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Trust in the Catholic Reformation. Genoa, 1594-1664

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1. Setting the scene. The Republic of Genoa in the seventeenth century

The situation of the Church in the Republic of Genoa some decades after the Council of Trent lends itself well to exploring the importance of trust. In this first chapter, I will briefly sketch the geopolitical and economic background of the Republic in the seventeenth century. Secondly, the chapter zooms in on the main protagonist in the Catholic Reformation in Genoa: Cardinal Stefano Durazzo. Then, a short historiographical overview will follow of the religious landscape of the city. Finally, I will delve into the only aspect of the religious history of Genoa that has been featured in English language scholarship, namely the importance of lay initiatives and popular devotion.

La Serenissima

In the seventeenth century, the Republic consisted of a relatively small strip of land along the Ligurian Sea: “a screen of barren mountains”, as one French diplomat put it, that reached up to the Mediterranean.¹ This strip was interrupted at two places: some 70 km west of Genoa was the Marquisate of Finale, purchased by the Spanish in 1598; Oneglia, a fief of the Doria family further west, was purchased by the Duke of Savoy in 1576 (but taken back by the Genoese in 1625).² Two major duchies, those of Savoy and Milan, surrounded the Republic, together with the smaller duchy of Parma and Mantua, the duchy of Modena, the Republic of Lucca and the Marquisate of Monferrato.

¹ Cited in: Fernand Braudel, *The Perspective of the World*, Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century; Vol. 3 (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), 157.

² See, for a map of Genoa in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with explanation: Thomas A. Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea: Policy and Power in an Early Modern Maritime Republic, 1559-1684* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 4–5.

In 1580, the city had some 48,000 inhabitants, a number that grew to around 72,500 in 1638. The disastrous plague epidemic in 1656-7, the greatest crisis in the history of early modern Genoa, reduced the population to around 40,000 inhabitants.³ Most inhabitants of the Republic lived in the capital or the surrounding villages.⁴ The rest of its territories were sparsely populated and did not feature any major cities: Savona, after Genoa the largest town, had around 12,000 inhabitants towards the end of the sixteenth century.⁵ Most commercial, political and religious activity was therefore to be found in the capital itself, which will be also the main (but not exclusive) focus of this dissertation.

La Serenissima is well known among international scholars for its fascinating maritime history and its impressive medieval trade empire.⁶ Genoa acquired its first overseas territories during the First Crusade and expanded progressively from the twelfth to the fourteenth century. Together with Venice, Genoa dominated medieval commerce in the Mediterranean area. With the rise of the Ottoman Empire in the eastern Mediterranean and the expansion of Spain and Portugal in the west, Genoa lost its strong position and turned towards another occupation: in the sixteenth century, individual merchants became involved with the finances of the Spanish crown, which would prove to be a fortunate move.

From the fourteenth until the early sixteenth century, Genoa was alternately controlled by Milan, France and the Spanish Habsburgs. Yet, whilst previously such domination did not exclude a certain independence, in the first decades of the

³ Giuseppe Rocca, 'La peste di metà Seicento a Genova e in Liguria', in *La Storia dei Genovesi. Atti del convegno di studi sui ceti dirigenti nelle istituzioni della Repubblica di Genova. Genova 10-11-12 Giugno 1987*, vol. 8 (Genoa: Centro internazionale di studi sui ceti dirigenti nelle istituzioni della Repubblica di Genova, 1987), 137–51.

⁴ In 1607, almost one third of the 360,000 inhabitants of the whole Republic except Corsica (i.e. the city of Genoa and its territories on the peninsula) lived in the city and surroundings. The total number of people in the Republic never rose above half a million during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thomas A. Kirk, 'A Little Country in a World of Empires: Genoese Attempts to Penetrate the Maritime Empires of the Seventeenth Century', *European Economic History Review* 25 (1996): 407.

⁵ Carlo Bitossi, 'L'antico regime genovese, 1576-1797', in *Storia di Genova: Mediterraneo, Europa, Atlantico*, ed. Dino Puncuh (Genoa: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 2003), 412.

⁶ See, for instance: Steven A. Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese, 958-1528* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

sixteenth century Genoa turned into the plaything of foreign powers. This was a time in which internal rivalry between factions soared, causing Genoa to lose its sovereignty alternatively to France and Spain, which profited from the political instability.⁷ The famous reforms of 1528 of Andrea Doria, a condottiere under Charles V who, with the help of the Spanish, had occupied the city that same year, enforced a new institutional order that removed the sting from some of the fiercest factional conflicts. Consequently, internal division could no longer be used by foreign powers, while a contractual relationship with Charles V ensured stability for both parties. Genoa became a satellite state of Spain, and Andrea Doria himself rose to a powerful position within the Republic. Doria's reforms did away with some of the major tensions by organising the nobility in 28 *alberghi*, i.e. groups of aristocratic families. Via a complicated system, the 1528 laws effectively divided political power over these groups.

Initially, the new stability and the relative geopolitical neutrality ensured an incredible rise of Genoese influence, this time via its supremacy in European finance. The second half of the sixteenth century was the “golden age” of Genoese financial activity, whilst Genoese shipping decreased.⁸ Ferdinand Braudel famously called the period from 1557 to 1627 the “age of the Genoese”: seventy years “of a rule that was so discreet and sophisticated that historians for a long time failed to notice it”, and that had as its focal point not the Republic but “a handful of banker-financiers”.⁹ Being the leader of the *nobili vecchi*, Doria only allowed people from his own faction to get involved in Spanish finances. Thus, the internal differences with the opposite faction, the *nobili nuovi*, who were mostly involved with manufacturing and trade, grew.¹⁰

A second reform implemented by Doria, in 1547, favouring the *nobili vecchi* in political offices brought about an increase not only in economic, but also in political divisions. Even in terms of maritime policy these two groups had different interests:

⁷ Steven Epstein has listed all the Genoese revolts and changes in government up until 1528, thus giving an interesting insight into French and Spanish involvement. *Ibid.*, 327.

⁸ Kirk, ‘A Little Country’, 407–8.

⁹ Braudel, *The Perspective*, 157.

¹⁰ Kirk, ‘A Little Country’, 410–11.

the *nobili nuovi* pressed for a position of armed neutrality and the acquisition of publicly owned galleys, whilst the *nobili vecchi* accepted dependence on Spain for military support. These economic and political divisions led to a major uprising in 1575 during which the *nobili vecchi* were banned from the city. Things calmed down after new laws were issued in 1576 in which the *nobili nuovi* obtained equal political power. It was again agreed that every year members could be inscribed to the *libro della nobiltà*, the ranks of those eligible for political offices (people below a certain standing never became eligible). The civil war ended but the compromise did not remove internal contrasts among the patriciate, nor did it satisfy those who continued to be excluded from power.¹¹

In fact, in the first decades of the seventeenth century, conflicts arose again over who was allowed access to political power within the Republic. Those who had made their fortune in recent years – entrepreneurs, merchants, and artisans – saw their political aspirations frustrated again and again.¹² A conspiracy of 1628, whose most important representative was Giulio Cesare Vachero, an enriched non-noble, was a sign of a broader discontent: at the instigation of the Duke of Savoy (with whom, as we shall see, Genoa had been at war shortly before) the conspirators planned to eliminate many high-ranking politicians.

Although their plot was foiled, this crisis forced the ruling class to open up.¹³ Officially, among those who did belong to the nobility, power and rights were distributed equally. Yet social fragmentation created ever more divisions, and political power shifted towards a small group of very rich families: not only the Doria family, the Spinolas – Ambrogio Spinola, of course, became the famous condottiere for the Spanish crown – and other great names from the *nobili vecchi*, but also “new” families that had enriched themselves in the world of international finance: Brignole Sale, Balbi, Durazzo, Mongeglia, Invrea and Strata were all included in a powerful

¹¹ Gino Benvenuti, *Storia della Repubblica di Genova*, Storia e documenti 26 (Milan: Mursia, 1977), 133–34; Carlo Bitossi, *Il governo dei magnifici: patriziato e politica a Genova fra Cinque e Seicento* (Genoa: Edizioni culturali internazionali Genova, 1990), 32.

¹² Bitossi, ‘L’antico regime’, 394.

¹³ Ibid.; Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea*, 105.

top layer of society.¹⁴ These families formed informal networks that conflicted with the supposedly equal division of power among all nobles.¹⁵

Starting from the first decade of the seventeenth century, the idea became increasingly accepted that the Republic should distance itself politically and diplomatically from Spain. One important reason was related to the various incidents regarding its sovereignty and autonomy around the turn of the century, among which was the controversial Spanish occupation of Finale.¹⁶ Yet while distrust was on the rise, the two remained mutually dependent: Genoa relied on Spain for protection and economically, whilst Spain needed Genoa's financial services and capital, and profited from its geographical position.¹⁷

The first decades of the seventeenth century were an era of fierce political debate, as reflected in many political treatises about the internal division of power as well as Genoa's position vis-à-vis the Habsburgs. Political writings were almost unanimously either cautious or openly against Genoese involvement in Spain but almost never asked for a radical break from its alliance.¹⁸ Both amongst the *nuovi* and the *vecchi*, internal divisions created groups of *filospagnoli*, *repubblicisti* and *filofrancesi* (those who opted for strengthening the bonds with France).¹⁹ Individuals within

¹⁴ For insight into the way these families were interrelated, see: Bitossi, *Il governo*, 124–35; Giorgio Doria and Rodolfo Savelli, “Cittadini di governo” a Genova’, *Materiali per una storia della cultura giuridica*, no. 2 (1980): 4–5.

¹⁵ They built Genoa's famous sixteenth- and seventeenth-century *palazzi* (of the Via Nuova and the Via Balbi) that, according to a letter of Peter Paul Rubens, were somewhat similar to the dwellings of the great monarchs of the time: this ostentation stirred up even more ill feeling among the city's middle classes who were excluded from this power and excessive wealth: Rodolfo Savelli, ‘Genova nell’età di Van Dyck. Sette quadri con un epilogo’, in *Van Dyck a Genova. Grande pittura e collezionismo* (Milan: Electa, 1997), 1; Teofilo Ossian De Negri, *Storia di Genova* (Milan: Martello, 1974), 686–91.

¹⁶ De Negri, *Storia di Genova*, 702.

¹⁷ Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea*, 96.

¹⁸ One of the most important political writers of the time was Andrea Spinola. Both he and Ansaldo Cebà in the 1610s and 1620s criticised Genoa's compliancy with the Spanish, as well as the concentration of power in the hands of the *Collegi* and the doge at the expense of the *Consigli* and the various *Magistrature di controllo*. Bitossi, *Il governo*, 198–99. On the culture of political debate in Genoa, see: Cees Reijner, ‘Gesprekken in Genua. Giovanni Costa over het Twaalfjarig Bestand’, *De Zeventiende Eeuw. Cultuur in de Nederlanden in interdisciplinair perspectief* 30, no. 1 (2014): 87–88.

¹⁹ Carlo Bitossi, ‘Patriziato e politica nella Repubblica di Genova fra Cinque e Seicento’, in *I Gesuiti fra impegno religioso e potere politico nella Repubblica di Genova. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi sotto l'Alto Patronato del Presidente della Repubblica. Genova, 2-3-4- dicembre 1991*, ed. Claudio Paolucci, vol. 2,

these different factions could have opposing interests and express them in unexpected ways. It was possible to lean towards the French crown for geopolitical reasons and at the same time to continue to invest in Spanish finances for personal gain.²⁰ Also, different individuals and groups could be allies with respect to one issue, and enemies in another.²¹ It is therefore an arduous if not impossible task to identify exactly who belonged to which faction.²²

In the 1620s, Genoa was struck by several major crises. In 1625, a dispute over the Marquisate of Zuccarello, purchased by the Genoese from the Holy Roman Empire but also claimed by the Savoyards, led to an armed conflict. Helped by French troops, the Duke of Savoy managed to reach the walls of Genoa within just a few weeks. The support of the Spanish crown and its allies relieved the city and the same year the Republic restored sovereignty over its territories. The senate unanimously decided to erect a new sanctuary in honour of Nostra Signora della Vittoria, to thank the Virgin Mary for what they saw as her role in this victory.²³ In 1625, a secret truce and later a peace between Spain and France, was also forced upon their respective allies: Genoa and Savoy. Fighting between the two, however, continued on a smaller scale and culminated in the earlier mentioned coup of Vachero supported by the Duke of Savoy.²⁴ Spain's actions in the wake of the war, its continuous interference with local politics, and the crown's suspension of payments to its Genoese creditors in 1627 greatly increased resentment in the

Quaderni Franzoniani. Semestrale di bibliografia e cultura ligure, V (Genoa: Associazione Amici della Biblioteca Franzoniana, 1992), 22–25.

²⁰ Carlo Bitossi, 'Un lungo addio. Il tramonto del partito spagnolo nella Genova del '600', in *La Storia dei Genovesi. Atti del convegno di studi sui ceti dirigenti nelle istituzioni della Repubblica di Genova. Genova 10-11-12 Giugno 1987*, vol. 8 (Centro internazionale di studi sui ceti dirigenti nelle istituzioni della Repubblica di Genova, 1988), 120.

²¹ Ibid., 124.

²² See for a comprehensive study of the political ranks: Carlo Bitossi, 'Famiglie e frazioni a Genova, 1576-1657', in *Nobiltà e governo a Genova tra Cinque e Seicento: ricerche sulle fonti per una storia della Repubblica di Genova*, vol. 2, *Miscellanea storica Ligure 12* (Genoa: Università di Genova, Istituto di storia moderna e contemporanea, 1980), 59–139.

²³ De Negri, *Storia di Genova*, 705–10.

²⁴ Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea*, 101–5.

Republic as it was already struck by years of poor harvests and famine (1622) and suffered from the high costs of war and internal political strife.²⁵

The 1630s were years in which Genoa sought to strengthen its position against internal and external enemies: many rich Genoese contributed to the new city walls built against a possible invasion. The *Inquisitori di Stato* were founded in reaction to the Vachero conspiracy of 1627 with the task of countering internal political threats by means of espionage and counterespionage.²⁶ Still, several other conspiracies, all encouraged by Savoy, followed in the 1630s and later decades. After the Spanish suspension of payments in 1627 and the peace with Savoy in 1633, the Genoese financial elite progressively disengaged from Spain: a new consciousness that Genoa had to become more independent became widespread.²⁷ A sign of this was the Republic's claim in 1637 to the status of a kingdom in matters of ceremony and diplomacy, on the basis of its reign over Corsica and the symbolic crowning of Mary as queen and patroness of the Republic that same year.²⁸ This move was clearly meant to emphasise both the Republic's sovereignty over its own territory and the Ligurian Sea, which Spain had repeatedly infringed in the previous years, and to underline its claim to equality with respect to the geopolitical powers of that time.²⁹

In the meantime, the political ranks continued to be divided on many issues. The year 1637 was marked by contrasts between the executive government, the *Collegi* - consisting of the senate and the *Camera* – and the *Supremi Sindacatori* who had

²⁵ Kirk, 'A Little Country', 413; Thomas A. Kirk, 'La crisi del 1654 come indicatore del nuovo equilibrio nel Mediterraneo', *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria, nuova serie* 51, no. 1 (2011): 532–33.

²⁶ Bitossi, 'L'antico regime', 391.

²⁷ Claudio Costantini, 'La ricerca di un'identità repubblicana nella Genova del primo Seicento', in *Dibattito politico e problemi di governo a Genova nella prima metà del Seicento*, ed. Claudio Costantini and Carlo Bitossi, vol. 2, *Miscellanea Storica Ligure* 7 (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1976), 45; Bitossi, *Il governo*, 192–93.

²⁸ See: Paolo Fontana, 'Una Regina per la Repubblica. Una scelta tra politica, devozione e teologia' (Convegno sul cardinale Stefano Durazzo (1594-1667) nel 350.mo della morte- Roma 11 luglio 1667, Genoa, 2017); De Negri, *Storia di Genova*, 715.

²⁹ See, for the geopolitical significance of this move: Thomas A. Kirk, 'The Implications of Ceremony at Sea: Some Examples from the Republic of Genoa (16th and 17th Centuries)', *Great Circle: Journal of the Australian Association for Maritime History* 18, no. 1 (1996): 8.

the task of supervising the *Collegi*.³⁰ The election as doge of Agostino Pallavicini (1637), who was determined to take a new course and was seen by some as too authoritarian, also stirred up conflict. It proved to be impossible to overcome the divisions in the ruling class, which continued during the next decade, leading to major political instability. (We will return to these divisions when discussing Durazzo's position in the city's political landscape).³¹

In the mid-seventeenth century, a time in which Genoese politics were directed towards greater independence, opinions also differed on the policy that would be most effective to achieve this goal: Thomas A. Kirk explains how, when both the attempt to strengthen the Republic's military power and that of increasing their commercial influence via a joint stock company had largely failed, the Genoese reverted to "an alternative, 'passive' approach to projecting the Republic's power onto the sea, influencing shipping patterns, and to some degree directing commercial traffic in the Mediterranean".³² They did so via their free port, the roots of which lay in measures already taken towards the end of the sixteenth century. This approach allowed Genoa to become a focal point of the economic interests of several larger powers who would not let each other dominate the Republic. Genoa thus secured its neutrality in a rather successful way. However, it could not prevent a disastrous French bombardment in 1684, now that Spain was no longer the dominating force in the Mediterranean.³³

Stefano Durazzo

It was against this background that Stefano Durazzo became archbishop of Genoa in 1635. Together with Virginia Centurione Bracelli (who was canonised in 2003 and whom we will encounter in chapter five), Durazzo is probably the most well-known

³⁰ The *Supremi Sindicatori* tried to take more political initiative reinforcing bonds with the *Minor Consiglio*, one of the councils of the city.

³¹ Costantini, 'La ricerca', 51–58; Bitossi, *Il governo*, 245.

³² Citation from: Kirk, *Genoa and the Sea*, 193. See also: Kirk, 'A Little Country', 419–20; Benvenuti, *Storia della Repubblica*, 142.

³³ Kirk, 'The Implications', 9.

exponent of the Genoese Church in the seventeenth century.³⁴ His metropolitanate encompassed the bishoprics of Albenga, Brugnato, Noli, and Bobbio (though the latter was not part of the Republic). The dioceses of Nebbio, Ajaccio-Mariana, Aleria and Sagona on the Island of Corsica fell under the dominion of the Republic but not under the ecclesiastical province and were being contested by the provinces of Genoa and Pisa. The Genoese cities of Savona and Ventimiglia were suffragan dioceses of Milan. Luni-Sarzana, instead, was semi-independent: on Genoese territory, it fell directly under the Holy See yet was also linked to the ecclesiastical province of Genoa.

Stefano Durazzo was born in 1594 to Aurelia Saluzzo and Pietro Durazzo.³⁵ His father was doge of the Republic from 1619 to 1621. Durazzo's extended family, his parents, uncles, and brothers and sisters with their many children, can be found at the centre of Genoese political life. They were related via marriage and bonds of godparenthood with several other important *casate*: the Brignole, Grimaldi, Pallavicini, Balbi, Saluzzo, Raggi, Giustiniani, De Franchi, Lercari, Adorno, and others, all of whom had their representatives in the political life of the Republic.³⁶ Stefano's brother Cesare, besides fulfilling many other political functions, was governor of Corsica from 1645 to 1647 and doge of the Republic from 1665 to 1667. His son Pietro Durazzo, a nephew of the cardinal, would become doge a few decades after his cardinal uncle passed away (in 1685-7). One of Stefano's direct cousins, Giovanni Battista Durazzo, was elected doge in 1639, during Durazzo's tenure. The family strategies of the Durazzo in the political sphere, keenly exploiting the possibilities at hand, enabled them to become one of the most influential clans in seventeenth-century Genoa.³⁷

³⁴ The *Archivio Storico Diocesano di Genova* organised a study day on 27 October 2017 centred around this famous cardinal, the proceedings of which will be published in the coming months.

³⁵ His brothers and sisters were Giacomo (who died at the age of 26), Mariettina, Nicola, Cassandra, Battista and Cesare. Luigi Alfonso, 'Aspetti della personalità del Card. Stefano Durazzo, arcivescovo di Genova (1653-1664)', *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria, nuova serie* 12, no. 2 (1972): 456–57.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 492.

³⁷ Bitossi even writes of them: "La strategia familiare dei Durazzo, che si muovevano dentro le istituzioni così com'erano, volgendo a utile privato le iniziative innovative pubbliche, doveva rivelarsi in definitiva la più accorta, la più accettabile dai consorti, la più consona al governo dei pochi". Bitossi, *Il governo*, 289–90.

Stefano Durazzo contributed to the family's central position in the city by pursuing a prestigious ecclesiastical career. He was ordained in 1618 and began studying law in Rome. In the 1620s, Durazzo held various prominent positions at the papal court and even became general treasurer of the Papal State in 1627. He was created cardinal in 1633 and was sent as a papal legate to Ferrara from 1634 to 1636. It was during his time as a legate, that he was ordained bishop and appointed to the archdiocese of Genoa (in 1635). Although he did not personally reach the city until 1637, he immediately appointed a vicar with whom he established close contact to start managing his diocese.³⁸ Durazzo remained archbishop until 1664, when he resigned his office. He died in Rome in 1667.³⁹

One of the main political concerns in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the relationship of the city's government with the Church, which on multiple occasions turned into a fierce power struggle, a phenomenon that was not unusual at the time.⁴⁰ The merging of religion and politics that had been exceptionally strong in late medieval Genoa, continued well into the seventeenth century.⁴¹ In 1593, the Republic instituted a special government institution, the *Giunta Ecclesiastica* (renamed *Giunta di Giurisdizione* in 1638) that was to defend the prerogatives of the secular government against affronts by the Church.

During Durazzo's tenure, the tensions between the two powers manifested themselves in disputes over issues of jurisdiction and precedence.⁴² They concerned

³⁸ See for a (somewhat hagiographical) biography of Cardinal Durazzo: Giovanni Andrea Musso, *Il Cardinale Stefano Durazzo, Arcivescovo di Genova (1596-1667)* (Rome: Artigianato Grafico C. Cappotto, 1959).

³⁹ Alfonso, 'Aspetti', 500.

⁴⁰ Bitossi, *Il governo*, 267. For an insightful overview of the fifteenth-century struggles between Church and state in Genoa, see: Danilo Zardin, 'Prerogative della Chiesa e prestigio della Repubblica. Dal primo Cinquecento alle riforme tridentine', in *Il cammino della Chiesa genovese: dalle origini ai nostri giorni*, ed. Dino Puncuh (Genoa: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 1999), 265–328. For the relation between Church and state in late medieval Genoa, see: Polonio, *Istituzioni ecclesiastiche della Liguria medievale*, 67:289–390. Genoa's slow implementation of reforms 'from above' was in part due to opposition from the political elite who held the archbishops in its grip. Cf. Zardin, 'Prerogative', 297–306.

⁴¹ Zardin, 'Prerogative', 266–67.

⁴² It was often at the level of ceremonial that struggles between the two powers were fought out. Besides those mentioned, other controversies can be found in: Alfonso, 'Aspetti', 480–91.

such issues as the place of the archiepiscopal seat with respect to the throne of the doge; the order in which the archbishop and doge were to receive the incense and the sign of peace during mass, as well as the greeting from (Lenten) preachers; the title with which representatives of the Republic should greet the cardinal; and the ceremonial surrounding Durazzo's entrance into Genoa.⁴³ More explicitly political was the archbishop's refusal, immediately after his arrival, to crown Agostino Pallavicini as doge, since the latter pretended regal honours (on the basis of the Republic's recent claim to regal status). Some years before, Pope Urban VIII had decreed that cardinals were next in line to monarchs in terms of their status as dignitaries. Hence, they were to be addressed by representatives of a republic with the title *eminenza*. The Genoese government's reluctance to observe this ruling was one of the reasons for Durazzo's refusal to crown the doge. Therefore, the celebration had to take place in the abbey of Santa Caterina, whose abbot was willing to perform the ceremony. This conflict came to an end as soon as the highest secular and ecclesiastical offices were both held by members of the Durazzo clan. When, in 1639, the archbishop's cousin Giovanni Battista Durazzo was elected doge, his own son, who was appointed bishop of Brugnato at the suggestion of the cardinal, gladly celebrated the coronation ceremony.⁴⁴

After Durazzo returned to Genoa following a period of absence – he had served as papal legate to Bologna from 1640 until 1642 – disputes arose over the diocesan synod that Durazzo held in 1643. What most stirred up resentment among many Genoese *Collegi* was the decision taken at this synod on how ecclesiastical land taxes (*terratici*) were to be paid: they saw this measure as an infringement of the secular government's right to decide on similar financial issues within the borders of the

⁴³ See, for instance, Durazzo's *Ad limina* report of 1640 in which he writes about the senate's pretensions with respect to the doge's seat in the cathedral, in: Luigi Nuovo, ed., *Le relationes ad limina dell'arcivescovo di Genova Stefano Durazzo (1635-1664)* (Genoa: Brigati, 2002), 37. His reports of 1644 and 1655 also shed light on the struggles with the secular government. For contrasts regarding the jurisdictions of Church and state, see e.g. Archivio Segreto Vaticano (hereafter ASV), Segreteria di Stato (hereafter: Segr. Stato), Cardinali, Vol. XIV, f. 613-635, Letter from Cardinal Durazzo to Cardinal Panzirolo, 09-05-1648

⁴⁴ Fontana, 'Una Regina', 6.

Republic.⁴⁵ The senate issued decrees which strictly prohibited anyone from cooperating with the cardinal's policy, while Durazzo proclaimed the excommunication of all those who followed the senate's instructions. The dispute lasted from 1643 until May 1658, when both the cardinal and the *Serenissimi Collegi*, possibly because of pressure by Rome, revoked their respective edicts and the synodal chapter on this subject and apparently agreed on the mode of payment.⁴⁶

A part of the urban political elite saw Durazzo's determination in matters of jurisdiction, ceremony, and precedence as a threat to their authority within the Genoese Republic. Durazzo, in turn, saw the interference of the senators with ecclesiastical affairs as an inadmissible breach of his authority: their say in the diocesan seminary, in particular, was a thorn in his side (see chapter two). These conflicts between Church and state combined with many other issues led to a major political crisis in the 1640s. Tension within the patriciate concerned the relations with France and Spain, mercantile policies, political-institutional changes, and territorial expansion.⁴⁷ Protests, known as the *mobba dei gentiluomini*, broke out in 1646 over the issue of new ascriptions to the nobility, organised by two famous exponents of *nuove* families: Stefano Raggio and Gian Paolo Balbi. The harsh repression of these protests provoked yet another conspiracy (1648) led by Balbi with the support of France, and with the knowledge of some members of government amongst whom were several members of the Durazzo family. Balbi was discovered and exiled, together with relatives from the Balbi and Durazzo families. Under other pretexts, even the head of the Durazzo clan, Cesare Durazzo, brother of the cardinal and former governor of Corsica, was imprisoned for several months. While the political divisions of those years influenced how Cesare Durazzo's case was dealt with, part of the governing

⁴⁵ Bitossi explains it as follows: "Il 30 aprile 1648 [in which these struggles culminated] l'arcivescovo Durazzo aveva pubblicato un decreto col quale respingeva, appellandosi alle decisioni del sinodo Genovese del 1643, la disposizione impartita dai Collegi della Repubblica, che i possessori di beni ecclesiastici fossero tenuti a pagare avarie e terratici in moneta corrente anziché in moneta di cartulario, come era avvenuto sino ad allora". Bitossi, *Il governo*, 267. See also: Idem, 'L'antico regime', 454.

⁴⁶ Alfonso, 'Aspetti', 485–86.

⁴⁷ Bitossi, 'Patriziato e politica', 26. Bitossi even writes about "una acuta crisi politica", in: Bitossi, 'Un lungo addio', 125.

elite also used this move as a lever in the continuous tussles with the cardinal over matters of jurisdiction, in particular the land taxes (this conflict reached a climax in 1648).⁴⁸

Another part of the political spectrum did not agree with how the issue of Cesare Durazzo was handled. Probably out of protest against the senate's policies, the famous politician and senator Anton Giulio Brignole Sale – a protagonist of the political faction that included many Brignole, Durazzo and Raggios among its adherents – left politics in order to become a priest and a leading figure in the new group of elite priests that Durazzo (to whom he was remotely related) had initiated, only to join the Jesuits some years later.⁴⁹ Taken together, these events of the 1640s all involved four of the most powerful *nuovi* families – Balbi, Durazzo, Raggio and Brignole – who had strong links through marriage. In the 1650s, besides the continuation of these struggles including the discovery of yet another presumed conspiracy by Stefano Raggio and renewed troubles with Spain, the largest crisis was yet to hit Genoa: the plague epidemic of 1656-7, which took the lives of many lay people and clergy alike.⁵⁰

It was against this turbulent background that Durazzo tried to reform the clergy and society at large. To do so, he needed the cooperation of different parties within and outside the Church. The instances of friction described above may create the impression that collaboration between a reformer like Durazzo and the political elites was impossible. The chapters that follow show that this was not the case, and that cooperation did take place on various occasions.⁵¹ At the same time, new religious initiatives from below tried to win trust of both the Church authorities and the lay elite in order to secure the recognition and financial support necessary for success. Practices of distrust, too, are an important feature of Genoa's ecclesiastical

⁴⁸ Bitossi, *Il governo*, 268–70; idem, 'Patriziato e politica', 26.

⁴⁹ Bitossi, 'Patriziato e politica', 26. Anton Giulio was the brother of Maria Maddalena, who was the daughter-in-law of Durazzo's uncle Agostino Durazzo. Cf. See also chapter seven.

⁵⁰ On the political crisis of those years: Bitossi, *Il governo*, 251–90.

⁵¹ Cf.: Claudio Costantini, 'Tradizione repubblicana e riforma cattolica nella Genova del Seicento', in *I Gesuiti fra impegno religioso e potere politico nella Repubblica di Genova. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi sotto l'Alto Patronato del Presidente della Repubblica. Genova, 2-3-4- dicembre 1991*, ed. Claudio Paolocci, vol. 2, Quaderni Franzoniani. Semestrale di bibliografia e cultura ligure, V (Genoa: Associazione Amici della Biblioteca Franzoniana, 1992), 17–20.

situation in the middle of the seventeenth century. Just as elsewhere in Catholic Europe, the Church hierarchy tried to bring about reform by means of strict regulations and firm discipline. Sometimes referred to as the Borromeo of Genoa, Durazzo made enemies with his determination to reform and defend the jurisdiction of the Church, just as his Milanese forerunner had done. This attitude was not unique though for the Genoese archbishop, and the struggles did not concern the person of Durazzo per se (as some historians have claimed), but rather resulted from the common defensiveness of both Church and state over their own jurisdictions in a time in which these matters were not yet settled.⁵² And, just like elsewhere, internal struggles between the different echelons of the Church, between different religious orders, and between parts of the lower clergy and the archbishop were also the order of the day.⁵³

Genoa's religious landscape

Unlike for the medieval period, no scholar has yet attempted to draw a general picture of the Genoese Church in the early modern period.⁵⁴ There are, however, many local studies that offer a useful window onto this reality. Particular to Genoa is the spiritual revival in the city around the turn of the fifteenth century, which centred on Ettore Vernazza. This Genoese notary became the founder of the Oratory of Divine Love, a religious confraternity that also had great success outside Genoa.⁵⁵ Following Caterina Fieschi Adorno (1447-1510), a mystic aristocratic lady who at the same time had been very active in assisting the ill and the poor, Vernazza and his group focused

⁵² Alfonso, 'Aspetti', 491.

⁵³ Ibid., 500.

⁵⁴ For an overview of the medieval history of the Church in Genoa: Polonio, *Istituzioni ecclesiastiche della Liguria medievale*.

⁵⁵ Daniela Solfaroli Camillocci, *I devoti della carità: le confraternite del Divino Amore nell'Italia del primo Cinquecento* (Naples, La città del sole, 2002). See also: Cassiano Carpaneto da Langasco, *Ettore Vernazza. Un grande umanista* (De Ferrari, 2007); Vito Piergiovanni and Daniela Solfaroli Camillocci, eds., 'La "carità segreta". Ricerche su Ettore Vernazza e i notai Genovesi confratelli del Divino Amore', in *Tra Siviglia e Genova: notaio, documento e commercio nell'età colombiana: atti del Convegno internazionale di studi storici per le celebrazioni colombiane, Genova, 12-14 marzo 1992* (Milan: Dott. A. Giuffrè, 1994), 393–434.

on individual conversion and concrete expressions of their religiosity in assisting the needy.⁵⁶ This movement of spiritual revival thus reinvigorated Genoa's rich tradition of charitable institutions ranging from the *Pammatone* hospital founded in the fifteenth century to the foundation of the impressive *Albergo dei Poveri* in the seventeenth century.⁵⁷ Largely the result of - and dependent on - lay initiative, these hospitals and other charitable institutions, too, became the subject of jurisdiction struggles between the Church and the state.⁵⁸

The same happened with the many confraternities in Genoa, as they were among the most important urban expressions of religiosity: many citizens relied completely on confraternities and oratories for their religious activities.⁵⁹ The most significant confraternity of a parish could even take over the management of the

⁵⁶ Polonio, *Istituzioni ecclesiastiche*, 382–90.

⁵⁷ Annamaria De Marini, *Emanuele Brignole e l'Albergo dei poveri di Genova* (Genoa: Termanini, 2016); Valeria Polonio, 'Ubi karitas, ibi pax: l'aiuto al più debole. Secoli IX-XVII', ed. Dino Puncuh, *Storia della cultura ligure*, Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria. Nuova Serie, 44, no. 1 (2004): 311–68; Riccardo Musso, 'La Repubblica di Genova e l'assistenza: la "Scuola dei Putti Orfani di S. Giovanni Battista"', ed. Claudio Paolucci, *San Giovanni Battista nella vita sociale e religiosa a Genova e in Liguria tra medioevo ed età contemporanea. Atti del Convegno di studi in occasione del nono centenario della traslazione a Genova delle Ceneri del Precursore. Genova, 16-17 giugno 1999.*, vol. II, Quaderni Franzoniani. Semestrale di bibliografia e cultura ligure, XIII (Genoa: Associazione Amici della Biblioteca Franzoniana, 2000), 231–70; Ennio Poleggi and Clara Altavista, 'L'Albergo dei poveri a Genova: proprietà immobiliare e sviluppo urbano in Antico Regime (1656-1798)', *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria, nuova serie* 39, no. 1 (1999): 493–529; Riccardo Magaglio, 'L'assistenza a Genova nel '600: i Lomellini e Virginia Centurione Bracelli (1587-1651)', in *La Storia dei Genovesi. Atti del convegno 1985*, vol. 6 (Genoa: Centro internazionale di studi sui ceti dirigenti nelle istituzioni della Repubblica di Genova, 1986), 323–41; Cassiano Carpaneto da Langasco, *Pammatone. Cinque secoli di vita ospedaliera* (Genoa: Ospedali civili, 1953).

⁵⁸ Even greater objects of conflict were the episcopal court and the Inquisition: both struggled to operate independently from the senate, but always saw their influence confined. Cf. Carlo Brizzolari, *L'Inquisizione a Genova e in Liguria* (Genoa: E.R.G.A., 1974).

⁵⁹ See, on confraternities in the Republic: Edoardo Grendi, 'Morfologia e dinamica della vita associativa urbana. Le confraternite a Genova fra i secoli XVI e XVIII', *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria, nuova serie* 5, no. 2 (1965): 241–311; Edoardo Grendi, *In altri termini: etnografia e storia di una società di antico regime* (Milan: Feltrinelli Editore, 2004); On the situation in Chiavari (part of the Genoese diocese), see: Luisa Puccio Canepa, 'Confraternite laicali a Chiavari. Dagli scopi religiosi e assistenziali alle committenze artistiche', *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria, nuova serie* 53, no. 2 (2013): 205–38; Fausta Franchini Guelfi, 'La diversità culturale delle confraternite fra devozione popolare, autonomia laicale e autorità ecclesiastica', *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria, nuova serie* 54, no. 2 (2014): 401–37; Rodolfo Savelli, 'Dalle confraternite allo stato: il sistema assistenziale Genovese nel Cinquecento', Dino Puncuh, *Storia della cultura ligure*, no. 2: 191–226.

parochial community.⁶⁰ According to Edoardo Grendi, who has done most to uncover the life of Genoese brotherhoods, at least 124 new ones were founded in early modern Genoa (starting from the year 1582).⁶¹ In the early nineteenth century, one-third of the adult men in the city were still members of a confraternity.⁶² Liguria was famous for a phenomenon called the *casacce*: originating as medieval flagellant groups, in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Genoa these became conglomerates of brotherhoods that were particularly invested in the yearly Corpus Domini processions.⁶³ The *oratorii segreti*, a different type of confraternity, privileged other devotions such as the communal participation in indulgences over the Holy Week solemnities. Many brotherhoods were the religious and communal expression of one craft or one specific social group: a community of zealous people, clergy or lay, would consciously choose certain devout or charitable practices to exercise communally while honouring a specific saint or the Blessed Sacrament.⁶⁴ Having a similar patron saint or name could lead to extreme rivalry among confraternities. Their feasts, funerals, processions, and ceremonies were often charged with political meaning and neighbourhood competition. The importance of lay initiatives for the vitality of religious life, through confraternities and charitable institutions, characterises the Genoese Church in the early modern period.

Costanza Longo, who has done more than any other scholar to unravel the ecclesiastical reality of seventeenth-century Genoa, rightly underlines the importance of religious orders in bringing diversity to the post-Tridentine Church in the Republic.⁶⁵ Her research on some of the orders that came to the city reveals the

⁶⁰ Grendi, *In altri termini*, 57.

⁶¹ Ibid., 50.

⁶² Ibid., 95.

⁶³ Ibid., 45–48.

⁶⁴ Often, the rise in popularity of a new devotion was accompanied by the creation of a new confraternity: hence, the panorama of devotions connected to the Genoese confraternities was extremely rich. Ibid., 53–54. Religious orders not infrequently began or encouraged new brotherhoods and tried to reach people in this way. The Jesuits, for instance, started many new confraternities, always directing them to more or less homogeneous social groups. With this ministry they tried to change society as a whole. Ibid., 54–55.

⁶⁵ Costanza Longo, 'Alcuni aspetti della Riforma Cattolica nella Repubblica di Genova nella prima metà del secolo XVII', in *Genova, la Liguria e l'Oltremare tra medioevo ed età moderna. studi e ricerche d'archivio*, vol. 3 (Genoa, 1979), 117, 175.

importance of their preaching and catechesis for popular reform.⁶⁶ The Jesuits arrived in Genoa in 1554 and focused mostly on educating the elite. A competing order, the Theatines, came to the port city in 1572 and served the rich elite while also carrying out their original mission to the poor. The Somaschi who arrived in 1575 were specialised in helping orphans and the children of the poor. The Camilliani opened a house in 1594 and focused mostly on serving the sick in Genoa's hospitals. In this manner, many new convents – later including the Barnabiti and Scolopi – were added to the already established monasteries. Yet it was not easy for a new order to enter the city: housing for new groups was scarce and competition was fierce.⁶⁷ Each of these new orders therefore had to bring a (spiritual) service that was not yet provided.⁶⁸

Due to Genoa's central geographical position, the city could never close itself off from developments throughout Europe. Consequently, the situation in Genoa

⁶⁶ Costanza Longo Timossi, 'I Teatini e la riforma cattolica nella Repubblica di Genova nella prima metà del Seicento', *Regnum Dei* 43, no. 113 (1987); idem, 'L'impegno missionario e l'azione sociale dei Preti della Missione in Corsica', *Geostorie* 16, no. 2 (2008): 189–265; idem, *Pauperismo e assistenza: i Camilliani a Genova nel primo Seicento* (Genoa: Scuola tipografica sorriso francescano, 1992); idem, 'Alcuni aspetti'. Other historians have shed light on the strategies of settlement of these new groups in a city that already had many religious orders: Giuseppe Felloni and Valeria Polonio, 'Un sondaggio per le comunità religiose a Genova in Età Moderna', *Studi e Documenti di Storia Ligure. In onore di don Luigi Alfonso per il suo 85o genetliaco. Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria, nuova serie* 36, no. 2 (1996): 143–66; Ennio Poleggi and Clara Altavista, 'Ordini religiosi e strategie urbane a Genova in Età Moderna', *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria, nuova serie* 39, no. 1 (1999): 475–92. See, for an elaboration of such a settlement issue: Paolo Fontana, 'Questioni territoriali e cerimoniale nei conflitti tra oratoriani e teatini nella Genova del Seicento', *Oratorium* 6 (2007): 245–22. For the history of the medieval orders of the Dominicans and Franciscans: Costantino Gilardi, 'Ut studerent et predicarent et conventum facerent. La fondazione dei conventi e dei vicariati dei Frati Predicatori in Liguria (1220-1928)', *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria, nuova serie* 47, no. 1 (2007): 9–54. Alfonso Casini, *La provincia di Genova dei Frati Minori: dalle origini ai nostri giorni* (Chiavari: Tipografia Moderna, 1985); Alfonso Casini, 'I frati minori di Liguria', in *Frati Minori d'Italia: le attività dei Frati Minori d'Italia attraverso i secoli, 1208-1981*, ed. Luciano Canonici (Città di Castello: Edizioni Porziuncola, 1981), 190–221. Claudio Costantini has made a first attempt to sketch the attitude of the Republican elite towards the new religious orders. Suspicious at first, the elites later started to consciously accommodate their efforts (the presence of many different groups offered valid alternative religious choices for individuals that might be politically opposed to one another), especially joining hands with the Jesuits. See: Costantini, 'Tradizione repubblicana'.

⁶⁷ Longo Timossi, 'I Teatini', 28.

⁶⁸ The Theatines, for example, entered only after several earlier attempts, managing finally to obtain the church of S. Maria Maddalena, with the support of the archbishop, Cipriano Pallavicini, some noblemen, and Filippo Neri, who declined to send his own Oratorians to the city. Ibid., 25.

mirrors many processes in other parts of the continent: first, the influence of the Spanish Discalced Carmelites and the Jesuits, then the advent of the French movement of spiritual revival brought mainly by the Lazarists. Genoa's religious movements, in turn, also influenced the rest of Europe. The city functioned as a springboard for several orders and congregations: the Augustinians, the Discalced Carmelites, and the Capuchins all fanned out across the Alps in the second half of the seventeenth century starting from Genoa.⁶⁹ The Turchine, a new female monastic order founded in Genoa at the start of the century, spread rapidly throughout Europe.⁷⁰

In the last three decades, the *Quaderni Franzoniani* series, under the care of Claudio Paolocci, has done much to further examine Genoa's diverse religious landscape in the early modern period. Part of this series is an overview of the history of the Church in Genoa from its origins to the present: *Il Cammino della Chiesa a Genova* (1999).⁷¹ Though very general in scope, the volume constitutes a crucial point of departure for any scholar of Genoa's ecclesiastical history. Other volumes disclose particular aspects that prior to the series had remained rather obscure. Especially important are the *Quaderni* dedicated to Ligurian devotions throughout the centuries: the veneration of Mary and the urban devotion to John the Baptist, the patron saint of the city.⁷² Several volumes in the series have been dedicated to individual religious orders and congregations: the Jesuits, Augustinians, Discalced Carmelites,

⁶⁹ Longo, 'Alcuni aspetti', 181.

⁷⁰ See chapter 5.

⁷¹ The chapters of Danilo Zardin, Luigi Nuovo, and Paolo Fontana are of particular concern for the early modern period: Zardin, 'Prerogative'; Luigi Nuovo, 'Cure pastorali e giurisdizionalismo: il Seicento', in Puncuh, *Il cammino*, 329–59; Paolo Fontana, 'Tra illuminismo e giansenismo: il Settecento', in Puncuh, *Il cammino*, 361–401.

⁷² See: Claudio Paolocci, ed., *Genova e Maria. Contributi per la storia. Atti della giornata di studio (Genova, 24 novembre. 1990)*, vol. 2, Quaderni Franzoniani. Semestrale di bibliografia e cultura ligure, IV (Genoa: Associazione Amici della Biblioteca Franzoniana, 1991); Paolocci, *San Giovanni Battista*. An insightful overview of Marian devotion in Genoa is offered in: Giovanni Farris, 'La Guardia nel contesto del culto mariano in Liguria tra XV e XVI secolo', in Paolocci, *Genova e Maria*, 69–76. Other interesting contributions on local devotion: Claudio Bernardi, 'Corpus Domini', in Terpstra, *The Politics of Ritual Kinship*; Giacomo Montanari, 'L'Impresa della Compagnia della Colonna: immagini e testi per una devozione', *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria, nuova serie* 54, no. 2 (2014): 95–113.

Oratorians, and Capuchins.⁷³ Each time, the scope of the publications went beyond historical details of their presence in Genoa to their spirituality and artistic and architectural contributions. The 1995 volume published to mark the four hundred years of existence of the Medee, a unique Genoese congregation of lay women, was one of the first Italian studies dealing with the phenomenon of early modern female religiosity that occurred outside the traditional institutions of marriage and convent.⁷⁴ The *Quaderni Franzoniani* have thus highlighted three significant characteristics of the early modern Genoese Church: the importance of popular devotions and the pervasive lay religiosity; the presence of a large number of old and new religious orders; and lastly, the rich presence of female religiosity both inside and outside the many convents of Genoa.⁷⁵

⁷³ Paolocci, ed., *I Gesuiti*; idem, ed., *Gli Agostiniani a Genova e in Liguria Tra Medioevo Ed Età Moderna. Atti Del Convegno Internazionale Di Studi. Genova, 9-11 Dicembre 1993.*, vol. 2, Quaderni Franzoniani, VII (Genoa: Associazione Amici della Biblioteca Franzoniana, 1994); Silvano Giordano and Claudio Paolocci, eds., *Nicolò Doria: itinerari economici, culturali, religiosi nei secoli XVI-XVII tra Spagna, Genova e l'Europa*, vol. 2, Quaderni Franzoniani, IX (Genoa: Associazione Amici della Biblioteca Franzoniana, 1996); Claudio Paolocci, 'Giacomo Giscardi: dalla storia della Congregazione dell'Oratorio alla storia civile e religiosa del Genovesato', in *La Congregazione di S. Filippo Neri. Per una storia della sua presenza a Genova. Giornata di studio in occasione del quarto centenario della morte di S. Filippo Neri. Genova, 15 novembre 1995*, ed. Claudio Paolocci, vol. 2, Quaderni Franzoniani, X (Genoa: Associazione Amici della Biblioteca Franzoniana, 1997), 169–218. Giuseppe Cosentino has described the history of the Jesuit order in Genoa: Giuseppe Cosentino, 'Il Collegio gesuitico di Genova fino alla soppressione della Compagnia', in Paolocci, *I Gesuiti*, 101–5. Besides the *Quaderni franzoniani* important work on the Genoese Jesuits has been done by Giuliano Raffo: Giuliano Raffo, 'I gesuiti a Genova dal XVI al XVIII secolo nella storia della casa professa', *La Civiltà cattolica* 3 (1997): 55–75; Giuliano Raffo, ed., *I gesuiti a Genova nei secoli XVII e XVIII - Storia della Casa Professa di Genova della Compagnia di Gesù dall'anno 1603 al 1773*, Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 36/1 (Genoa, 1996). For an overview of the history of the Discalced Carmelites in Genoa: A. Roggero, *Genova e gli inizi della Riforma teresiana in Italia (1584-1597)*, Institutum historicum Teresianum: Studia (Sagep, 1984).

⁷⁴ Claudio Paolocci, ed., *Congregazioni laicali femminili e promozione della donna in Italia nei secoli XVI e XVII. Atti della giornata di studio in occasione del quarto centenario delle Medee. Genova, 3 giugno 1994*, vol. 2, Quaderni Franzoniani, VIII (Genoa: Associazione Amici della Biblioteca Franzoniana, 1995).

⁷⁵ The world of female convents in early modern Genoa has been uncovered in a recent project by Ezia Gavazza and Lauro Magnini, see: Ezia Gavazza and Lauro Magnani, eds., *Monasteri femminili a Genova tra XVI e XVIII secolo* (Genoa: DIRAS, 2011).

In recent years, the attention of scholars has shifted to the secular clergy.⁷⁶ In particular, they have dealt with the phenomenon of “criminal clergy”, who have been identified as a major obstacle to reforms.⁷⁷ Paolo Fontana has done much to unravel the archives of the diocesan tribunal and to reveal all possible forms of religious deviance. He has shown convincingly that the priests who appeared before this tribunal often belonged to the most important families of the Ligurian inland. They were particularly prone to violence and disobedient to the central authorities as their loyalty lay first and foremost with their kin.⁷⁸ In conflicts between local factions, the priest lost his common role as mediator and sided with his family instead. For these family factions, recourse to the tribunal was a means of conflict resolution.⁷⁹ Using the same type of sources, Elena Taddia has convincingly argued that many members of the clergy until well into the eighteenth century were completely immersed in a society where vendetta, banditry, family ties, and honour were paramount.⁸⁰ Flavia

⁷⁶ Longo, ‘Alcuni aspetti’, 120. For an insightful analysis of the secular clergy in the thirteenth century, see: John Benjamin Yousey-Hindes, ‘Living the Middle Life, Secular Priests and Their Communities in Thirteenth-Century Genoa’ (Stanford University, 2010).

⁷⁷ Longo, ‘Alcuni aspetti’, 120.

⁷⁸ See e.g.: Paolo Fontana, “Gente tanto inurbana e temeraria”. L’occhio del tribunale diocesano genovese su Moneglia in età d’antico regime’, in *L’Oratorio dei Disciplinati di Moneglia. Testimonianze di fede e di arte nella storia di una comunità. Atti del Convegno, Moneglia 10-11 ottobre 2008*, ed. Giuliana Algeri and Valeria Polonio (Chiavari: Accademia dei cultori di storia locale, 2012), 119–42. On the prominence of elite violence: Stuart Carroll, ‘Revenge and Reconciliation in Early Modern Italy’, *Past & Present* 233, no. 1 (2016): 101–42. Giovanni Assereto rightly underlines that the conflicts between factions “over the control of local offices, over the use of communal goods, over the distribution of scarce yields” were frequently a “struggle between miserable people”. “All’interno delle comunità [...] è tutto un ribollire di conflitti tra fazioni e “parentelle”, un agistarsi di “bravachioni” e “capelazzi” per il controllo delle cariche locali, per l’uso dei beni comunali, per la spartizione di magri proventi: una lotta tra miserabili, molto spesso.” Giovanni Assereto, *Le metamorfosi della Repubblica. Saggi di storia genovese tra il XVI e il XIX secolo* (Savona: Daner Edizioni, 1999), 63.

⁷⁹ Paolo Fontana, ‘I processi per avvelenamento e la giustizia ecclesiastica a Genova nel Seicento tra inurbamento del clero, faide e denunce’, in *Corpi Manoscritti. Archivi e Corporalità nell’Età Moderna. Atti del convegno, Genova 27-28 novembre 2015*, ed. Paolo Fontana and Elena Taddia (Genoa: Edizioni culturali internazionali Genova, 2017), 53–74; Fontana, ‘Gente tanto inurbana’.

⁸⁰ Elena Taddia, ‘La Corse terre d’exil. Prêtres génois bannis en Corse: sources, réflexions’, *Bulletin de la Société des Sciences Historiques et Naturelles de Corse* 740–741 (2012): 69–83. The clergy were leading figures within the local factions, and did not shy away from using violence: Elena Taddia, ‘Violences physiques et violences verbales: le prêtre criminel d’après les archives ecclésiastiques du diocèse de Gênes’, in *Violence(s) de la Préhistoire à nos jours*, ed. Marie-Claude Marandet (Perpignan: Presses universitaires de Perpignan, 2011), 221–37. Taddia even asserts, on the basis of her findings from

Gattiglia, by contrast, has focused on how the image of the “good priest” (and its opposite, the criminal priest) was used in diverse types of communication from below with lay and clerical authorities. She also studied seventeenth-century moral treatises in which the “good priest” is presented as someone who is a perfect model for the faithful in his modesty and spirit of service. Separation from the laity was seen as a condition for the priesthood, but it was the one requirement that contemporary clergy did not accept easily: not only did they not align their behaviour with the Tridentine decrees on the separation between laity and clergy, but they saw the defence of their family reputation (if needs be by violent means) as an integral part of their duty.⁸¹ The reality of the seventeenth-century Church on Genoese territory as sketched by these historians is clearly one of persistent deviant behaviour among a clergy who did not conform to the Tridentine ideals, despite the many normative efforts.

As such, this situation forms an ideal case study for the subjects that I want to explore in this thesis. It leaves one to wonder how the Church hierarchy and other individuals and groups tried to deal with those members of the clergy who were reluctant to reform. The seventeenth century is of particular interest because it was a period of transition: reforms had been started (or attempted anew, after the setback of the last decades of the sixteenth century) but were far from being complete. In this transition period, negotiation was key to reform, and trust was needed to effectively align all parties involved in the effort.

both the diocesan archives and the *fondo iurisdictionalium* in the *Archivio di Stato*, that the separation between clergy and laity that Trent envisioned, in particular the renewed emphasis on celibacy, has caused further victims of clerical violence (instead of reducing them), namely those related to patrimony and illicit sexuality, and even infanticide Elena Taddia, ‘Fratelli preti e criminali: microconflitti e alleanze familiari nella Liguria dell’età moderna’, *Popolazione e Storia* 15, no. 1 (2014): 39–56.

⁸¹ Flavia Gattiglia, “E come può esser rispettato dal Popolo colui che in nulla differisce dal Popolo?”: gli abusi del clero secolare nella comunicazione con l’autorità. (Repubblica di Genova, XVII secolo)’ (Università degli Studi di Genova, 2017), 209.

The lay perspective

In 1636, the unfortunate shipwreck of an Irish vessel in the harbour of Genoa led to a remarkable spectacle of popular devotion. An eighteenth-century account vividly recounts how, in the wake of a fierce storm, a miraculous statue was found that came to be venerated as the *Madonna della Fortuna* (Our Lady of the Storm).⁸² On 17 January 1636,

the libeccio [a southwesterly wind] stirred up such a violent storm that huge billows entered the harbour, [were] knocked around by the impetuous wind, and then again frighteningly regrouped. Many hawsers were ripped from the ships that lay at anchor. [...] After a few hours, a disastrous mass of wrecks of those big disconnected bodies could be seen floating in the harbour, miserably shattered on the rocks [...]. When the frightful storm calmed down [...] seamen rushed to gather here and there the unfortunate remains of what the voracious sea had left behind. Among these [...] was a statue [Simulacro] that had been left completely undamaged by the waves: it had been detached from the prow of the Irish ship [...] [and] represented a venerable lady, holding in her right arm an adorable child with a superhuman aura.⁸³

This heavily romanticised and partly censured story (1757) by Father Zignago – prior of the church where the statue eventually came to be located – was an attempt to persuade his eighteenth-century readers that the devotion towards the statue of the *Madonna della Fortuna* had been genuine and trustworthy from the time it was found

⁸² Tommaso Lorenzo Zignago, *Brieve notizia del successo per cui la chiesa parrocchiale di S. Vittore Martire eretta in Genova, abbia poi acquistata in Titolare la Vergine Madre sotto la invocazione di Madonna della Fortuna, dedicata alla nobilissima dama signora Maria Maddalena Duražza* (Bernardo Tarigo, 1757).

⁸³ Ibid., 19-20. “fu eccitata dal libeccio sì rabbiosa tempesta, che scaricandosi in questo Porto, dall’impetuoso vento urtati, e spaventosamente raggruppati i marosi, si strapparono in gran parte le gomene da’ loro legni fermati dall’ancore, e furiosamente insieme cozzando, e l’un l’altro con reciproche percosse fiaccando, tra poche ore videsi nel Porto galeggiare un funesto sfasciume di que’ gran corpi scollegati dal loro vicendevole dibattimento, e miseramente infranti dal ripercotimento negli scogli. Calmata poi a più ore una sì pertinace dalla mezza notte, fino quasi alla fine del vegnente giorno lugubre burrasca, accorse la sollecita marinaria a raccogliere quà, e là i dispersi infelici avanzi del mar vorace. Fra questi il più in mole, e comparse luttuoso fu un niente dall’onde offeso Simulacro, smembrato dalla poppa della sudetta Nave Irlandese, rappresentante una veneranda Matrona, stringente nel destro braccio un di aria più che umana adorabil Bambino”.

in the Genoese harbour, more than a century earlier. Indeed, the prow statue had immediately sparked enthusiasm among the poor fishermen and sailors in the harbour district of Genoa. In contrast to this, serious suspicion was the first reaction among the Church authorities, imbued as they were with post-Tridentine prudence towards new popular devotions.⁸⁴ The situation thus called for persuasion from below. The trust of the authorities in the legitimacy of the devotion towards this statue – necessary for it to become a success in post-Tridentine Genoa – could only be won in a process of negotiation between the seamen and the Church leaders. They alone could provide official approval of the religious fervour for this Madonna.

This particular instance of popular devotion transformed into a locus of negotiation has been eloquently described in Jane Garnett and Gervase Rosser's book *Spectacular Miracles*, the only English language monograph dedicated to religion in Liguria in the early modern period (and beyond).⁸⁵ Although they did not focus on trust, the story they report illustrates its centrality in the success or failure of religious initiatives from below. First, to give the statue the allure appropriate for a reliable miracle-working object – which the seamen who found it soon believed it to be – they asked the parish priest of the nearby parish of San Vittore dei Marinari, Orazio Pizzarello, to accommodate it in his church. Pizzarello, according to Garnett and Rosser, was a real mediator “between his teeming maritime parish and the universal Church of which he was the representative”: though a learned man, he was willing to give his parishioners' fervour a chance and to accommodate the statue.⁸⁶ The surge in expressions of popular devotion that immediately followed this decision met with suspicion and resistance from both the secular and the ecclesiastical authorities.

⁸⁴ Garnett and Rosser note that “The clerical desire to monitor lay piety had been intensifying even prior to the emergence of the Protestant critique. The Fifth Lateran Council had in 1516 issued an important regulation concerning visions: any report of heavenly apparitions was to be referred to the Holy See for verification”. Jane Garnett and Gervase Rosser, *Spectacular Miracles: Transforming Images in Italy, from the Renaissance to the Present* (London: Reaktion, 2013), 65.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 73–80.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 74.

Upon hearing about all kinds of alleged miracles and exorcisms worked by the poor laymen from the harbour on the authority of the statue (by making use of the oil from the lamps burning in front of it, for instance) the vicar general ordered

that a wall should be built around the same [statue], the ex-votos and the sacred furnishings which adorned it; and that this enclosure [...] was to be surrounded [...] by strong fences so that the people could not go near to it and tear down the wall.⁸⁷

The *Magistrato dei Poveri*, the city's department for poor relief and the provision of alms, was also alarmed by the situation and turned against two young girls who went into the streets of the city with their mothers, singing and dressed as angels to collect money to adorn the statue's place in church.⁸⁸

Despite the authorities' provisions, enthusiasm for their Madonna did not fade among the parishioners: they continued to flock to the wall around the statue to express their devotion. The mere fact that this popular devotion, which expressed a trust beyond doubt in the divine character of the prow statue, was practically unstoppable, constrained the authorities to give the devotion an official stamp. The outcome of the process of negotiation between the insistence of the statue's many devotees and the reluctant Church authorities was, one could say, a compromise on the "reliability" of the statue: in September 1636 the wall was torn down and a papal indulgence from Pope Urban VIII was issued for all visitors to the *Madonna della Fortuna*. Thaumaturgical rites by the populace were strictly forbidden as was the publicising of any presumed miracles. In this middle position, the statue of Mary – the "trust-inspiring statue" as Zignago described it⁸⁹ – found its eventual home: trusted by the people from the Genoese harbour as their ally in their difficult daily lives, and accepted by the authorities as a well-regulated, and thus reliable devotion

⁸⁷ "che fosse murato il medesimo, e con lo stesso rinchiusi i voti, e sacri arredi, che l'adornavano, e si circondasse la clausura del medesimo, in distanza di sette palmi, di forti cancelli, acciò il popolo non potesse accostarvisi, e smurarlo". Zignago, *Brieve notizia*, 29.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 27. See also: Garnett and Rosser, *Spectacular Miracles*, 75.

⁸⁹ Zignago, *Brieve notizia*, 10.

undone of its magical excesses.⁹⁰ Now that it had received the hallmark of trustworthiness the popularity of the *Madonna della Fortuna* only increased, not only among the people of the harbour but also among the ecclesiastical and political elites of the city and beyond.

A striking aspect of the attempt by the port workers to win the trust of their fellow citizens for the object of their devotion, prior to its official recognition, was their wish to carry the statue through the streets of Genoa as part of the yearly Corpus Domini procession that was held shortly after the catastrophic storm. In the eyes of the seamen, having the prow statue participate in the procession – “completely decorated by flowers, ... [and] preceded and followed by twelve seamen with lit torches in their hands” - would strengthen its aura of religious legitimacy and power: indeed it was carried in the midst of their exemplary order and, according to Zignago’s account, “wherever it passed by, one could see the packed crowds moved to tears of joy”.⁹¹

The importance that the devotees of the *Madonna della Fortuna* ascribed to the Corpus Domini procession as a possibility to win trust for “their” statue resonates with how Claudio Bernardi – in his English language contribution to *The Politics of*

⁹⁰ Garnett and Rosser describe the reached equilibrium as follows: “For the great majority of her devotees in the city of Genoa and in parts beyond, she continued to be much more than an object of prayer and a sign of the grace of the Virgin Mary – the qualities emphasised by the various mouthpieces of the Church. In the wider context, she remained, rather, a personal ally and a powerful source of magical aid.” Garnett and Rosser, *Spectacular Miracles*, 80. The authors thus emphasise the continued magical character of the devotion and the opposition between the viewpoints ‘from above’ and ‘from below’. I instead think that the devotion could become successful because the way the people and the Church authorities started to view this *Madonna* largely overlapped after a negotiation process: “L’Eminentissimo Cardinale Spinola allora Vescovo di Sarzana, cui era giunta la fama e delle grazie, e de’ miracoli di cui si faceva rigoroso squittinio da Ecclesiastici, dotti in Riti, e sottilissimi speculatori della verità, poi a non guari che u arrivato in Genova, si portò alla Chiesa di Nostra Signora della Fortuna, e con interna spiritual consolazione celebrò al suo Altare la Santa Messa. Il simile fece il Cardinale Santa Cecilia, più, e più volte l’Eminentissimo Durazzo Arcivescovo di questa Città”. Zignago, *Brieve notizia*, 40. Obviously, it is quite possible that the seventeenth century prior was exaggerating in his description of the visits, but it is not unlikely that these different Church leaders with their presents affirmed the trust they had in this devotion towards the *Madonna della Fortuna*, after it came under ecclesiastical control.

⁹¹ “portato era in trionfo il Simulacro della Gran Vergine tutto adornato di fiori: prima, e dopo il quale s’incomminavano, e seguivano dodici marinari con le accese torcie nelle mani; e ovunque passava, si vedeva il folto popolo intenerito in pianto di contentezza”. Zignago, *Brieve notizia*, 25.

Ritual Kinship – characterises this specific Eucharistic devotion: Genoa’s Corpus Domini procession was a communal effort that could not succeed without cooperation and a certain level of mutual trust between all layers of society.⁹² This cooperation was so essential that it provided people from all ranks with ways to express themselves and their political and more general desires, just as the *marinari* did by carrying the newly found statue in the procession.⁹³ Bernardi rightly points out that the Corpus Domini procession was the most important religious and civic occasion of the year: “the event encapsulated the tension between the Christian ideal of brotherhood and its actual manifestation; for one day in the year at least, the earthly city sought to transform itself into its heavenly version”.⁹⁴

The negotiation process that was needed in order to let the procession succeed clearly shows, as Bernardi argues, that “the traditional image of a pyramid-like social organisation is misleading; relations between the component orders or estates were polyphonic, as in a choir or orchestra”.⁹⁵ The *marinari* from the harbour were just as important as the high-placed aristocrats who, “with a big enough retinue”, were to take turns in carrying the baldachin above the Holy Sacrament.⁹⁶ The procession of 1590 could, contrary to custom, only go “to the little chapel of the jetty, and not to its head” “because neither by the seamen nor by others [the jetty] had been covered with awnings or other protection from the sun”.⁹⁷ Any alterations to the procession’s course were immediately noticeable and damaged the “civic miracle” that the

⁹² The costs of the Corpus Domini procession were taken up by the community, reflecting the civic and communal aspect of the devotion. The list of expenses incurred in 1672 included costs for perfume, the decoration of the baldachin and the cathedral, the pay of a person who put all the guilds in the right order, and most of all: the reward for the different people who provided for the awnings or arranged for them to be placed in the streets through which the procession passed. Moreover, each year shop owners were picked by ballot and ordered to decorate a specific part of the route.

⁹³ Bernardi, ‘Corpus Domini’. Besides Garnett and Rosser, Bernardi is the only historian, to my knowledge, who wrote an English language article about early modern religion in Genoa.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 229.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 234–35.

⁹⁶ “con mobba sufficiente”. Archivio Storico Civico di Genova (ASCG), Fondo dei Padri del Comune 297, no. 100.

⁹⁷ “alla Cappelletta del Molo, et non in cima poiche per gli marinari, ne per altri se gli era stato coperto con tende ne con altro riparamento dal sole” On the Corpus Domini procession of 1590. Archivio di Stato di Genova (ASG), Archivio Segreto (AS) 474, f. 87v.

procession represented: even an individual neighbourhood or guild could thus pressure the rest to make certain compromises through their way of contributing to this communal devotion.

Individual citizens also needed to cooperate in order for the procession to be successful. Every year, the *Padri del Comune*, the government department that dealt with public spaces in the city, issued the notice that every citizen had “to observe at once that the streets where [the procession] usually pass[ed] by, be swept and cleaned before his own house, getting rid of any garbage or impediment that might be there”.⁹⁸ Apart from threatening to punish those who failed to obey this order, the instructions show that the authorities were aware that peer pressure and persuasion were more effective than punishment:

All those who have their house or rooms on the said route [...] should decorate everything they can with tapestries and devotional paintings in honour and reverence of the Holy Sacrament, imitating what people usually do in Christian countries. [The *Padri del Comune*] praise those who already started to do so and persuade them to continue in order that others learn from their good example to do the same.⁹⁹

The consuls of all guilds were instructed to gather early in the morning with their candles to accompany the procession, whereas all singers and other musicians of the city “on penalty of 50 silver *scudi* per person” were to adorn it with their music.¹⁰⁰ One musician, Francesco, nicknamed “il Ballarino”, upon being investigated about his alleged absence in 1672 replied that he had “served the procession up to the pier and that he then left when the strings of his harp had come loose because of the

⁹⁸ “da ogn’uno osseruerà prontamente, che detto giorno sij per la strada consueta passare spazzata, e nettata nanzi la sua casa rispettiuamente togliendo uia ogn’immondizio, et impedimento che ui fosse sotto ogni graue pena a lor Signorie Illustrissime arbitraria”. ASCG, Padri del Comune 297, n. 350. Grida Per il giorno del Corpus Domini.

⁹⁹ “Auertendo di piu tutti coloro che hanno casa, ò stanze intorno la sudetta strada, che vogliono ornare tutto quello, che potranno di tapezzi e quadri di devozione ad honore, e riuerenza d’esso Santissimo Sacramento ad imitazione di tutto quello, che si suole fare nelle parti del Christianesimo lodando molto quelli che già hanno introdotto a farlo persuadendole a perseuerare acciò che gl’altri con loro buon esempio imparino a fare il medemo”, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ “sotto pena di scuti cinquanta argento per ogn’uno”, *ibid.*

gunshots” that were fired from the ships in honour of the Holy Sacrament.¹⁰¹ Not only musicians were warned and punished if they did not live up to their duty. In the same procession of 1672 several guilds that were missing, came late, or sent only one torchbearer instead of several, awaited the same fate.

Clearly, it needed the cooperation of not only the political and ecclesiastical elites to make this devotion work, but also of every neighbourhood, the different guilds and confraternities, the shop owners, the artisans who covered the streets with awnings and decorations, and those who fired the canons in the harbour when the procession arrived at the pier. The “social contract” necessary for success was based partly on the threat of punishments (that clearly did not impress everybody and were repeated every year) but mostly on cooperation, persuasion and the need to maintain trust-relationships, since every single contributor could at any moment make up his mind and hinder or alter the procession, putting a blemish on the communal effort.

Conclusion

Seventeenth-century Genoa was a city full of contrasts and divisions. The city’s geopolitical situation, however, forced the Genoese to always find some internal balance in order to keep out the neighbouring powers. Conflicts between the secular and the ecclesiastical powers were equally the order of the day. At the same time, just as in politics, there was some level of cooperation, because it was convenient for both the state and the Church, as we will see in the following chapters. Even internally the Genoese Church was divided. Political and ecclesio-political conflicts were expressed through tussles over precedent and ceremony, for instance during the communal devotion of the Corpus Domini procession. When these religious ceremonies and devotions went well, after a process of negotiation, they were a forceful expression of the restored balance of power within the city.

Division among the clergy was partially caused by the fact that, in the seventeenth century, the clergy were still very much tied to their own families and

¹⁰¹ “servito alla processione sin’al molo e ch’essendosi scatenato l’arpa per le sparate egli poi sen’andò”. ASCG, Padri del Comune 297, n. 273.

the values of their community. This was particularly true for the rural clergy. These family ties formed an obstacle to the reform of the clergy as advocated by individuals such as Durazzo. Yet the higher clergy, too, continued to be bound to their families in the seventeenth century. Cardinal Durazzo would have probably been unable to obtain and maintain his archbishopric without the help of his wealthy and influential family members. It is clear, then, that in the seventeenth century, family ties remained essential to both high and low clergy.

From the two examples of communal devotions in Genoa, we learnt that these devotions, too, concerned the elites as much as the common people. All strata of society were equally involved in the surge of a new devotion around the miracle-working prow statue in 1636 and in the Corpus Domini procession that was held each year. These devotions are two prime examples of religious expressions of post-Tridentine Catholicism that could not succeed without a continuous process of negotiation, cooperation and persuasion.¹⁰² Central to these processes of negotiation is the issue of trust: suspicion had to be overcome between the port workers and the Church authorities in order that the devotion to the *Madonna della Fortuna* could exist inside the framework of the post-Tridentine Church. Only a well-regulated devotion, the fruit of negotiation, could elicit trust from all sides. Similarly, it was in cases of distrust or conflict that the Corpus Domini procession lacked its desired unity. Existing studies thus confirm the hypothesis from which my study departs: namely that trust constituted a pivotal element of post-Tridentine religiosity and Church organisation.

Since the two English language contributions regarding the religious history of early modern Genoa have worked at this from a bottom-up perspective (as did the extensive work of Grendi on confraternities), emphasizing the importance of initiative and persuasion from below, the focus of the chapters that follow will mostly lie elsewhere. Trust was not only central to the interplay between the Church hierarchy and the faithful, it was also necessary to whatever successful change and

¹⁰² Celeste McMamara describes a similar need of popular support for reformed practices in the rural parishes of the diocese of Padua, many of whose parishioners actually embraced baroque Catholicism. McNamara, Celeste. 'What the People Want'.

reform seventeenth-century ecclesiastics tried to bring about *within* the ranks of the institutional Church (both from above and from below). In the next chapters, the emphasis will therefore be on the many male and female religious and secular priests that one could encounter in the streets of Genoa. Attention will be paid particularly to the problems that came with ecclesiastical reform attempts that relied primarily on trust (chapters 2 and 3); the necessity of freedom and trust for effective (moral) change and the success of new religious initiatives (chapters 4 and 5); and, finally, the manner in which the religious fostered the trust relationships they needed in a historical context that saw obedience as a core religious value (chapters 6 and 7).