive for the Union of Brest and the expansion of Catholicism?

The discovery of eighteen letters in the Vatican Library now makes it possible to identify the author of the three aforementioned missives. He is the Cypriot Pietro De Nores, descendant of a family possibly of ancient Norman

² Athanasius Welykyj (ed.), *Documenta Unionis Berestensis eiusque auctorum (1590–1600)* (Rome, 1970) (henceforth *DUB*), no. 137, pp. 193–7.

³ *DUB*, no. 96, p. 153; *ibid.*, no. 130, p. 184, ‘quidam ex familiaribus Card. Aldobrandini’; no. 150, p. 239. The three documents cited in the *DUB* edition are preserved in Vatican City, Archivio Apostolico Vaticano (AAV), *Nunziature diverse*, vol. 282, fols 93r–95r; Ilaria Toesca and Roberto Zappieri, ‘Agucchi, Giovanni Battista’, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960–2020) (henceforth *DBI*), vol. 1 (Rome, 1960), pp. 504–5.

⁴ Marc Fumaroli, *La Repubblica delle Lettere* (Milan, 2018), pp. 70, 74, 268, where the author uses expressions such as ‘sovrano’, ‘princeps’, ‘gran maestro’ of the Republic of Letters.

ancestry who moved to the island at the time of the Crusades.⁵ The De Nores family was very wealthy: one of Pietro's great-uncles had been an ambassador for Venice in Tripoli, while his ancestors included the powerful cardinal Ludovico Podocataro.⁶ His father, Giasone (or Jason), had fled to Padua in 1570 due to the Ottoman advance, receiving a professorship in moral philosophy at the ancient *Studium* and weaving a lasting friendship with Pinelli.⁷ A careful reconstruction of the biography of Pietro De Nores and that of Pinelli allows for a better understanding of their relationship, the history of that correspondence, and the interest of the cardinal-nephew and the Holy Office in this affair. In other words, it is possible to explain why in order to reach the

⁵ Almost all these letters are in two different collections of Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV): letter 1 (*Vat. lat.* 10257, fols 2r–7v; *Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 2r–6r); letter 2 (*Vat. lat.* 10257, fols 7v–10r; *Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 6v–8v); letter 3 (*Vat. lat.* 10257, fols 26r–8r; *Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 22v–3v); letter 4 (*Vat. lat.* 10257, fols 28r–30r; *Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 24r–25v); letter 5 (*Vat. lat.* 10257, fols 30r–32r; *Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 26r–27v); letter 6 (*Vat. lat.* 10257, fols 32r–42v); letter 7 (*Vat. lat.* 10257, fols 43r–65r; *Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 40r–59r); letter 8 (*Vat. lat.* 10257, fols 65r–66v; *Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 59r–60r); letter 9 (*Vat. lat.* 10257, fols 88r–92v; *Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 77r–80v); letter 10 (*Vat. lat.* 10257, fols 92v–99r; *Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 93r–98v); letter 11 (*Vat. lat.* 10257, fols 99r–100r; *Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 98r–99v); letter 12 (*Vat. lat.* 10257, fols 107r–111r; *Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 104r–105v); letter 13 (*Vat. lat.* 10257, fols 111r–112; *Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 105v–106r); letter 14 (*Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 122v–104r); letter 15 (*Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 117v–120r); letter 16 (*Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 124r–125r); letter 17 (*Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 127v–133r); letter 18 (*Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 133r–137r). The codex *Barb. lat.* 5781 is available online: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Barb.lat.5781 [accessed 8 Jan. 2025]. From now on, only the numbers and dates of the missives will be mentioned. Some of these letters are also preserved in BAV, *Vat. lat.* 13432 (in which appears a letter from De Nores to Pinelli absent in the other collections, dated 29 January 1594, concerning the war with the Ottomans, in which the hand of his nephew *ex-sorore* Giorgio De Nores also appears), as well as in *Ott. lat.* 1088 and in *Ott. lat.* 2228; see Luciano Scarabelli, *Preface*, in *idem* (ed.), 'Pietro Nores, Storia della guerra di Paolo IV contro gli Spagnuoli corredata da documenti', *Archivio storico italiano*, 12 (1847), IX–XXXIII. The presence of several copies of the same epistolary testifies to the great relevance that this exchange of information had for confessional and political dynamics in those years.

⁶ Elisa Andretta, 'Podocataro, Ludovico', *DBI*, vol. 84 (Rome, 2015), pp. 442–3.

⁷ Giorgio Patrizi, 'Denores, Giasone', *DBI*, vol. 38 (Rome, 1990), pp. 768–73. A paragraph is reserved for Jason within Pinelli's biography, a sign of how solid and well known their relationship was: Paolo Gualdo, *Vita Ioannis Vincentii Pinelli, Patricii Genuensis. In qua studiosis bonarum artium, proponitur typus viri probi et eruditi* (Augsburg, 1607), pp. 93–4. Gualdo erroneously dates Jason's death to 1570 (and not 1590), the year of his arrival in the city.

Union of Brest it was decided to go ‘by way of Padua’.⁸ This is a story in which the Roman Inquisition played a decisive role, helping to define the context, establishing the margins of action of the respective protagonists and probably promoting the involvement in the negotiations of Pinelli, a friend of famous victims of the Inquisition (such as Andreas Dudith, Francesco Barozzi, Pietro Longo, Galileo Galilei, Cesare Cremonini and Paolo Sarpi).

A humanist caught between Venice and the Roman Inquisition

The name of Gian Vincenzo Pinelli is certainly familiar to anyone who has been involved in literary and cultural circles, erudition, collecting or early modern Venetian history.⁹ Born in Naples in 1535 to a branch of the Genoese Pinelli family who had moved there for business, Gian Vincenzo had received an excellent education as a younger son and was primed for a career within civil or ecclesiastical institutions. His teachers were Giovanni Paolo Vernaglione for philosophy and literature, Bartolomeo Maranta for medicine and botany, and the Flemish Philippe Van den Berge for music. In his early twenties he was already at the centre of a dense network of correspondence that he never ceased to expand, weaving friendships with the likes of Ulisse Aldrovandi. Having overcome his father’s resistance, he moved to Padua to study law in 1558. There he would spend the rest of his life, absenting himself for very short periods, for example to visit the bishops gathered at the last sessions of the Council of Trent. Gian Vincenzo died in Padua in 1601, benefitting from a European-wide reputation. Nicolas-Claude Fabri (future *seigneur de Peiresc*), who lived in the Pinelli house during the last years of the scholar’s life, regarded him as a model of humanistic perfection.

For more than forty years in Padua, Pinelli led an intellectual circle of great prominence at his home, frequented by the most eminent men of the time

⁸ Silvio Bernardinello, ‘Oriente e occidente in tre momenti di cultura bizantina a Padova’, in *Byzance et les Slaves. Mélanges Ivan Dujčev* (Paris, 1979), pp. 41–8.

⁹ It is impossible to provide even a cursory bibliography on the Neapolitan humanist here. I merely refer to Angela Nuovo, ‘The Creation and Dispersal of the Library of Gian Vincenzo Pinelli’, in Giles Mandelbrote *et al.* (eds), *Books on the Move: Tracking Copies through Collections and the Book Trade* (Newcastle-London, 2007), pp. 39–68; Marco Callegari, ‘Pinelli, Gian Vincenzo’, *DBI*, vol. 83 (2015), pp. 727–32; Anna Maria Raugei, *Gian Vincenzo Pinelli e la sua biblioteca* (Geneva, 2018). For an updated bibliography see Dennj Solera ‘Un principe per testimone. Gian Vincenzo Pinelli alle lauree padovane’, in Gian Paolo Brizzi and Massimo Donattini (eds), *Conoscere il passato per progettare il futuro. Studi per l’Ottavo Centenario dell’Università di Padova* (Bologna, 2022), pp. 53–76.

who lived in Padua or Venice or who passed through these cities as students, government men, ambassadors or to tour the rest of the peninsula. Among them were Andreas Dudith, Nicaise Ellebault, Paolo Manuzio, Claude Dupuy, Girolamo Mercuriale, Paolo Gualdo, Andrea Palladio, Torquato Tasso, Carlo Sigonio, Cesare Cremonini, Galileo Galilei, Paolo Sarpi, Cinzio Passeri Aldobrandini, Thomas Seget, Matthias de L'Obel, Joseph Justus Scaliger and so many others that it would be impossible to list them in full here. Pinelli's home was one of the most crucial centres of sixteenth-century European culture, in relation to every lover of the *humanae litterae*, embedded within an intense circulation of books, objects, plants, letters, *avvisi* and knowledge, regardless of the geographic origin or religious beliefs of individuals. He was the undisputed *dominus* of this circle, welcoming prominent visitors, introducing them to one another, providing letters of recommendation to foreign or Venetian authorities, opening his own collections to visitors, or interceding with the Serenissima to obtain a place at the Studio (such was the case with Galilei in 1592).

Important members of the Roman Curia and in particular of the Inquisitorial Congregation of the second half of the sixteenth century were part of this circle; an aspect not yet thoroughly investigated by historians. Pinelli had direct dealings with Giovanni and Ippolito Aldobrandini, then with Cinzio Passeri (all students at Padua), Jacques Du Perron, Cesare Baronio¹⁰ and Guglielmo Sirleto (librarians at the Vatican Library), Agostino Valier (a leader of the Congregation of the Index), and Domenico Pinelli, Roberto Bellarmino and Federico Borromeo (members of the Inquisition). In the Curia and at the Holy Office, at the Congregation of the Index or in the Vatican Library, there were many friends and bibliophiles who esteemed Gian Vincenzo or sought him out for advice, texts or help of any other kind.

Among the cardinal inquisitors mentioned, there was one with whom Gian Vincenzo was very close: his cousin Domenico, son of his uncle Paride Pinelli. The relationship between the two has never been documented and analyzed, while an initial survey I conducted did not identify their correspondence, which is instead witnessed by other sources. Their bond emerges from the biography that Paolo Gualdo dedicated to the Neapolitan scholar, published

¹⁰ The relationship between Pinelli and Baronio is also mentioned in the biography of Peiresc written by Pierre Gassendi, *Viri illustris Nicolai Claudij Fabricij de Peiresc, senatoris Aquisextensis vita*, 3rd ed. (The Hague, 1655) (*Vie de l'illustre Nicolas Claude Fabri de Peiresc, conseiller au Parlement d'Aix*, trans. R. Lassalle, Paris, 1992); see Stefano Zen, *Baronio storico. Controriforma e crisi del metodo umanistico* (Naples, 1994), p. 49.

posthumously in 1607 and dedicated specifically to Cardinal Dean Pinelli.¹¹ Gualdo conducted extensive research through relatives and acquaintances of his friend, in Padua and other cities, in order to provide as complete a picture of his life as possible. Gian Vincenzo had not only moved to Padua because of the fame of the ancient *Studium*, but also because he knew that Domenico, at the time a law student approaching graduation, was already living in the city. Gian Vincenzo moved into Domenico's residence for the first few years. His cousin graduated *in utroque iure* in 1562, then held an annual professorship at the *Studium*, before leaving for Rome where he had a remarkable career. Appointed bishop of Fermo in 1577, Sixtus V made Domenico Pinelli a cardinal in 1585, while Clement VIII wanted him among the cardinals of the Inquisition as early as 1592. In this capacity he was among the signatories of the 1600 condemnation of Giordano Bruno, one of the most famous inquisitorial documents ever.¹² But the Neapolitan scholar could certainly also count on the support in the Curia of another cousin, Giovanni Agostino, brother of the cardinal inquisitor Domenico, treasurer and depositary of the Apostolic Chamber. These cousins of Gian Vincenzo were so powerful that they had a central role in the most influential papal institutions of the time. This link seems to have escaped the scholars of the famous erudite, but invites us to consider the breadth of the credit Gian Vincenzo enjoyed within the Inquisition and the Curia of the late sixteenth century. He was approached by Guglielmo Sirleto through his friend Fulvio Orsini in search of books suspected of heresy or for advice on a philologist to be employed at the Vatican Library;¹³ con-

¹¹ Gualdo, *Vita*.

¹² The absence of any mention of Bruno in Gian Vincenzo Pinelli's biography seems to be due to the self-censorship of Gualdo, who by 1607 had long been vicar to the bishop of Padua. Not only had Jacopo Corbinelli, Pinelli's most assiduous informant, in 1586 frequented and described Bruno in his letters while they were both in Paris, but Pinelli himself kept three works of the Nola man in his library, the *De la causa* (1584), the *Dialogi duo* (1586) and the *De triplici* (1591). Raugei hypothesised that these were gifts made by the author to the humanist, Angela Nuovo, 'Filosofia e scienza nelle biblioteche del Cinquecento: una prospettiva pinelliana', in Francesca Maria Crasta (ed.), *Biblioteche filosofiche private in età moderna e contemporanea. Atti del convegno Cagliari, 21–23 aprile 2009* (Florence, 2010), pp. 65–79, at p. 73; Raugei, *Gian Vincenzo Pinelli*, p. 49. Moreover, Bruno was in Padua from August to November 1591 and, like Pinelli, was a close scholar of Aristotle.

¹³ For another case see BAV, *Vat. lat.* 6195, fol. 12r, letter from Pinelli to Sirleto (6 January 1583), in which the Greek scholar Giovanni Bonafè was recommended; Raugei, *Gian Vincenzo Pinelli*, p. 22. In 1589, Bonafè was commissioned to edit the Greek part of the bilingual edition of the General Councils for the Vatican Printing House.

versely, Pinelli wrote letters of introduction for Paolo Manuzio when he was about to move to Rome with his printing house in 1561. Whoever walked the road between Padua–Venice and Rome also passed through Pinelli's house.

The respect and gratitude of very powerful men of culture and prelates allowed Gian Vincenzo to live shielded from suspicions of heterodoxy or irreligiousness, despite his pronounced interest in Lucretius, of whom he had authored a philologically annotated edition in his early years in Padua. Dealing with Lucretius in Padua, the city of Pietro d'Abano and Pietro Pomponazzi, cannot, in my opinion, be considered a secondary aspect in the humanist's life, as has been assumed so far. Despite this, he always lived according to Catholic norms, within the erudite libertinism of the time, made even more pronounced by the *Pataвина libertas* he enjoyed on Veneto soil.¹⁴ Nine hundred and fifty printed works out of the approximately nine thousand collected by Pinelli (10.5 per cent) had been banned, but the humanist kept them without any problems, even though he did not have the appropriate licence, which was sought in vain through Sirleto, who instead granted it to Pinelli's friend Mercuriale.¹⁵ He owned Conrad Gessner's *Bibliotheca Universalis*, while in his home were the portraits of Machiavelli (whose *opera omnia* had been put on the Index) and of Erasmus (only partly permitted by the Indexes of 1564 and 1596). Gian Vincenzo's name was well known not only within the Inquisitorial Congregation, but also to various local inquisitors, according to a geography that still awaits detailed reconstruction. We know, for example, that the judge of faith in Genoa seized two crates of volumes sent to Pinelli via Lyon by his friend Claude Dupuy in 1573. On the other hand, he was a close friend of the Venetian inquisitor, Fra Marco Medici, who during his term of office in the Lagoon City between 1574 and 1578 constantly turned a blind eye to all parcels addressed to Pinelli's house, even if they were sent from book fairs such as Frankfurt, where he was known to have exchanged banned works. In 1596, Pinelli would go to great lengths to recommend to the office of inquisitor an

¹⁴ Andrea Caracausi, Paolo Molino and Dennj Solera (eds), *Libertas. Tra religione, politica e saperi* (Padua-Rome, 2022).

¹⁵ For scholars' difficult access to literature, sacred and otherwise, and also for the updated bibliography, see Gigliola Fragnito, *Rinascimento perduto: la letteratura italiana sotto gli occhi dei censori (secoli XV–XVII)* (Bologna, 2019). I agree with the thesis proposed by Fragnito, according to which some scholars were allowed greater freedom in the possession of books (even without a license), both because of the undeniable ties with the censors, and to make possible the recovery of some works that were rare, condemned or to be expurgated, especially those printed abroad. It was a matter of common interest.

inquisitorial vicar, Fra Giovanni Paolo Sansoni from Milan, who had served the Paduan court for nine years.¹⁶

The humanist was also very attentive to the relatives of eminent inquisitors who happened to pass through Padua. On the evening of 5 April 1571, he witnessed the graduation *in utroque* of cousins Ascanio and Ottavio Rebiba, sons of Giovanni and Hamione Rebiba respectively, nephews of Cardinal Scipione. The prelate was at that time enjoying renewed fortune within the papal Curia, firmly directing the Inquisitorial Congregation and intervening in major enquiries. It was within this context that Pinelli met and probably frequented the nephews of the eminent inquisitor in Padua, who had great curial expectations of the two young men.¹⁷

A relative of a cardinal inquisitor, patron and acquaintance of other judges of the faith, Pinelli represented a point of reference for the Curia and the Holy Office in Veneto, but also for politically delicate matters. It was in this context that Gian Vincenzo received the eighteen letters written from Rome between 1591 and 1595 by Pietro De Nores, an old friend of his. The Cypriot had arrived in Padua with his father in 1571, and in 1589 Jason had entrusted him to the care of Pinelli, hoping to save him from a fate of ignominy: at that time Pietro had been banished by the Serenissima for having wounded a Venetian patrician in a duel. Perhaps it was precisely to protect Pietro and to make use of his undoubted relational skills that Pinelli decided to send him to Rome at the end of 1591. From there he would reciprocate the help received by sending detailed reports on what was happening in the city and in the Curia, extending the dense network of informers maintained by Pinelli throughout Europe. De Nores arrived in the Eternal City with a letter of recommendation to Claudio Acquaviva, the powerful Jesuit general. Through De Nores, Pinelli was able to stay informed about many cardinals, collaborators or former members of the Inquisition, especially during the conclave of 1592. In his letters, Pietro names several times the Cardinals Giovanni Ludovico Madruzzo, Giulio Antonio Santori and Paolo Emilio Sfondrati, the future Cardinal Lucio Sassi and Ascanio Colonna, a member of the Index.¹⁸ This was a happy conjunction for

¹⁶ Raugei, *Gian Vincenzo Pinelli*, pp. 82–4.

¹⁷ *Acta graduum academicorum Gymnasii Patavini, ab anno 1566 ad annum 1600*, ed. Elda Martellozzo Forin (3 vols, Rome-Padua, 2008), vol. I, 1566–1575, pp. 359–60, nos 607–8. As far as I know, the relationship between Pinelli and the Cardinal of Pisa is not attested by other sources.

¹⁸ For Madruzzo, see letter 6 (9 May 1592) and letter 9 (22 January 1594). For Santori, see letter 3 (1 February 1592) and letter 6. For Sfondrati, see letter 1 (12 December 1591), letter 6 and letter 7 (2 March 1592). For Sassi, see letter 10 (15 March 1595). For Colonna, see letter 6. Careers within the Holy Office can be

Pinelli, because two months after De Nores' arrival in Rome another friend, Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini, ascended to the papal throne. The Cypriot had met him in Rome while he was still a cardinal, describing their meeting in the first letter sent on 12 December 1591, an important document for understanding the relationship between Pinelli and the future pontiff. De Nores writes about Aldobrandini:

He spoke of you more than of anyone else, he wanted to know if you lived elsewhere, which scholars visited your house more than others, and whether Signor Paolo Aleardo [Aicardo] was often with you; and since we ended up talking about the affairs of Cyprus, about which the Lord Cardinal was very knowledgeable, and from this went on to speak of the Greek language, he mentioned Signor Francesco Patritio, and said that he and Your Lordship should stay in Rome.¹⁹

Clement VIII knew Pinelli very well, as well as his circle of intellectuals who were passionate about Greek texts. Moreover, he knew that his Paduan friend and his own nephew Cinzio were served by that Cypriot: an aspect that proved to be decisive. Once the conclave was over, the Cardinal Inquisitor Pinelli went to pay his respects to the new pope, who ordered him to greet Gian Vincenzo and to invite him to move to Rome, in all probability to make him a cardinal. However, the humanist avoided this by citing his own unworthiness, as well as various health problems.²⁰ Perhaps he was only aware of how 'heavy' a cardinal's *berretta* would be on his head. Pinelli ensured that his older brother did not learn of the proposal, fearing that he would write to his cousin the cardinal to force Gian Vincenzo to go to Rome.²¹

In those months, De Nores became a 'servant' of Passeri Aldobrandini, who after Pinelli had repeatedly written to him that 'Your Lordship is the

reconstructed thanks to Herman H. Schwedt, *Die Anfänge der römischen Inquisition* (Freiburg-Basel-Vienna, 2013).

¹⁹ 'Egli si fermò a ragionare di Vostra Signoria più di niuno de gli altri, ha voluto sapere se ella habitava altre volte. Quali dottori più de gl'altri frequentino la sua casa, se si trattiene più con lei il signor Paolo Aleardo [Aicardo], e perché si cadde in proposito delle cose di Cipro, delle quali trovo il signor cardinale molto informato, e da questa a parlare di lingua greca fece mention del signor Francesco Patritio, e disse che egli et Vostra Signoria bisognarebbe che stessero in Roma', letter 1 (12 December 1591).

²⁰ Gualdo, *Vita*, pp. 84–5.

²¹ At the time of the publication of *Documenta Unionis Berestensis* Pinelli had not yet been the subject of targeted studies. Therefore, the editor described him as 'Quidam Patavinus, ut videtur, forsan ecclesiasticus, prout ex ipso tenore litterarum patet' (*DUB*, no. 214, p. 239).

honour of Padua, and of the whole State of the Republic',²² in 1595 decided to exploit the Cyriot in order to open a new channel of information on Padua and Venice through Pinelli. The political and religious context of those months had made the possibility of reintegrating a large number of Eastern European Christians into the Church of Rome more concrete. This was a very delicate objective and every detail had to be attended to in order to ensure a positive outcome.

Sabotage the opponent by gathering information

Gian Vincenzo was the perfect intermediary. Esteemed by both the pontiff and the cardinal-nephew, he had solid support in the Holy Office, which in the latter part of 1595 had acquired an important role in the negotiations toward the Church Union. On 25 August, Passeri Aldobrandini had forwarded the requests of the Ruthenians to the Inquisition to assess their doctrinal admissibility.²³ As Tatarenko pointed out, the Curia's reaction to the text received is unknown to us. Only two texts produced within the papal court contain information about the claims, the first by the Carmelite Thomas of Jesus, the second by Pedro Juan Zaragoza de Heredia, the assistant to the Master of the Sacred Palace Bartolomé de Miranda. The latter text is only known because De Nores forwarded it by letter to Pinelli.²⁴

In the meantime, news had reached Rome through the nuncio in Poland that a delegation was on its way to conclude the Union, so much so that on 26 August the cardinal-nephew wrote to the bishop of Padua to welcome the envoys with decorum. On 29 August De Nores also wrote to Pinelli, but on matters strictly related to Venetian affairs – a sign of how at this moment in time the cardinal still preferred to keep the *affaire* within official channels.²⁵ On the same day, Passeri Aldobrandini wrote to other prelates to facilitate the delegation's arrival in Rome.²⁶

²² Letter 1 (12 December 1591).

²³ Cardinals Deza, Santori, Sfondrati, Toledo and Pinelli were in charge of it, see *DUB*, no. 142, p. 203; Tatarenko, *Une réforme*, p. 268 n. 216.

²⁴ Letter 16 (2 December 1595).

²⁵ Letter 13 (29 August 1595).

²⁶ The Cardinal sent notices to the Vice Delegate of Bologna, the President of Romagna, the Governors of Ancona, the Marca, Camerino and Perugia, as well as the bishop of Loreto, see *DUB*, no. 82, pp. 129–30. On 16 September, he would also write to the nuncio in Poland reporting that he had delivered the requests of the

It was only in this context that on 23 September, the cardinal decided to contact Pinelli through De Nores, having alerted the relevant prelates and sent the *Articles* to the Holy Office.²⁷ This makes it plausible, if not probable, that the cardinal took this decision at the invitation of the Inquisition, some of its members, or even the pontiff, who assiduously attended the meetings of the Congregation at that time. Not only was the humanist of unquestionable orthodoxy and morality, indispensable requisites in that mediation, but he was also liked by the authorities of the Serenissima. Pinelli was an intimate of many Venetian patricians, such as the future Doge Nicolò Da Ponte, Alvise Mocenigo, Jacopo Contarini, Bishop Marco Corner and others. Any missive sent to Pinelli would not have been subject to particular scrutiny. There was an urgent need to pursue all possible avenues to achieve union, avoiding delays and dangerous stalemates as had happened during the negotiations with the Copts of Egypt, which were effectively suspended at the beginning of 1595. Cardinal inquisitors Santori and Toledo were in charge of that mediation, and, as Tatarenko pointed out, they knew how vital it was to close the negotiations with the Ruthenians as soon as possible.²⁸

The cardinal-nephew therefore questioned Pinelli about the Greek Orthodox living in Venice, a religious minority that the Republic carefully protected from any external interference, given the relevance of those Christians especially in the territorial management of the *Stato da mar*.²⁹ The Congregation of the Inquisition knew how necessary it was to proceed cautiously within the Serenissima and towards its subjects: Cardinal Pinelli himself was aware of this, since in 1589 he had aided the bishop of Brescia Giovan Francesco Morosini amid many difficulties. It was therefore preferable to take other, more informal and confidential routes, sheltered above all from the Venetian Inquisitors of State, who were always careful to defend the prerogatives of the Republic to the detriment of those of the Holy Office.

Ruthenians to the cardinal inquisitors, but had not yet received any results (*ibid.*, n. 92, p. 147).

²⁷ Tatarenko, *Une réforme*, p. 268 n. 216; *DUB*, no. 142, p. 203.

²⁸ Tatarenko, *Une réforme*, p. 269 n. 220.

²⁹ Ersie C. Burke, *The Greeks of Venice, 1498–1600. Immigration, Settlement and Integration* (Turnhout, 2016); Giorgio Fedalto, *Ricerche sulla posizione giuridica ed ecclesiastica dei Greci a Venezia nei secoli XV e XVI* (Florence, 1967). The student guild, in which were inserted those who came from the *Stato da mar* at the University of Padua, was very important for relations between the Serenissima and the maritime dominions: Giorgio Fedalto, 'La Nazione Ultramarina', in Francesco Piovan and Luciana Sitran Rea (eds), *Studenti, Università, città nella storia padovana. Atti del Convegno, Padova, 6–8 febbraio 1998* (Trieste, 2001), pp. 425–39.

The knowledge that it was De Nores who wrote those letters to Pinelli allows us to understand essential aspects of that religious mediation. The cardinal-nephew had asked the Cypriot if his 'mother lives according to the Latin rite, or according to the Greek rite. I replied that she had always lived together with those of the house, not just in Italy, but already in Cyprus, according to the Latin rite'.³⁰ This is very likely, as his family had fled to Padua to escape the new Ottoman overlords. De Nores continued: 'even if my mother does not live in the Greek rite, she has cousins, and an aunt, and other relatives who follow that rite, and from them she could easily have understood something of what His Most Illustrious Lordship [the cardinal nephew] wished to know'.³¹ The Cypriot had been surprised by this very personal question, so much so that the cardinal, overcoming his embarrassment, had revealed to him why he was interested in the faith of those relatives. The cardinal had revealed:

Some Ruthenian bishops are expected here, who are coming to reunite with the Roman Church, and because it is understood that the Greeks of Venice are applying extreme diligence to get news of them, and of their journey, and especially of their arrival there, a priest of the Greek College, called Pietro Arcudi, has become suspicious, and has made us suspicious, that the Greeks are interested in meeting with these Ruthenians before they come here, trying to divert them from this holy resolution.³²

The Greek Orthodox of Venice seemed to want to intercept that delegation to distract it from the openness of Rome and to keep it within the Orthodox ecumene.³³ The cardinal had therefore approached his servant for information on those 'Greeks', perhaps through the latter's mother (his father Jason had died five years earlier). The cardinal had then continued:

³⁰ 'Se mia madre vive secondo il rito latino, o secondo il rito greco. Ho risposto ch'era sempre vissuta insieme con tutta la casa, né pure in Italia, ma in Cipro ancora, secondo il rito latino', letter 14 (23 September 1595).

³¹ 'Se bene mia madre non vive alla greca, ha nondimeno cugine, et zia, et altri parenti assai, che seguitano quel rito, et da essi harebbe potuto facilmente intendere qualche cosa di ciò che Sua Signoria Illustrissima desiderava sapere' (*ibid.*).

³² 'S'aspettano qui alcuni vescovi rutheni, che vengono per riunirsi alla Chiesa romana, e perché s'è inteso che i greci di Venetia fanno estrema diligenza per haver nuova di loro, et del loro viaggio, e principalmente del loro arrivo là, un prete del Collegio greco, chiamato Pietro Arcudi, è entrato in sospetto, et c'ha fatto entrar noi, che questa diligenza si faccia da greci per trovarsi con questi rutheni prima che giungan qui, e tentar di distrarli da questa santa resolutione' (*ibid.*).

³³ The nuncio in Poland was also informed of this later, *DUB*, no. 107, p. 169 (letter of 21 October 1595).

I had therefore wondered if your mother could inquire about this through the bishop of Philadelphia, who is the leader of those Greeks and the one who insists on having news of the Ruthenians.³⁴

According to the plan, the widow De Nores was to informally contact the archbishop of Philadelphia of Lydia, a title held by the head of the Venetian Greek Orthodox community.³⁵ However, it was impossible for the Roman institutions to communicate directly with those ‘schismatics’,³⁶ just as it was unthinkable to act through the Patriarch or the nuncio in Venice. That ecclesiastical title, however, sounded familiar to Pietro, who immediately wrote to Pinelli about it:

When I heard the bishop of Philadelphia mentioned, I told the cardinal that no one is a better friend of the bishop of Philadelphia than Your Lordship, with whom he has continuous correspondence, and when he comes there, which he often does, he stays in your house.³⁷

Not only did Pinelli know the orthodox bishop, but the two were on close terms, so much so that the prelate used to write to him and stay in his home during his visits to Padua. Passeri Aldobrandini had therefore ordered De Nores to write both to Pinelli, ‘openly and with the usual confidence’, and to his mother, ‘under another pretext, and without communicating the details, nor our aims’.³⁸ Pinelli was a reliable intermediary, to him the cardinal-nephew could reveal the underlying plan. While the nuncio in Venice was charged

³⁴ ‘Io havea perciò pensato, se vostra madre havesse potuto penetrarne qualche cosa col mezo del vescovo di Filadelfia, che è il capo di que’ greci, et che è quegli che preme d’haver de rutheni nuova di mano in mano’, letter 14 (23 September 1595).

³⁵ Efstathios Birtachas, ‘Un “secondo” vescovo a Venezia: il metropolita di Filadelfia (secoli xvi–xviii)’, in Maria Francesca Tiepolo and Eurigio Tonetti (eds), *I Greci a Venezia* (Venice, 2002), pp. 103–22.

³⁶ For the doctrinal line taken by the Holy Office and by an important part of the Curia towards the Greek Orthodox, see Vincenzo Lavenia, ‘*Quasi haereticus*. Lo scisma nella riflessione degli inquisitori dell’età moderna’, *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome-Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines*, 126 (2014), 307–24.

³⁷ ‘Io sentendo nominare il vescovo di Filadelfia dissi al signor cardinale che niuno è più amico del vescovo di Filadelfia di Vostra Signoria con la quale egli ha continuo commercio di lettere, et quando viene costì, il che fa spesso, si trattiene in casa sua’, letter 14 (23 September 1595).

³⁸ ‘Il cardinale ha udito volentieri tutto ciò, et mi ha comesso ch’io ne scriva, et a Vostra Signoria et a mia madre. A Vostra Signoria apertamente et con la solita confidenza. A mia madre sotto altro pretesto, et senza comunicare i particolari, né i nostri fini’ (*ibid.*).

with receiving a reply from the widow, Pinelli was to forward the news he had received from the bishop to the nuncio. Only the confidence and cultural ascendancy Pinelli enjoyed over the Orthodox could have made the bishop of Philadelphia reveal his true intentions: an objective impossible to achieve on the part of the nuncio, by a rival institution which, almost paradoxically, was situated in Venice just a few metres from the Greek Orthodox community. It is unknown whether or not Pinelli's replies to De Nores are preserved; nor is the correspondence circulated between the humanist and the nuncio or the Orthodox bishop. This therefore prevents an accurate estimate of how decisive Pinelli's mediation was in ensuring the arrival of the Ruthenian delegates in Rome.

From other sources we know that Gian Vincenzo had for many years known Gabriel Severos (Gavriil Seviros), the Greek Orthodox bishop who was almost the same age as him and, like Pinelli, had been a student at the University of Padua.³⁹ After graduating, Severos was ordained a priest in the Greek parish of San Giorgio dei Greci in Venice, which he would never leave, and became its titular bishop. Theirs was a relationship consolidated by their common love for *humanae litterae* and in particular for classical Greek culture.⁴⁰ Pinelli was a crucial cultural mediator, so much so that scholars have recently credited him, for example, with introducing European humanists to Greek chemistry through original works.⁴¹ In addition to the volumes he owned, Pinelli collected many private library catalogues, often transcribing only their Greek sections. Among the most valuable collections described were the library of the Phanariot Michael Kantakouzenos (a very important merchant within the Ottoman Empire who was executed in Constantinople

³⁹ Martin Jugie, 'Un théologien grec du XV siècle. Gabriel Sévère et les divergences entre les deux Églises', *Échos d'Orient*, 16 (1913), 97–108; Dimitrios Fykas, *Ο Γαβριήλ Σεβήρος και η στάση του στα πνευματικά προβλήματα της εποχής του* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, 2008).

⁴⁰ In the catalogues of Pinelli's library, we find several grammars in Greek. Gualdo reports Vincenzo's absolute mastery of the language, and how he used to take private notes in Greek in the evenings, while using Italian for the servants of the house, Silvio Bernardinello, 'Una biblioteca privata a disposizione dell'*Universitas Artistarum* nella seconda metà del Cinquecento', *Atti e Memorie dell'accademia Galileiana*, 131:3 (2018–19), 121–59, at p. 132 n. 62.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 158 note 181. Regarding Severos, however, see also for the updated bibliography Erika Elia and Rosa Maria Piccione, 'A Rediscovered Library. Gabriel Severos and His Books', in Rosa Maria Piccione (ed.), *Greeks, Books and Libraries in Renaissance Venice* (Berlin–Boston, MA, 2021), pp. 33–82.

in 1578)⁴² and that of Cardinal Bessarion (containing one thousand Greek manuscripts). However, the humanist was not only interested in Greek culture, language history and the texts of the ancients, but also in the relationship between Catholics and Orthodox well before the Union of Brest. This is evidenced by the correspondence he exchanged with the philologist Pietro Vettori, now partly published. On 11 February 1578, Pinelli thanked his friend for providing him with the text of the speech read by Vettori in front of Gregory XIII, on the occasion of the opening of the Greek College in Rome, commissioned by Cardinal Santori.⁴³

Gian Vincenzo was also intimate with various exponents of the Greek Orthodox faith, Venetian and others. Among these, the most important was undoubtedly the bishop of Cerigo Maximos Emmanuel Margounios, a Cretan theologian, philosopher and commentator on Augustine's *De Trinitate*, who had an intense exchange of letters and rare books with Pinelli, often visiting him.⁴⁴ To the Neapolitan he would dedicate the philosophical *Dialogos peri athliotetos anthrōpines* (*Dialogue on human misery*), published posthumously.⁴⁵ As a teacher at the Greek school in Venice, Margounios had as his pupil the future Patriarch of Alexandria and then of Constantinople Cyril Lucaris, and

⁴² This catalogue was provided to him by Margounios, a friend and Orthodox bishop of Cerigo: Angela Nuovo, 'Gian Vincenzo Pinelli's collection of catalogues of private libraries in sixteenth-century Europe', *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch*, 82 (2007), 129–44. Unlike Margounios, Severos was not a profound connoisseur of Catholic doctrine and in his works became a tenacious opponent of Possevino and Bellarmino, other acquaintances of Pinelli.

⁴³ Angela Nuovo, 'Il fattore umano nelle biblioteche: Gian Vincenzo Pinelli e Pietro Vettori', in *eadem et al.* (eds), *Pensare le biblioteche. Studi e interventi offerti a Paolo Traniello* (Rome, 2008), pp. 45–58, pp. 54–6; *Petri Victorii Epistolarum libri X. Orationes XIV. Et Liber de laudibus Ioannae Austriacae* (Florence, 1586), pp. 190–1. The letter is still preserved in Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana (BAM), Q. 122 sup. On Santori and the Greek Orthodox, see John Krajcar (ed.), *Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santoro and the Christian East. Santoro's Audiences and Consistorial Acts* (Rome, 1966); Vittorio Peri, *Chiesa romana e 'rito greco'. G. A. Santoro e la Congregazione dei Greci (1566–1596)* (Brescia, 1975); Saverio Ricci, *Il Sommo Inquisitore. Giulio Antonio Santori tra autobiografia e storia (1532–1602)* (Rome, 2002).

⁴⁴ Giuseppe Visonà, 'Pseudo-Ippolito: "In Sanctum Pascha", Il ruolo della comunità greco-veneta del sec. XVI nella storia della trasmissione del testo', *Aevum*, 54:3 (1980), 456–72.

⁴⁵ Maximos E. Margounios, *Διάλογος περί ἀθλιότητος ἀνθρωπίνης* (s.l., [1625–1626]); see Giorgio Plumidis and Giorgio Fedalto, 'Emanuele-Massimo Margounio (1549–1602) e il *Διάλογος περί ἀθλιότητος ἀνθρωπίνης* dedicato a Giovanni Vincenzo Pinelli', *Atti e Memorie dell'Accademia Patavina di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti. Memorie della Classe di scienze morali, Lettere ed Arti*, 80 (1967/1968), 257–71.

he was among the most convinced supporters of a possible union between Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholics.

The cardinal-nephew also resorted to Pinelli and his credit among the Orthodox to ensure the physical safety of the Ruthenian delegation. This was far from being a secondary concern, as the arriving bishops had already been attacked in Poland by the soldiers of Konstanty Wasyl Ostrogski, voivode of Kyiv. The armed men had ambushed the Ruthenians in order to prevent their submission to Rome; this could not be repeated on Venetian soil.⁴⁶ However, the delegation arrived unharmed in Padua on 26 October, as reported to Rome by the Paduan bishop,⁴⁷ news that was later confirmed in a letter from the nuncio in Venice to Rome on 4 November, in which the prelate blamed the cardinal-nephew for the Ruthenians' decision not to pass through Venice but only through Padua.⁴⁸ De Nores confirmed the arrival of the bishops in his letter to Pinelli of 2 December, enclosing the *Ristretto*, i.e., the summary of the *XXXII Articles* of Ruthenian requests, to the humanist.⁴⁹

In many versions of the De Nores–Pinelli epistolary preserved at the Vatican Library⁵⁰ the *Ristretto* is located after the letter sent on 2 December (although without a specific date at its end), while Welykyj dates it in the DUB between 14 and 16 December.⁵¹ It suggests that even before the 14th, the Roman Curia had already arrived at a clear basis for negotiations with the Ruthenians. It was precisely in those days that decisive meetings were organised for the stipulation of the Union. On 2, 6 and 9 December, ordinary and extraordinary meetings of the Inquisition were held at Cardinal Santori's residence, convened precisely on the Ruthenian question, at which the text sent to Pinelli was probably also discussed. From a diary kept by one of Clement VIII's servants, as well as from the *decreta* of the Inquisitorial Congregation, we know that the pontiff attended the meetings of the *feria quinta* (Thursday) of those months, including those of 7 and 14 December, despite the aggravation of the gout that would later force him to bed.⁵² Given the scarcity of documents for understanding the reaction of the Inquisition and the Curia to the requests made by the Ruthenians, De Nores' letters demonstrate how

⁴⁶ DUB, no. 110, p. 171.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 114, p. 74.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 113, p. 173.

⁴⁹ Letter 16 (2 December 1595).

⁵⁰ BAV, *Barb. lat.* 5781, fols 124r–125r; *ibid.*, *Ott. lat.* 1088, fols 125v–127r; *ibid.*, fols 275v–278v; *ibid.*, *Vat. lat.* 13432, fols 141r–144r.

⁵¹ DUB, no. 136, pp. 191–3.

⁵² *Ibid.*, no. 158, pp. 246–51.

the inquisitors had a longer time frame to discuss the second round (the last and more important one) of requests made by the delegation. Rome, having received and examined the *XXXII Articles*, did not rush directly to the conclusion of the Union without paying attention to the *Ristretto*: the inquisitors carefully considered the Ruthenians' proposals, even in the presence of the pontiff, from at least the first days of December. A sort of last inquisitorial intervention in this *affaire* could be the text written by Zaragoza de Heredia on 16 December, in which, as assistant to the Master of the Sacred Palace (a permanent member of the Holy Office), he attempted to consider the acceptability of the last requests.⁵³

The Union was sanctioned on 23 December. Clement VIII sent official letters to the Polish King, and to Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian princes, prelates and lords to welcome the return of the bishops reconciled with Rome. Here it might be interesting to underline the importance of one of these missives, that sent to Jan Zamoyski, the Great Chancellor of Poland, and a leading figure in the political and diplomatic balances in that part of Europe. On 7 February 1596, however, the pope was probably not addressing an unknown lord of arms, but an old acquaintance. In their youth, they (like Pinelli) had been students in Padua in the same years (first half of the 1560s), attending courses at the same *universitas* of law.⁵⁴ In 1564, Zamoyski had been elected councillor of the *Natio Polona* (his national academic association), while Aldobrandini's friend Francesco Patrizi was elected representative of the Dalmatian scholars. We know that in the same years the three of them frequented Pinelli's house. In the years that followed, Gian Vincenzo did not stop gathering information on those three old friends, collecting Patrizi's library catalogue (they were corresponding)⁵⁵ and news about Zamoyski's exploits in Poland,

⁵³ Letter 17 (16 December 1595); Tatarenko, *Une réforme*, p. 267 note 210; DUB, no. 137, pp. 193–7.

⁵⁴ Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini's mission to Poland as *legate a latere* may have been of crucial importance for his future relations as pope with Zamoyski. During his diplomatic assignment (between 23 May 1588 and 27 May 1589) Aldobrandini was an important mediator between Zamoyski and the emperor Rudolf II, partly due to his academic training in law and his independence within the Roman Curia; Agostino Borromeo, 'Clemente VIII, papa', in *DBI*, vol. 26 (1982), pp. 259–82, in particular pp. 260–1; BAM, S 78 sup.

⁵⁵ Cf. Francesco Patrizi, *Lettere ed opuscoli inediti*, ed. Danilo Aguzzi Barbagli (Florence, 1975), p. 33. Pinelli refused to be the dedicatee of Patrizi's *Discussiones Peripateticæ* (Basel, 1581) because he didn't share the author's point of view and he didn't want to make the Paduan Aristotelians worry: see Chiara Lastraioli, 'Aspects d'une correspondance érudite: les lettres de Giovan Vincenzo Pinelli', in Catherine Magnien (ed.), *L'Épistolaire au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 2001), pp. 165–78, at p. 175. Despite

and keeping up to date with his friend the cardinal and later pontiff.⁵⁶ Patrizi, in particular, was to be received in Rome on 18 April 1592 by Clement VIII, becoming a professor of Platonic philosophy at the *Studium Urbis*. He moved into the cardinal-nephew's palace together with Torquato Tasso, De Nores and other friends of Pinelli. That old group of Paduan scholars was reunited in the Eternal City three decades after their student days.⁵⁷ But Bellarmino's attention would soon focus on Patrizi, repeatedly blaming the pontiff for the danger nestled in the theories of his old and protected friend Francesco.⁵⁸

Conclusion

I believe that being able to identify Pietro De Nores as the sender of those missives does not constitute a simple attribution of authorship of ancient documents. Knowing that it was the Cypriot who allowed that channel of information, sought by the cardinal-nephew, through Pinelli in Padua and

their differences, Pinelli preserved many of Patrizi's writings and printed works, to promote their study and dissemination: see BAM, D 332 inf.; Anna Maria Raugéi, *Gian Vincenzo Pinelli e la sua biblioteca* (Geneva, 2018), p. 84.

⁵⁶ Anna Maria Raugéi (ed.), *Une correspondance entre deux humanistes: Gian Vincenzo Pinelli et Claude Dupuy* (2 vols, Florence, 2001), pp. 78 (letters from Dupuy to Pinelli, 28 September 1573), 93 and 98 (28 March 1574). Pinelli was corresponding or friends with different men who were in Poland or visited this country when Zamoyksi was at his apogee: Corbinelli (master of the new king Henry of Valois), Jean de Montluc (ambassador in Poland for the Valois), Vincenzo Laureo (nuncio in Poland in 1573–8 and cardinal in 1583); BAM, R 94 sup. (*olim* F 150); *ibid.*, R 121 sup. (*olim* F 404).

⁵⁷ Matteo Maria Quintiliani, 'Patrizi, Francesco', *DBI*, vol. 81 (2014), pp. 730–2.

⁵⁸ Franco Motta, 'Roberto Bellarmino, santo', in *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione* (henceforth *DSI*), directed by Adriano Prosperi, with the collaboration of Vincenzo Lavenia and John Tedeschi (4 vols, Pisa, 2010), vol. 3, pp. 1334–5; Franco Motta, *Bellarmino. Una teologia politica della Controriforma* (Brescia, 2005). In 1591 Patrizi had published the *Nova de universis philosophia* (Ferrara) that earned him a summons to the Congregation of the Index on 7 November 1592. Although Patrizi denounced the decontextualisation of his theories, which were openly anti-Aristotelian, his work was condemned in 1594, included in the 1596 Index and never republished. He continued to teach in Rome until his death in 1597; Francesco Patrizi, *Nova de Universis Philosophia. Materiali per un'edizione emendata*, ed. Anna Maura Puliafito Bleuel (Florence, 1993); Paul Grendler, 'Patrizi, Francesco', *DSI*, vol. 3, pp. 1176–7. The work was dedicated to the reigning Pope Gregory XIV and his nephew Cardinal Sfondrati, who was to become a member of the Inquisition on 6 November 1591: *Nova de universis*, unnumbered page; Schwedt, *Die Anfänge*, p. 239.

through his Orthodox friends in Venice, provides the answer to many of the questions posed at the beginning. The three known letters and the fifteen others found were all written by the same hand, by De Nores, who was commissioned by the cardinal as his esteemed collaborator. The ‘Prince of Letters’ Pinelli, on the other hand, was asked because he was the Cypriot’s patron, as well as a trusted friend of Passeri Aldobrandini and of the pontiff, who tried in vain to have him in Rome. They were solid relations, therefore, but which in my opinion would not have been enough to make such a path viable without the full support of the Inquisition. The pontiff himself, the head of the Congregation, Pinelli’s cousin Domenico, or some other cardinal inquisitor, might have suggested to Passeri Aldobrandini that he forward the text of the *Ristretto* to Pinelli in the same weeks in which the document was being examined by the Inquisition. Unfortunately, this is an *affaire* that the remaining documents allow us to know only partially. The loss of the letters written in response by Pinelli to De Nores and the absence of documents tracing Pinelli’s relationship with Severos (regarding the arrival of the Ruthenians in Padua and later in Rome) prevents us from knowing what subsequent moves were made by the Prince of Letters in this complex mediation, managed by the pontiff, cardinals, bishops, nuncios, and ambassadors of different kinds. Similarly, we know that the *Ristretto* was sent immediately to Pinelli through the Cypriot, that the humanist received it in the same days in which the Inquisition was discussing it before Zaragoza de Heredia’s intervention, but we do not know any remarks or reactions from Pinelli with respect to this very important (and obviously secret) document. In summary, De Nores’ available letters allow us to understand the esteem and motive that led the Roman Curia to involve an intellectual of such prestige in that crucial religious mediation, but not to understand the extent to which Pinelli reacted to the requests made to him by the pontiff. He certainly moved in accordance with the wishes of the Aldobrandinis, as shown by the great credit Pinelli had, even after this, within the Roman Curia, and not only for literary or cultural matters.

In 1598, three years after the Union of Brest and three years before Pinelli’s death, the Duchy of Ferrara returned to the direct control of the Papacy, an act sanctioned by the move of Clement VIII and most of the Roman court to the former capital of the Este family. Some prelates decided to take advantage of a holiday period to travel to Venice, passing through Padua with the sole purpose of meeting in person the famous scholar Pinelli, by then already very ill and almost blind. Among those who crossed the threshold of his residence were Cesare Baronio (at that time cardinal librarian, provost general of the

Oratorians and a member of the Index);⁵⁹ Roberto Bellarmino (papal theologian, consultant of the Index and the Holy Office and cardinal inquisitor the following year);⁶⁰ and Federico Borromeo (cardinal of the Index).⁶¹ Bellarmino joyfully returned to a house where he had been some thirty years earlier, at the time of his studies in Padua.⁶² Amazed, they found their own portraits hanging on the walls, a sign of how their works and their love of knowledge deserved a place in that picture gallery of more than a hundred scholars, both ancient and modern. Three of the most important men of the Church were thus paying a final homage to the humble humanist who, by virtue of his philanthropy, had succeeded, if only in part, in fostering the acceptance of those Eastern European Christians into the Catholic ecumene.

⁵⁹ Pinelli possessed three copies of Baronio's *Annales*. See Maria Teresa Fattori, 'Baronio, Cesare', *DSI*, vol. 1, pp. 138–9. Already after the publication of the fifth volume (1594) Pinelli had promoted praise of the *Annales* by the theologian Paolo Beni, as the author himself reveals in the introduction to the work *De Ecclesiasticis Baronii cardinalis Annalibus disputatio* (Rome, 1596), pp. 3, 7; Zen, *Baronio storico*, p. 171.

⁶⁰ Motta, 'Roberto Bellarmino, santo', *DSI*.

⁶¹ Gualdo, *Vita*, p. 19. The episode is narrated with few differences in various sources, including two letters sent by Bellarmino to his brother Thomas: Zen, *Baronio storico*, pp. 316, 331; Gassendi, *Viri illustri*, p. 24. Gualdo is the only one to testify to Borromeo's presence. The absence of the Milanese cardinal, whom Gualdo affirms he remembers very well, in the other sources may depend on the tendency, already established at the end of the sixteenth century, to refer jointly to Baronio and Bellarmino as if they were an inseparable pair, a single phenomenon, Zen, *Baronio storico*, p. 341. For the relations between the humanist and Borromeo see Umberto Motta, 'Borromeo, Pinelli e Quarenghi: letteratura e collezionismo librario tra Cinque e Seicento', *Studia Borromaica*, 13 (1999), 129–59; Marzia Giuliani, "Cum eruditus viris". Gian Vincenzo Pinelli, Federico Borromeo e gli scritti di Agostino Valier presso la Biblioteca Ambrosiana', *Studia Borromaica*, 21 (2007), 229–68.

⁶² Zen, *Baronio storico*, p. 341; Franco Motta, 'Roberto Bellarmino, santo', *DBI*, vol. 87 (Rome, 2016), pp. 806–12. Bellarmino remained in Padua from the end of 1567 to the spring of 1569. Pinelli was very close to the Jesuits of Padua and those who passed through that city, such as Antonio Possevino, Paolo Comitoli, Giulio Negroni, Riccardo Esio (or Hesio), Alvise Valmarana, Bernardino Stefonio, Famiano Strada and others, Gualdo, *Vita*, p. 45. It was precisely the *Societas* that seems to have been the recipient of Pinelli's considerable library, later bequeathed to Gian Vincenzo's grandchildren, *ibid.* When Pinelli died in 1601, it was his cousin Domenico who interceded for the return to his heirs of some boxes of books that had belonged to the deceased and had been requisitioned by the Camera Apostolica (Raugei, *Gian Vincenzo Pinelli*, p. 98).

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