

THE PAZZI WAR AND CROATIANS IN THE SERVICE
OF PAPAL PROPAGANDA: MATO RAGNINA'S
SUPER PACE VENETORUM CUM MAGNO TURCO (1479)*

Tobias Daniels

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Tobias Daniels
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität
Historicum
M ü n c h e n
Tobias.Daniels@mg.fak09.uni-muenchen.de
tobiasdaniels@gmx.net

The present paper analyzes Mato Ragnina's (ca. 1444-1499) treatise *Super pace Venetorum cum Magno Turco et auxilio Florentinis contra Romanum Pontificem ab eis et duce Mediolanensi impenso libellus* (Vat. lat. 4858) (spring 1479) in the context of Italian politics during the war that followed the Pazzi conspiracy (1478-1480). This paper argues that Ragnina's text may be counted among the numerous pamphlets written during the Pazzi war. Ragnina's principal arguments, that neither Venice's peace with the Turks in January 1479 nor its help for Milan and Florence against Sixtus IV since 1478 was legitimate, reflect papal policies and show the way the Curia intended to influence the balances of power in that context. Moreover, the treatise reflects the way the Papacy viewed itself in Quattrocento Italy and justified its power during the establishment of what research has later described as 'Papal Sovereignty'. Ragnina responds to the Venetian stipulation of not only an armistice but also a unilateral treaty, which questioned the role of the Papacy itself as defender of the Christian Republic. In this perspective, the pontiffs could accept neither a coalition between Venice and the Turks nor an alliance of legitimate powers such as Venice and Milan in defence of excommunicated persons like Lorenzo de' Medici, since this would have undermined the authority of the Papacy, which was at the same time equally threatened by the call for a council.

Keys words: Pazzi conspiracy, Pazzi war, pamphlets, Lorenzo de' Medici, Sixtus IV, Giuliano della Rovere, league of Florence, Milan and Venice (1474), Venice's peace with the Ottomans (1479), murder of Galeazzo Maria Sforza (1476), Andrija Jamometić, Nicholas of Modruš

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In 1478 a conspiracy against the Medici brothers Giuliano and Lorenzo failed to overthrow their regime in Florence: the conspirators managed to murder Giuliano, but failed to kill Lorenzo.¹ The so-called Pazzi conspiracy led to a grievous war which ended only in 1480. On the one side stood Florence, allied with Milan and Venice, on the other, there was the coalition forged chiefly by the king of Naples and pope Sixtus IV.² The struggle was not only fought with military means, but was also accompanied by diplomatic efforts and a ferocious propaganda war.³ In the latter context, Croatian politicians and scholars were also involved. One of them, the bishop of Krajina, Andrija Jamometić, served as a proctor for Emperor Frederick III in Rome and mediated in the diplomatic struggles to secure peace, especially in 1479.⁴ Famously, some years later in Basel he would call for a Church Council in order to impeach Sixtus IV.⁵ Firmly on the papal side was Nicholas, bishop of Modruš.⁶ In the immediate aftermath of the murder of Giuliano de' Medici, he was sent to Florence in order to secure the release of the young cardinal Raffaele Riario who had been taken prisoner by the Signoria after the failed coup. Shortly thereafter, Nicholas wrote a work called the *Defensio ecclesiasticae libertatis* in which he justified the pope's position.⁷ The present paper will consider a little-

¹ Riccardo Fubini, »La congiura dei Pazzi: radici politico-sociali e ragioni di un fallimento«, *Id., Italia quattrocentesca. Politica e diplomazia nell'età di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, Milan, 1994, 87-106; Tobias Daniels, *La congiura dei Pazzi: i documenti del conflitto fra Lorenzo de' Medici e Sisto IV. Le bolle di scomunica, la »Florentina Synodus«, e la »Dissentio« insorta tra la Santità del Papa e i Fiorentini. Edizione critica e commento*, Florence, 2013 (Studi di storia e documentazione storica, 6).

² For Milan's part see now: Tobias Daniels, »Milano partecipe nella congiura dei Pazzi?«, *Il laboratorio del Rinascimento. Studi di storia e cultura per Riccardo Fubini*, ed. by Lorenzo Tanzini, Florence, 2015, 157-176.

³ T. Daniels, op. cit. (1).

⁴ Jürgen Petersohn, *Kaiserlicher Gesandter und Kurienbischof: Andreas Jamometić am Hof Papst Sixtus' IV. (1478-1481); Aufschlüsse aus neuen Quellen*, Hannover, 2004.

⁵ Jürgen Petersohn, *Reichsrecht versus Kirchenrecht: Kaiser Friedrich III. im Ringen mit Papst Sixtus IV. um die Strafgewalt über den Basler Konzilspronuntiator Andreas Jamometić 1482-1484*, Cologne, 2015 (cf. my review in *Francia recensio* 2015: http://www.perspectivia.net/publikationen/francia/francia-recensio/2015-3/ma/petersohn_daniels); Tobias Daniels, »Die italienischen Mächte und der Basler Konzilsversuch des Andreas Jamometić«, *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, kanonistische Abteilung*, 100 (2014), 339-367.

⁶ Luka Špoljarić, »Ex libris Nicolai episcopi Modrussiensis: knjižnica Nikole Modruškoga« [»Ex Libris Nicolai episcopi Modrussiensis: the Library of Nicholas of Modruš«], *CM XXI* (2012), 25-68; »Nicholas of Modruš and his Latin Translations of Isocrates' To Nicocles and To Demonicus: Questions of Authorship, Sources and Dedication«, *CM XXIV* (2015), 5-48.

⁷ Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 8092. Extracts have been published by Giovanni Mercati, »Notizie varie sopra Niccolò Modrussiese«, *Id., Opere Minori, raccolte in occasione del settantesimo natalizio sotto gli auspici di S.S. Pio XI*, vol. 4, Città del Vaticano, 1937 (Studi e Testi, 79), 205-267, here 251-257. A second manuscript is to be found

known work related to these events, Mato Ragnina's *Super pace Venetorum cum Magno Turco et auxilio Florentinis contra Romanum Pontificem ab eis et duce Mediolanensi impenso libellus*. The treatise can be dated to the spring of 1479. The only known copy, preserved in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana under the shelf mark Vat. lat. 4858, was mentioned first by Giovanni Mercati in his studies on Nicholas of Modruš.⁸ Later, Florio Banfi wrote a short description of the text,⁹ while Miroslav Kurelac briefly introduced it to the Croatian academia.¹⁰ The aim of this paper is to contextualize this work and its author in the curial politics and propaganda after the Pazzi conspiracy.

1. The Author

Mato Lovrin Ragnina (Matheus Laurentii Ragnina, Mattheus Araneus) (ca. 1444-1499) was born in Ragusa, the great-nephew of Mato Marinov Ragnina, an illustrious professor of both laws and rector of the *natio citramontana* in Padua in 1397.¹¹ To understand Mato Lovrin's career, one has to consider the commercial and intellectual ties that bound Ragusa to Italy, to the Republic of Venice (and its 'domestic' university Padua), but also to Florence and Rome. Since the fourteenth century, the Popes had issued privileges to the Ragusans, guaranteeing the legitimacy of their trade with the 'heretical' Ottomans.¹² Sixtus IV in particular

in Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Cod. 365, fols 71r-137r. For Nicholas and the *Defensio* see: T. D a n i e l s, op. cit. (1), 81; Tobias D a n i e l s, »The Sistine Chapel and the Image of Sixtus IV. Considerations in the Light of the Pazzi Conspiracy«, *Congiure e conflitti. L'affermazione della signoria pontificia su Roma nel Rinascimento: politica, economia e cultura*, ed. by Myriam Chiabò, Maurizio Gargano, Anna Modigliani and Patricia Osmond, Rome, 2014, 275-299, here 285; Tobias D a n i e l s, *Umanesimo, congiure e propaganda politica. Cola Montano e l'«Oratio ad Lucenses»*, Rome, 2015 (RR inedita 63. saggi), 159-160. A complete edition is being prepared by Luka Špoljarić.

⁸ G. M e r c a t i, op. cit. (7), 257-258.

⁹ Florio B a n f i, »Matteo Ragnina da Ragusa e la sua opera contenuta nel Codice Vaticano Latino 4858«, *Archivio storico per la Dalmazia*, 25 (1928), 184-194.

¹⁰ Miroslav K u r e l a c, »O mogućnostima i uvjetima mira između Venecije i Turaka: Poslanica Dubrovčanina Mateja Ranjine papi Sikstu IV. 1479«, *Croatica christiana periodica*, 16, 30 (1992), 179-182.

¹¹ Still today the 18th-century statue of Mato Marinov Ragnina (†1453/54) stands in Padua, on the Prado della Valle. Cf. Nella L o n z a, »Studenti giuristi Ragusei del tardo medioevo: un'analisi prosopografica«, *Quaderni per la storia dell'Università di Padova*, 44 (2011), 3-43, here 7-9.

¹² Filippo N a i t a n a, »I beni dei Pazzi all'indomani della congiura. Un 'passaporto' per la storia delle relazioni fra Firenze e Ragusa nel tardo Medioevo«, *Quaderni medievali*, 47 (1999), 41-76. For these issues see also: Arnold E s c h, »Der Handel zwischen Christen und Muslimen im Mittelmeer-Raum. Verstöße gegen das päpstliche Embargo geschildert in den Gesuchen an die Apostolische Pönitentiarie (1439-1483)«, *Quellen und Forschungen*

extended these privileges in the years 1471 to 1475.¹³ Equally close were the commercial bonds that linked Ragusa and Florence.¹⁴ Ragusa even played a small role in the conflict connected to the Pazzi conspiracy. In the summer of 1479, the Florentines tried to get their hands on mercantile goods which had been left by the Pazzi in Ragusa and were claimed by Bishop Antonio de' Pazzi from Rome.¹⁵ The Florentines also tried to obtain Ragusa's help in capturing the assassin Bernardo Bandini, who had fled to Constantinople.¹⁶ However, as Filippo Naitana suggests, the Republic of Ragusa did not favor either side in the conflict.

Nella Lonza has recently collected biographical data regarding Ragnina.¹⁷ According to this comprehensive study, the younger Mato was born around 1444. He was already a canon of the Cathedral of Ragusa when he studied law in 1465. He became *doctor utriusque iuris* before 4 November 1473, possibly in Rome.¹⁸ From 1470 he was acknowledged to have been a member of the papal household and was at the latest in November 1473 a *familiaris* and probably also secretary of Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere. Additionally, he held the offices of Apostolic Protonotary and *auditor causarum* from 1476. After having written the above-mentioned treatise in 1479, he probably returned to Ragusa, at the latest around 1481. Innocent VIII made him *delegatus apostolicus* in 1485. In 1488 he was Archdeacon of the Cathedral Chapter of Ragusa, later served as rector of the

aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken, 92 (2012), 85-140; Tobias Daniels, Arnold Esch, »Casi fiorentini negli atti della Penitenzieria Apostolica 1439-1484«, *Archivio storico italiano*, 172 (2014), 729-762.

¹³ F. Naitana, op. cit. (12), here 46-48.

¹⁴ Bariša Krekić, *Dubrovnik, Italy and the Balkans in the late Middle Ages*, London, 1980, 707-714; Alain Ducellier, »La place des Toscans et des Italiens du nord dans le commerce balkanique au XV^{ème} siècle: l'apport des sources ragusaines«, *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 11 (1987), 299-314; Bruno Dinì, *Saggi su una economia-mondo. Firenze e l'Italia fra Mediterraneo ed Europa (secc. XIII-XVI)*, Pisa, 1995; Paola Pilli, *Tra argento, grano e panni: Piero Pantella, un operatore italiano nella Ragusa del primo Quattrocento*, Florence, 2013.

¹⁵ Lorenzo de' Medici, *Lettere*, vol. IV: 1479-1480, ed. Nicolai Rubinstein, Florence, 1981, 144 and 215; F. Naitana, op. cit. (12). For Antonio de' Pazzi, bishop of Sarno, see T. Daniels, op. cit. (7), 77, 86, 88, 124-126, 152, 233-234, 238, 281-283, 311, 320.

¹⁶ L. de' Medici, *Lettere*, IV, op. cit. (15), 108-109, 144 and 215; F. Naitana, op. cit. (12); Elisabetta Scarton, *Giovanni Lanfredini: uomo d'affari e diplomatico nell'Italia del Quattrocento*, Florence, 2007, 131. For aspects of art history, see Gherardo Ortali, »Pittura Infamante. Practices, Genres and Connections«, *Images of Shame: Infamy, Defamation and the Ethics of oeconomia*, ed. by Carolin Behrmann, Berlin, 2016, 29-48.

¹⁷ N. Lonza, op. cit. (11).

¹⁸ He is described as *doctor utriusque iuris* in a papal bull of 4 November 1473 (Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Reg. Lat. 731, fol. 179r-180v; also in Reg. Suppl. 753, fol. 207v-208r, 27 June 1476). For the universities in Rome, see Brigide Schwarz, *Kurienuniversität und stadtrömische Universität von ca. 1300 bis 1471*, Leiden et al. 2013 (626, no. 227, has a »Andreas Johannes de Menciis«, canon of Ragusa, studying »in Romana curia« in 1443).

church of St. Andrews in Lopud, was Abbot of the Church of St. Stephen in Rijeka dubrovačka and in 1490 received a benefice of the church of St. John. Ragnina died in 1499, several years before his former patron Giuliano della Rovere became Pope (1506).¹⁹

The key to understanding Ragnina's decision to write his treatise is provided by his ties to Giuliano della Rovere, an important nephew of Sixtus IV who had a meteoric ecclesiastical career since the election of Francesco della Rovere to Pope.²⁰ After serving as a Legate to the March of Ancona in 1473, Giuliano headed military operations in Umbria a year later. There he besieged Città di Castello, a town that was one of the points of contest between Florence and Rome. Giuliano was then sent as Legate to Avignon in 1476 in order to forge an alliance between Sixtus IV and Charles of Burgundy, and also to calm anti-papal conciliar ideas at the French court.²¹ When taking into account Giuliano della Rovere's ecclesiastical career, it is interesting to see that his legation to Ancona dates precisely to the time when Ragnina became his *familiaris*. Since the March of Ancona was rather densely inhabited by Illyrians,²² it might be that Della Rovere welcomed Ragnina into his service because of his ethnic background to serve as his intermediary. Moreover, one must consider Ragnina's personal networks in the Curia: While his main protector Giuliano della Rovere was sent on another long legation on 28 April 1480, there were two Illyrians that he would very likely have known in Rome as compatriots: Andrija Jamometić and Nicholas of Modruš. Jamometić, however, fell from papal grace and was imprisoned in 1481 in Castel Sant'Angelo, and Nicholas of Modruš died in May 1480. It is possible that these events had an effect on Ragnina's standing at the Curia and forced him to return to his homeland.

¹⁹ For Giuliano della Rovere as a Pope, see: Christine S h a w, *Julius II. The warrior pope*, Oxford, 1993; Massimo R o s p o c h e r, *Il papa guerriero. Giulio II nello spazio pubblico europeo*, Bologna, 2015 (Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento, Monografie, 65).

²⁰ Egmont L e e, *Sixtus IV and men of letters*, Rome, 1978; Christine S h a w, »A pope and his nipote: Sixtus IV and Giuliano della Rovere«, *Atti e memorie della Società Savonese di Storia Patria*, nuova serie, 24 (1988), 233-250; *Ead.*, »Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere: The man, the politician, the prince of the church«, in: *Giulio II. Papa, politico, mecenate. Atti del convegno, Savona, Fortezza del Priamar, Sala della Sibilla, 25, 26, 27 marzo 2004*, ed. by Giovanna Terminiello Rotondi and Giulio Nepi, Genoa, 2005, 37-45.

²¹ T. D a n i e l s, op. cit. (1), 55-57; Esther M o e n c h, »Lontano dall'Italia: Giuliano ad Avignone«, *Giulio II papa, politico, mecenate*, op. cit. (20), 130-140.

²² See at least Mario N a t a l u c c i, »Insediamenti di colonie e di gruppi dalmati, slavi e albanesi nel territorio di Ancona (secoli XV-XVI)«, *Atti e memorie (Marche)*, nuova serie, 82 (1977), 93-111; Sergio A n s e l m i, »Gli Schiavoni nell'economia marchigiana del Quattrocento«, *Atti del VII convegno degli storici italiani jugoslavi*, 4 (1978); Mario S e n s i, »Slavi nelle Marche tra pietà e devozione«, *Stranieri e forestieri nella Marca dei secoli XIV-XVI. Atti del 30 convegno di studi maceratesi, Macerata, 19-20 novembre 1994*, Macerata, 1996, 481-506, and Elisabetta S e b a s t i a n i, »La Compagnia del popolo degli Schiavoni ad Ancona nel XV secolo«, *ibid.*, 519-526.

Ragnina's origins lay in the patriciate of Ragusa, a Republic that was closely connected to Italy as an important and privileged outpost for commerce in the Levant, especially with the Ottomans, but also stood in the focus of Florentine interests in the aftermath of the Pazzi conspiracy. Ragnina's status as a *familiaris* of the pope's nephew Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere was evidently of prime importance for his career in Rome. As an erudite person, Ragnina was not a humanist *stricto sensu*, but a jurist.

2. The Themes Addressed in the Treatise

Ms. Vat. lat. 4858 is the presentation copy of Ragnina's treatise. Adorned with the Della Rovere coat of arms and dedicated to Sixtus IV, it can be traced in the inventories of the Vatican Library at the latest from the sixteenth century.²³ As Banfi has shown, the work should be dated between the peace signed by the Venetian envoy Giovanni Dario in Constantinople on the 24 January 1479 and the preliminary offer of peace given by the Pope to the Florentine party on 2 June of the same year.²⁴

Formally speaking, the text is a straightforward juridical treatise, extending over 108 folios. At the beginning Ragnina says that his argument developed out of discussions between curialists («curiales quidam gravissimi et sapientissimi») after news of the peace made between Venice and the Turks had reached Rome. The two main questions ('dubia') of these discussions were:

- Was it legitimate for the Venetians to make peace with the Turks?
- Is it legitimate for the Republic of Venice and the Duke of Milan to enter into an alliance with Florence against the Roman Pontiff?²⁵

²³ See *Librorum Latinorum Bibliothecae Vaticanae Index a Nicolao de Maiorani compositus et Fausto Sabeo collatus anno MDXXXIII* curantibus Assunta di Sante – Antonio Manfredi, Città del Vaticano, 2009 (Studi e testi, 457), 106, no. 961: »Matheus Araneus De contemptione, ex membranibus in rubro [...]«, and Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 7131, fol. 1r-35v (»Inventarium librorum existentium in banchis bibliothecae magnae pontificiae secretae«, fol. 11r (»In tertio banco bibliothecae parvae, inferius in tertio ordine [...] Mattheus Araneus de contentione super pace Venetorum cum magno Turco ex membranibus in rubeo«).

²⁴ F. Banfi, op. cit. (9); see now: L. de' Medici, *Lettere*, IV, op. cit. (15), 96-97, cf. J. Petersohn, op. cit. (4), 66-69. For the Venetian peace see also: Anna Calia, »The Venetian Ottoman Peace of 1479 in the Light of Documents from the Venice State Archive«, *Italy and Europe's Eastern Border. 1204-1669. Acts of the International Conference, Rome, November 2010*, ed. by Iulian Mihai Damian et al., Vienna, 2012, 45-60; Tobias Danieles, »Wahrnehmung, Vermittlung und soziale Eingebundenheit: Ein sächsischer Jerusalem-Wallfahrer berichtet aus Venedig (1479)«, *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, 39,4 (2012), 561-591.

²⁵ Transcriptions of these passages are in F. Banfi, op. cit. (9), 3-5.

Having been asked by his interlocutors, Ragnina consigned his private thoughts about these issues to paper, documenting the positions of the discussions in the Curia. He hesitated to hand the work over to Sixtus IV, however, until the pontiff finally made peace. In his treatise, Ragnina deals with the first question rather extensively on folios 2r-73r, while the second one is resolved comparatively briefly on folios 73r-108v. It is not surprising that Ragnina's answer to both questions is an emphatic »no«: Neither was it right for the Venetians to have made peace with the Turks, nor should they and Milan help Florence against Sixtus IV.

As Banfi has shown, his second argument refers to the league of Venice, Milan and Florence which was established in 1474, originally in order to fight against the Turks.²⁶ Since its establishment, it had generated an opposition that contributed to the formation of the alliance between Naples and the Pope, which ultimately led to the Pazzi conspiracy and the war.²⁷ In the immediate aftermath of the murder in the Florentine cathedral, Venice did not play the role the Florentines had hoped, but now, in 1479, in the wake of the peace with the Turks, Sixtus IV feared that Venice could reunite more closely with Florence and Milan according to the league of 1474 and turn against the Papal-Neapolitan alliance.²⁸

3. The Treatise in the Context of the Pazzi War

While Ragnina's text awaits a deeper juridical analysis, this article addresses the question of why Ragnina linked the peace of Venice with the Turks in 1479 to the help granted by Milan and Venice to the Pope's enemies, the Florentines. While Banfi and Kurelac have concentrated on the context of the »anti-Turkish propaganda« or the relations between Christians and Muslims,²⁹ the Italian dimensions of the treatise have never been properly discussed. How then does the work fit into the context of the Pazzi war?

²⁶ Lorenzo d' e' M e d i c i, *Lettere*, vol. II, ed. by Riccardo Fubini, Florence, 1977, Excursus II, 485-490.

²⁷ Nicolai R u b i n s t e i n, »Das politische System Italiens in der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts«, »Bündnisssysteme« und »Außenpolitik« im späteren Mittelalter, ed. by Peter Moraw, Berlin, Munich, 1988, 105-119; Riccardo F u b i n i, »Lega italica e 'politica dell'equilibrio' all'avvento di Lorenzo de' Medici al potere«, *Italia quattrocentesca*, op. cit. (1), 185-220.

²⁸ For the later developments see Riccardo F u b i n i, »Considerazioni conclusive«, *La conquista turca di Otranto (1480) tra storia e mito, Atti del Convegno internazionale di studio (Otranto, Muro Leccese, 28-31 marzo 2007)*, ed. by Hubert Houben, vol. 2, Galatina, 2008, 219-231; and T. D a n i e l s, op. cit. (5).

²⁹ See more generally: James H a n k i n s, »Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II«, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 49 (1995), 111-207; Norman J. H o u s l e y (ed.), *The Crusade in the Fifteenth Century: Converging and Competing Cultures*, New York, 2017.

Immediately after the conspirators had killed Giuliano de' Medici, Lorenzo de' Medici initiated a cruel vendetta. The acts of violence perpetrated by the Medici partisans gave Sixtus IV the opportunity to excommunicate Lorenzo in a bull dated June 1, 1478.³⁰ The bull enumerated all the cases that had made Lorenzo the pope's enemy since about 1473: his support of the *de facto signori* of Umbria and Romagna in their territorial conflicts with the Holy See, his detaining of German pilgrims in Florence and his support of pirates,³¹ his actions against the Bishop of Pisa, Francesco Salviati, and against Cardinal Raffaele Riario and finally the fact that priests had been killed in the immediate aftermath of the events of April 26 1478. On these grounds, the pope excommunicated Lorenzo and the Florentine officials and placed an interdict on the dioceses of Florence, Fiesole and Pistoia.³² In doing so, Sixtus IV tried to legitimate his military actions against Florence as a just war against Lorenzo, the 'Tyrant of Florence'.

Having been struck by the spiritual restrictions and awaiting enemy troops moving towards the gates of his town, Lorenzo devised a political strategy that recurred to the spiritual side of the conflict. As the pope himself was implicated in the murder, he was clearly unworthy of his office. According to the theory of conciliarism, the only instance authorized to try and depose an unworthy pope was a General Council of the Church. In order to convoke such a council, Lorenzo turned not only towards Milan and Venice, but also to his traditional ally, the king of France. The *Rex Christianissimus* was generally an important figure in the history of conciliarism. Louis XI had planned to convoke a Council as a political measure against Sixtus IV in 1476 after Giuliano della Rovere had replaced the Legate to Avignon, Charles of Bourbon, bishop of Lyons. In the aftermath of the conspiracy, Lorenzo de' Medici tried to renew the French anti-papal dispositions against Sixtus IV, and Louis XI immediately offered his help.³³

In the meantime, Lorenzo activated the intellectuals in his service. The best-known literary account on the events of April 26 is Angelo Poliziano's *Coniurationis commentarium*.³⁴ It presented the conspirators in the light of Sallust's *De coniuratione Catilinae*, suggesting in this way that the Pazzi and Francesco Salviati had committed a similar state crime, a *crimen laesae maiestatis*. More important for Lorenzo's political strategy were several responses to the papal bulls

³⁰ Ed. T. D a n i e l s, op. cit. (1), doc. 1, 105-114.

³¹ For this point see Tobias D a n i e l s, »Kooperation und Konflikt im hansischen Mittelmeerhandel zwischen Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit«, *Hansischer Handel im Strukturwandel vom 15. zum 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Rolf Hammel-Kiesow and Stephan Selzer, Trier, 2016, 137-159.

³² Ed. T. D a n i e l s, op. cit. (1), docs 2 and 3, 115-121.

³³ T. D a n i e l s, op. cit. (1), 29-80.

³⁴ See *Della congiura dei Pazzi (Coniurationis Commentarium)*, ed. by Alessandro Perosa, Padua, 1958. See also Tobias D a n i e l s, »Poesia politica degli umanisti. Letteratura e propaganda dopo la congiura dei Pazzi«, *Atti e Memorie dell'Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere »La Colombaria«*, 78 (2013), 87-108.

elaborated by jurists of the universities of Pisa and Pavia and by other humanists in Lorenzo's service like Bartolomeo Scala.³⁵ The politically most important among these works is a text that Lorenzo commissioned from his old teacher Gentile Becchi, the *Florentina Synodus*.³⁶ The *Synodus* purported to be a written account of the convocation of the »Tuscan clergy« that had supposedly taken place in the Florentine cathedral at the end of July and raised accusations against the Pope. In this way, the invective served as an *appellatio* to the supreme authority of Emperor Frederick III and, first and foremost, to the king of France, who was called upon to convoke the Council.

Sixtus IV replied to this with a campaign of his own. An anonymous pamphlet called *Dissentio inter Sanctissimum Dominum Nostrum Papam et Florentinos suborta*, written probably with the help of Bartolomeo Platina in late autumn 1478, reinforced the Pope's claims to supreme authority in the church. It justified his military measures, stigmatizing Lorenzo as an evil tyrant and identifying his cause with the biblical figures Chora, Dathan and Abiram, while associating the Pope's actions with the stories of Moses.³⁷ Another piece of papal propaganda was the *Oratio ad Lucenses* by Cola Montano.³⁸ This is a speech which was delivered by Montano in November 1478 in Lucca and published, after some serious remodelling by Lorenzo Giustini and Antonio de' Pazzi, in print in Rome in April 1479. The main aim of Montano's speech was to persuade the people of Lucca that in this war it was not only a bad decision but also illegitimate to make an alliance with the Florentines, who were traitors, heretics and excommunicates. On the contrary, allying themselves with the forces assembled by the pope would guarantee the liberty of the Republic. Incidentally, the catalogue of Sixtus' allies outlined by Montano is very similar to the one found in a poem written by Tideo Acciarini in 1471, perhaps while he was in Split, in response to the fall of Negroponte, and edited recently by Bratislav Lučin. Since Acciarini was close to Montano, his poem might be regarded as one of the sources of the published version of Montano's speech.³⁹

³⁵ Scala's *Excusatio Florentinorum* is edited in Bartolomeo Scala, *Humanistic and Political Writings*, ed. by Alison Brown, Tempe, 1997, 199-202. For the *consilia* see Enrico Spagnesi, »In difesa del Magnifico. A proposito di alcuni Consilia legali al tempo della Congiura dei Pazzi«, *La Toscana al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico. Politica, Economia, Cultura, Arte. Convegno di Studi promosso dalle Università di Firenze, Pisa e Siena, 5-8 novembre 1991*, ed. by Riccardo Fubini, vol. 3, Pisa, 1996 (1997), 1235-1251.

³⁶ Ed. T. Daniels, op. cit. (1), doc. 4, 122-160.

³⁷ Ed. T. Daniels, op. cit. (1), doc. 5, 161-180. For the fact that this work was published anonymously, see also T. Daniels, op. cit. (7), 19.

³⁸ T. Daniels, op. cit. (7).

³⁹ Bratislav Lučin, »Neobjavljena pjesma Tidea Acciarinija papi Sikstu IV.« [»An Unpublished Poem of Tideo Acciarini to Pope Sixtus IV«], *CM XXIV* (2015), 65-71, 112-114 (verses 298-367). For Acciarini and Montano see T. Daniels, op. cit. (7), 28, 245-246, 285.

The connection to Acciarini's poem is only one of the many examples of intertextuality in curial propaganda. At the end of 1479, most of the same arguments were employed by Nicholas of Modruš in the already mentioned *Defensio ecclesiastice libertatis*. Taking an approach similar to the *Dissentio* and Ragnina's text, the *Defensio* raised papal apologetic thought to a more general level. The Bishop of Modruš not only concerned himself with »iustissime cause suscep[ti] belli contra Florentin[os]«,⁴⁰ he also added long disquisitions and far-reaching catalogues of pontiffs who, since late Antiquity, had taken up arms for ecclesiastical possessions, who corrected the errors of princes and tyrants, or had, like Sixtus IV, engaged themselves in the war against the Turks.⁴¹

Ragnina's treatise seems to have been written precisely at the time when Sixtus' curialists were rewriting Montano's speech. For this reason, it does not surprise that the juridical notions used in Montano's *Oratio* are in some parts exactly the same that Ragnina uses.⁴² In order to set Ragnina's work within the context of the papal campaign, two points must be considered. Firstly, Ragnina often refers explicitly to the papal bull of June 1, 1478 in order to justify the argument that nobody should forge a coalition with the Florentines and that war may be waged against them lawfully:

Nemini etiam dubium est hostibus ecclesie per papam iuste posse bellum inferri [...]. Indubitatum est etiam, quod contra excommunicatos in excommunicatione pertinaciter perseverantes Romanus pontifex iuste potest indicare bellum, [...]. Sed Florentini in excommunicatione persistent, ut palam et notorium est, hostes ecclesie sunt, ut infra patebit. Romipetas et peregrinos detinuerunt, ut bulla papalis contra eos publicata enarrat, ecclesiasticam libertatem offenderunt, subditis ecclesie et personis ecclesiasticis iniurias intulerunt, cardinalem sancte Romane ecclesie contra suam detinendo voluntatem et temerarias manus propria auctoritate in personas ecclesiasticas iniciendo et ecclesiastica bona occupata iniuste detinendo, ut in prefata bulla papali contra eos publicata, cui adhibenda fides est, ut probavi, omnia hec

⁴⁰ Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 8092, fol. 7r-10v; G. M e r c a t i, op. cit. (7), 251-253.

⁴¹ G. M e r c a t i, op. cit. (7), 251. Here, the conflict with Lorenzo de' Medici is described as an obstacle to the Pope's plans. See for instance, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 8092, fol. 63r: »Ecce Nicolaus Vitellus a violatoribus Florentine libertatis [*Lorenzo de' Medici*] sollicitatus, tyrannidem Tipherni vel, ut nunc dicimus, Civitatis Castelli, ecclesiae Romanae ditionis, repente occupat et a sedis Apostolice obedientia plane desciscit, ut necesse fuerit pontifici et ceptam [sic] in Turcos ommittere expeditionem et Julianum nepotem suum cardinalem sancti Petri ad Vincula [*Giuliano della Rovere*] magnis cum copiis duce Federico Urbinatate [*Federico da Montefeltro*] illo transmittere ad pellendum urbe tyrannum. [...]«. The same argument counts for Carlo Fortebraccio (fol. 63r-v).

⁴² For a further analysis, see T. D a n i e l s, op. cit. (7), 156-158.

latius explicantur. Ergo relinquitur hoc bellum quod contra Florentinos geritur ex parte Romani pontificis esse iustum.⁴³

Apart from the fate of German pilgrims and the cases of Cardinal Raffaele Riario and the archbishop of Pisa, Francesco Salviati, Ragnina adds other references to the bull and the help given by the Florentines to the ‘rebels of the Church’ Carlo Fortebraccio da Montone in Perugia (1477) and Niccolò Vitelli in Città di Castello (1474):⁴⁴

Sed Florentini, qui comitem Carolum de Montone ad invadendas terras ecclesie et Nicolaum Vitelli ad rebellionem apostolice sedis, cuius erat subditus et vassallus, excitaverunt, per hoc machinati fuisse videntur contra prosperitatem et quietum statum ecclesie, igitur etc.⁴⁵

Altogether, these points were supposed to prove that the Pope’s was a just war, while the Florentines’ was unjust: »Ex premissis itaque relinquitur, quod bellum, quod contra Florentinos geritur ex parte Romani pontificis, sit iustum, et ex parte Florentinorum iniustum.«⁴⁶ Further on in his text, Ragnina responds to certain contestations of the papal bull raised by the other side:

Sed ad hoc multi sunt, qui dicunt Florentinos, contra quos censurarum sententie sunt promulgate, non esse excommunicatos nec illis censurarum sententiis aliquo pacto ligari, ad quod demonstrandum multa adducunt et dicunt, quod iniusta sententia excommunicationis neminem ligat [...].⁴⁷

Here and in the following passages, Ragnina clearly refers to the *consilia* written by the jurists of the universities of Pavia and Pisa arguing the invalidity of the papal bull against Lorenzo. He also refers to the *Florentina Synodus*, since the juridical notions expressed in the *consilia* represented the canonistic basis of the Florentine pamphlet.⁴⁸ Without entering here into the complex legal details, it is worth noting that Ragnina forms his reply by reinforcing the points made in the bull of June 1, 1478 in a strictly juridical way. Moreover, Ragnina explicitly states that one must give credence to the argument of the bull (»Cui adhibenda fides est«).

Sixtus IV never replied officially to the pro-Medici jurists’ and humanists’ contestations of his bull. The anonymous *Dissentio* (ca. autumn 1478) responded to the conciliar threat raised by the *Florentina Synodus*, presenting a theologically based view of papal primacy, and identifying the pontiff with the lawgiver Moses.

⁴³ Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 4858, fol. 85v-86r.

⁴⁴ For all these points, see T. Daniels, op. cit. (1), *passim*.

⁴⁵ Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 4858, fol. 86r.

⁴⁶ *Ibd.*, fol. 86v.

⁴⁷ *Ibd.*, fol. 95r.

⁴⁸ See the references in T. Daniels, op. cit. (1), *passim*.

Cola Montano's speech (November 1478, published around April 1479) incorporated these points, but focused on the 'communal' discourse of 'tyranny' and 'liberty' and on the illicitness of pacts made with a tyrant. Overall, the importance of Ragnina's treatise lies in the fact that it represents the only formal response of the Curia to the juridical arguments made by the Florentine side.

Secondly, Ragnina concentrates on yet another point. Since Sixtus IV had excommunicated Lorenzo and placed Florence under interdict, by church law, all Florentines were excluded from human society. Being thus regarded as equal to 'infidel heretics', the Florentines were practically put on the same level as the Ottomans. (Montano even wrote that Lorenzo was worse than the Moors and the Turks: »Non est Laurentius eiusmodi Mauris ac Turcis [...] peior [...]»?⁴⁹ while, on the Florentine side, authors like Bartolomeo Scala had accused the Pope of delaying a crusade against the Ottomans.) For this reason, it was illegal for Milan and Venice to ally themselves with Florence. On the other hand, Ragnina stressed that both Milan and Venice were obliged to the Popes: first, the pontiffs had granted them political help; and second, they had granted them cardinals. Taking into consideration Venice's difficult situation during the war with the Ottomans, the popes guaranteed its ecclesiastical privileges and had nominated a Venetian cardinal, Pietro Foscari.⁵⁰ In Milan's case, Sixtus IV himself maintained the young duke Gian Galeazzo Sforza in his position in Milan after the murder of his father Galeazzo Maria (26 December 1476) by sending his Legate Giovanni Battista Mellini to stabilize the regime.⁵¹ Previously, he had favoured the election of a Milanese cardinal, Giovanni Arcimboldi, the bishop of Novara.⁵² If Venice and Milan helped Florence, it would be an act of ingratitude:

Cum igitur Veneti, cum ab inimico eorum acerrimo et peculiari Turco persecutionem paterentur, a Romano pontifice auxilia susceperint, qui, ut eis succurreret, decimas a clero et ecclesiis exigendas gratiose concessit et ex patrimonio ecclesie constructa classe auxilio eis sepius fuit et ecclesiastica beneficia sub temporali eorum dominio existentia, quorum liberam habet

⁴⁹ T. D a n i e l s, op. cit. (7), 189-190.

⁵⁰ Pietro Foscari (1417-1485), nominated cardinal by Paul II in 1477. From 1 April 1478 to 17 September 1479, he was apostolic administrator of the dioceses of Split. See Giuseppe d e l T o r r e, »Foscari, Pietro«, *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, 49, Rome, 1960, 341; and Francesco S o m a i n i, »La 'stagione dei prelati del principe': appunti sulla politica ecclesiastica milanese nel decennio di Galeazzo Maria Sforza (1466-1476)«, *Milano nella storia dell'età moderna*, ed. by Carlo Capra and Claudio Donati, Milan, 1997, 7-64, here 30, note 82.

⁵¹ Cf. Riccardo F u b i n i, »Federico da Montefeltro e la congiura dei Pazzi: immagine propagandistica e realtà politica«, *Italia quattrocentesca*, op. cit. (1), 253-326, 295, note 140, with further references.

⁵² Francesco S o m a i n i, *Un prelado lombardo del XV secolo: il card. Giovanni Arcimboldi vescovo di Novara, arcivescovo di Milano*, 3 vols, Rome, 2003, here vol. 1, 421-578, especially 505-527.

dispositionem [...], ut eis morem gereret, scilicet eorum desiderium dispensavit, et ut eis morem gereret, protonotarium de Foscaris [= *Pietro Foscaris*], patritium Venetum ex vetusta et clara familia ortum, licet ob eius singularem virtutem, vite modestiam et relligionis summam observantiam dignum tanta dignitate ad cardinalatus promovit officium, cuius etiam predecessores Romani pontifices, liberos et ab imperiali iurisdictione fecerunt exemptos et libertatis munere que existimationem non recipit [...] eorum senatum ornaverunt [...], qui Duci Mediolanensi [*Gian Galeazzo Sforza*] post interemptum patrem [*Galeazzo Maria Sforza*], ut titubantium populorum animos in sua devotione et statum et quietum conservaret, cardinalem Urbinatem [*Giovanni Battista Mellini*], virum gravissimum, ad Mediolanensem provinciam cum amplissima facultate destinavit, qui antea cardinalem Novariensem [*Giovanni Arcimboldi*], eloquentissimum virum iureque consultissimum summa probitate summoque ingenio ad premortui patris huius ducis instantiam et preces ad amplitudinem et culmen ecclesiastice dignitatis cardinalatum assumpsit, qui denique in omnibus postulatis ita liberalem et Venetis et Mediolanensi Duci se exhibuit, ut plura obtinuerint quam petierint. Relinquitur ex premissis, quod absque maximo ingratitude vitio Florentinis hostibus eius auxilium prestare non possint.⁵³

In the very moment that Venice was making peace with the Ottomans, Ragnina reminded his readers that not only was this peace with the ‘infidel’ unlawful, but that it was the same as supporting the ‘domestic heretic’ Lorenzo de’ Medici. This point linked Ragnina’s first and second *dubium*: behind his apparently anti-Turkish invective stood the pope’s political aims in the Italian Peninsula. The Papacy was opposed to Venice’s peace with the Ottomans for theological reasons, but even more because it feared a Venetian intervention in the war on the side of the Florentines according to the league of 1474. In fact, the Florentine magistrate of the Dieci di Balìa commented on the incoming news about the peace in this way: »ecce paruta una grande et buona novella, et molto a proposito delle cose nostre, perché uno de’ principali fondamenti de’ nimici nostri era lo impedimento de’ Venetiani per le cose del Turcho.«⁵⁴

On a more general level, the fact that Venice stipulated not only an armistice but also a unilateral treaty questioned the role of the Papacy itself as defender of the Christian Republic. In this perspective, the pontiffs could accept neither a coalition between Venice and the Turks nor an alliance of legitimate powers such as Venice and Milan in defence of excommunicated persons, since this undermined the authority of the Papacy, which was equally threatened by the call for a council.

⁵³ Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 4858, fols 89r-v.

⁵⁴ Florence, Archivio di Stato, Dieci di Balìa, Missive, 7, fols 172v-175r, the Dieci to their ambassador in France, Guidantonio Vespucci, 1 March 1479, cited in L. de’ Medici, *Lettere*, IV, op. cit. (15), 15, note 4.

In the following months, the Venetian ambassador in Rome played an important role in the peace negotiations.⁵⁵ Incidentally, it may be recalled that the Venetian peace also undermined Sixtus' plans regarding the imperial peace negotiations entrusted to Jamometić, since Frederick III's primary concern was to forge a peace in order to secure the south-eastern flank of his dominion. The pope, on the contrary, intended to use the Emperor as a counterweight against the ecclesiastical and political authority of France and Venice, while at the same time trying to isolate Milan from the Florentines.⁵⁶

Lorenzo, on the other hand, initiated peace negotiations with the principal *condottieri* of the Neapolitan-papal coalition, the dukes of Calabria and Urbino. These negotiations would lead to Lorenzo's peace with Ferrante in 1480, which, along with the landing of the Ottomans in Otranto, forced Sixtus IV to ratify the peace.⁵⁷ Lorenzo's agreement with King Ferrante in 1480 put an end to the rivalry between the league of Florence, Milan and Venice and the Papal-Neapolitan alliance. As the old league between Naples, Milan and Florence was renewed, the Pope came to terms with Venice. While Ferrante d'Aragona and Lorenzo soon promoted Jamometić's appellation to a church council in Basel, the king of France (addressed by Lorenzo in 1478) proposed to lead a Venetian crusade against the Ottomans (thus putting himself at the head of a traditionally papal enterprise). At this time, an alliance between the Pope, Naples and Venice was also being explored. In such an alliance, Venice would practically have become a third party in the former coalition of Sixtus IV and Ferrante against Lorenzo. Hence, the 'Magnifico' commented with bitter irony: »È pure gran cosa da diventare Turchi noi altri, che il capo de' Christiani vegga i Turchi in Italia et non se ne risenta; anzi, la principal cura sua è in accrescere signoria et stato al conte Hieronymo [...].«⁵⁸

Conclusions

Mato Ragnina's *Super pace Venetorum cum Magno Turco* is an important work, not so much in the context of the *Anti-Turcica*, as for understanding papal politics during the war of pamphlets during Pazzi war. What has been previously unnoticed is that the work represents the only pro-Papal legal treatise responding to the pro-Medici *consilia* that confuted the papal bull of excommunication of June 1, 1478. Moreover, the work shrewdly uses the Ottoman threat for the purpose of influencing and reshaping political alliances during the Pazzi war. Finally, the treatise reflects the way the Papacy viewed itself in Quattrocento Italy and justi-

⁵⁵ *Ibd.*, 63-64, 73-74.

⁵⁶ J. P e t e r s o h n, *op. cit.* (4), 37-40; T. D a n i e l s, *op. cit.* (7), 90-94.

⁵⁷ R. F u b i n i, *op. cit.* (51), 268; T. D a n i e l s, *op. cit.* (7), 95.

⁵⁸ Lorenzo de' M e d i c i, *Lettere*, vol. V: 1480-1481, ed. by Michael Mallett, Florence, 1989, no. 468, Lorenzo to Lionetto de' Rossi in Lyon, Florence, 2 September 1480, 40-61, here 58; cf. R. F u b i n i, *op. cit.* (28), 229.

fied its power during the establishment of what research has later described as ‘Papal Sovereignty’.⁵⁹

The author, Mato Lovrin Ragnina, was perfectly fitted to expose these thoughts. As a jurist, he was able to make his case in the form of an authoritative text. As his origins lay in Ragusa, he was well qualified to stress the danger of the Venetian peace for Christendom in a credible manner.

As has been pointed out, Ragnina states in a typically humble fashion in his dedication to Sixtus IV that he merely penned the discussions that were being held among his friends and colleagues at the Curia for private purposes. His words should not be taken lightly. Since Ragnina was a *familiaris* of the papal nephew Giuliano della Rovere, it may be assumed that these discussions took place either in the cardinal’s *suite* or in circles very close to the Pope. However, one should also not exclude the possibility that his text is the fruit of discussions in wider circles, be it in the Curia or, for instance, at one of Rome’s *studia*. Moreover, it is evident that Ragnina tried to promote his own career in the Curia by dedicating his work to Sixtus IV. A parallel example, on the other side, is Francesco Filelfo: in the aftermath of the murder in Santa Maria del Fiore, he offered to write for Lorenzo de’ Medici a history of the events.⁶⁰ In this perspective, the treatise shows to what extent the theme of the Pazzi war dominated the Sistine Curia at the time.

Generally, *consilia* and other juridical texts were written on demand for specific purposes. For example, the pro-Medici *consilia* served as confutations of Sixtus’ excommunication of Lorenzo, and provided grounds for an appeal to a General Council of the Church via the *Florentina Synodus*. Since Ragnina himself points to the 1479 peace negotiations in Rome, it is possible that his treatise played a role as a briefing paper for the papal advocates in these negotiations. In fact, at the beginning of February, Sixtus IV chose Ragnina’s patron, Giuliano della Rovere, as a member of the commission of cardinals to consult with the ambassadors of the League.⁶¹ It is also possible that Ragnina’s text, similar to the above-mentioned *consilia*, served for the preparation of other texts, especially since it shows parallels with Montano’s *Oratio* and Nicholas of Modruš’s *Defensio*. Finally, Ragnina’s treatise itself may have been destined for the printing presses, as was in all probability Nicholas of Modruš’ text.⁶²

The *Dissentio*, Ragnina’s text and Modruš’ *Defensio* (the latter being a sort of ‘summa’) all belong to a rare type of source which may be described as ‘papal legitimist texts’ that emerged out of the Pazzi war. They were written against a bold defiance. Andrija Jamometić, for instance, accused Sixtus IV sharply for the same political conduct which Ragnina’s text is paradigmatic for. In his appellation

⁵⁹ Paolo Prodi, *Il sovrano pontefice. Un corpo e due anime: la monarchia papale nella prima età moderna*, Bologna, 1982.

⁶⁰ Angelo Fabroni, *Laurentii Medicis Magnifici Vita*, vol. II, Pisa, 1784, 102-103.

⁶¹ L. de’ Medici, *Lettere*, IV, op. cit. (15), 16, note 9.

⁶² G. Mercati, op. cit. (7), 249.

of 1482, he did not only denounce Sixtus's involvement in the Pazzi conspiracy.⁶³ He also claimed:

Item tu, Sixte, suscitasti divisiones inter potentatus Italiae tempore, quo debet fieri expeditio contra immanissimum Turcum; et contra multos fecisti bellum iniustum et iniuste; ad hoc, ne fieret expeditio contra hostes religionis christianae, qui effunderunt sanguinem innocentem et continue effundunt, te permittente.⁶⁴

Croatian churchmen played an important role at the papal curia during the pontificate of Sixtus IV and during the Pazzi war. While Andrija Jamometić and Nicholas of Modruš are well studied figures, this article has drawn closer attention to the least studied of the three, Mato Ragnina and his *Super pace Venetorum cum Magno Turco*. An edition of his work, which he himself may have hoped to publish in print, would be the next step.

⁶³ See T. Daniels, op. cit. (1), 103, with further references.

⁶⁴ Joseph Schleich, *Andrea Zamometić und der Basler Konzilsversuch vom Jahre 1482*, Paderborn, 1903, 39*. To build his case, Jamometić also added that it was none other than Sixtus IV himself who induced Venice to make peace with the Ottomans. »Item tu, Sixte, coegisti illustrissimum et devotissimum dominium Venetorum inire pacem cum immanissimo Turco sitibundo sanguine Christiano. Et hoc cum magno discrimine et periculo totius religionis Christiane.« This claim takes up rumors which accompanied the peace; however, it reflects more Jamometić's defamatory skills than the pope's political goals. Cf. L. de' Medici, *Lettere*, IV, op. cit. (15), 15, note 4; 121, note 7.