

to Union with Greece" *Dodoni* 20 (1991=1994) 373-417; in Greek].

These comments don't detract from the fundamental qualities of Ioannis Psaras's historical volume, which is a serious, authoritative work characterised by thorough collation and documentation of archival sources, compositional facility, honestly stated opinions, and persuasive arguments.

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Antonio Scottà, *La Conciliazione ufficiosa. Diario del barone Carlo Monti, "incaricato d'affari" del governo italiano presso la Santa Sede (1914-1922)*, vols. 1-2, Vatican City 1997, pp. 550 + 659, 91 plates.

We have grown accustomed to addressing the existence and the problems of the Holy See through official, austere, and frequently sterile documents of an ecclesiastical, economic, or politico-diplomatic nature. There has been very little evidence of the private life of the popes, their personal concerns, their human, everyday face. If one focuses on the final document issued by the papal secretariat, one can have no idea of the stages of decision making, the labyrinthine negotiations, the mutual compromises, the underlying anguish and striving.

In complete contrast to all this is the two-volume work under review here. It's a source of possibly unique importance, because it gives the reader access to the Pontiff's immediate entourage, his own office, and the views of and confrontations between high-ranking representatives of the Italian government and the Holy See during a period that was critical for the entire human race, namely the First World War (1914-1918) and the two years of the peace conference (1919-1920).

What's so distinctive about this book? Not, certainly, the mere fact that it consists of diary entries; but primarily their author's position as the Italian government's unofficial link with the Vatican. It so happens that the Pope himself and the link in question had been at school together. So the relations between the two men were long-standing, close, and very cordial.

On the one hand we have Baron Carlo Monti (1851-1924) and on the other Pope Benedict XV (1854-1922; Pope from 3 September 1914 to 22 January 1922). In 1882, Monti had been appointed first class secretary in the Ministry of Justice's Department of Ecclesiastical Affairs. In 1908, he became head of the department. When the Archbishop of Bologna, Cardinal Giacomo della

Chiesa, a native of Genoa, was elected Pope in 1914 (as Benedict XV), Monti was considered to be the most suitable person, with the consent and confidence of both sides, to act as intermediary between the Italian government and the Vatican. He was certainly a most fortunate choice.

It should be remembered here that the so-called "Roman Question" had not been resolved since the Italian troops had violated the Porta Pia on 20 September 1870. The Pope remained within the Vatican complex and in Castel Sant' Angelo, regarded himself a "prisoner", rejected the law on guarantees (*legge delle Guarentigie*, 13 May 1871) as a unilateral action by the Italian parliament, and issued the *non expedit* (1874), a bull forbidding Italian citizens in the Catholic Church to take part in the political processes, i.e. to elect and to stand for election. It was a painful rift between State and Church with grave repercussions on the political life of the country. These would become tragic in the event of a war, with conscription and the Vatican's doubtful support of military action. Out of these fundamental problems emerged a host of others, which further envenomed and complicated the relations between the two powers.

It will now be clear how difficult it was for the two childhood friends to act and to deal with fragile situations. Their friendship created a congenial climate of understanding, fellow feeling, even joviality in the chilly, formal environment of the Vatican. The (usually) two-week contacts between Monti and Benedict furthered the dialogue between the State and the Church, and mutual suspicion was thus mitigated and extreme positions abandoned.

The editor of, and commentator on, these two volumes, Don Antonio Scottà, very properly titles his work the "unofficial reconciliation", for it was this period (1914-1922) that, thanks to the two friends, produced the firm prospect of finally drawing up the *Patti Lateranensi* (11 February 1929), which healed the rift between the Italian state and the Vatican. These two men's sincere co-operation once again points up the important part played by personal initiative in the evolution and the interpretation of historical processes.

So Monti's *Diario* conveys, without chilly plural forms of address or distant diplomatic *politesse*, the converging and diverging view of affairs, both at an (Italian) state and national level and from an international point of view.

The entries begin on 29 August 1914 and end on 26 January 1922 with a brief reference to the Pope's funeral. Thus ended Monti's mission, which, as he notes (vol. 2, p. 576), lasted for seven years and four months.

A reading of the *Diario* leaves the distinct impression that its author didn't intend it for publication. He didn't tidy up his text. His sentences are short, abrupt, sometimes cryptic, referring to documents in his personal

archive, which hasn't been found. Clearly, he wanted a rough tool readily to hand for his task. I believe that Monti didn't tell his friend the Pope about these diary notes; if he had, we would somewhere have been told about the Pontiff's understandable interest.

After his death, Monti's widow handed the *Diario* over to the Vatican archive service, where it remains to the present day (see vol. 1, p. 5). The questions which arise out of the text of the diary may be summed up as follows.

First of all, the outline of the Pope's day, from 5.30 a.m. to the early evening. The times of prayer, work, and collaboration, the walk in the Vatican gardens, the anecdotes, the memories of schooldays, the congenial company; all within a surprising frugality, in terms of both food and lifestyle: his bedroom might be that of a student; he wields the shaving equipment in the bathroom himself, every other day; the food on the plain table is no different from that eaten by a parish priest in the Italian countryside.

One discussion after another reveals the sleepless anxiety over the unresolved "Roman Question" and the immoderate attacks on the Vatican and the Pope himself both by those who wished Italy to enter the War and by those who didn't. The impartiality of the Pope, who was responsible for the souls of the Catholics not only of Italy but also of Austro-Hungary and of Germany, was frequently interpreted as a sympathetic neutrality. Benedict is known to have been on good terms with the Habsburg Emperor.

In the Italian government of the time, the harshest critic of the Pope's actions, who desired to see the Vatican totally undermined and isolated from the international community, was the Foreign Minister, Sidney Sonnino (5 Nov. 1914 - 19 June 1916; 19 June 1916 - 30 Oct. 1917; 30 Oct. 1917 - 23 June 1919), in the respective administrations of Prime Ministers Antonio Salandra, Paolo Boselli, and Vittorio Emanuele Orlando. However, Sonnino's harshness was mitigated by Orlando's conciliatory interventions.

The exclusion of the Holy See from the peace conference (1919-1920) was one of the main points of friction between the Pope and the Italian state (cf. vol. 1, pp. 140-151). The opposition came to a head when the secret agreement concluded in London on 26 April 1915, specifying the terms under which Italy would join the War together with the Entente forces, was revealed by the Soviets in *Isvestia* in November 1917. According to article 15 of the agreement, France, Great Britain, and Russia would support Italy's efforts to prevent the Holy See from taking part in any stage of the peace negotiations after the end of the War.

Another important issue was the philanthropic work carried out by the

Catholic Church, chiefly with regard to relieving prisoners and the civilian population in the occupied countries. Its charitable work was widely accepted, and not only by Catholics, as it is attested by the statue of Benedict XV in Istanbul, which was commissioned and erected by Jews, Turkish Moslems, Arabs, and Orthodox Christians (see vol. 1, p. 75, and a photograph of the statue in vol. 2, opposite p. 447, No. 90).

Scottà supplies important information on many other subjects, such as the presence of Catholics in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, the role of Catholic missionaries in the Near East, and the general extent of anticlerical feeling in Europe. Space is lacking for a fuller discussion here.

Let me conclude by mentioning the Vatican's deep concern that Constantinople might be ceded to Russia with the acquiescence of France and Great Britain. The geographical spread and the strengthening of the Orthodox Slavonic world would diminish the prestige of Catholicism with disastrous repercussions on political stability in Europe (cf. vol. 1, pp. 42, 59, 67, 249). Needless to say, the Holy See was also opposed to the occupation of Smyrna and the surrounding area by the Greek army. It should, apparently, have been ceded to Italy (!). Now the Italian missionaries were obliged to leave Smyrna under pressure from the Greek Orthodox (vol. 2, pp. 465, 492-493).

There was an overwhelming fear in Vatican circles that the Slav and Greek Orthodox would be further empowered. The decisions of the second Vatican council (1962-1965) and the ecumenical movement were still many years away.

Before concluding, I must stress the high praise which is due to Don Antonio Scottà for having offered scholars Carlo Monti's *Diario* with such strict adherence to the rules of a diplomatic edition. He accompanies it with a lengthy, comprehensive introduction (pp. 1-110), an appendix of 27 documents and other data (pp. 111-169), extensive footnotes, and a meticulously compiled index of words, terms, subjects, people, and places. I should also note that he very successfully links the various pieces of evidence he has drawn from the published diaries, the memoirs, and the parliamentary and extraparlimentary speeches of Orlando and Sonnino. It's worth remembering that Scottà's competence is due to the fact that he's already produced a considerable body of work and he is now regarded as one of the few experts in the history of the First World War.