

## Cesare Baronio's Books in the Vallicellian Library and the Congregation of the Roman Oratory's Commitment to Learning

Among the numerous cultural initiatives in Italy and many other countries to commemorate the fourth centenary of the death of Cardinal Baronio (2007), the events that were either organized or hosted by the Vallicellian Library are worthy of note. The Library has been the site of many memorable gatherings that have advanced the Congregation of the Oratory's commitment to learning.

One of these was the International Colloquium, "*Cesare Baronio tra santità e scrittura storica*" ("Cesare Baronio: Holy Man and Historian"), held in June 2007 and jointly presented by the University of Rome *Tor Vergata*, the University of *Roma Tre*, the Office of the Procurator General of the Oratory, the Italian Association for the Study of Holiness, Worship and Hagiography, and the Vallicellian Library.

Another was the series of conferences organized by the Office of the Procurator General of the Oratory, featuring papers by Prof. Luis Martinez Ferrer, Prof. Agostino Borromeo and others named below.

The Vallicellian Library prepared an exhibition of Baronio's books, which was a timely opportunity for study and research. An excellent publication edited by Giuseppe Finocchiaro, *I libri di Cesare Baronio in Vallicelliana* ("Cesare Baronio's Books in the Vallicellian Library", Rome 2008) surveys this exhibition.



The display of Baronio's books in the magnificent main hall of the Library brought to mind the scholarly commitment<sup>1</sup> that has characterized the Congregation of the Oratory of Rome, founded by St. Philip Neri, in the centuries since Baronio's death.

By the unanimous admission of his contemporaries, St. Philip Neri was an educated "man of letters"<sup>2</sup>, equipped with a solid theological and classical education, as is evident in his personal library preserved to this day in the Vallicellian Library, a sizeable collection of a variety of books<sup>3</sup>. Discussions about books were a centerpiece of his informal presentations that were the origin of the sermons preached in the great Oratory. As a young man, he decided to quit his studies<sup>4</sup>, but not out of disinterest; indeed, he enjoyed serious study throughout his life. Several people testified to this fact, including Antonio Gallonio: "Although our Father's principal study was his continual prayer, nevertheless when he wanted to discuss theology, philosophy or the humanities, they were as fresh in his mind as if he had been studying them up to that very moment". Cardinal Girolamo Panfili recalled: "Especially in his later years, he enjoyed discussing theology and philosophy; he was very knowledgeable in these sciences . . ." And Matteo Guerra said: "I often listened to Father as he debated with various theologians and learned men. He would quote many passages of Scripture, and the theologians and others who were present were amazed at his knowledge."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. M. T. BONADONNA RUSSO, *La cultura storica nella Congregazione dell'Oratorio*, in M. T. BONADONNA RUSSO – NICCOLÒ DEL RE (ed.), *San Filippo Neri nella realtà romana del XVI secolo* (Rome 2000, pp. 69-70).

<sup>2</sup> From Fr. Recuperati's deposition in G. INCISA DELLA ROCCHETTA – N. VIAN (ed.), *Il primo processo canonico per San Filippo Neri nel Codice Vaticano Latino 3798 e in altri esemplari dell'Oratorio di Roma* (Vatican City, I [1957]; II [1958]; III [1960]; IV [1963], IV, p. 121); hereafter referred to as *Processo*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. A. CISTELLINI, *I libri e la libreria di San Filippo Neri*, in "*Memorie Oratoriane*", 18 (1997) 7-43; N. VIAN, *S. Filippo bibliofilo alla sua maniera*, in G. PAPINI, *S. Filippo Neri fiorentino* (Vicenza 1994, 29-31).

<sup>4</sup> *Processo*, I, 175 and 484; II, 207 and 1424: "I remember hearing from many people and from Father Philip himself that, when he was a young man attending lectures in philosophy and theology, he loved to gaze at the crucifix in the lecture hall, so much so that he couldn't pay attention to the lecture but was continually moved to break down in tears."

<sup>5</sup> *Processo*, I, 194; II, 112; II, 59.

In the tribute that was composed in honor of Gregorio XIII in 1578<sup>6</sup> three years after the canonical *recognitio* of the Congregation, seven academic doctors are listed among the Congregation's twenty-one members: Giovan Francesco Bordini, Cesare Baronio, Tommaso Bozio, Alessandro Fideli, Antonio Talpa, Camillo Severini, Pietro Boffoli; also two theologians: the Spaniard Biagio Messia, and Leonardo Paoli; two literary scholars: Germanico Fedeli and Giulio Savioli; while others, like the young Antonio Gallonio, were already showing promising signs of accomplishment in the fields of study and education.

**Giovan Battista Bordini** (b. Rome 1536 – d. Avignon 1609)

He was born of humble parentage, but was very refined in his manners and bearing. When he entered the Oratory at the age of twenty-two in order to follow Father Philip, he already had a doctorate in civil law. He was one of the first men that Philip sent to study for the priesthood. He became bishop of Cavaillon, France in 1592, and then archbishop of Avignon. Among his works we should mention *Liber primus Carminum de rebus preclare gestis a Sixto V, P. M.*, (Rome, 1588); *Summorum Pontificum et Imperatorum series et gesta* (Paris 1604); and his translation of the *Vita di madre Teresa di Gesù* (Venice 1604).

**Ven. Cesare Baronio** (b. Sora 1538 – d. Rome 1607)

He began his law studies at the University of Naples, and then came to Rome in 1557. Almost immediately he began to attend Oratory gatherings, and very soon, at Father Philip's request, he commenced his series of sermons on the history of the Church<sup>7</sup>. In 1561 he was awarded doctorates in both civil and canon law. In 1583, Gregorio XIII entrusted him with the revision of the Roman Martyrology; in 1586 a new edition of the Martyrology appeared, including his *Tractatio de Martyrologio Romano*. He authored a *Vita S. Ambrosii mediolanensis Episcopi*, published by the Tipografia Vaticana in 1587, as well as a *Vita S. Gregorii Nazianzeni*; these two hagiographies are found in the *Acta Sanctorum* (Vol. for the month of May, t. II; Antwerp 1680). In 1588 he began publishing the *Annales Ecclesiastici* – the work that made him famous as ‘the father of modern church history’<sup>8</sup> – volume XII, the last of the series, appeared in 1607, the same year that he died<sup>9</sup>.

**Tommaso Bozio** (b. Gubbio 1548 – d. Rome 1610)

He was a very well educated man, typical of the members of the first Oratorian community, which he joined in 1571. At times he substituted for Baronio as a preacher, and he wrote a series of biographies of saints organized by country. These lives of the saints were never published, but became the basis for his *De signis Ecclesiae libri XXIV* (published in 1591-1592). At the strong urging of Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti, a friend of the Congregation, as well as the encouragement of Pope Innocenzo IX, he turned his attention to the problem of Niccolò Machiavelli's writings, to the point that he became their first and perhaps most authoritative expert<sup>10</sup>. His first work in this field was *De robore bellico diuturnis et amplis catholicorum regnis adversus Machiavellum* published in Rome in 1593, immediately followed by his *De imperio virtutis h. e. Imperium pendere a veris et non simulatis virtutibus libri duo adversum Nicholaum Macchiavellum*. Then he wrote *De antiquo et novo Italiae statu libri IV, adversum Nicholaum Macchiavellum*, 1595; *De ruinis gentium et Regnorum adversus impios Politicos*

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<sup>6</sup> *Lineamenti dell'Oratorio e della Congregazione in antichi memoriali*, in “Memorie Oratoriane”, n. s. III (1982), 9, pp. 10-11

<sup>7</sup> For a summary of the structure and various publications of the *Annales Ecclesiastici*, cf. L. MARTINEZ FERRER - E. A. CERRATO, *San Filippo Neri, Cesare Baronio e l'insegnamento della Storia ecclesiastica*, in “Annales Oratorii”, 7 (2008), pp. 95-103.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. M. TORRINI, *Prima ricognizione della fortuna del Baronio tra critica e erudizione*, in *Baronio storico e la Controriforma*, Sora 1982, pp. 735-753

<sup>9</sup> For a bibliography of works by and about, cf. A. M MAZZARIOL, *Bibliografia baroniana*, in *Baronio storico e la Controriforma*, pp. 817-952; for a list of works published since Mazzariol's listing, cf. E. A. CERRATO, *Cesare Baronio, discepolo e primo successore di S. Filippo Neri*, in “Annales Oratorii”, 6 (2007), p. 77.

<sup>10</sup> This material may be found in R. DE MATTEI, *La problematica politica nel Seicento italiano* in *Studi in memoria di P. M. Arcari*, Milan 1978, pp. 311-330; S. MASTELLONE, *T. Bozio l'intransigente amico del Baronio, teorico dell'ordine ecclesiastico*, in *Baronio storico e la controriforma*, op. cit., pp. 219-230.

*libri VIII*, 1596; *De jure Status seu de jure naturali et divino-ecclesiasticae libertatis et potestatis libri VI*, 1600. He has also left us his *Annales antiquitatum ab orbe condito usque ad annum 2024 secundum supputationem Hebraeorum*, published in Rome in 1637, and numerous other works in the fields of history, philosophy, spirituality and hagiography<sup>11</sup>.

**Antonio Gallonio** (b. Rome 1557 – d. Rome 1605)

He probably knew Father Philip from childhood, and placed himself under his spiritual direction when he was twenty, devoting himself completely to assisting him in his old age. He joined the Congregation in 1577, and took up the study of hagiography, which became his specialty when Baronio and Bozio left the field to attend to their other commitments. On account of this, Father Philip himself obliged him to not abandon his work in hagiography; Gallonio wanted to devote himself completely to prayer. He wrote the following: *Historia delle Sante Vergini Romane...*, Rome 1591; *De Sanctorum Martyrum cruciatibus*, Rome 1591; *Vita della beata Margherita Colonna*, Rome 1591; *Vita di Elena de' Massimi*, Rome 1593; and *Historia della vita e martirio de' gloriosi santi Flavia Domitilla vergine, Nereo ed Achilleo e altri*, Rome 1597<sup>12</sup>. Intent upon expediting the canonization of the Founder, the Congregation entrusted Gallonio with the task of compiling the first biography of St. Philip: *Vita Beati P. Philippi Neri Florentini, Congregationis Oratorii Fundatoris, in annos digesta*, Rome 1600, which was translated into Italian and published the following year as *Vita del Beato P. Filippo Neri, fiorentino... scritta e ordinata per anni*, Rome 1601; a recent critical edition was edited by M. T. BONADONNA RUSSO (Rome 1995)<sup>13</sup>. An English translation by Jerome Bertram, C.O. of the Oxford Oratory has been published by Ignatius Press in the USA and Family Publications in Oxford UK, both in 2005. Among Gallonio's other works, there is the *Liber apologeticus pro assertis in Annalibus Ecclesiasticis Baronianis de monacatu s. Gregorii Papae adversus D. Constantinum monacum cassinensem*, Rome 1604.

In the years immediately thereafter, other priests stood out for their commitment to learning, publishing works that were well-received. Among these are Pompeo Pateri, Giovanni Giovenale Ancina, Agostino Manni, Francesco Bozio, Giovanni Severani.

**Pompeo Pateri** (b. Piovera 1547 – d. Rome 1624)

He was already living in Rome when he joined the Congregation in 1574, and he became an important representative of the Oratory's apostolate. He was a much sought-after spiritual director and a good administrator, a friend of popes and of their cardinal vicars in Rome, and he put his industrious intelligence at their service. He left us a small book, *Memorie*, edited by M. T. BONADONNA RUSSO, in the "Archivio della Soc. Romana di Storia Patria", 1975, I-IV.

**Bl. Giovanni Giovenale Ancina** (b. Fossano 1545 – d. Saluzzo 1604)

A doctor of both philosophy and medicine, he met Father Philip during the Jubilee Year of 1575; three years later, he joined the Congregation, along with his brother Giovanni Matteo Ancina (1552-1638). He was a gifted musician, and published the *Tempio armonico della Beatissima Vergine Maria N. S.*, Rome 1599, a magnificent collection of sacred songs<sup>14</sup>. Named bishop of Saluzzo in 1602, he published commemorative and spiritual works<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> For a complete listing cf. VILLAROSA A. di, *Memorie degli scrittori filippini o siano della Congregazione dell'Oratorio di S. Filippo Neri*, Naples 1837, pp. 75-77 (henceforth referred to as VILLAROSA)

<sup>12</sup> Cf. M. CUTTANO, *Il Padre Antonio Gallonio e l'agiografia cristiana nel Cinquecento*, in "L'Oratorio di S. Filippo Neri", 19 (1962), 11, pp. 14-16; 12, pp. 10-15).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. A. CISTELLINI, *A proposito della Vita di S. Filippo Neri di Antonio Gallonio*, in "Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia", LIV (2000), 1, pp. 1-6.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. P. DAMILANO, *Giovenale Ancina, musicista filippino*, Florence 1956. Along with a list of published works, it also gives a list of his unpublished writings.

<sup>15</sup> Fr. **Francesco Soto de Langa** (b. Osma 1540 – d. Rome 1619) held an important post in this area of life in the Congregation. While he continued his work with the Sistine Chapel Choir, in 1575 he dedicated himself to music in the Oratory. He published a quarto edition of his *Terzo Libro di Laudi spirituali a tre e quattro voci* (Rome 1588), and has also left us some minor musical compositions in manuscript. Alaleona says: "He

**Agostino Manni** (b. Cantiano 1548 – d. Rome 1618)

After studying law in Perugia, he came to Rome and worked as a lawyer for a few years. Joining the Congregation in 1577, he was one of the most important representatives of the first generation of the Oratory, above all as a preacher (St. Philip famously made him repeat the same sermon over and over again as an exercise in humility). He ministered as a spiritual director, especially among young people, and he composed many of the Oratory's hymns; these were published in 1582 in a collection of works by him and other composers. Father Philip appreciated the plays that Manni organized for the young people. Aringhi says that Manni did this "as a praiseworthy way of keeping the young people involved; anyone who attended these plays could see the fruit that they produced." For the Jubilee Year of 1600, he wrote the libretto for the "*Rappresentazione de anima et corpo*", set to music by Emilio de' Cavalieri, a brother in the Oratory. An author of great merit, he wrote and published an ascetical book of daily devotional exercises, which is a veritable treatise on prayer. He also wrote a collection of short stories in church history, his *Selectae historiae rerum memorabilium Ecclesiae Dei gestarum* (Rome 1612), as well as a *Raccolta di due esercizi, uno sopra l'eternità della felicità del Cielo e l'altro sopra l'eternità delle pene dell'Inferno* (Rome 1625).

**Francesco Bozio** (b. Gubbio 1562 – d. Rome 1643)

He was the younger brother of Fr. Tommaso Bozio, and was already a priest when he joined the Congregation in 1588; Father Philip was very fond of him. Well educated in the sacred sciences, he edited Fr. Tommaso's *Annales antiquitatum* and wrote a five-volume work that elaborated upon writings that his brother had left in the form of notes, *De temporali Ecclesiae monarchia et iurisdictione*; this was published in 1601, and appeared in a German edition the following year. He also authored a *Vita sancti Petri principis Apostolorum*, and left a manuscript of a *Carmen de Jo. Bapt. et Franc. Roffensis Martyrio*.

**Giovanni Severani** (b. San Severino 1562 – d. Rome 1640)

He entered the Congregation in 1588, after having studied humanities. In 1630 he published in two volumes his *Memorie delle sette chiese di Roma* in which he describes the seven major and minor Roman basilicas in terms of their archeology, topography, architecture and decoration, as well as the relics preserved in each. He was a friend of the first Christian archeologist, Antonio Bosio and, together with him, was a co-founder of this science. When Bosio died, Severani completed his unfinished work, *Roma sotterranea*, and he edited the published version in 1632. By 1627 he had already published his *Pretiosae mortes iustorum, ex variis probatisque auctoribus collectae*. His work in the fields of archeology and history gave rise to the school of Christian archeology that was a glory of the Roman Oratory and contributed so much to a revival of the cult of the martyrs.<sup>16</sup>

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was the one who composed the music for the five books of Oratorian hymns, a very important accomplishment". (Cf. P. ALALEONA, *Storia dell'Oratorio musicale in Italia*, Turin 1925; cf. also A. BERTINI, *La musica all'Oratorio dalle origini ad oggi*, Quaderni dell'Oratorio, 11; M. T. BONADONNA RUSSO, *Musica e devozione nell'Oratorio di S. Filippo Neri*, in *Lunario Romano* 1986, pp. 145-166). The Roman Oratory's musical tradition continued under Fr. **Francesco Martini** (b. Cambrai 1568 – d. Rome 1623), who entered the Congregation in 1602 and left behind spiritual songs and other compositions. After Br. Prospero Santini, director of music from 1593 to 1597, and Br. Diorisio Isorelli, director from 1599 to 1604, Fr. Martini held this office until 1623. He composed a *Messe e Vesperi per le principali feste della nostra chiesa* that the musician Arnerio greatly admired. He composed other songs, motets and instrumental music for various Oratories as well; unfortunately, all these were lost when Chiesa Nuova's music archives were dispersed. He was succeeded by Fr. **Guglielmo Rosini** (b. Perugia 1581 – d. Rome 1644), who joined the Congregation in 1606. Chiesa Nuova's musical tradition continued in our own day under the direction of Fr. Antonio Sartori (†27 September 1964; cf. L. FAIT, *La perdita del P. Antonio Sartori*, in "L'Oratorio di S. Filippo Neri", 21 (1964), 10-11, pp. 1-3). Today this ministry has been entrusted to Fr. Rocco Camillò.

<sup>16</sup> V. FIOCCHI NICOLAI, *San Filippo Neri, le catacombe di S. Sebastiano e le origini dell'archeologia cristiana*, in M. T. BONADONNA RUSSO – NICCOLÒ DEL RE (ed.), *San Filippo Neri nella realtà romana del XVI secolo*, Rome 2000, pp. 105-130

Father Philip's first followers were committed to study and research. There was no doubt that he held these activities of theirs in high esteem, but he paid more attention to their spiritual formation and priestly ministry. Yet the earnest commitment of other illustrious Oratorians continued to grow beyond the Congregation's traditional disciplines into other fields of scholarship, expanding the cultural interests of the Congregation.

Some carried on Gallonio's hagiographical research; others followed in Baronio's footsteps and became historians. The Congregation maintained its continuing commitment to the *Annales*, "since Church history found its start in the Congregation", a conviction clearly affirmed by Clemente XII<sup>17</sup>.

Among those who published various works over the next centuries, including Oratorians whose work was a credit to the Vallicellian Library, we find the following:

**Scipione de Rossi** (b. Città Ducale 1559 – d. Rome 1643)

Graduating in humanities and canon law from the University of Perugia, he joined the Congregation in 1592. He wrote a treatise on the jurisdiction of bishops, *Aphorismi episcopales*, which was published in 1631, and in 1624 his commentary on liturgical rubrics, *Ad Missalis romani rubricas adnotationes*, appeared.

**Fabiano Giustiniani** (b. Genova 1579 – d. Ajaccio 1627)

A man of lively intelligence, he entered the Congregation in 1597 and became a brilliant student of philosophy, theology, arithmetic, astronomy, drawing and painting. Appointed librarian (1605-1617), he organized the Library and, with the help of two confreres, compiled a two-volume catalog organized by author and subject. He also organized the collections of books bequeathed to the Library by Stazio (Estaço), Antoniano and Baronio. In 1613, he published a monumental work, his *Index universalis alphabeticus materia in omni facultate consulto pertractata, earumque scriptorum et locum designans appendice perampla locupletatus*. Named bishop of Ajaccio, he also wrote many scriptural commentaries to assist preachers.

**Orazio Giustiniani** (b. Genova 1580 – d. Rome 1649)

He was the younger brother of Fr. Fabiano e di p. Giuliano (b. Scio 1581 – d. Rome 1654), joining the Congregation in 1604 and serving as the Library's prefect from 1620 to 1626. Urbano VIII appointed him to an administrative post in the Vatican Library, and later made him bishop of Montalto. Innocenzo X held the three Giustiniani brothers in high regard and transferred Orazio to the see of Nocera Umbra and made him a cardinal, his brother Giuliano having refused that honor. In 1645 the Pope appointed him Prefect of the Vatican Library. He left us the *Acta sacri Oecumenici Concilli Florentini* (1638).

**Giacomo Volponi** (b. Andria 1566 – d. Rome 1636)

A doctor of theology, he also studied philosophy and law. He entered the Congregation in 1602, working on the *Annales*, annotating the Martyrology, and assisting with the revision of the Breviary. Someone who worked very closely with him was Fr. **Riccardo Aybar** (b. Andria 1598 –d. Florence 1663), who left some manuscripts of his work.

**Marsilio Honorati** (b. Viterbo 1577 – d. Rome 1654)

He met Fr. Philip in Rome, and regularly went to confession to Fr. Manni. Joining the Congregation in 1603, he specialized in work with youth. From 1641 to 1648 he published an eight-volume *Vita di Gesù*, and numerous other historical and devotional works, including lives of the saints and a historical commentary on the concept of the Jubilee Year.

**Pier Giacomo Bacci** (b. Arezzo 1576 – d. Rome 1656)

He was particularly attracted to the study of sacred Scripture, especially the Psalms, but he also studied civil and canon law in Perugia and earned degrees there in those disciplines. He entered the Congregation in 1604. He became good friends with Fr. Consolini, and learned from him all the principles needed to reconstruct the spiritual character of the Congregation's beginnings. In 1621 he composed a biography of Baronio; in collaboration with Fr. Consolini

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Archives of the Congregation of the Oratory of Rome (ACOR), C.I.9, f. 176 (21 September 1703)

and Fr. Zazzara he wrote the *Vita di San Filippo Neri fiorentino Fondatore della Congregazione dell'Oratorio, scritta dal p. Pietro Giacomo Bacci, prete dell'istessa Congregazione, ed accresciuta di molti Fatti e Detti del Santo, cavati da' Processi della sua Canonizzazione*, which was published in Rome in 1622. This work became well-known for its documentation and purity of style, which made it a pleasure to read; it has been reprinted in 140 editions, right up to the 20th century. Apart from the 1672 edition (F. Tizzoni, Rome), it is often found as an appendix to the Fr. Giacomo Ricci's *Aggiunta di una breve notizia di alcuni suoi compagni*.

**Cesare Becilli** (b. Urbino 1570 – d. Rome 1649)

He studied in Perugia and worked as a medical doctor in various places. He met Baronio, and agreed to move to Rome to serve as his personal physician, and subsequently joined the Congregation in 1610. He devoted himself to the study of history in collaboration with the Cardinal, and published *Evangeliorum connexio...* (Rome, 1622); *Adnotationes marginales in Ciacconium et Collationes Ciacconiane historiae cum Baroniana* (Rome, 1630); *Acta S. Caii papae et martyris* (Rome, 1628). He left 46 works in manuscript, catalogued by Villarosa (pp. 52-56), on historical, biblical, astronomical and theological matters.

**Odorico Rinaldi** (b. Treviso 1596 – d. Rome 1671)

Entering the Congregation in 1618, after studies at the Jesuit College and the University of Parma he devoted himself to giving sermons about history, and was assigned to continue Baronio's *Annales*. In 1646 he issued volume 13; this was followed by eight more volumes (three of which were published posthumously) which updated the series to his own time. He also wrote a three-volume compendium of Baronio's works, published in 1669. Innocent X offered him a position as Superintendent of the Vatican Library, but he declined this in order to dedicate himself to historical studies. He was in contact with the most outstanding scholars of his time, who held him in the highest esteem.

**Virgilio Spada** (b. Brisighella 1595 – d. Rome 1662)

This was a very talented man, especially well-versed in science, and a lover of music who was also a composer. Anxious to travel and see the world, he ran away from home and came to Rome, and there, attracted by Fr. Rosini's music, he began to frequent the Oratory. He studied philosophy at the Roman College and joined the Congregation in 1622, always giving good example by living devoutly and demonstrating great charity. He became prefect of the Library, and had several terms at different times as Provost of the Oratory. Beginning in 1637 he had charge of the construction of the Community's new residence. Highly cultured, and open to the new and exciting ideas of his time, he befriended Francesco Borromini and secured his architectural services for the Congregation, completing construction in 1643. He compiled the *Opus architectonicum Borrominianum* for Borromini (published only in the early 1700s), a description of the criteria for construction, and including the adaptations made and precautions taken with the Vallicellian complex (church, library and residence). In addition to collaborating in various areas of Church government and diplomacy, he advised the Popes in theological matters, and wrote a treatise, *Elucubrationes*, which was never published. He declined both the episcopacy and the cardinalate, but Innocenzo X made him a domestic prelate, allowing him to remain with the Congregation; and Alessandro VII confided various tasks to him. Because of his experience and competence, he was assigned to the Fabric of St. Peter's Basilica; it seems that Bernini got the idea for his colonnade around St. Peter's Square from Spada. He left a remarkable bibliographical collection to the Library.

**Paolo Aringhi** (b. Rome 1610 – d. Rome 1676)

A regular participant in various events held at the Oratory, he entered the Congregation in 1622, the year of St. Philip Neri's canonization, to whom he was especially devoted. He was very attached to the Community, as was demonstrated by the various ways in which he was of service, but also shown in his collection of notes on various subjects, which has proven to be, in many cases, a very important resource. The collection's three large volumes of manuscript, unfortunately still unpublished, are preserved in the Vallicellian Library: (B. V., O. 58, O. 59, O. 60): *Le vite e detti de' Padri e Fratelli della Congregazione dell'Oratorio...*, *raccolti da*

*Paolo Aringhi, prete della detta Congregazione e da altri.* He was also proficient in archeology and wrote a two-volume work about the catacombs of Rome: *Roma subterranea novissima in qua post Antonium Bosium antesignanum, Joannem Severanum, Congr. Oratorii Presb., et celebres alios scriptores, antiqua Christianorum et precipue Martyrum Coemeteria illustrantur* (Rome 1651). He also wrote his *Monumenta infelicitatis sive mortes peccatorum pessimae* (Rome 1664); *Triumphus Paenitentiae sive selectae Paenitentium mortes* (Rome 1670); and *Memorie storiche della vita del Ven. Pier Francesco Scarampi* (Rome 1744).

**Giuseppe Mansi** (b. Lucca 1607 – d. Rome 1694)

He entered the Congregation in 1634 and published works on spirituality as well as books to assist preachers. His four volumes of the *Biblioteca moralis predicabilis* (Rome 1672) was particularly well-received, and was translated into other languages.

**Gerolamo Bernabei** (b. Perugia 1611 – d. Perugia 1662)

After his studies at the University of Perugia, his uncle Fr. Rosini invited him to Rome, where he joined the Congregation in 1638. There he distinguished himself by his attentive care for the construction and decoration of the cupola of Chiesa Nuova. He became ill while on a journey, and was brought to the Oratory in Perugia, where he died. He left to us a *Vita Caesaris Baronii* (Rome 1651) and a biography of St. Philip Neri in Latin.

**Ven. Mariano Sozzini** (b. Siena 1613 – d. Rome 1680)

His reputation for sanctity followed him after death, and he has the title of ‘Venerable’. Joining the Congregation in 1644, he was for the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century what Ven. Consolini represented for the first half. An example of faithful religious observance who is often mentioned in the *Pregi dell’Oratorio* (“Illustrious Oratorians”), he performed many works of charity, one of them being the help and spiritual assistance he gave to refugees from Carpazi. He left, among other works, a *Vita del b. Bernardo Tolomei*, and also his *Memorie della vita del p. Prospero Airolì*, both published in Venice in 1751.

**Nicola Balducci** (b. Pistoia 1604 – d. Rome 1685)

He held various positions in the Vatican Congregation “Propaganda Fide”, including head of a diplomatic mission to the King of the Congo, who had converted to Catholicism. He entered the Congregation in 1642 and distinguished himself by his virtuous life and solid scholarship. He had a strong bent for music. He produced numerous works in hagiography and spirituality, including a *Vita di s. Nilo abate, fondatore del monistero di Grotta Ferrata* (Rome 1628). A complete list of his works is found on pp. 25-27 of VILLAROSA.

**Francesco Marchesi** (b. Rome 1623 – d. Rome 1697)

Having received a good education, he became a member of the Congregation in 1643 and was outstanding in virtue and scholarship. He wrote many works, mostly hagiographical (VILLAROSA, pp. 168-170), but he also left unpublished works of a historico-juridical nature in defense of the Holy See: *Del dominio temporale della Chiesa Romana*; *Antiqua Ecclesiae Romanae facies*; and *Sanctorum Schola supremam Apostolicae Sedis potestatem impugnantibus reserata*.

**Sebastiano Resta** (b. Milan 1635 – d. Rome 1714)

He graduated in philosophy from the University of Milan and then earned further degrees in both canon and civil law from the University of Pavia, where he served as a professor. Joining the Congregation in 1665, he devoted himself to the scientific and sacred studies. But he was especially proficient in the figurative arts and architecture, and he developed friendly relationships with many artists, notably Carlo Maratti. He assembled a valuable collection of drawings, now scattered amongst various museums and libraries. In 1999, his *Libro d’Arabeschi* was rediscovered in the *Biblioteca Comunale di Palermo*, a collection that he had assembled in the 1600s and given to Giuseppe del Voglia: 292 drawings and 15 prints that provide an illustrated history of the arts of ornamentation and decoration in Italy from the late 1400s to the 1600s. This is very useful in the study of old monuments and statutes, covering everything from

architectural ornamentation and gold-leafing, to friezes and vaulted ceilings decorated in the *grotesque* style, not to mention scenic views and landscapes. It was displayed in an exhibition in Rome in 2008, along with the *Piccolo Codice Resta*, which constitutes part of the previously-mentioned collection of thirty volumes, organized by topic or period.

He wrote in verse (*Epigrammata*) in memory of many important people, and translated many Latin inscriptions.

**Giacomo Laderchi** (b. Faenza 1667 – d. Rome 1738)

Gifted with an outstanding education, he entered the Congregation in 1689 and devoted himself mainly to the study of history, continuing the work of Baronio's *Annales*. He had his critics, especially regarding the tone he used in confronting opponents. Among his many works, listed by VILLAROSA (pp. 151-153), we can mention his three volumes of the *Annales Ecclesiastici ab anno 1571 ubi Odoricus Rainaldus desinit*, published in Rome in 1727, 1733, and 1737, works that are not held in high regard and are not always reliable.

**Alessandro Mazzoleni** (b. Bergamo 1687 – d. Rome 1762)

There is not much information about him, as is pointed out in VILLAROSA (p. 174). After joining the Congregation, he mainly focused on the study of mathematics and the physical and natural sciences, but he also dabbled in literature, philosophy and numismatics. He had a friendly working relationship with Msgr. Bianchini, the uncle of Fr. Giuseppe (*q.v.* below), and published his *Vita* in 1735. He had his own specialized library to assist in his writing about the natural sciences, but his works have unfortunately been lost.

**Giuseppe Bianchini** (b. Verona 1704 – d. Rome 1764)

From the start of his academic career, he dedicated himself to the study of history and archeology. He continued these pursuits in Rome, where he assembled a valuable book collection that is still extant under his name in the Vallicellian Library. He joined the Congregation in 1732, and with the approval of Pope Clemente XII, the Fathers of the Roman Oratory gave him the responsibility to carry on Baronio's work. A. L. Muratori thought very highly of him and attested to the effective contribution that Bianchini made to his work; in fact, he was on good terms with many scholars of his time. Among his many works, we can list the *Historia calcographica* of the Holy Years, and the *Methodus historiae ecclesiasticae quadripartitae*. From 1740 to 1750, he was secretary of the Pontifical Academy of Ecclesiastical History, which Benedict XIV had founded at the Roman Oratory. The Pope made honorable mention of Fr. Bianchini in his Bull of Foundation of the Oratory of Milan (1757). Death found him still very involved in writing several other works, completely listed in VILLAROSA (pp. 61-66).

**Carlo Ignazio Massini** (b. Cesena 1702 – d. Rome 1791)

He became a member of the Congregation when he was 32, in 1734, and was recognized for his profound knowledge of Sacred Scripture, the Fathers of the Church, and church history. Besides a *Vita del P. Mariano Sozzini* (1547) and a *Vita di N. S. Gesù Cristo estratta dall'Evangelo* (1759), he published a thirteen-volume *Raccolta di vite di santi per ogni giorno dell'anno* in 1763, followed by a *Seconda Raccolta* (1767) and a six-volume *Vite de' Santi dell'Antico Testamento* (1786).

**Gaspere Saccarelli** (b. Turin 1723 – d. Rome 1803)

Joining the Congregation in 1749, he was for years the librarian of the Vallicellian, and much devoted to study. He wrote and published a 26-volume *Historia Ecclesiastica* (Rome 1771), supplementing Baronio's *Annales* – the starting point for his research – with new documentation and critical considerations of some controversial events in history. In addition, he left three volumes of sermons, preserved in manuscript form in the Vallicellian Library.

**Simone De Magistris** (b. Rome 1727 – d. Rome 1802)

He entered the Congregation in 1760, already noted for his studies in economics. But rather than undertaking the task of continuing Baronio's *Annales*, he preferred to study ancient church



history under the tutelage of Fr. Bianchini. Due to his outstanding competence in oriental languages and biblical philology, he was called to preside over the Congregation for the revision of the liturgical books of the Eastern Churches. He published his *Acta Martyrum ad Ostia Tiberina* (Rome 1795) and the *Atti dei cinque Martiri di Corea* in 1801.

Devastated by the tribulations of the Jacobin period and laboriously re-established after its suppression<sup>18</sup>, the advent of the Kingdom of Italy forced the Congregation to undergo yet another confiscation of its own house in Rome under the laws of 1870 that were made effective in March 1871<sup>19</sup>. Despite the distressing situation that weighed heavily upon the life of the Roman Oratory and its activity<sup>20</sup>, it continued to distinguish itself in its commitment to learning:

**Augustin Theiner** (b. Breslau 1804 – d. Civitavecchia 1874)

Having graduated in jurisprudence, he applied himself to the study of canon law. In response to his erudite monograph on the development of the Decretals of Gregorio IX, he was offered a university chair in Berlin. He joined the Congregation in 1839. Pius IX assigned him the task of writing a history of the pontificate of Clemente XIV to counter the one just written by Cretineau-Joly. In 1851, he was named coadjutor to the prefect of the Vatican Archives with right of succession, and this allowed him to collect and study for his work, published in 1853. His book, which revealed his strong dislike for the Jesuits, created a sensation and provoked numerous written rebuttals that were not always based on the same scrupulous and careful historical research that he himself had demonstrated. Nominated prefect of the Vatican Archives in November of 1855, the next year he published three volumes in continuation of Baronio's *Annales Ecclesiastici*, bringing the narrative forward to the conclusion of Gregory XIII's pontificate. His vicissitudes drew to a sad conclusion: supporting those who opposed the dogma of papal infallibility that was being debated during Vatican Council I, Fr. Theiner sent to Cardinal Hohenlohe the procedural rules of the Council of Trent, mandating that any decisions on matters of faith required unanimous approval by the Council Fathers, and not simply a majority vote, as the Pope was planning. As a result, Pius IX forbade him to have access to the Secret Archives. He did not deprive Theiner of his office, but from that moment he was prefect in name only.

**Generoso Calenzio** (b. Naples 1831 – d. Rome 1915)

He began his work as a historian with the 1862 publication of a study about Boniface VIII. In 1863 he became a member of the Congregation, and studied history and archival science intensely in preparation for his assignment as prefect of the Vallicellian Library. He demonstrated a strong interest in scholarship and research regarding the Council of Trent, publishing *Saggio di Storia del Concilio Generale di Trento sotto Paolo III. Esame critico letterario delle opere riguardanti la Storia del Concilio di Trento; Documenti inediti e nuovi lavori sul Concilio di Trento*. He also wrote a *Vita di Martin Lutero*. He was passionate about archeological research, especially when it came to the catacombs, and he published a *Dissertazione intorno alle varie controversie di Storia e Archeologia ecclesiastica*. Relying on a wealth of unpublished documents, he penned his *Vita e gli scritti del Card. Cesare Baronio* (Rome 1907), with the aim that the book would aid the reopening of the cause of Baronio's beatification. In the preface, he provides a wide-ranging bibliography of works about the Cardinal, the various editions of his *Annales*, and a collection of his letters. Calenzio's monumental work won praise from important historians like Pastor, but it also encountered the harsh criticism of G. De Luca for "not knowing how to organize the huge number of documents that he used in a more strictly historical system"<sup>21</sup>; but there is no lack of scholars today who are considering the opportunity to review these opinions.

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. C. GASBARRI, *L'Oratorio Romano dal Cinquecento al Novecento*, Rome 1962, pp. 103-116.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 125-135.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. A. BIANCO, *Vicende Vallicelliane a seguito delle Leggi eversive*, in "Annales Oratorii", 5 (2006), pp. 75-87.

<sup>21</sup> G. DE LUCA, *Premessa a A. Roncalli, Il Card. Cesare Baronio*, Rome 1961

**Giuseppe Lais** (b. Rome 1845 – d. Rome 1921)

He graduated in philosophy from the University of Rome in 1865, in mathematics in 1867, and won the diploma in engineering in 1870. Under the tutelage of the celebrated Jesuit astronomer Fr. Angelo Secchi, Lais acquired practical training and a rare wealth of information about astronomy. In 1871 he joined the Congregation. In 1874 he accepted an appointment as coadjutor prefect of the Vallicellian Library and embarked upon the cataloging of 580 codexes, some of the most important documents of its valuable collection of books; he wrote a monograph about this project. He was a member of the Academy of the Lynx, being its president from 1905 to 1919, and he participated in numerous meetings of Academy. In 1889, as a consequence of his esteemed scientific work, he took part in the reestablishment of the Vatican Observatory. Leo XIII appointed him its Vice-Director, and he played an important part in the program of the *Carte du Ciel* as well as the *Catalogo Fotografico*, for which he personally photographed and developed a large number of the plates<sup>22</sup>. His scientific works, several dozen in all, were published by the Academy of the Lynx and reprinted in numerous specialized journals, both in Italy and abroad. Other monographs of his may be found in publications by the Vatican Observatory.

Any discussion of the Congregation's cultural vocation cannot omit a mention of the *Biblioteca Vallicelliana*, or Vallicellian Library<sup>23</sup>.



According to a statement attributed to Causabon, Baronio – who was the first librarian, exercising this office from 1584 to 1587 – “saw the Library as a direct result of his studies of the early Fathers, the first cause and reason for its existence”, but “this hypothesis appears to be valid and acceptable only in the sense of acknowledging the origin of the Institute’s transformation from being a general book collection that reflected the interests of its founders, to becoming a first-class library and an indispensable tool for a particular type of research.”<sup>24</sup>

Begun with the bequest of two thousand volumes Father Philip had inherited from Achille Estaço<sup>25</sup> by virtue of his last will and testament dated 1581, it was certainly the oldest library in Rome that was open to the public. It became one of the most important libraries in the city, specializing in the history of Rome and the Church, thanks to the valuable collections donated to it: the Archives and part of the Library of S. Giovanni in Venere (1585), and the personal collections of Cardinal Silvio Antoniano<sup>26</sup>, Pierre Morin<sup>27</sup>, Giovenale Ancina (1604), manuscripts

<sup>22</sup> Cf. G. STEIN, *La Specola Vaticana*, Spoleto 1939; S. MAFFEO S.J., *In the service of nine Popes: 100 years of the Vatican Observatory*, Vatican Observatory and Pontifical Academy of Science, 1991.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. M. T. BONADONNA RUSSO, *La cultura storica nella Congregazione dell’Oratorio*, pp. 84-88. Cf. also M. T. BONADONNA RUSSO, *Origini e vicende della Biblioteca Vallicelliana*, in “Studi Romani”, XXVI, 1 – Gennaio-Marzo 1978, pp. 14-34; E. PINTO, *La Biblioteca Vallicelliana in Roma*, Rome 1932; G. LAIS, *Cenni storici della Biblioteca Vallicelliana con ricerche di Patrologia*, Rome 1875.

<sup>24</sup> M. T. BONADONNA RUSSO, *La cultura storica nella Congregazione dell’Oratorio*, p. 84

<sup>25</sup> Achille Estaço (1524-1581) was acquainted with what was happening at S. Girolamo della Carità even before arriving in Rome from Portugal. His will, with its precise conditions regarding the maintenance of his library and who was allowed to use it, is considered the founding document of the Vallicellian Library.

<sup>26</sup> Silvio Antoniano (b. Rome 1540 – d. Rome 1603). Nicknamed ‘the little poet’ for his gift of writing verse, he was summoned to Ferrara by Ercole II d’Este, where he was awarded doctorates in both civil and canon law in 1557. Returning to Rome in 1559, he took part in the work of the Academy of Vatican Nights, founded by (St.) Cardinal Charles Borromeo in 1562. He was a spiritual son of Father Philip, and was ordained in 1569, maintaining a strong bond of friendship with the Congregation throughout his life. He always held important positions in the papal Curia, and became a cardinal in 1599 at Baronio’s suggestion. In addition to Latin poems and prayers, he wrote a three-volume work on educational methodology,

obtained from S. Eutizio with the help of Abbot Giacomo Crescenzi, part of the private collections of Cardinal Cesare Baronio and Virgilio Spada, Leone Allacci's manuscript collection, and then the bequests of Frs. Rinaldi, Laderchi, Bianchini and many others, beginning with the donation by Nicolò Gigli<sup>28</sup>, all of whom left their books to the Library.

The confiscation of 1871 was a grave loss for the Congregation, provoking the librarian, Fr. Generoso Calenzio, to declare himself absolutely ready to "burn the place down rather than leave it in the hands of the usurpers!"<sup>29</sup>. An inspection by government functionaries on 31 March 1871 showed that "all the books are in place, there is no sign that any books at all have been removed, as was confirmed by checking the six-volume alphabetical catalog of published books and the alphabetical index of manuscripts". The Library contained about 25,000 printed volumes and an extremely valuable collection of 3000 manuscripts.

The greater risk to the Library's integrity came from the Commission for the Capital's transfer to Rome. In order to provide a place for the judicial Tribunals, the Commission was tempted to move the precious manuscripts and books from their home in Borromini's great hall. After the suppression of the Congregation and the seizure of the Library in December 1873, Fr. Calenzio was removed from his post, having shown signs of mental imbalance<sup>30</sup>, and the Liquidation Committee proposed instead Fr. Agostino Theiner, who had ties of friendship with some members of the new government, among whom was the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Visconti Venosta; these connections were enough to reassure the Committee. But for reasons of age and his position as Prefect of the Vatican Archives, which he still held at the time, Fr. Theiner had to refuse the post, suggesting that the Committee appoint in his place a Croatian, Mons. Nicola Voršac, with Fr. Giuseppe Lais as his assistant. After 1880, the fortunes of the Vallicellian Library were intertwined with those of the National History Society of Rome (*la Società Romana di Storia Patria*). In its role as guardian of Roman history and supervisor of the city's scientific institutions, the Society defended the Vallicellian Library's autonomy from those who wanted to seize the opportunity to merge it with the Victor Emmanuel National Library (*Biblioteca Nazionale "Vittorio Emanuele"*). It was naturally assumed that this would happen, thus theoretically justifying the decree of the merger of the two Institutes<sup>31</sup>.

The original library, almost certainly located near Father Philip's room, was destroyed in a fire started by fireworks in 1620, during celebrations of the anniversary of the election of Pope Paul V. A great part of the old residence was destroyed in the blaze.

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*Dell'educazione cristiana de' figliuoli* (Verona 1584), a compilation of much of Father Philip's teaching experience. Its dedication is significant: "*Reverendis Patribus Congregationis Oratorii*", since, as he himself affirms, it is the "*fructus ab eorum semine*". He bequeathed to the Library a personal collection of 1500 volumes, including rare editions of classical authors.

<sup>27</sup> Pierre Morin (1508-1608). Learned and pious, he worked under Gregorio XIII and Sixtus V in the production of various editions of the Bible. It was probably (St.) Cardinal Charles Borromeo who influenced him to go to S. Maria in Vallicella. The collection he left as a bequest totals more than 2000 volumes.

<sup>28</sup> Niccolò Gigli (b. Troyes 1520 – d. Rome 1591). A tributed dated 1578 called him "very gifted". He was one of the finest of the original members of the Oratory, known for his purity and his gentle ways. Father Philip loved him, holding him in the highest esteem, and used him as his personal secretary. He was the first one to organize the Congregation's Archives.

<sup>29</sup> For this material, cf. the cited summary by A. BIANCO, *Vicende Vallicelliane a seguito delle Leggi eversive*.

<sup>30</sup> Fr. Calenzio was sent to a clinic; he returned to the community in 1876. The outburst mentioned above needs to be placed in context: taken aback by the events of 1870, which it seems he did not expect, he was convinced that Rome would not be invaded. This developed into a case of psychological anxiety that was connected to the fact that he was the librarian at the exact moment when Vallicellian Library, which the Congregation and founded and nurtured for more than three centuries, was stolen. With the loss of the beloved Library, he felt like his life was over, to the point that his health suffered greatly; thus he saw the confiscation as a personal attack. When he returned after a brief stay in a clinic, the Congregation had been legally suppressed. He was sentenced for stealing, having stated that he resided at Chiesa Nuova, and as a consequence he retired to an apartment he owned across the street from the piazza.

<sup>31</sup> The immediate cause, however, was the precarious situation in which the Society found itself. The local authorities had evicted it from its previous home on Via delle Quattro Fontane, which was given to the University of Rome's laboratory for hygiene research.

The present library's construction coincided with the remarkable growth of the Congregation and the need to acquire new space for its constantly-growing collection of books.

The task of designing the building was awarded to Francesco Borromini, who himself directed construction from 1637 to 1652; Camillo Arcucci brought the project to its completion in 1667.

The original plans may be found in the already-cited *Opus architectonicum equitis Fr. Borromini* and are explained there in detail by Fr. Virgilio Spada, who assisted the architect in designing the Palazzo. Borromini's original design was subsequently modified: the outer wall of the Library exactly follows the line formed by the underlying previous foundation. Thus the Library was enlarged, but it lacks symmetry. The ceiling is irregular; its last panels are rectangular rather than square, and the stars are ovular, not round. But Giovanni Battista Romanelli adorned the wood and stucco ceiling with monochrome painting that creates a special marbled effect. He constructed four winding staircases in the Library's corners, minimal enough in size so as not to interrupt the unifying effect of the books along the walls. The grand rectangular hall is illuminated by sixteen chandeliers; along the walls stands the 17<sup>th</sup> century wooden bookshelving, divided between two levels by a balcony supported by wooden columns. The furnishings include a splendid cabinet made by the craftsman Taddeo Landi, the bookcase that houses books owned by Philip Neri, marble busts of the Saint and Cardinal Baronio, and two globes – one of the heavens and the other of the earth – which date back to the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

**Edoardo Aldo Cerrato, C.O.**

*translated from the Italian by Fr. Timothy E. Deeter*