

A “Jansenist case for translation”: Religious reform and translation practices in 18th-century Italy

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Translation. Religion. Catholic reform. Jansenism. Politics. Entanglements.

In late 18th-century Tuscany, an attempt at wholesale religious reform was carried out by the bishop of a relatively small diocese, Scipione de’ Ricci, with the explicit support of the enlightened monarch he served, Peter Leopold. This article aims to observe and characterize, from the standpoint of translation history, the entanglements between the discourse of translation and that of societal, religious, and political reform within this Italian context. It argues that both the practice and reflection of translation played a central role in mediating a specific devotional culture and religious sensibility, pioneering new uses of vernacular languages for religious communication, and advancing a cultural policy driven by an explicit political and ideological commitment.

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In September 1786, the bishop of a relatively minor Tuscan diocese convened a synod that, according to some scholars, became one of the most significant theological events between the Council of Trent and the Second Vatican Council (Tempestini 1986, 29; Blanchard 2020, 5). This synod, known as the Synod of Pistoia, was called by Bishop Scipione de' Ricci with the explicit backing of Grand Duke Peter Leopold of Habsburg-Lorraine. As an enlightened monarch, Peter Leopold advocated for a comprehensive reform of society, which included a radical religious reform that aimed to reshape various aspects of Church life and doctrine, aligning with a philo-Jansenist, anti-papalist and anti-Jesuit perspective.

It is not possible to provide a complete account of the different facets of the Pistoian Synod, its political, ideological, and theological underpinnings, nor of all the events leading up to it and its consequences, in a few pages.¹ It is important, however, for the purposes of this study, to understand the nature of the bold reforms carried out by Bishop Ricci. First of all, he was furiously anti-papalist, so he sought to empower the local dioceses and the parishes by restructuring the institutional organization of the diocesan clergy, frequently attacking monastic orders. Secondly, he asserted the authority and responsibility of sovereigns in the ecclesiastical sphere, and overtly sustained the power of the Tuscan State to reform the local Church and circumscribe papal power. Thirdly, Ricci was animated by a *Muratorian* theological and doctrinal spirit which sought to prioritize the Christocentric in the devotional life of his flock, so he enforced many radical liturgical and devotional reforms which were unprecedented in any Italian state. This striving for reform of every aspect of religious and devotional life reached its peak with the convocation of the Synod itself, “a unique case in Italy of civil and religious reformist activity supported with equal determination by a Bishop and a ruler”² (D’Afflitto 1986, 10).

Given its great historical relevance, the literature on Italian Jansenism is immense, as is also that concerning the Pistoian Synod and the attempts at religious reform in 18th-century Tuscany. As Mario Rosa (2014) accurately reconstructs, it was 20th-century Italian historiography that first gave rise to different, often conflicting critical interpretations. The movement was studied from diverse perspectives, ranging from a theological and confessional interest in its origins to other approaches that emphasized the connections between the reformist stances of Italian Jansenism and certain tenets of the Catholic Enlightenment and of philosophical and political liberalism (Jemolo 1928; Codignola 1947; Rosa 1969, 1981, 2009, 2014; Menozzi 1979; Passerin d’Entrèves 1952–1954, 1959). Other scholars, such as the Salesian Pietro Stella (1986, 2006), conducted thorough archival work that shed light on previously unexplored material aspects of the movement, including the intellectual networks, epistolary communications, and the editorial policies and strategies of book circulation that fostered the movement in its regional, national, and international dimensions.

In more recent years, new interpretations of Tuscan Jansenism and of the Pistoian Synod were put forward by scholars working mostly from outside the mainstream channels of Italian historiography. According to these recent interpreters, the Synod of Pistoia could be read as a forerunner to one of the most significant events in mod-

ern Catholicism, the Second Vatican Council, as it encouraged vernacular liturgy and Bible reading, shaped a form of religious liberty and sought to highlight the role of the laity and episcopal collegiality in ecclesial infallibility (Blanchard 2020).

Then why should scholars of translation be concerned with an 18th-century Tuscan Bishop and his striving for religious reform? A first answer could be that several aspects of this Jansenist episode in the history of the Italian peninsula are related to the practice or the concept of translation, and so were some of the most groundbreaking (though not completely new) ideas put forward by Ricci and the synod itself. Furthermore, the most recent attempts at reading the Pistoian Synod in the light of the Second Vatican Council have inevitably brought to the fore a number of linguistic and translational issues that had not always been thoroughly considered by previous historiography on the subject: namely, the problem of the implementation of a vernacular liturgy for the Roman Catholic Church and the issue of the intelligibility of the rites and doctrine, with all its linguistic implications. These have opened new research topics such as liturgical translation – which was traditionally overshadowed by the interest in Biblical translation – and translation practices within the Catholic Reform and Counter-Reformation.³

The discussion below will examine the linguistic issues and translational concepts and practices that were central concerns for both the Jansenist reformists and their detractors. This analysis aims to characterize, from the standpoint of translation history, the entanglement between the discourse of translation and those of societal, religious, and political reform within this specific Italian context.

ENTANGLEMENTS: TRANSLATION, RELIGION(S) AND CHRISTIAN TRADITION(S)

We have already introduced, albeit indirectly, one of the main features that characterizes translation in Christian tradition, namely the fact that it (almost always) has a political dimension. Especially since, as Matthew Kraus points out, translation in Christian tradition tends to be “prominent during dramatic periods” (2022, 267) such as periods of crisis or transition between different political, cultural, or linguistic regimes (as well as during periods of social and religious reform). Even though the study of translation in Christian tradition has commonly focused on scriptural and sacred texts, during the last two or three decades many scholars have started to consider the relevance of other religious textualities and, more importantly, have begun to think about translation and religion as a pervasive historical entanglement that concerns not merely textual or linguistic operations but also underpins a broad array of cultural and political processes and practices (Rafael 1988; Seidman 2006; Flüchter and Wirbser 2017; O’Connor 2019). This shift in the historical study of translation and religion has had several consequences.

On a methodological level, due to the need to de-essentialize the concept of *Christianity* and the qualifier *Christian*, it may be preferable to avoid the expression *Christian translation* to indicate an object of study: since “Christianity defies essentialization throughout its history, so classifying a translator as Christian should be understood as specific to the translator’s orientation, not as a transhistorical,

monolithic qualifier” (Kraus 2022, 271). In addition to this, it is also important not to overstate the “impact of Christianity in the actual practice of translation” since “Christianity does not motivate the use of a participle instead of a relative clause” (271). This last remark, which seems to contradict millenary statements about strategies and techniques of religious translation, simply states (perhaps a little provocatively) that translation is, first and foremost, a historically identifiable (though deeply unstable and various) set of concepts and practices that intersect, in specific periods and under particular circumstances, different (and deeply unstable as well) conceptions of Christianity. From this perspective, what we can observe as translation history scholars is the entanglement, at some point in time and for various reasons, of the discourse of translation (however defined and characterized) with Christian religious texts, practices, agents, ideas, movements, and so on.

The second consequence of the shift in the study of translation and religion(s) can be said to be a theoretical/epistemological one. To explain this, let us briefly consider some important studies on translation in Christian tradition to understand what they have in common and how we can infer a certain theoretical position from them.

A considerable portion of the scholarship about translation and religion has dealt with the uses of translation in colonial settings, as an evangelization and catechetical tool, as well as an instrument of political, geographical, linguistic, and subjective *re-settlement* (Rafael 1988; Payàs Puigarnau 2010; Valdeón 2014; Durston 2007; Flüchter and Wirbser 2017). All these studies show that the textual practice of translation is inextricable from other linguistic practices, such as the writing of vernacular grammars and vocabularies, bilingual confession books, catechisms, and other catechetical and educational instruments. These authors have also demonstrated that political conquest and religious conversion are both linguistic endeavors on many levels. By the same token, this recent scholarship has also shown that the study of translation and/in Christian tradition needs to go beyond merely linguistic issues of adaptation or equivalence, and that translation practices are better read against the backdrop of other discursive formations that are often perceived as distant, such as geography, topography, art, architecture, bibliography and science.

Another body of scholarship that has tackled the relationship between translation and Christian tradition has focused on the entanglement between Catholic politics, institutions, and infrastructures and the practice and concept of translation, showing that translation is inseparable from the power dynamics and temporal concerns that characterized the Catholic apparatus through history. These dynamics have served very different purposes in time, not least the delimitation of a Catholic identity, often coinciding, especially from the 19th century on, with the revindication of national prerogatives and traditions (Delisle 2005; O’Connor 2019; Ferrante 2024).

What assumptions can we gather from this somewhat schematic state of the art? First of all, the study of the entanglement between translation and Christian tradition is an inherently interdisciplinary endeavor, and we need to take into account “a much wider and complex set of assumptions, practices and relationships linking religious institutions, communities, imaginaries, rituals, space, materials and objects with various modes of communication, of which the use of languages is but one”

(Israel 2023a, 11; 2023b). Secondly, we need to make sense of how the discourse of translation *mediated* the category, doctrine, institutions, and practices of Christianity in time, and how the intersection between translation and religion “potentially constitutes texts, languages, and peoples” (11). From an epistemological point of view, it is not surprising that the most recent *Handbook* on the issue of translation and religion(s) resorts to the concept of *discourse*, not explicitly but evidently in a Foucauldian sense, to establish the theoretical underpinnings of the enterprise.

This approach to translation as a mediating discursive formation can be expanded and integrated with the *histoire croisée* toolbox as formulated by Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmerman in their historiographical papers. As its theorists state, *histoire croisée* is not a ready-made analytical model to be applied as it is, but rather a set of methodological tools and theoretical assumptions that can be used to postulate associations between “social, cultural and political formations [...] that are assumed to bear relationship to one another” (2006, 31). *Histoire croisée* aims at examining the links between historically constituted formations not as a “rehabilitation of buried reality” (32) but as the postulation of new relationships or historical intersections that can be generative of meaning. From this analytical point of view, intercrossings never present themselves as already given, but they must be postulated by an observer who shapes, at the same time, the space for their understanding: a space of *intelligibility* that is always linked to the epistemic act of observation, the delimitation of the object, and its interpretation. This is why the *histoire croisée* toolbox relies on reflexivity: postulating relationships that are not self-evident or necessarily empirically grounded, it deconstructs the notion of a stable historical archive to unearth, and underlines the fact that any act of historical interpretation is a result of the intersections between what is brought into play by the object and what is construed by the observer. At a methodological level, objects and entities are considered not only in relation but also *through* one another (38), which is one of the purposes of interdisciplinary research: to be able to observe one field of knowledge or discipline through the lens of the other.

It is now possible to advance some preliminary questions: how can we describe or characterize the relationship between the discourse of translation and that of religious reform in this philo-Jansenist Italian milieu? How did the practice and the concept of translation feature the integral reformist operation that the Bishop and the Sovereign intended to carry out? With which other existing discourses and practices was it intertwined? Can we refer those entanglements to a wider set of problematics of which translation was a part?

TRANSLATION AND RELIGIOUS REFORM: PUBLISHING POLICY AND THE PROPAGANDA DEVICE

The troubled episcopate of Scipione de’ Ricci (1780–1791) was characterized, as indicated above, by a strong striving for religious reform, which was part of a broader attempt at societal reform carried out by the grand duke Leopold of Habsburg in Tuscany. The unique significance of this episode of Italian Jansenism lies in its effort to reform the Catholic Church *from within*, at the crossroads of Papal terri-

tories, religious dissidence, and Habsburg reform in Northern Italy (Bolton 1969, ix).⁴ Its ultimate goals were to ensure a more authentic Christian life and devotion for the brethren, a sincere vocation and true pastoral dedication from the clergy, and a strong collaboration between church and state in ecclesiastical matters.⁵

One of the main concerns of Bishop Scipione de' Ricci was, from the outset of his episcopate, the education of both the clergy and the laity, as well as the general reorganization of the diocese of Prato-Pistoia and of the different religious infrastructures (Rosa 2014, 123–133). Considering the core of these concrete preoccupations can show how translation intersects with the different aspects of his reformist enterprise.

As for the clergy, from the beginning of his bishopric, Ricci set out to reform ecclesiastical studies. He implemented a plan of reorganization of the bishop's school and the seminary, and created a new Ecclesiastical Academy for higher studies (Stella 2006, 326–328). His “openly propagandist” (Bolton 1969, 24) program of studies reflected an educational model sensitive to the latest perspectives of the Catholic Enlightenment, a necessary renewal of the scholastic methods through the circulation of Jansenist literature, and the importance of the studies of antiquity as a means to a better comprehension of Christian doctrine, liturgy, and devotion.

Bishop Ricci also changed the economic organization of the ecclesiastical structures and of the livelihood of the secular clergy to minimize temporal and material concerns and allow them to dedicate themselves exclusively to their educational and pastoral function. In this vein, Ricci also substantially rearranged the parish structures to guarantee the presence of a priest even in impenetrable or distant territories that had been without one, highlighting the importance of the participation of the laity in the life of the parish, and the inescapable centrality of the pastoral role of the diocesan clergy (Rauty 1986; Tempestini 1986).

As for the laity (setting aside for now the liturgical and devotional reforms that will be discussed below), Bishop Ricci was convinced that widespread ignorance was the main cause of the decadence of religious life and devotion, so he violently opposed the “preachers who said that the study of religion was insolent curiosity [...] and who by their fine words without meaning kept the people from reading the Scriptures or from any book that might enlighten them” (Bolton 1969, 18; Rosa 2014, 152–154). In an important pastoral letter issued when adopting a new catechism for his diocese, titled *Istruzione pastorale di monsignor Vescovo di Pistoia e Prato sulla necessità e sul modo di studiare la religione* (Pastoral instruction of the lord bishop of Pistoia e Prato on the necessity and the method of studying religion, 1782), Ricci establishes his policy regarding lay education, since he believed that there was “a crying need for proper instruction on the nature of Confession. The people must be instructed by their clergy. They must be given good books, especially the Scriptures. They must attend their parish services” (Bolton 1986, 19).

To advance his ideas and to implement this ambitious plan of reform despite the opposition of his enemies and detractors, Ricci could count on a complex propaganda apparatus that relied on an aggressive editorial and publication policy (Stella 2006, 333–334). Ricci seemed to have “an unlimited faith in printed material as a lever for changing ideas and for the formation of a clergy capable of implementing

the reforms” (Aiardi and Savi 1986, 71) and, as a consequence, he spent great sums of money on books and pamphlets, which he referred to as “a flood of good books”, frequently (though not always) originally in French, and Jansenist in doctrine or outlook.

Ricci collaborated with two official Episcopal printers (Atto Bracali and Vincenzo Vestri) that, between 1780 and 1791 (i.e., the years of Ricci’s episcopate), carried out a systematic publishing activity which was unprecedented in a small diocese such as Prato-Pistoia, and that also testifies to a relationship of patronage between the Bishop and the printers who were to serve his cause. As for the books, pamphlets, and volumes which were to be printed and circulated, Bolton has reconstructed the paths and connections through which the material to be read and translated arrived in Tuscany:

Ricci’s correspondence with the French Jansenists at Utrecht shows that he received literally thousands of books from abroad, especially during the first years of his episcopate. As a rule packages were sent by sea from Antwerp to Genoa or Leghorn. The land route was more costly; this was from Paris to Dijon, Lyon, Turin, Pavia and Genoa. Different friends received the packages and forwarded them after removing what was destined for themselves. [...] Many books were sent in large quantities. Most were destined for the clergy and for the ecclesiastical students of Pistoia, although a certain number were to be translated and then reprinted. Writing to the Archduke’s secretary to ask him to provide printing presses for the sake of propaganda, Ricci says: “I think it necessary to flood the country with good books. I do not tire of bringing Books in but the business, as you see, is too passive. As I have agreed with the Archduke to form a little collection of good books, I shall really need a new printing works.” (1969, 28)

At the receiving end of this well-structured intellectual network, translation was a fundamental stage in the reception of this flood of “good books”, especially for the laity and the common people, which was a central point in Ricci’s editorial and translation policy. The need to translate books and pamphlets into the local languages, other than the usual and most popular catechisms and the few other genres allowed by ecclesiastical censorship (Fragno 2005, 191–259), responded to his conviction that everyone – from the most educated to the *idioti*, from the literate parishioners to their illiterate families, children and women included – should be able to get a closer grasp of the mysteries of the faith. He believed they should understand the meaning of the rites in which they participated and the significance of the Sacraments they received. Ricci repeatedly makes this point in his pastoral letters, private correspondence, homilies, and official statements. This is also why he frequently offers, as a corollary to these reasons, lists of good (translated) books to be owned and read, even out loud on familiar and social occasions. As Ricci himself states in the aforementioned pastoral letter:

[Among the means for properly studying religion] there are even more, and these are good books, the reading of which can be of great benefit to you. The divine Scriptures are a book which all the faithful should always have in their hands. These are also faithfully translated, so that those who do not know any other language will not be left without such important reading. The reprinting of the entire Sacy in our language also offers

great and salutary nourishment to the faithful, who also find in it an edifying explanation of the literal and spiritual meaning drawn from the Holy Fathers and ecclesiastical authors. The Compendium of the History of the Old Testament by the pious and learned Mr. Mésenguy, which is already translated in Vicenza, and the Ecclesiastical History of Racine, which is translated and almost printed in Florence under the auspices of the Religious Sovereign, are two works which form the History of the whole Religion, which is presented to us in an equally satisfactory and edifying way, and I cannot recommend enough to all Christian families to provide themselves with them and to read them daily. (1782, xxii–xxiii)

Here, Ricci not only recommends Bible reading but, more importantly, he advises his flock to get acquainted with the history of religion and religious texts. The importance of the study of the history of religious doctrine, liturgy, and institutions is a central tenet of Catholic Enlightenment. In this view, an accurate historical and philological study of the early Christian Church's texts and practices is an instrument that can shed new light on and restore the meaning of current liturgical practices and religious doctrines believed to have been corrupted or misunderstood over time. In this Enlightened reformist milieu, historical awareness encompasses change, making it acceptable. Historiography thus becomes a path for reform, underscoring the need to translate these materials and make them available to the laity.

As noted above, the lists of “good books” and authors suggested, translated, and published by Ricci were often French Jansenist books, writings from “the Friends of the Truth”. On many occasions, these books and pamphlets had already been condemned by Rome or placed on the Index of Forbidden Books (Stella 2006, 335–337). A striking example is the Episcopal publisher Atto Bracali's expensive edition of the translation of Pasquier Quesnel's *Le Nouveau Testament en français avec des réflexions morales sur chaque verset* (New Testament in French with moral reflections upon each verse, 1695). It was then general knowledge that 101 propositions from this book – a commented French translation of the New Testament – were severely condemned in 1713 by the Papal bull *Unigenitus Dei Filius*, causing a resurgence of the Jansenist religious movement that led to a violent and long-lasting conflict between religious dissidents and the Curial orthodox positions all over Europe. There was, then, no mistaking this translation intervention for a naive form of religious instruction or communication: it was also, evidently, a political act, an open challenge to Papal authority, and so it was acknowledged by Ricci's detractors and supporters (Stella 2006, 356–358).⁶

Thus, the practice of translation operated on many levels and intersected with various religious, cultural, and political discursive instances. First, translation was an *educational tool* that allowed everyone to access the doctrines of the Faith and to carry out what Ricci saw as a duty for every Christian: the close study of religion and the meaningful participation in the life of the Church and, ultimately, of the parish. Secondly, translation worked as a performative *propaganda device*, a practice needed to instantiate controversial ideological positions, flooding the public and private spaces with very recognizable discourses emanating from the *Republic of Grace* (Blanchard 2020, 72–76). By the same token, translation also served as a *networking*

instrument that highlighted the connections between different geographical and intellectual spaces that shared well-defined doctrinal, ecclesiological, and devotional tenets. Finally, the discourse and practice of translation was a deliberate form of *political intervention*: in this case, a bold translation policy was an open challenge to Papal authority and power.

TRANSLATION AND RELIGIOUS REFORM: THE VOICE OF THE BRETHREN AND THE LITURGICAL DEVICE

In late 18th-century Italy, the topic of lay Bible reading and, hence, of Bible translation was still quite a contentious issue (Fragnito 1997, 2005; Fattori 2014). However, another very sensitive matter was the possibility, clearly put forward by the Synod of Pistoia and Ricci himself, of implementing a vernacular liturgy or, at least, providing “vernacular aids” during the ceremony of the Mass to allow the participants to follow the different rites and understand their meaning.

This was part of a broader liturgical reform that Ricci implemented during his episcopate and that saw him, once again, on a collision course with Catholic established practices. For Ricci, ignorance was a source of error and sin, and the only way to counter the decadence and corruption of the Christian message and the disengagement and superficiality he observed among the faithful was a closer acquaintance with the original Christian evangelical sources, i.e. the Scriptures, and with the most significant part of Christian life, the sacrifice of the Mass.⁷ As the Final Document of the Pistoian Synod states (Atti e Decreti 1788), all Christians have the *right* and *duty* to participate in public prayer and the *obligation to understand* the Church’s prayers and ceremonies to unite the voice of the single believer to the voice of the Church (203–205).

It is interesting, once again, to consider different aspects of this attempt to reform the liturgy because it helps us to better understand the web of practices and meanings to which translation belonged. For example, to encourage lay participation, bring them in closer touch with sacramental mysteries, and increase the comprehensibility of the worship experience, Ricci established that in every church there had to be only one altar, which represented, visually, the uniqueness of Christ’s sacrifice and the relationship between the believer and God. By the same token, Ricci called for a rearrangement of the spaces of worship, which had to be grave, sober and minimalist, devoid of mundane solemnity and distractions, luxury and pomp (Romby 1986). Furthermore, sacred images were to be limited, not to be worshipped but with a clear pedagogical function, to eradicate superstition and popular devotions⁸ (D’Afflitto and Roani Villani 1986). The same attempt at a more direct and aware participation in liturgical experience was to be achieved by several linguistic practices involved in the liturgy. First of all, the prayers and the rites of the Church would be translated and compiled in bilingual editions (in Latin and in the vernacular), especially when administering the Sacraments, so the faithful could follow and comprehend every passage of the rites. Secondly, the (Ordinary of the) Mass would be translated, and the Psalms and Hymns would be “reduced into Italian poetry” (Atti e Decreti 1788, 205–206). Another point related to the concept of translation and to the need for

an *intelligibility* of the rites was that, during the Mass, the pronunciation of the Canon (the Eucharistic prayer by which, according to the Catholic rite, the Host becomes the body of Christ) would have to be clear and distinct, out loud, without rushing and allowing everybody to understand every single word. This was opposed to the established Catholic tradition according to which this prayer had to be pronounced quietly, *sotto voce*, as a whisper (128); in fact, traditionally the Canon was not supposed to be heard by the participants in the Eucharistic rite (Bini 2015). Finally, one of the main aspirations of the synod's Liturgical Decrees was the establishment of an entirely vernacular liturgy, as stated in the following controversial passage from the Synod's Decrees:

Persuaded of these principles, the holy Synod desires to remove those reasons by which [these solid liturgical principles] have been in part forgotten: by recalling the Liturgy to a greater simplicity of rites, by expressing it in the vulgar tongue, and by uttering it in an elevated voice. (Atti e Decreti 1788, 131, trans. by Blanchard 2020, 169)

This call for vernacular liturgy, for the use of vernacular aids, bilingual editions, and translations was a scandal to the opponents of the Synod, a "violation of the Arcane" (Blanchard 2020, 173). Unsurprisingly, then, many of these propositions incurred the condemnation of the Papacy.

CONCLUSION

Not many historians have discussed the linguistic dimension at work in the Jansenist attempts at religious reform. One of the few scholars who took an interest in the linguistic problem that this episode in Italian religious history poses is the historian Pietro Stella, who writes in the introduction to his monumental critical edition of the Synod Decrees:

The historical sketch presented leaves important fields in the shadows, such as that of language. It is evident, in fact, that the synod, having been written in Italian, appears for that very reason to be a revolutionary act when compared with the consolidated tradition of post-Tridentine synods, all of which were the fruit of a mentality that reaffirmed Latin as the official language of the church. (1986, v–vi)

While a number of the reforms implemented or theorized by this reformist milieu were actually a reinterpretation of some aspects of French Jansenist doctrine, the generally unacknowledged fact that the Synod Final Decrees were originally written and published in Italian, as Stella points out, is itself a revolutionary act that brought about a number of long-lasting consequences (2006, 347–350). Translation offers a unique vantage point for understanding this revolution. As the Italian linguist and historian Vittorio Coletti (2006) argues, the discourse of translation is where the intellectual debates over the capacity of the vernacular (can it be used for scientific, philosophical, legal or religious communication?) most clearly intersect, historically, the debates over the role of the laity in the religious sphere: who is entitled to understand, listen or read directly the Sacred texts? How much is the laity supposed to grasp of the language and the meaning of liturgy and, more generally, of religious doctrine?

By the same token, the liturgical reforms pursued by Bishop Ricci (one altar, sobriety of the rite and of the music, pronunciation of the Canon, the frequent participation in the Sacrifice of the Mass, and, of course, vernacular liturgy and vernacular or bilingual aids to follow the rites) all tended to underline the need for what we have called the *intelligibility* of the religious experience, and the possibility of an unmediated and more aware relationship between the Word and the individual, which had been, as is well known, one of the central tenets of the main reformist religious movements at least since the 15th century (Taylor 2009, 104–116). As a consequence, translation practices need to be read against the backdrop of other concurrent discourses and practices (educational, economic, political), all of which tended to encourage lay participation in the life of the Church and to enhance the education of both the laity and the clergy, as well as to clearly establish a space of political intervention and resistance to what was perceived as an excessive power of the Roman Curia.

NOTES

- ¹ The literature on the Pistoian Synod and religious reform in 18th-century Tuscany is immense. For a general overview, see Lamioni 1986 and, more recently, Stella 2006 and Rosa 2014.
- ² Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Italian are by the present author. Translations from Italian to English were performed with assistance from the AI-based tool Gemini. The author performed a comprehensive review and revision of the machine-generated text to ensure scientific accuracy, contextual fidelity, and correct disciplinary terminology. The final translated content reflects the author's interpretation and is not solely the output of the AI tool.
- ³ Scholars who have tackled the issue of translation discourses, practices and policies within the Jansenist religious movement, both in the Italian and in the French and/or Francophone contexts, include Weaver 1985, Pieroni Francini 1987, and Caffiero 1989. Other scholars, such as Pietro Stella (2006), have also considered the textual, linguistic, and literary dimension of the movement.
- ⁴ Passerin d'Entrèves (1954, 279–285) points out the “European dimension” of these anti-Curialist and philo-Jansenist attempts at societal and religious reform, especially those that took place in Habsburg territories such as Tuscany, Lombardy and Austria.
- ⁵ For the limits and the ambiguities of the collaboration between the sovereign Peter Leopold and Bishop Ricci, see Passerin d'Entrèves (1953, 359–365).
- ⁶ According to Pietro Stella, when there were doubts or ambiguities regarding the interpretation of the Riccian doctrinal positions as orthodox or heretical, the Roman Congregation would adopt “as proof the indisputable fact that Ricci in his pastoral letters and the synodal acts themselves had promoted the *Réflexions morales* of Quesnel and other writings condemned by the Holy See and notoriously Jansenist” (1983, 29). On the openly propagandist translation policy of Ricci, see also Stella (2006) on the *Raccolta di opuscoli interessanti la religione* (Collection of pamphlets about religion), a multivolume collection of philo-Jansenist pamphlets and books published under the direct supervision of Ricci, and quickly placed in the Index as well.
- ⁷ For a complete and extensive overview of the different aspects of what has been called the “*pietà illuminata*” (enlightened piety) see Rosa 2014, 135–157.
- ⁸ By “popular devotions”, Jansenists referred to religious practices such as the worship of relics, the veiling of sacred images, the multiplication of religious festivities, or the sale of indulgences. They argued that these and other similar practices did not reflect an interior and rational spirituality (“*pietà illuminata*”) but were the result of a superficial and superstitious approach to the faith and an “obscuration” of the true and original Scriptural and patristic teachings. See Rosa 2014.

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