

## HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL COMPARISONS, CONTROVERSIES AND POLARITIES IN THE WORKS OF MARCUS ANTONIUS DE DOMINIS

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Marcus Antonius de Dominis was one of the most distinguished figures and personalities at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> into the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and he excelled both in the fields of the natural and theological sciences. He was first the bishop of Senj and later the archbishop of Split. M. A. de Dominis was predominantly occupied with the question of why Christianity was so divided in itself among its numerous churches and denominations. Generally speaking with regards to his day and age: in the last two decades of the 16th and the first quarter of the 17th century the main concern pertaining to religious thought was the clash between the two concepts around which the Church was organized.

In his quest for the truth, De Dominis always questioned the original thought and the teachings of Jesus Christ himself in order to ascertain which of these two ways was the correct one. Therefore, de Dominis sought the third way in the form of religious tolerance.

**Key words:** Marcus Antonius de Dominis, Paolo Sarpi, Venetian interdict, King James I, Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobes, Hugo Grotius, Johannes Kepler, Pope Urban VIII

### 1. The question of the Venetian interdict

Many Croatian and other authors have written about Marcus Antonius de Dominis and about his works, as well as regarding his opinion about the

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relations between the State and the Church, especially in case of the so called “Venetian Interdict”.<sup>1</sup> It is quite obvious that de Dominis had a strong interest in the matter of “Venetian Interdict” in his lifetime, but also in overall relations between the State and the Church. Among his many works on that topic two of his works from the area of ecclesiology can be pointed out, “The Objections of the Venetian Republic” and “Martelino”. In those works, de Dominis describes the relations between the State and the Church ie. relations between the sacred and secular.

Let us begin by stressing that this is about the relations between the State and the Church, which is a constantly current topic and one interesting for the history of the Church. The topic has been current since the very beginnings of the Church, from its origins, when Church was institutionalized by Jesus Christ himself. Those relations were based upon the words of Christ, which can be found in the Gospel of Lucas, “Give God what is His and Caesar what is his”.<sup>2</sup> Upon these Christ’s words, throughout the centuries the Church tended to define the relations with the State in that way, though in the medieval times there were many cases in which the Church and the papacy tried to work in favour of the sacred often giving it a jurisdictional advantage as opposed to secular and civil laws. Pope Gregory VII worked in that spirit and manner introducing many reforms in the Church. Historiography therefore added “The Great” to his name. History later named his ecclesiastical reforms: “Gregorian Reforms”. With the reforms Pope Gregory VII gave advantage to the Sacred placing thus the laws of the Church above civil laws. In the history of the medieval period, the clash between the Pope Gregory VII and the German king Henry IV is generally known, one in which Pope Gregory VII won in Canossa giving thus birth to the saying “going to Canossa” meaning o humiliate oneself. As we shall see the present clash between the sacred and the secular will arise later, at the passage from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> century regarding Pope Boniface VIII whom the famous Italian poet Dante Alighieri placed in Hell (its Ninth Circle) and the French king Philip IV “The Nice”. The result of this clash is known to the history of the Church as “The Avignon Captivity”.<sup>3</sup> The deep crisis of the Church of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and at the very beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century resulted in the crisis which finally ended with the reformation at the

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<sup>1</sup> Noel Malcolm, *De Dominis (1560.-1624.). Venetian, Anglican, Ecumenist and Relapsed Heretic* (London, 1984); Antonio Russo, *Marc'Antonio de Dominis (1560.-1624.), archivescovo di Spalato e apostata* (Naples, 1965); Ivan Supek, *Enciclopedia moderna* (Zagreb, 1967); Ivan Supek, *Heretik*, (Zagreb, 1968); Ivan Supek, *Spoznaja* (Zagreb, 1971), p. 257; Vesna Gamulin Tudina, ed., *Marko Antonije de Dominis, A Manifestation of the Motives* (Zagreb-Split, 1997); Vesna Gamulin Tudina, *Politološko-ekleziološka misao Marka Antonija de Dominisa* (doctoral dissertation, unpublished) (Zagreb, 2003); Ante Maletić, ed., *Marko Antonije de Dominis, Izabrani radovi 1*, (Split: 2002); Ante Maletić, ed., *Marko Antonije de Dominis, Izabrani radovi 2* (Split: 2003); *Zbornik radova o Markantunu de Dominisu* (Split, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Lk 20, 20-26. *Jeruzalemska Biblija* (Rome, Zagreb, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> August Franzen, *Kratka povijest Crkve* (Zagreb, 1988), pp.188.

beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century when all the attempts to achieve reforms “in capite et in membris” failed. It ended in the so called “Augsburg Peace” in the year 1555 in which the sentence “Quius regio, eius et religio” was confirmed.

That meant a need to redefine the relations of the State and the Church. In de Dominis’ time there broke a conflict between the Republic of Venice and a papal Rome of the pope Paul V. Venice itself wanted to create these relations in its own way, keeping its main political, religious and state interests. But it was not in favour of the Roman Papal Court nor of then ruling Pope Paul V and was in fact contrary to the interests of the renaissance papacy, generally speaking. Venice usually presented itself as a devoted daughter of the Catholic Church and its defender but in reality the situation was quite different. Venice itself, together with its intellectual noble circles, was completely lacking interest for religious topics and matters. Few individuals showed some interest for the protestant ideas and literature which was officially forbidden, but the same protestant literature easily circled around inside those small intellectual groups. The Venetian Republic was much more wary towards the Roman Church and the building of the new temples, monasteries and churches what was severely observed by the State. The Venetian Republic as a State was very afraid of its interests being interfered, especially when it was about the Church and its work. Thus, Venice always put its own political interests as a priority and did not permit the Church to be in the collision with its own interests, competence and jurisdiction.<sup>4</sup>

To be sure, one of the most important episodes in life of Marcus Antonius de Dominis was the year of 1606. From the history of the Church it is known that it was the year of a conflict between the Venetian Republic and the Roman Papal Court about which side has a greater competence in matters of civil jurisdiction. Has the Roman Church got equal right and competence in both fields of ecclesiastical and civil jurisdiction?

Two of the most active and competent figures and persons in solving the mater of “Venetian Interdict” were a Venetian official state theologian Paolo Sarpi, as well as then actual archbishop of Split Marcus Antonius de Dominis. De Dominis himself paid attention to the problem of interdict and wrote two significant jurisdictional work under the titles of “Objections of the Venetian Republic” and “Martelino”.<sup>5</sup> In his work “Objections of the Venetian Republic”, de Dominis criticized all injustice and irregularities that have been exposed in the letter against Venice of Cesare Baronio. There, Dominis stressed all Baronio’s incompetence and his interference with the civil realm. According to de Dominis, there’s no place for such Church in a civil realm regarding such an activity. Dominis further states that Cesare Baronio is a bad historian and that he should stick to the Church and not to the history. According to de Dominis, Baronio has lost his mind due to his cardinal crimson. Human vanity is,

<sup>4</sup> Ludwig Pastor, *Die Geschichte der Paepste*, vol. 11 (Darmstadt, 1911)

<sup>5</sup> *Marko Antonije de Dominis, Izabrani radovi 1*, p. 35-52.

according to de Dominis, the source of all evil and irregularities in the Church, especially during the election of new members of the cardinal choir, as well as during the election of the Pope.

Another script of de Dominis, related to “Venetian Interdict” was “Martelino”. In this script de Dominis describes a dialogue between two subjects. Martelino is a strong man, dreading nothing and no one, while contrary to this, Timorelli is a shy frightened man, a local vicar in Venetian hinterland (Terraferma). That possible conversation took place in that same hinterland in May of the year of 1606. Martelino probably represents De Dominis due to his character, while Timorelli, because of his position and duty, represents any frightened local vicar discussing the topic of interdict. With this discussion, de Dominis contributed amply to the solving of the Venetian interdict, already during his lifetime and even later after his death during centuries long attempts to solve that problem of competing between the State and the Church. Much later in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the question of competence between the State and the Church was solved in the spirit of modern relations. With his basic and initial discussion on that topic, de Dominis contributed hugely to the final solution of this ever present problem.

Still in the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, a fight for papal supremacy began. The already mentioned pope Gregory VII began reforming the Church, thus giving it superior position towards the State later earning the title “The Great”. Such a condition of ecclesiastical and political practice in that spirit remained for around two and a half centuries when new political constellation on the European Christian west, created new political powers and forces, thus defining and shaping new political interrelations between the State and the Church: this time in favour of the French kings.

What at the beginning of the early developed medieval period German rulers failed to do was now successfully done by the French kings at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Pope Boniface VIII tried in theory and more formally in his bull “Unum sanctum” to remind and if possible reinstall the old conditions and already mentioned interrelations. His act eventually resulted in his arrest and landed him with his followers and heirs on the papal throne in captivity, as well as the whole papacy. The episode is usually known to the history of the Church as “The Avignon Captivity”,<sup>6</sup> French king Philip the Nice came to Rome and ordered Pope Boniface VIII to Avignon, where the French king installed a new papal centre. Later this would cause future papal schisms and the so called phenomenon of counterpapacy particularly present in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but also in the first half of the next 15<sup>th</sup>. That phenomenon brought to forth again the question of the relations between the State and the Church, upon which the main role was given to the Sorbonne University in Paris, its faculty of Theology and its department of Ecclesiastical Law and its main relevant figure, lawyer Jean Gerson.

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<sup>6</sup> A. Franzen, *Kratka povijest*, p. 188.

Another question arose of organizing a Church Council for the entire western Christianity and its Church to overcome and heal the western papal schism. There was another task of trying to solve and overcome already four centuries old schism of the Churches between the Christian West and the East. In the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century there were attempts by the Dominican friar Ivan Stojković, a citizen of Dubrovnik and in its second half the same was tried by Andrija Jamometić.<sup>7</sup> But in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the ecclesiastical and political circumstances were much different after trying to solve the papal crisis and western schism in the first part of that same century. It only seemed as a semblance that these efforts brought solution, as well as it seemed to overcome the schism between the Christian West and East after the church council that took place in Ferrara and Florence. Such an agreement was reached in Florence in the year of 1439 but with no long term results.<sup>8</sup> This union of the churches was forced, because of very bad position and condition of the Greek Church caused by the military expansion of the Ottoman Turks. All along Greek Church acted as if the achieved union did not exist.<sup>9</sup> Such circumstances in western Christianity, that only apparently solved the split gave rise to a new crisis and schism in the western Christianity at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century that couldn't be solved and overcome. The reason was the manner in which territories in the newly discovered worlds were distributed and shared among European nations, but also a very rigid position of the Roman Court during the Trident Church Council, especially at its end. But the gilt was not only on one side. Eventually a solution was reached, "Quius regio, eius et religio". Protestant communities were recognised at the peace conference in Augsburg as "Confessio Augustana" in the year of 1555. It was however not a real peace, though it seemed so, but merely a lasting truce. The following bloody "Thirty Years' War" (1618-1648) showed the whole global tragedy of religious matters and problems that were not solved in the spirit of evangelisation throughout the last three hundred years.

We can quote very significant words of de Dominis who said that through many years of his priesthood he wanted to see Christian churches united. De Dominis compared the situation with Christ's garment which was torn off just like it was torn apart again by many conflicts and schisms within Christian churches.<sup>10</sup> For the actual relations between the church and the state the moral condition of the church is essential, especially after the Trident Church Council and after already recognised and confirmed western ecclesiastical schism, by the Roman Church as well as by all political figures.

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Holjevac, *Ivan Stojković i njegovo doba* (Zagreb, 2004), p. 31.

<sup>8</sup> Kamilo Dočkal, *Povijest općeg crkvenog sabora u Ferrari i Firenci* (Zagreb, 1940)

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Gill, *Il concilio di Firenze* (Rome, 1967).

<sup>10</sup> M. A. de Dominis, "Prvi proglas", in: *Marko Antonije de Dominis, Izabrani radovi 1*, pp. 53-71.

## Dominiis from Heidelberg to the Roman proclamation

This chronological part of de Dominiis' life, concerning his written theological work is certainly the richest one. This period begins with de Dominiis' departure from the Split bishopric which he had to leave, because of very poor internal circumstances, as well as external dangers and threats when Roman Papal Court invited him to Rome. Namely, Rome and papal court found out about the book that de Dominiis began to write, while still the archbishop of Split, under the title: "De Republica "Ecclesiastica". Instead traveling to Rome, Dominiis chose a different destinations, first one being Venice where Dominiis picked up a precious book, written by Paolo Sarpi called "A History of the Trident Council".<sup>11</sup>

Dominiis came to England with the assistance of the British ambassador in the Republic of Venice, Sir Watton who helped de Dominiis leave Venice, using his diplomatic authority and protection and not only Venice but all European lands and states subjected to the authority of the Roman Church.<sup>12</sup> De Dominiis decided to take this step because there was an always existing threat and danger for de Dominiis' life, since Roman court could always and at each moment claim de Dominiis' extradition, as he was the citizen of the Venetian Republic. The reason why Roman court would claim de Dominiis' extradition is because during his stay in Split as the archbishop, the same court discovered that de Dominiis was writing a capital work of enormous size and importance in which the phenomenon of the Roman Church and its history was described and elaborated systematically and from all points of view, as well as the Church in general.<sup>13</sup> In his work de Dominiis tries to elaborate the Church from its historical and ecclesiastical point of view, especially the Roman Church; its past, but also its, to Dominiis, present time and also how it should be organized, according to the vision of Jesus Christ himself and according to the interpretation of de Dominiis too. This capital and a great volume de Dominiis named "De Republica Ecclesiastica". The title of the book itself suggested to the Roman papal court which size of the topic the book of de Dominiis encompasses. Regardless of de Dominiis' role in defending civil rights of the Venetian Republic against the attacks of the Roman court, Venice, contrary to this, could not offer de Dominiis any possible protection and security on its territory against the papal spies and even murderers sent by the Roman court. Therefore de Dominiis started his secret negotiations with the English ambassador Sir Wotton to

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<sup>11</sup> Veselin Kostić, *Kulturne veze Britanskog ostrva i jugoslovenskih zemalja* (Belgrade: SANU, 1972), p.137.

<sup>12</sup> See: Vesna Gamulin, "Regesta dokumenata iz Public Record Office u Londonu koji su vezani uz boravak Marka Antonija de Dominiisa u Engleskoj", *Zbornik radova Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti JAZU* 13/1983): 200.

<sup>13</sup> M. A. de Dominiis, "Crkvena država – izbor iz djela", in: *Marko Antonije de Dominiis, Izabrani radovi 1*, pp. 73-120.

leave Venice and come to England. All this was confirmed by later discovered diplomatic correspondence between two English embassies; those in Venice and the other one in the Dutch city of Den Haag<sup>14</sup>. The diplomatic correspondence between these two English embassies in the first quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century has for sure had a certain diplomatic protection and that is why this correspondence couldn't be discovered, neither by the Venetian authorities, nor by the Roman ecclesiastical authorities. So next year of 1616 de Dominis by the assistance of the English ambassador Sir Watton, finally decided to take this step towards leaving Venice. Using false documents, identity and the passport of a Ragusian merchant, de Dominis left the territory of Venetian Republic. But none of that was enough to ensure his security because de Dominis had to pass through the territories of Habsburg Monarchy, as well as through some German territories of the river Rhein, especially near the city of Cologne. Namely, wherever the Roman court had ecclesiastical and civil reign, a message was passed around for Dominis "ex archbishop of Split and now the fugitive" to be apprehended. So, according to the words of de Dominis himself, he had to hide under the deck of the river boat that took him from Heidelberg to Cologne and later to the Dutch cities of Den Haag and Rotterdam whence he was transported by the Dutch war ship across the English Channel to Dover where he was warmly greeted and accepted by the king James, English nobles and citizens of London. It was in December of 1616.<sup>15</sup>

What followed were many tours and trips around England. King James placed de Dominis in the court of the archbishop of Abbot, who had contacts abroad and with Protestants overseas, Criptoprotestants and many intellectual circles that were on the way of becoming Protestant or claimed so. Above all de Dominis visit to two the most famous Universities; Oxford and Cambridge must be mentioned, where he was also very warmly accepted. There de Dominis was present in defending the doctoral thesis by a certain James William, in the field of theology as referring to ecclesiology. In the year of 1621 famous Francis Bacon will be dismissed after a financial affair and the already mentioned James William will take his position and even gain the title of the Lord. Throughout first year of his sojourn in England de Dominis' was busy printing the first volume of his "De Republica Ecclesiastica". Earlier, in Heidelberg, he wrote his first, so called, "Heidelberg proclamation". That was in a way a continued farewell letter to the citizens of his former bishopric of Split. There de Dominis wrote about reasons why he left Split and went to England. De Dominis very openly spoke about very poor conditions of and inside the Roman Church, describing his situation as having to be a little dog, making sure to be

<sup>14</sup> Vesna Gamulin, "Regesta dokumenata iz Public Record Office u Londonu koji su vezani uz boravak Marka Antonija de Dominisa u Engleskoj", *Zbornik radova Odsjeka za povijesne znanosti JAZU* 13 (1983): 200.

<sup>15</sup> Compare: Veselin Kostić, op.cit. pp. 131., Marko Antonije de Dominis, "O miru među religijama – poslanica kralju Jamesu", in: *Marko Antonije de Dominis, Izabrani radovi 1*, pp. 181-182., "Pismo Josefa Halla Dominisu", in: *Marko Antonije de Dominis, Izabrani radovi 1*, pp. 201-213.

alert and indicate all the abuse and by the clergy. De Dominis furthermore writes that this clergy didn't take proper care of the sheep, personifying believers who were given by Christ himself to his disciples to be well guarded. Instead, the herd of sheep was treated poorly in many ways. The vineyard (as an image of the Church), according to the words of de Dominis is being used by the clergy for their own entertainment, carousing and orgies. That is why, according to his words, in the interest of his own security, but even more in the interest of his struggle for the true Church which Roman Church turned away from and because of the fight for the Gospel, he had to take wings of a dove and fly away to England<sup>16</sup>. Time and again De Dominis stressed that he never ceased to be a true Catholic and there was a proof for it. Namely, during the time spent in England, he always described himself as "Archiepiscopus Spalatensis, primas Dalmatiae et Croatiae".

As was already said, the initial years of de Dominis stay in England were about visiting high ranging clergy of the Anglican Church. He was also invited to many special occasions. De Dominis visited the royal court of the king James I and attended some lectures at the universities. At the end of the year of 1617, just at the time of the Advent, De Dominis printed his sermon that he held on the first Sunday during the advent the same year. He held the sermon in the chapel for the Italian merchants, Calvinists. In it de Dominis preached about the opposition between the day and night. The topic of his sermon is the message of St. Paul to the Romans, letter which de Dominis inserted in his contemporary context<sup>17</sup>. The night, according to the interpretation of de Dominis himself would be a tyrannical rule of the Roman Church which for many centuries illegitimately took the role and prerogatives of the true Catholic Church, thus oppressing ignorant and uneducated masses of believers. The day, also according to the interpretation of de Dominis, would refer to Reformation, ie. a reformed church which set aside and cast away all irregularities and superstitious acts that were, throughout the centuries presented under the disguise of the true Catholic Church. The sun is, according to de Dominis, a permanent source of light and Jesus Christ himself represents this celestial body. De Dominis also describes geography of polar lands and landscapes, demonstrating his acquaintance with life there, as well as with geographers of the old<sup>18</sup>. These De Dominis' statements were constantly repeated during his stay in England in his other works that we shall mention later. But the most important were efforts to print his capital volume "De Republica Ecclesiastica". Its first volumes were printed in that year of 1618. In comparison to this capital book of "De Republica Ecclesiastica", other de Dominis's smaller works seem to circle around this huge celestial body of "De Republica Ecclesiastica" like the astral bodies and satellites around the sun. That same year of 1618 another de Domi-

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<sup>16</sup> Marko Antonije de Dominis, *Izabrani radovi 1*, p. 63.

<sup>17</sup> *Jeruzalemska Biblija* (Rome - Zagreb, 1996)

<sup>18</sup> Marko Antonije de Dominis, *Izabrani radovi 1*, pp. 139-140.



nis' work was published under the title: "Rocks of the Christian Shipwreck". This De Dominis' work is chronological, very closely related according to the topic and attached to his previous work, already mentioned, "The preaching on the First Sunday of the Advent".<sup>19</sup> In his work "Rocks of the Christian Shipwreck" de Dominis gave a precise and detailed hydrographical map description of all reefs and shallow waters which caused the sinking of the Roman Church ship, commanded by rotten sea captains, referring to the contemporary Pope Paul V as well as to all the previous ones through the past centuries of the history of the Church. Group by group De Dominis lists all the faults that according to his belief have accumulated throughout centuries, practiced in the rituals of the Roman Church and included in the teachings of the Church, far from being based on healthy fundamental biblical teaching of the earliest church. Those sins, vice and false beliefs, according to de Dominis, as superstitions, whether purposeful or inadvertent, entered the practice and rituals of the Roman Church and even more; the dogma and very beliefs of the Roman Church. The reason was, according to de Dominis, the fact that the Roman Church went astray from the teaching of the true Catholic Church. But also in de Dominis' view, there was an intention by the Roman Church to subject mostly uneducated masses to believing in order to manipulate them more easily. Thus de Dominis elaborated very critically his present conditions of the Roman Church that seemed to be very poor. Dominis spoke out about the phenomenon of the unconditional faith that is closely related to the phenomenon of the unconditional obedience to higher structures of the Church, without subjecting them to any questions. In an earlier work of his de Dominis said that he was forced to accept every practice of the Roman Church as a part of the true faith and the dogma. Each doubt, however tiny, according to him, caused him a lot of inner suffering out of scruples. Later when he read all the prescribed religious books, he saw many irregularities in their contents that were offered to uneducated gullible masses as religious truths. De Dominis said that during his theological studies, many protestant authors were misquoted in order to be shown as true heretics. The aim was to present the Roman Church teachings as the only correct ones. De Dominis furthermore widely criticised many practices of the Roman Church, such as confessions and worshipping holy relics, images of the saints and statues. De Dominis is strongly against fasting that is not fasting at all referring to consuming finest food and fish during the days the Church proclaimed to be meant for fasting, instead of helping those in need. This segment of religious practice of helping each other is strongly stressed in de Dominis' thought. De Dominis criticised teaching of the Roman Church about the existence of Purgatory, of which there's no evidence and prove in the Holy Scripture. Such theological and ecclesiological statements of the time, exposed and presented by De Dominis largely correspond to those of Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes was partly De Dominis' contempo-

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<sup>19</sup> *Marko Antonije de Dominis, Izabrani radovi 2*, pp. 143-144.

rary thinker. He exposed his philosophical views in his work “Leviathan”<sup>20</sup>. Later de Dominis extensively revised his opinion about the question of Purgatory and not only that. De Dominis wrote his publication: “Rocks of the Christian Shipwreck” in the year of 1618 intending to warn and point to all irregularities of the Roman Church in the name of the true Catholic and universal church to its children and believers. Those who ignore the warnings will claim their own responsibility and suffer the consequences. Finally, De Dominis in those days of his stay in England, from his view of ecclesiology, sees Roman Church as only a part of a universal Catholic Church. It is comparable to a ship whose captain is a Roman bishop (the Pope), while the true universal Catholic Church is a fleet whose captain is Jesus Christ himself as the admiral of that fleet claiming thus the title of Jesus Christ Church<sup>21</sup>.

Thus, following the chronology, we’re approaching a very important screed by de Dominis, “About the Origins, Progress and Decline of the Institution of Papacy”, “De Romano Pontifice”. It is very interesting that this screed was printed in Frankfurt at the printing press of Gotfried Tampach in the year of 1618. This theological script by de Dominis’ deals with the idea of bishops’ community and equality. The script is divided in ten chapters in which de Dominis elaborates the fact that papacy and its institution took over all political power, beside the spiritual one that has been given by Jesus Christ himself to the papacy and to the Church. In this script, de Dominis in his own way and very selectively quoted the Holy Script, its fragments, as well as the fragments of the patriarchs of the Church, thus wanting to show correctness of his statements. In the introduction de Dominis didn’t omit to greet King James I, his family, prince Charles too. According to him, they are all an excellent example of good Christians, as good Christian governors who are defenders of Christianity itself and a good example of Christian reign. Dominis continued with the statement that papacy never had the right of hieromonarchy. He listed many examples from history of the Church; from the period of the early Christianity, up to the medieval times. De Dominis showed examples from western Christianity, but also from the eastern one. He referred to the interrelations between the Christian west and the east, trying to show through correspondence of the papacy directed to the eastern Constantinople patriarchs that both sides understood their interrelations very correctly, as equal and fraternal, during these early times of history of the Church<sup>22</sup>. According to de Dominis the present condition of papacy and western church is a mater of later deviations and wrong interpretations of the centuries that followed. It is also worth saying that de Dominis is not always the most correct, when he elaborates the earliest pe-

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Levijatan* (Zagreb, 2004), pp. 293.-305.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Holjevac, “Die Kontroversen von Markantun de Dominis, den Bischof von Senj und spaeteren Erzbischof von Split”, *Review of Croatian History* III (2007), no. 1: 293-305.

<sup>22</sup> Marko Antonije de Dominis, *Izabrani radovi* 2; pp. 23.-28; Georgije Ostrogorski, *Povijest Bizanta* (Zagreb, 2002), pp. 44.

riod of the early Church, as well as the reign of the roman emperor Nero when de Dominis erroneously dated the time of death of St. Peter's. The reason could be de Dominis' intention to show that St. Peter has never been to Rome. By this statement de Dominis put the whole institution of papacy itself in question. Far from precise is also de Dominis' datation concerning chronology of the preorigines of the Church. In the script "De Romano Pontifice", the most important part is de Dominis' debate about relations between the Church and the State. De Dominis wants to emphasise that only king has the apostolic right of installing priests and bishops<sup>23</sup>.

Another de Dominis' script "Sorex primus" deserves a mention, written by his secretary from Burgundia, Daniel Lochet who defends his master from many offences issued by Leonardo Maria, professor of theology at the University of Cologne. According to Daniel Lochet, who defends his supreme master de Dominis, Leonardo Maria read only the first page of de Dominis' masterpiece "De Republica Ecclesiastica" and is like a little mouse who only started nibbling someone else's slice of cheese. According to Lochet, Leonardo Maria thinks that he is a match to then present great theological debates. Lochet called Leonardo Maria "a little theologian" and his secretary Sever Binio, Lochet called "Sever" thus ironically playing with his Latin version of his name. Once again Lochet called Maria a small and a miserable mouse that eats somebody else's slice of cheese and forecasts that this small poor mouse is going to die very miserably, nearby sewage grills, like mice usually die. This script "Sorex primus" is packed with insults. It is not rare for the late period of the renaissance. The selection of vocabulary is very crude. So in a way we can compare this script "Sorex primus" by Daniel Lochet with another one, already interpreted and analyzed "Objections of the Venetian Republic"<sup>24</sup>. The main point of that de Dominis' and Lochet's script "Sorex primus" is that Maria cannot call de Dominis "ex archbishop of Split" because de Dominis never strayed from the true Catholic faith and the title of the archbishop of Split. So, according to Lochet, Leonardo Maria showed his minimal knowledge of theology<sup>25</sup>.

A very important event is printing the "History of the Trident Church Council" that de Dominis secretly brought with him from Venice to London in small volumes. In the year 1619 this script was published under the name (anagram) of the Venetian state secretary Paolo Sarpi. By the act of publishing this script Venice had quite a number of diplomatic problems. De Dominis wanted in his own way to revenge to Venice and to its state secretary and state theologian because of their lack of gratitude towards him. Of course, this was at after the Venetian Interdict when all diplomatic troubles, as it seemed, were over-

<sup>23</sup> M. A. de Dominis, "O podrijetlu, napretku te gašenju ustanove papinstva", in: *Marko Antonije de Dominis, Izabrani radovi 2*, Franjo Pšeničnjak, "De Dominisova ideja o biskupskoj kolegijalnosti", *Obnovljeni život* 29 (1974): 490-512.

<sup>24</sup> *Marko Antonije de Dominis, Izabrani radovi 1*, pp. 1-34

<sup>25</sup> *Marko Antonije de Dominis, Izabrani radovi 2*, pp. 204-213.

come. So anything reminding both diplomatic subjects of the unpleasant clash could influence their then present diplomatic relations<sup>26</sup>.

Thus strictly following the chronology of de Dominis' stay in England, we're taking a look at the letter that de Dominis wrote to Alexandrian patriarch Cyril in which he informs the Alexandrian patriarch about bad conditions of the western churches under the Pope. De Dominis even singled Pope out as "a new pharaoh and antichrist". Besides the letter to the Alexandrian patriarch Cyril, de Dominis sent him the already printed volumes of his "De Republica Ecclesiastica". De Dominis also informed Alexandrian patriarch Cyril about the contents of his book made up of ten volumes. Observing the history of the Church, De Dominis, according to his own words, defended the Church of Constantinople and churches of the Christian East pertaining to this Church. It is interesting how de Dominis easily exposed his thesis regarding the history of eastern churches and their interrelations though the reality of it was entirely different. Namely, the eastern Churches of Alexandria, Antiochia, as well as the others were in bitter opposition towards Constantinople before the expansion of Islam<sup>27</sup>. According to de Dominis papal Rome of his time is synonymous to ancient Egypt and to slavery of the chosen people, oppressing new Israel; the Church. As mentioned earlier de Dominis called the pope "a pharaoh" and even "the antichrist"<sup>28</sup>. That is why de Dominis wanted patriarch Cyril and his Alexandrian Church to enter the union with the Anglican Church. As de Dominis said, he found in England a modern Goshem where there is light of a true faith and Gospel shining. Again, according to de Dominis, England and its Church bitterly oppose to the papal autocracy. Of course de Dominis did not forget to mention King James I and all his virtues, king who is fighting bitterly against the papacy. Just like at the beginning, at the end of his letter de Dominis did not forget to send his regards filled with love.

The fact that de Dominis decides to send his letter to Alexandrian patriarch Cyril is very interesting just like another letter which he sent to the homonymous patriarch of Constantinople Cyril Lucaris who had strong relations with protestant churches (church communities and denominations), since he once studied in Geneva. Cyril Lucaris wanted protestant theological thought to influence the already atrophied Greek Orthodox Church thought. Therefore Cyril Lucaris was excommunicated by the Greek Orthodox Church after his death at the Church council in Jerusalem in the year 1672. Upon his thought and view the same Greek Orthodox Church cast the anathema.<sup>29</sup> Cyril Lucaris himself thanked de Dominis a few times on the first volumes of the book "De

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<sup>26</sup> Ivan Supek, *Spoznaja*, (Zagreb, 1971), p. 257

<sup>27</sup> Jane A. Tombie, "Coptic Church", in: Parry, Ken, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity* (Blackwell Publishing, 2007), pp. 94.-117

<sup>28</sup> Marko Antonije de Dominis, *Izabrani radovi 1*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas W. Arnold, *Historija islama* (Sarajevo, 1990), pp. 197-200; Gerchard Podskalsky, *Griechische Theologie in der Zeit der turken Herrschaft 1453.-1821* (Munich, 1988).

Republica Ecclesiastica” which de Dominis sent him. He also asked Dominis to send him the rest once they are published.

Another important correspondence of de Dominis’ is with the famous Dutch humanist, Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), who founded the international law as a scientific discipline and who was a great fan of de Dominis and his theological and other scientific works. He was particularly impressed by de Dominis’ courage when he left his archbishop’s chair in Split and fled to England over Venice, being invited by king James. But it is not evident and likely that de Dominis met with Hugo Grotius during his very short stay in the Netherlands that could only have been in passing and related to his journey to England. During his short stay in Netherlands, de Dominis visited Den Haag and Rotterdam. After his meeting with Dutch protestant grand dukes, a Dutch navy war ship brought him to England. On the occasion of de Dominis’ arrival to England a magnificent meeting was arranged in December of 1616. That same year William Shakespeare died on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April.<sup>30</sup> Hugo Grotius shared very similar thoughts and opinions with de Dominis, concerning religion and faith as well as the European political complications nearly related to this question of religion and faith that reflected very badly on Grotius’ Dutch homeland. Upon that topic Grotius discussed at length with de Dominis.<sup>31</sup> Concerning his discussion with Hugo Grotius, de Dominis wrote a letter to the social classes of the Netherlands and Belgium, pleading for togetherness and unity that should be presented in a form of the religious tolerance<sup>32</sup>. But as enthusiastic as Hugo Grotius was before de Dominis’ arrival to England, he was equally disappointed after de Dominis left England and returned to the Roman Catholic Church. On the contrary, such a disappointment was not characteristic of the famous astronomer Johannes Kepler, whose admiration for de Dominis’ remained the same before and after de Dominis left England and returned to Rome probably due to Kepler’s admiration to Dominis’ scientific work among other things. But the international political constellation wasn’t de Dominis’s only problem during his stay in England. His problems began because of his correspondence with Hugo Grotius. The topic of this correspondence was religion and interconfessional relationships, especially after the protestant Dordrecht Council in the years of 1618-1619 where hard line Calvinist stream within Anglican Church prevailed.<sup>33</sup> It could also be the result of de Dominis’ initial disorientation among so numerous denominations and their streams inside the Anglican Church.<sup>34</sup> De Dominis testified about that

<sup>30</sup> V. Kostić, *Kulturne veze*, p. 131.

<sup>31</sup> Matija Berljak, “Dva pisma Marka Antonija de Dominisa Hugu Grotiusu”, *Croatica Christiana Periodica* 24 (2000), no. 45: 103 -116.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., “Dva pisma Marka Antuna de Dominisa u svezi njegovoga djela ‘De Republica Ecclesiastica’”, *Croatica Christiana Periodica* 21 (1997), no. 4: 1-11.

<sup>33</sup> Nicholas Tyacke, *Anticalvinists, The Rise of English Arminianism 1590.-1640* (Oxford,1987).

<sup>34</sup> Eleonora Belligni, *Auctoritas e potestas* (Milano, 2003), pp. 244-278.

situation in his letter to the Worcester archbishop that he sent to him from Bruxelles in the year of 1622 after de Dominis already left England after the administrative decree of King James I.<sup>35</sup>

Already at that time in some de Dominis' sermons, unlike his first sermon on the first Sunday of the Advent in December of 1617 one can notice that he no longer considers Catholic Church as heresy nor its teachings as heretic. Indeed his closeness to the Catholic Church was becoming increasingly obvious, both from its dogmatic and its political point of view. This can be ascribed to the influence of Spanish ambassador Gondomar who tried to persuade de Dominis to return to the Roman Catholic Church, in accordance with the Roman court. On the other hand Gondomar defamed de Dominis in the eyes of King James telling him about de Dominis' wish to return to Rome and to the Roman Catholic Church. When King James realised that rumours about de Dominis' desire to return to Rome became a reality, he was furious and said that to a grateful person all he had done for de Dominis would seem plenty and for an ungrateful one a little.<sup>36</sup> Gondomar also said to King James that he did not intend to vex him but merely show de Dominis' hypocrisy and his true character as being fickle not only personally, but also in the matter of the then current dogmatic clash between two ecclesiastical teachings, Catholic and the Protestant. Gondomar even accused de Dominis of plotting with Pope Paul V to come to England and to work upon the recatholisation of England and the English throne. According to this, England should return under the fold of Roman Catholic Church. That angered King James more than anything. Since then, King James had a negative opinion about de Dominis and considered him his enemy. Before de Dominis left England and after his final decision to leave with the assistance of Duke of Gondomar, de Dominis had to answer a few questions of King James himself. In his last letter to de Dominis King James asked him about reasons of his coming to England and if these reasons were sincere, why de Dominis decided to leave after all the honours were given to him. Dominis had to answer question by question, point by point, as there was a great doubt that de Dominis was no more than an ordinary spy of the Roman court. Eventually de Dominis was strictly ordered to leave British Kingdom by a certain date.<sup>37</sup>

After de Dominis left England in March of 1622 he answered the letter of the Worcester archbishop Sir Joseph Hall. This letter de Dominis wrote from the papal embassy in Bruxelles. In his letter written before de Dominis left England, Joseph Hall's tried to persuade de Dominis to stay in England. Otherwise, according to his own words, de Dominis will be very sorry for having ever set foot on the English soil where he was presented by all the political and religious freedoms of Britain, which de Dominis himself could have enjoyed. Hall continued ironically if that was so, let de Dominis hear and listen

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<sup>35</sup> *Marko Antonije de Dominis, Izabrani radovi 1*, pp. 159-171.

<sup>36</sup> V. Kostić, *Kulturne veze*, p. 162.

<sup>37</sup> *Marko Antonije de Dominis, Izabrani radovi 2*, pp. 300-318.

to the whispering and false promises of the Jesuits. At the very beginning of his letter in answer to Hall's de Dominis says in a diplomatic way that Hall is an honourable man stating a whole list of Hall's virtues. In the central part of his letter, de Dominis moved to the topic at hand: diplomatic criticism of the situation, especially of political and religious circumstances in England. De Dominis' view and opinion on the ecclesiology are now radically changed. His opinion after he left England is that Roman Church didn't cause and initiate the schism but the schism has been done and initiated by others and many times in history Roman Church suffered because of it. Dominis no doubt referred to the big Eastern-Western schism of the year of 1054 but also to the western Christianity schism of the year of 1517 when Luther famously came forward with his Protestant manifest containing the 95 theses with long term consequences up to the times of de Dominis. De Dominis particularly criticised the Dordrecht Synod of Protestant Churches (1618-1619) where rigid Calvinist stream prevailed according to de Dominis.

Elaborating earlier English history, de Dominis is particularly fond of Queen Mary Stuart who aimed at restoring Catholicism, after the well known episode with King Henry VIII and his breakup with Roman Church. De Dominis said that the extreme form of Calvinism never took supremacy in theological and ecclesiastical debates in the frame of the Anglican Church until his present time, during the rule of King James I. According to de Dominis, the reason Calvinists took supremacy was their desire to take possession over the property left by the Catholic Church. But de Dominis also stresses that here were more than seven thousands honourable men in the Anglican Church who didn't want to bow before Luther's and Calvin's fury.

In his correspondence with Joseph Hall de Dominis also touches the question of transubstantiation. In the end of his letter de Dominis, in his own exalted way, says that he would sing with joy on the occasion of his return to Rome at last under the fold of his mother, the Roman Catholic Church<sup>38</sup>.

Thus, in that vein and style de Dominis wrote his, so called, "Second Roman Manifestation" in which, he, most probably forced by censorship, now totally differently observed ecclesiology and multiconfessionality. What he earlier considered in his, so called, "The first Heidelberg Manifestation" as correct and inspired by Holy Spirit, now he considered a deviation and a kind of illness. He even considered that he apostated from the only right mother; the Roman Catholic Church that, according to his new vision has, as the only institution to teach and to explain the right and sacred truths of faith. But not even all that was enough to satisfy the Roman inquisition. The inquisition proclaimed de Dominis "Haereticus relapsus". De Dominis died in the castle of St. Angelo under very grim circumstances on September 8<sup>th</sup> of 1624.

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<sup>38</sup> Marko Antonije de Dominis, *Izabrani radovi 2*, pp. 200.-218.

We can consider and call de Dominis Erasmus of Rotterdam since de Dominis, like Erasmus, was one who really sought the truth – truth that was to answer which Christian path and which Christian church was righteous. Like Erasmus, he didn't want to choose any. Instead he chose the third path.<sup>39</sup> This became obvious during his stay in England from his works like "The Rocks of the Christian Shipwreck" and "De Romano Pontifice" in which he fully adopted the protestant "Credo". His third path could be seen in his work: "De pace religionis" written after de Dominis left England in the year 1622 and after he got an introspective sight about the situation in the Anglican church from inside where extreme Calvinist theories took supremacy. But also earlier, in his letters to Hugo Grotius and Johannes Kepler, de Dominis appealed for the freedom of speech, freedom of confession and, generally speaking, tolerance. Both Hugo Grotius and Johannes Kepler considered de Dominis their idol even after he left England and returned to the Roman Catholic Church and to Rome. They were disappointed by this act of de Dominis but their admiration for him remained. In his work "De pace religionis" de Dominis appeals for general tolerance. In crucial religious things he appeals for the unity and for those that were of lesser importance. He appeals for freedom. What was too much for one side, for another one, the Roman church was too little. In his second Roman manifest, de Dominis had to revise his earlier views upon the matter of theological and ecclesiological questions four times. The aim of the Roman inquisition, Roman Church and pope Urban VIII was to humiliate de Dominis as much as possible and then to kill him in inhuman conditions. After that just like Pontius Pilate they were to wash their hands of his death and potential suspicion for causing it possibly by poisoning.<sup>40</sup> Autopsy performed proclaimed an ordinary pneumonia as the cause of death which is not strange considering the conditions of de Dominis's captivity in St. Angel's castle in the year of 1624.

"Post mortem" de Dominis was proclaimed by the Roman inquisition as "haereticus relapsus" who not only died as a martyr in captivity of the same Roman Church to which he so sincerely returned but wasn't even given right to a Christian funeral.<sup>41</sup> Although de Dominis always remained Catholic in his heart, his body was burned down at stake on the Roman square "Campo dei fiori", together with all his scientific works from the fields of the Theology the Mathematics and Physics. His ashes were thrown into the river of Tiber, like the ashes of all damned for all eternity. Afterwards, Catholics like Protestants tried to forget de Dominis along with all his works which is often the case also in his homeland where de Dominis grew up, where narrow minded interpretations of his works and theories are present.<sup>42</sup> But real values remain for the future centuries and also for the eternity.

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<sup>39</sup> Erazmo Rotterdamski, *Pohvala ludosti* (Zagreb, 1999).

<sup>40</sup> Ante Maletić ed., *Skica za portret Marka Antonija de Dominisa* (Split, 2008), p. 152.

<sup>41</sup> E. Belligni, *Auctoritas e potestas*.

<sup>42</sup> Ivan Supek, *Enciclopedia moderna* (Zagreb, 1967); Ivan Supek, *Spoznaja* (Zagreb, 1971)



## **Geschichtliche und theologische Vergleiche, Kontroversen und Gegensätze in Werken von Marcus Antonius de Dominis**

### **Zusammenfassung**

Marcus Antonius de Dominis spielte als Theologe eine wichtige Rolle in intellektuellen Kreisen an der Wende zum 17. Jahrhundert. Er war Bischof von Zengg (Senj) und später Erzbischof von Split. In diesem Beitrag schildert der Autor politische und theologische Tätigkeit von Marcus Antonius de Dominis, die auf Versöhnung und interkonfessionellen Dialog gerichtet war. Im Mittelpunkt des Forschungsinteresses des Autors befinden sich die theologischen Werke von Dominis, vor allem das Werk "De Republica Ecclesiastica"

