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ANNALISA CAPPIELLO

Apostolici regiminis and vera philosophia. From Savonarola to Javelli

It is well known that, just six months after the conclusion of the Vth Lateran Council, the Lutheran controversy would begin.[1] It is also known, however, that the Council itself had been opened under the auspices of a reform of the Church and that this expectation had been renewed with the election of Pope Leo X Medici. In the closing phase of the work of the Council, Giovanfrancesco Pico della Mirandola had delivered to the Pope and the Lateran Fathers his *Oratio de reformandis moribus*,[2] which recalled some issues already developed in that important document concerning the *reformatio Ecclesiae* which was the *Libellus ad Leonem X*, signed by the Camaldolese monks Tommaso Giustiniani and Vincenzo Quirini.[3] As it has already been highlighted by the critical literature, particularly in view of the great familiarity of the two monks with Leo X's brother, Cardinal Giuliano de' Medici, the *Libellus,* whose definitive version dated back to June or July 1513, could have played a role in the drafting of the Lateran bull *Apostolici regiminis,* promulgated on 19 December of the same year.[4]

The *Apostolici regiminis*[5] derived from the urgency to censor the Alexandrist doctrine of the mortality of the individual soul and the Averroist doctrine of the unity of the intellect – as well as the attitude of those who

[1] For more details and references on the link between Luther and the Vth Lateran Council, see CAPPIELLO, Annalisa/LAMANNA, Marco: *Il principio dell'unicità del vero dalla bolla* Apostolici regiminis *(1513) alla Rivoluzione scientifica*, in: Quaestio 14 (2014), 229–256, at 244–248.

[2] For a critical edition of Pico's oration, see CAO, Gian Mario: *Pico della Mirandola goes to Germany. With an Edition of Gianfrancesco Pico's "De reformandis moribus oratio"*, in: Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento = Jahrbuch des italienisch-deutschen historischen Instituts in Trient 30 (2004), 463–525, at 516–525.

[3] On the link between Giustiniani and Quirini's *Libellus* and Pico's oration, see VASOLI, Cesare: *Gianfrancesco Pico e l'*Oratio de reformandis moribus, in: CASTELLI, Patrizia (a cura di): *Giovanni e Gianfrancesco Pico. L'opera e la fortuna di due studenti ferraresi* (= Pubblicazioni dell'Università di Ferrara VI). Firenze: Olschki 1998, 237–238.

[4] See GILBERT, Felix: *Cristianesimo, Umanesimo e la Bolla "Apostolici regiminis" del 1513*, in: Rivista storica italiana 79 (1967), 967–990, at 986–987; VASOLI, Cesare: *Gianfrancesco Pico e l'*Oratio de reformandis moribus, 237–238.

[5] For the text of the papal bull, see MANSI, Joannes Dominicus (ed.): *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*. Parisiis: Expensis Huberti Welter, Bibliopolae 1902, vol. XXXII, 842–843; for a more recent edition, see LAURITZEN, Fredrik/MINNICH, Nelson H./STIEBER, Joachim W./SUERMANN, Harald/UHLICH, Jörg (eds. by): *The General Councils of Latin Christendom: From Basel to Lateran V (1431–1517)* (= Corpus Christianorum Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta II/2). Turnhout: Brepols 2013, 1363–1365.

asserted that these doctrines were true "at least from a philosophical point of view" (*secundum saltem philosophiam*)[6] – and it came to a dogmatic formulation of the ontological status of the rational soul: the soul truly exists of itself and essentially as the form of the human body, it's immortal, individually multipliable and multiplied according to the multitude of the bodies into which it is infused. This was indeed the position which agreed with what is written in the Gospel about the prospect of an otherworldly life, the divine justice, the incarnation and the other mysteries of Christ, especially the resurrection of the bodies. Conversely, "since the truth does not contradict the truth" (*cumque verum vero minime contradicat*),[7] any position that contradicted the truths of faith was not only heretical, but also completely false. On this basis, the decree proceeded to a double injunction. The first one concerned the philosophy professors' teaching method and forced them to devote every effort to clarify for their students the truth of the Christian religion, to teach it as persuasively as possible and to apply themselves to refute any heterodox argument. The second one regarded the secular and regular clergy's training curriculum, and pointed out that the prolonged study of human philosophy, which was "foolish without the divine wisdom's dressing" (*stultam* [...] *absque divinae sapientiae condimento*),[8] led to error rather than to the discovery of the truth. For this reason, the bull ordained that none of those in sacred orders, whether religious or seculars, could devote themselves to the study of philosophy or poetry for longer than five years after the study of grammar and dialectic, without giving some time to the study of theology or pontifical law; once these five years were past, if they wished, they could sweat over such studies, but only if they actively devoted themselves to theology or the sacred canon, so that they could find, in these holy and useful occupations, the tools "for cleansing and healing the infected roots of philosophy and poetry" (*infectas philosophiae et poesis radices purgare et sanare*).[9]

Now, the exact problem of the clerics' training was one of the most thorny points in the program drawn up by Quirini and Giustiniani, which evaluated the clergy's ignorance as a serious plague of Christendom, for the clerics were responsible to educate other people.[10] The two Camaldole-

[6] MANSI (ed.): *Sacrorum conciliorum*, 842.

[7] MANSI (ed.): *Sacrorum conciliorum*, 842.

[8] MANSI (ed.): *Sacrorum conciliorum*, 843.

[9] MANSI (ed.): *Sacrorum conciliorum*, 843.

[10] JUSTINIANUS, Paulus/QUIRINUS, Petrus: *Libellus ad Leonem X Pontificem Maximum*, in: MITTARELLUS, Joannes Benedictus/COSTADONUS, Anselmus (opera et studio): *Annales Camaldulenses Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*. Venetiis/Aere Monasterii Sancti Michaelis de Muriano: prostant apud Jo. Baptistam Pasquali 1773, t. IX, 676: "Horum autem, quae numeravimus, maximum et malorum omnium caput, causamque ignorantiam esse, nemo est, qui possit ambigere; quae quidem tanto gravior periculosiorque infirmitas est, quanto magis in illis

sian monks complained about the fact that those very few religious men who understood the Latin language were mostly enticed by the poets' lies and the philosophers' impiety.[11] In addition, those rare clerics which followed the one and true philosophy, namely, the Christian discipline, did not focus often on the certainties which arose from the Holy Scriptures and from the Fathers of the Church's words, but they lost their time in empty and unnecessary disputes.[12] For these reasons, the *Libellus* emphasized the need to direct the pagan studies to the study of theology and of Holy Letters, and, even more, the need to warn young people above all Christian writers, since Christians had authors which did not fear the comparison with pagan authors.[13]

Unquestionably, the criticisms against the clergy's degradation and against the pagan tendencies of the studies were not original issues. On the contrary, some scholars perceive in Quirini and Giustiniani's book the echoes of the reform ideas spreaded fifteen years earlier from Girolamo Savonarola's preaching.[14] Unsurprisingly, in Savonarola's works it is possible to track down a recurring use of the concordistic principle *omne verum*

vigere comprehenditur, qui non solum scire ipsi debuerant, sed ad alios docendos, et instituendos ordinati esse videntur. Nulla enim pene salutis spes reliqua existimatur, ubi medici, qui languentes alios curare habebant, eadem ipsi infirmitate gravissime laborent. Quanta autem, qualisve nunc in Ecclesia Dei in religiosis hominibus omnibus ignorantia sit, sicut neminem prorsus latere poterit, ita nullus omnino est, qui pro merito valeat explicare".

[11] JUSTINIANUS/QUIRINUS: *Libellus ad Leonem X*, 676: "In omni autem tam numerosa religiosorum moltitudine vix duo ex centum, aut decem e mille reperies, qui tantum Latinae linguae addiscerint, ut quae Latino sermone conscripta quotidie in Ecclesia legunt, plane valeant intelligere. Ex his vero, qui intelligunt, paucos admodum invenies, qui ulterius ad aliquam disciplinarum, atque scientiarum cognitionem progressi sint. Ex paucissimis vero illis, qui litterarum studiis incumbere quoquo modo videntur, rarus quippe est, qui non Poetarum potius mendacia, aut Philosophorum impietatem, quam Christianam pietatem amplexus sit".

[12] JUSTINIANUS/QUIRINUS: *Libellus ad Leonem X*, 676: "Ex rarissimis vero illis, qui *veram, solamque Philosophiam, Christianam Disciplinam* sequuntur, vix unum, aut alterum invenies, qui non inanissima recentiorum Scriptorum argumenta, simultatum sane, odiorumque irritamenta, potius quam Sacrarum Scripturarum, antiquaque Patrum documenta sectetur; qui non inanibus quaestionibus, quae ad nihilum quidem utiles sunt, potius quam Sanctorum Evangeliorum lectionibus occupetur; qui denique non illam potius vanam, quae instat, quae extollit, disputativam disciplinam, quam illam sanctam, puram, castamque Sacrarum Scripturarum, quae inflammat et humiliat, doctrinam sequatur" (italics are mine).

[13] JUSTINIANUS/QUIRINUS: *Libellus ad Leonem X*, 677: "nisi ad divina studia, et ad sacras litteras haec Gentilia studia dirigantur, nihil omnino curiosius, nihil vanius, nihil sine fructu laboriosius, nihil denique a Christianis hominibus magis alienum existimari debet, quam haec ipsa Poetarum, Oratorum Gentiliumque auctorum studia; unde tunc maxime recte studia instituere Te iudicabimus, cum pueris et ipsis, pro Gentilibus Oratoribus, pro Gentilibus fabulis, Christianam veritatem, Christianosque Scriptores proponi iusseris. Habent enim et suos Christiani historiographos, habent et suos Oratores, quos in utraque pariter lingua, Graeca scilicet, et Latina cum Gentilibus conferre non erubescimus".

[14] See, for example, DALL'AGLIO, Stefano: *L'eremita e il sinodo. Paolo Giustiniani e l'offensiva medicea contro Girolamo Savonarola (1516–1517)* (= Il tempo di Savonarola 2). Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo per la Fondazione Ezio Franceschini 2006, 63–75.

vero consonat. In the 4th homily on *Psalms* (17 January 1495), for example, the Ferrarese monk says: "Adunque questa Scrittura è vera e da Dio. *Item* questa Scrittura consuona e concorda con tutte le altre scienzie vere e con la filosofia vera, e discorda da tutte le scritture false. Adunque questa Scrittura è vera, *quia verum vero consonat et falsum dissonat vero*".[15] Similar considerations can be found in the 32nd homily on *Job* (3 April 1495), where Savonarola refers to the primitive Church model, in which divine things were held in high regard, unlike what was happening in his own time: the lowest things – the monk says – should be raised to the highest ones, in order to be ameliorated – philosophy, in other words, should be put at the service of theology and faith –, but what actually happened was exactly the opposite; Christian doctors and theologians, instead, wanted to humiliate the philosophers's pride and to show that the natural light does not compete with the supernatural light, but that one truth is in tune with the other one.[16] Another crucial piece of evidence that is worthy of a mention is the 44th homily on *Job* (19 April 1495). It is an Easter sermon in which it is expressly discussed the topic of the immortality of the soul: Savonarola says that Christ improved philosophy and made it perfect, as He revealed to us the whole truth about the origin and destiny of our soul and dispelled any doubt on this issue.[17] It is then attached a list of the

[15] SAVONAROLA, Girolamo: *Prediche sopra i Salmi*. A cura di Vincenzo Romano (= Edizione Nazionale delle opere di G. Savonarola). Roma: Belardetti 1969, vol. I, 72.

[16] SAVONAROLA, Girolamo: *Prediche sopra Giobbe*. A cura di Roberto Ridolfi (= Edizione Nazionale delle opere di G. Savonarola). Roma: Belardetti 1957, vol. II, 126: "La teologia tratta di quelle cose alte che sono soprannaturali; e però, essendo quella superiore a tutte le scienzie, come tu la tiri alla cose basse, tu la avvilisci. Se tu la mescoli colla retorica e colle poesie, tu la fai imperfetta; ma quando tu tiri le cose più basse alle più alte, tu fai quelle basse più perfette, e, se la filosofia ti serve alle cose alte di teologia e soprannaturali e della fede, per farle più intelligibili, tu la fai più perfetta. Ma perché oggi si fa per molti il contrario, però le cose divine sono in poca reverenzia. Non era così nella primitiva Chiesa; però le cose divine della Chiesa erano in massima reverenzia. E se tu dicessi: – Queste cose della filosofia servano e han servito per difendersi meglio dagli eretici –, ti rispondo che nella Chiesa primitiva erano gli eretici e persecutori della fede più che mai fusse, e nondimanco si difendevano e' fideli sanza tanta filosofia. Credi tu che lo Spirito Santo non sapesse fare in loro una scienzia per se stessa, potente a difendersi sanza tanta filosofia? Ma li nostri dottori e teologi c'hanno scritto per deprimere la superbia de' filosofi, l'hanno fatto ancora per mostrare che la filosofia e il lume naturale non è contrario al soprannaturale né alla teologia, *quia verum consonat vero*: 'l'una verità consuona con l'altra'".

[17] SAVONAROLA: *Prediche sopra Giobbe*, 369–370: "E però io v'ho detto e dico che innanzi che Cristo venissi, ogni cosa era in tenebre e pieno il mondo d'ignoranzia e di cecità e che gli uomini non conoscevono cosa alcuna dell'altra vita; ma venuto Cristo e la sua dottrina e questo santo giorno della resurrezione, ha illuminato il mondo; e Cristo è stato quello c'ha fatto perfetta la filosofia, la quale, insino che non venne Cristo, non aveva trovato la verità dell'anima dell'uomo e del fine suo né del principio donde ella viene. [...] E così la fede ci ha fatta perfetta la filosofia, e non destrutta, come gl'ignoranti dicono; anzi, per la fede e per il lume che n'ha dato Cristo al mondo, conosciamo che l'anima è immortale e che ella non muore col corpo, anzi che 'l fine suo è nell'altra vita, dond'ella è venuta, e che di là sarà premiata del suo ben fare o punita se, nel mal fare, si trovasse morto il corpo. E così la fede

most famous philosophical opinions on the subject, among which appears Aristotle's position, that the Ferrarese monk, as a Thomas Aquinas' follower, counts among the opinions that approached closer to the truth of faith.[18]

Actually, even though Savonarola reiterated here that the natural reason is in harmony with the supernatural light of faith,[19] precisely the issue of the correct exegesis of Aristotle's thought was far from peaceful and it complicated the effective application of the concordist principle. It is symptomatic that, in the section of the *Libellus* dedicated to the remedies which were necessary to solve any kind of division within the Church, this very interesting point is listed: Quirini and Giustiniani entrusted the Pope's pastoral authority with the clarification of those faith issues in which a disagreement between the doctors of the Church was detected, and in particular between Scotus and Thomas.[20] Now, precisely the problem of the immortality of the soul – and the critical interpretation of Aristotle's words on this subject – was a source of disagreement between Scotus and Thomas, and it is clear that the bull *Apostolici regiminis* ratified the validity of the proofs developed by Thomas Aquinas in support of the immortalist thesis[21] – those proofs which, conversely, Scotus has defined simply probable proofs, namely, neither demonstrative nor necessary.[22]

ci ha dichiarato bene ogni cosa e mostratoci la verità, la quale conosciuta, sono resolute tutte le dubitazioni che prima erano".

[18] SAVONAROLA: *Prediche sopra Giobbe*, 368–369: "Altri dissono che nell'uomo è qualche cosa immortale separata dal corpo; e questi si sono più accostati al vero. Come fu Aristotile e molt'altri, che provano con ragioni molto efficaci che l'intelletto nostro è separato da ogni organo del corpo, perché è impossibile che l'intelletto intendessi quelle cose che lui intende, se fusse coniunto a cosa materiale".

[19] SAVONAROLA: *Prediche sopra Giobbe*, 371: "E etiam che questo ce lo dica la fede e gli Evangelii di Cristo, ce lo detta e demostra ancora la ragione naturale, la quale è conforme ancora al lume soprannaturale delle cose della fede".

[20] JUSTINIANUS/QUIRINUS: *Libellus ad Leonem X*, 689–690: "Quae quidem divisiones, ac diversitates, partim ex animorum dissensionibus oriri, partim vero easdem ipsas animorum discordias parare, atque fovere existimamus. Has autem delere Tibi perfacile futurum est, Beatissime Pater, si ad haec intendere aliae minus fortasse necessariae, aut minus certe pastoralis curae dignae occupationes Tibi permittent. [...] si in his, in quibus Johannes Scotus Beato Thomae contradicit, aut alii similiter Doctores ad invicem dissentiunt, in illis dumtaxat, quae ad fidem spectare videntur, cujusnam sententia sit ab Ecclesia suscipienda, ita definiatur, ut opposita omnino damnabilis judicetur".

[21] On the papal bull *Apostolici regiminis* as endorsement of the Thomistic "criteriology", see BERETTA, Francesco: *Orthodoxie philosophique et Inquisition romaine aux 16e–17e siècles. Un essai d'interprétation*. https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00007791/document, 12–14 (28.09.2016); see also BIANCHI, Luca: *Pour une histoire de la "double vérité"* (= Conférences Pierre Abélard). Paris: Vrin 2008, 127–128.

[22] SCOTUS, Joannes Duns: *Quaestiones in IV librum Sententiarum* (= Opera omnia. Editio nova juxta editionem Waddingi XX). Parisiis: Apud Ludovicum Vivés 1894, dist. 43, q. 2, 46.

It is also significant that an author such as Giovanfrancesco Pico, who accused the whole pagan culture of vanity, and mainly the Aristotelian philosophy, in his *De animae immortalitate digressio* (published in 1523) argued that, excluding Averroes and Alexander of Aphrodisias, all Aristotle's Greek commentators were unanimous in concluding that the Stagirite philosopher had thought that the individual soul was immortal.[23] So, if Pico stated, on the one hand, that Aristotle's opinion was not influential for the Christian faith,[24] on the other hand, he criticized some of the most famous mortalist exegeses of Aristotle's texts: in particular, the exegeses supported by Scotus, by the Thomistic theologian Tommaso de Vio Cajetan and by the Aristotelian philosopher Pietro Pomponazzi.[25]

The disagreement between the Christian authors, however, was a fact, and just the opportunity to leverage it had been a fundamental part of Pomponazzi's argumentative strategy, after the enactment of the *Apostolici regiminis*. In his famous *Tractatus de immortalitate animae* (1516), Pomponazzi (who was then professor of natural philosophy at the University of Bologna) had concluded that the question of the immortality was a *neutral problem*, i.e. rationally insoluble, and in so saying he invoked those Christians doctors which had shown this same difficulty, alluding mainly

[23] PICUS MIRANDULAE, Joannes Franciscus: *De animae immortalitate digressio*. Bononiae: Impressum a Hieronymo de Benedictis 1523, 3*r*–3*v*: "Deinde Aristotelis verba et eorum rationes atque authoritates philosophorum, qui magni fuere in peripatetica familia nominis moliemur in medium adducere, ut clarum sit iis, qui graece nesciunt, et extra omnem controversiam positum a veteribus peripateticis, existimatum Aristotelem de anima immortalitate sensisse secus ac Alexander et Averroys censuerint".

[24] PICUS MIRANDULAE: *De animae immortalitate*, 7*r*–7*v*: "Sed quoniam, uti supra dicebamus, variae considerationes distinctionesque variae disputatoribus ansam praebent, ut quisque negocium exhibere adversario queat, ideo quid Aristoteles de animae immortalitate senserit ex eius maxime discipulis et sectatoribus afferamus; postea eos qui ex Aristotelis verbis mortalitatem invehere sunt adnixi, non modo ostendemus aberrare, sed monstrabimus inde trahi argumenta validissima ad asserendam animae immortalitatem, longeque vero similius haberi immortalem animam esse ad Aristotele existimatam. Nec quidem id moliar ut ex eo negotio putemus magnam fieri accessionem nostrae Christianae religioni. Quid enim illi cum Aristotele, qui quoad vixit caecutivit in superstitionum tenebris, et obambulavit in quodam quasi hippodromo rerum sublunarium multiplici, sinuatoque magis, quam ille apud Pindarum duodecies inflexus".

[25] On Scotus, see for example PICUS MIRANDULAE: *De animae immortalitate*, 4*r*: "Notum enim apud neotericos, nonnullas eorum quae tetigimus rationes, conatum Scotum in quarto commentariorum in theologicas sententias dissolvere, quamquam reficere et instaurare illas multi curaverunt, et instaurari et refici illas ipsas, et ceteras etiam, quas alii labefactare conentur, non sit omnino difficile". Pomponazzi and Cajetan are never mentioned by Pico. It is however possible to find allusions to their respective positions. For Pomponazzi's position on the mortality of the soul as the probable option, see PICUS MIRANDULAE: *De animae immortalitate*, 5*r*–5*v* (for the reference to Pomponazzi's book, see below). As for Cajetan, a passage of his commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* is literally quoted, see PICUS MIRANDULAE: *De animae immortalitate*, 17*r*–17*v* and DE VIO CAIETANUS, *Thomas: Commentaria in libros Aristotelis De anima. Liber 3* (= Studia. Travaux de recherche 19). Editionem curaverunt Guy Picard et Gilles Pelland. Bruges: Desclèe de Brouwer 1965, cap. 1, §§ 32–33, 29–30.

to Scotus' agnostic position in this regard; he therefore had relieved himself of the obligation to refute the mortalist thesis – since this had already been done by Thomas Aquinas – and he had reiterated that, if even eminent and pious doctors (such as Thomas and Scotus) were in disagreement among each others, the problem could be resolved only by God.[26]

Actually, Pomponazzi's *neutrality* did not mean that he was unable to choose between two options – the immortalist thesis and the mortalist thesis – which were both logically tenable, but that he was trying to find a compromise between what Christian orthodoxy asked the philosophy professors (namely, to defend the truth of faith) and the results of his own rational inquiry. Once he placed the basic premise of his *Tractatus*, namely that he wanted to remain "exclusively within the natural limits" (*pure infra limites naturales*), [27] to expand his evidence in accordance with the natural reason and the principles of peripatetic philosophy and to neglect revealed data and miracles, Pomponazzi had come to emphasize that the proofs of the immortalist thesis (i.e. those developed by Thomas) were "full of nonsense and incoherent with the principles of philosophy" (*deliramenta et principiis philosophiae repugnantia*),[28] and that the mortalist thesis was undoubtedly the "more probable" (*probabilior*)[29] option between the two. From the moment in which he had exposed the tenets of the Thomistic position, Pomponazzi had declared that he had no doubt about the truth of this position, as it was sanctioned by the canonical Scripture, but that he could not but wonder whether Thomas' statements passed the limits of the natural reason (namely, whether they presupposed some data of faith), and whether they were really in conformity with Aristotle's words; and, at the end of these questions, Pomponazzi had added that the most learned of Thomas' followers maybe would be able to reveal the truth to him.[30]

[26] POMPONAZZI, Pietro: *Tutti i trattati peripatetici. Testo latino a front.e* A cura di Francesco Paolo Raimondi e José Manuel García Valverde (= Il pensiero occidentale). Milano: Bompiani 2013, cap. 15, §1, 1098: "His itaque sic se habentibus mihi, salva saniori sententia in hac materia, dicendum videtur quod quaestio de immortalitate animae est *neutrum problema*, sicut etiam de mundi aeternitate. Mihi namque videtur quod nullae rationes naturales adduci possunt cogentes animam esse immortalem, minusque probantes animam esse mortalem, sicut quam plures doctores, tenentes eam immortalem declarant. Quare nolui ponere responsiones ad alteram partem, cum alii ponant, et praecipue Divus Thomas luculenter, copiose et graviter. Quapropter dicemus, sicut dixit Plato in primo *De legibus*, certificare de aliquo, cum multi ambigunt, solius est Dei. Cum itaque tam illustres viri inter se ambigant, nisi per Deum hoc certificari posse existimo" (italics are mine).

[27] POMPONAZZI: *Tutti i trattati peripatetici*, §1, 926.

[28] POMPONAZZI: *Tutti i trattati peripatetici*, cap. 9, §19, 996.

[29] POMPONAZZI: *Tutti i trattati peripatetici*, cap. 9, §23, 1002.

[30] POMPONAZZI: *Tutti i trattati peripatetici*, cap. 8, §1, 964: "De veritate quidem huius positionis apud me nulla prorsus est ambiguitas, cum Scriptura canonica, quae cuilibet rationi et experimento humano praeferenda est, cum a Deo data sit, hanc positionem sanciat. Sed, quod apud me vertitur in dubium, est an ista dicta excedant limites naturales sic quod aliquid vel creditum vel revelatum praesupponant, et conformia sint dictis Aristotelis, sicut

Perhaps this was not a harmless comment, as Pomponazzi could not but knew that even between his contemporary Thomistic theologians there was a disagreement on the subject of the immortality of the soul. Pomponazzi certainly knew that, six years before his *Tractatus*, the famous Cajetan had published a commentary on *De anima* in which he found – against Thomas – that from Aristotle's words it must necessarily be inferred that the intellective soul is not separable from the body and immortal.[31] Cajetan had added that the opinion of *this Greek man* (i.e. Aristotle) was philosophically false, since from the principles of philosophy, as they are true, it cannot be deduced but the truth, namely, that the intellective soul is separable from the body and immortal.[32] In doing so, Cajetan drew a distinction between exegetical truth – the genuine (i.e. mortalist) Aristotle's position – and philosophical truth – which was taught by Thomas and which was in agreement with the faith. Despite this clarification, however, it is possible to presume that a true philosophy, which was distinct from the Aristotelian philosophy and in harmony with theology, did not exist at all for Cajetan. Indeed, there are at least two pieces of evidence showing this conjecture. First: as general master of the Order of Preachers, Cajetan had been a member of the commission appointed by Pope Leo X for the drafting of the text of the bull *Apostolic regiminis*, and during the vote of ratification he had disapproved that the document interfered in the philosophy professors' activities by requiring them to teach the truth of faith.[33] Second: in the last phase of his career, in his commentaries on the Holy Scripture, Cajetan openly classified the question of the immortality of the soul as a mystery of faith which was unintelligible for the human reason.[34]

Even Pomponazzi classified the issue as an article of faith.[35] His conclusion, however, had not resulted from his inability to prove the immortality of the soul, but rather – paradoxically – from his ability to refute it,

ipse Divus Thomas enuntiat. Verum, cum tanti doctoris autoritas apud me summa est, nedum in divinis, verum in ipsa Aristotelis via, non ausim contra eum aliquid affirmare, sed tantum quod dicam per modum dubitantis et non asserentis ponam, fortassisque mihi ab eius doctissimis sectatoribus veritas aperietur".

31 See DE VIO CAIETANUS, Thomas: *Scripta Philosophica. Commentaria in De anima Aristotelis* I. Editionem curavit Joannes Coquelle. Romae: Angelicum 1938, §31, 33.

32 DE VIO CAIETANUS: *Commentaria in libros Aristotelis De anima*, cap. 2, §102, 65: "...scito quod non est intentionis meae dicere aut sustinere velle intellectum possibilem esse generabilem et corruptibilem secundum philosophiae principia: quoniam haec positio est falsissima. Quoniam ex principiis philosophiae utpote veris non deducitur recte nisi verum. Hoc autem constat ex fide esse falsum. Igitur non potest ex principiis philosophiae sequi. Unde neque ut verum, neque ut consonum, neque ut probabile philosophiae haec scripserim; sed tantum ut exponens opinionem *istius Graeci*, quam conabor ostendere esse falsam secundum philosophiae principia" (italics are mine).

33 See MANSI (ed.): *Sacrorum conciliorum*, 843.

34 For more information and references on Cajetan's position on the topic of the immortality of the soul, see CAPPIELLO/LAMANNA: *Il principio dell'unicità del vero*, 241–244.

35 POMPONAZZI: *Tutti i trattati peripatetici*, cap. 15, § 5, 1100.

according to the natural reason, the experience and the principles of the Aristotelian philosophy. Within the natural sphere, indeed, the belief in the immortality of the soul could be considered, according to Pomponazzi, not as a speculative content, but as a moral content, namely an apologue which is neither true nor false, but which is useful to make men virtuous, by making them fear the judgment of the divine court.[36] In this way, Pomponazzi showed what the risk was in overlapping epistemological contexts, since the tools of philosophy, in his opinion, were not only unsuitable to prove the truth of faith, but even counterproductive to this aim. For this reason, in his *Apologia* (1518), he continued to forcefully insist on the distinction between the teaching of philosophy and the preaching of Gospel truths: every science should be supported by appropriate principles, and this rule applied above all for theology and philosophy, as theology concerned the result of the divine revelation, while philosophy concerned the result of the human intelligence.[37] It was not only a matter of safeguarding the natural philosopher's autonomy, but also of respecting the preacher's specific task, namely to provide for the faithful's spiritual health, by conveying them truths which were not constantly challenged. As a natural philosopher, therefore, the best thing to do to the benefit of faith, according to Pomponazzi, was simply to do his own job, even if he had to violate a ecclesiastical decree.

Pomponazzi's freedom of expression was however censored by the Inquisitor of Bologna Giovanni de' Torfanni when he finished writing his *Defensorium*, in which he developed against his colleague Augustine Nifo's *De immortalitate animae libellus* (1519) a long series of proofs in favour of the mortality of the soul, yet without matching them with their respective Christian refutations, as prescribed by the papal bull. As a result of a negotiation with the competent ecclesiastical authorities, Pomponazzi gained license to printing and selling his book provided that each copy was furnished with an appendix of forty-two solutions, drafted by the regent of the Dominican *Studium* of Bologna Crisostomo Javelli, which refused the same number of proofs of the mortality of the soul found in *Defensorium*, since Pomponazzi had not wanted to refuse them in his own hand.[38] Javelli's *Solutiones* were inserted in the edition of the *Defensorium*, which was printed in 1519 in Bologna by Giustiniano da Rubiera, and in the edition of Pomponazzi's *Tractatus acutissimi, utillimi et mere peripatetici*, which was printed in 1525 in Venice by Ottaviano Scoto. In both these

[36] See in particular POMPONAZZI: *Tutti i trattati peripatetici*, cap. 14, §§28–29, 1074–1076.

[37] See POMPONAZZI: *Tutti i trattati peripatetici*, l. III, cap. 3, §§32–33, 1526–1528.

[38] For a more detailed study on this sequence of events, see CAPPIELLO, Annalisa: *Le* Solutiones *di Crisostomo Javelli al* Defensorium *di Pietro Pomponazzi. Edizione critica del testo latino*, in: Noctua III (2016) 1, 74–149, at 74–91.

editions, an exchange of letters between Pomponazzi and Javelli is also reproduced which testifies to their covenant.

In his letter, Javelli showed leniency toward Pomponazzi's theoretical attitude, for he admitted that Aristotle's statements on the immaterial entities were often ambiguous and lent themselves to opposite interpretations.[39] Obviously, he clarified that his own position was far from Pomponazzi's: as Thomistic theologian, Javelli considered that, according to Aristotle, the human soul was immortal.[40] Interestingly, however, he thought that the best way to fulfil the requirements of the papal bull was neither to insist on the immortalist interpretation of Aristotle's words nor to carry out the theologian's role by preaching the Scriptural truths. Javelli indeed said he would have written his *Solutiones* according to the principles of theology and of the principles of a science of pure truth which he calls "philosophy", or rather the truest philosophy, a sort of tonic that he wanted to administer to the Christian faith, which had been weakened by Pomponazzi's proofs[41] – for, as Thomas Aquinas had taught, "to administer" means that when someone is weak, he needs a tonic to become stronger.[42] And this science could be an excellent tonic for it did not coincide with the peripatetic philosophy or, more generally, with the secular philosophy, which were full of doubts and mistakes, but it directly derived from listening to God's Word.[43] It is not a coincidence that the text of the *Solutiones* started with a reference to the faithful's listening ability: Javelli placed in exergue a list of eight assumptions based on the divine wisdom

39 JAVELLUS, Chrysostomus: *Excellentissimo famosissimoque huius nostrae aetatis philosopho Domino Petro Mantuano*, in: POMPONATIUS, Petrus: *Defensorium*. Bononiae: Impressum Per Magistrum Iustinianum De Ruberia 1519, FVI*r*: "Aristoteles autem veluti callidissimus naturae scrutator a sensatis et notioribus paulatim se ad immaterialia elevat, quoniam existimavit, ut est, in primo *Posteriorum* omnem nostram intelligentiam originari a sensu, ex quo provenit quod Aristoteles elevans se per gradus (ut ita dixerim) sensatos, quantum a sensu elevatus tantum determinate et constanter philosophari potuit, at quamprimum manuductio ex sensu defecit, caligavit eius intellectus, ita quod vel illic gradum sistit, vel anceps, obnubilosus et obstrusus adeo loquitur quod dicta sua oppositos sensus videntur posse recipere".

40 JAVELLUS: *Excellentissimo famosissimoque*, FVI*r*: "Ego quidem, ut divi Thomae fidelis sectator, non existimo sic clarum esse quod deducis quin trahi possit oppositum".

41 JAVELLUS: *Excellentissimo famosissimoque*, FVI*r*: "Solvam igitur quascumque rationes formasti mortalitatem probantes, principiis quidem non Aristotelis pro nunc, sed sacrae theologiae et *verissimae philosophiae* quam arbitramur nostrae catholicae fidei *subministrare*" (italics are mine).

42 DE AQUINO, Thomas: *Super epistolas S. Pauli lectura* II. *Super epistolam ad Philippenses lectura*. Cura Raphaelis Cai. Taurini: Marietti 1953, cap. 1, lect. 3, n. 28, 96–96: "Quando enim aliquis est debilis, indiget *relevante* ut sustentetur, et hoc est subministrare..." (italics are mine).

43 JAVELLUS: *Excellentissimo famosissimoque*, FVI*r*: "Neque enim philosophia et Aristotelis philosophia convertuntur. Philosophia siquidem in se est scientia merae veritatis, quae est divina possessio nobis a patre luminum demissa. Huius saeculi philosophia erroribus, tenebris et dubiis undique referta est".

(namely a list of *auctoritates* extracted from Augustine's and Cassiodorus' books), which the true Catholics, as he said, could not but approve at the first listening, for these assumptions sound suitable for the faith.[44] Similarly, at the end of the text, Javelli exhorted the readers to assent to the solutions written by him, since they had arisen not from the human light, but directly from the divine light, which is the source of all true science.[45]

Just fifteen years after his *Solutiones*, in his *Tractatus de animae humanae indeficientia*, (completed in 1534 and published in 1536), Javelli would apply himself to rehabilitate the classical Thomistic interpretation of Aristotle's thought and to defend this position from those who had challenged it, such as Scotus, Cajetan and, of course, Pomponazzi. In this new treatise, Javelli said he wanted to refute Pomponazzi's proofs of the mortality of the soul by developing not theological solutions but physical ones, i.e. solutions which were compatible with the principles of the Peripatetic philosophy.[46] This meant not only that Javelli had to modify his *auctoritates*, but also that he had to evaluate the boundary within which any honest Christian exegete had to stay. And for Javelli the limit beyond which Aristotle's words could not be forced was quite precise: although it was correct to conclude that according to Aristotle the human soul was immortal, it was instead totally ridiculous to claim to gather from the Aristotelian texts any statement concerning the condition of the soul in a state of separation from the body. This had been Nifo's claim, which had sparked Pomponazzi's reaction.[47] Javelli's conclusion was therefore still the same: the expressions "Aristotelian philosophy" and "true philosophy" were not convertible to each other. For a very clear reason: the contents of the

44 JAVELLUS, Chrysostomus: *Solutiones rationum animi mortalitatem probantium quae in Defensorio contra Niphum excellentissimi Domini Petri Pomponatii formantur*, in: CAPPIELLO: *Le* Solutiones *di Crisostomo Javelli al* Defensorium *di Pietro Pomponazzi*, 102: "Supposito pro nunc secundum sententiam tuam Aristotelem sensisse humanum animum esse mortalem, adhuc manifestatur rationes tuas non concludere contra veritatem fidei. Sed prius praemittendae sunt suppositiones divinae sapientiae quas *veri Catholici* statim probant auditas" (italics are mine).

45 JAVELLUS: *Solutiones*, 144: "Hortamur autem et obsecramus nostrarum solutionum lectores, quas non incomposito affectu, sed pro sacra religione et veritate et Dei maximi honore adduximus, ut serena fronte suscipiant, illis assentiant, sibi ipsis suadentes, quod non tam ex humano, quam divino lumine prodierunt, a quo est *omnis verae scientiae* fons et origo" (italics are mine).

46 JAVELLUS, Chrysostomus: *Tractatus de animae humanae indeficientia, in quatruplici via s. peripatetica, academica, naturali, et christiana, revisus per authorem et nunc primo editus.* Venetiis: in officina Aureli Pinci Veneti 1536, pars I, cap. 5, 24*v*.

47 JAVELLUS: *Tractatus de animae humanae indeficientia*, cap. I, cap. 1, 6*v*–7*r*: "Sufficit ergo quod Aristoteles attribuerit animae posse intelligere post hunc statum, licet modum investigare non potuerit, nisi hanc negativam: non intelligit cum phantasmate. Et adverte, Alexander optime, quod qui voluerunt attribuere Aristoteli ipsum posuisse talem, vel talem modum intelligendi in anima separata, cadunt in multa derisoria, sicut Niphus suessanus in tractatu, quem edidit contra Petrum Pomponacium de animae immortalitate".

true philosophy were attested to by the divine revelation and Aristotle, as pagan, could not grasp them. The only reasonable thing to say, according to Javelli, was that if Aristotle could have listened to those contents, he would not have denied his assent.[48]

A few years later, Javelli would have named the true philosophy "Christian philosophy", by explicitly distinguishing it from the "Gentiles' philosophy". In his *De Christiana philosophia*, published in 1540, Javelli would still have said that it was only true that science that emanated from the divine light, as in it there were no blunders, or falsity, or false notes. The human science, i.e. generally the Gentiles' philosophy, by contrast, was lit by a lamp that did not shine but gave off smoke.[49] For this reason, human science contained many true things, but these were always and inevitably mixed with falsity and blunders.[50]

In conclusion, the science of pure truth which Javelli insisted on calling "philosophy" rather than "theology" and which, at the same time, could not be identified with the Peripatetic philosophy seemed to be a sort of grey area between one and the other. The notion of "true philosophy", which Javelli had begun to forge when he wrote his *Solutiones* for Pomponazzi's book, more than the name of an autonomous discipline with

[48] JAVELLUS: *Tractatus de animae humanae indeficientia*, pars I, cap. 5, 41*r*–41*v*: "Nos autem dicimus quod et si haec expresse non habeantur in philosophia Aristotelis, quoniam ex sensu, a quo semper incepit philosophari, deprehendere non potuit ista, tamen posito quod animam posuerit immortalem, ut docuimus in primo cap., si quis docuisset eum in solutionibus, quas adducemus, ut consonans verae philosophiae, non negasset eas. Debes enim scire, mi Alexander, quod philosophia Aristotelis et philosophia ut philosophia non convertuntur. Nam philosophia in se est scientia merae veritatis et perfecta, philosophia autem Aristotelis non est perfecta, nec in omnibus approbatur, et ideo posito quod ex philosophia Aristotelis non posset reddi certa ratio supradictorum, tamen ex ipsa philosophia reddetur, quam, ut dixi, Aristoteles audiens non negaret, licet sensu ad talem altitudinem ascendere non potuerit".

[49] JAVELLUS, Chrysostomus: *De christiana philosophia*, in: *Opera omnia*. Lugduni: Apud Carolum Pesnot 1580, t. II, cap. 1, 379: "Constat autem inter haec duo lumina pene nullam comparationem ac proportionem existere. Stat enim error et falsitas admixta veritati in scientia humana, ut patet in tota philosophia [...]. Nullus enim ex auctoribus humanis ita locutus est, neque ita scripsit, quod in omnibus ab omnibus approbaretur. Cum scientia autem lumine divino revelata nullus error, neque falsitas, neque absonum persistere possunt. Deus enim est primum et summum verum; cum summo autem nullum stat gradus oppositi, ut cum summa caliditate nulla permanet frigiditatis gradus, neque cum summo lucido quid tenebrosum aut obscurum. Qualis est igitur proportio inter splendorem solarem et lucernam potius fumigantem quam lucentem, talis utique erit inter divinum et humani intellectus lumen".

[50] JAVELLUS: *De christiana philosophia*, cap. 5, 382–383: "apud gentiles duplex invenitur sapientia: una est speculativa, ut metaphysica, altera est ad deorum cultum ordinata [...]. Illa quidem speculativa quamplura continet vera, sed et multa falsa, ut quod mundus sit aeternus, quod Deus de necessitate naturae agit ad extra, quod individuorum ut individua sunt, providentiam non habet, quod tot sunt intelligentiae, quot coelorum motus, nec plures, et quoniam multa continet falsa, ideo non meretur dici, nec esse sapientia. Est enim sapientia vera et de verissimis ac divinis rebus firma cognitio".

respect to theology and secular philosophy, seemed to correspond to the title of a historic task for the Christian wiseman: to nourish the faith and to shed light on the pagan culture. That task that embodied the reforming and moralizing demands of the bull *Apostolici regiminis*.

Abstract
Just a few months before the Protestant Reformation, the Lateran bull Apostolici regiminis (19 December 1513) initiated an attempt to reform and moralize humane studies by seeking to stem their pagan tendencies. The main idea of the papal bull was that philosophy should be taught and learned taking into account the dictates of Christian doctrine, for philosophy, as true science, could not contradict the truths of faith. The article examines the notion of "true philosophy" (vera philosophia) as a discipline improved by the Christian faith starting from Girolamo Savonarola's preaching – whose ideas were recalled by some people very close to Pope Leo X, as Giovanfrancesco Pico della Mirandola and the two Camaldolese monks Vincenzo Quirini and Tommaso Giustiniani – up to the first known application of the Lateran decree, which involved the Dominican theologian Crisostomo Javelli.