


## Traveling Political Knowledge

### Remarks on the Fortune of Giovanni Francesco Commendone's *Discorso Sopra la Corte di Roma*

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**Abstract.** This article illustrates an unknown page in the fortunes of Giovanni Francesco Commendone's (1524–84) *Discorso sopra la corte di Roma*. The analysis starts from the first circulation of the text in Roman circles. It then follows the work's journey from Rome to the library of one of the most important universities of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Akademia Zamojska. Here the treatise was read along with a small selection of Italian political writings, informing and influencing the scions of the future Polish ruling class.

**Keywords:** Transfer, knowledge, politics, library, university, curriculum

## Introduction

An important chapter in the studies of student migration in the early modern age concerns the transfer of knowledge through the movement of books on various subjects carried out by students in their travels.<sup>1</sup> After spending time studying abroad and prior to returning to their home countries, students filled their luggage with notebooks in which they transcribed whole works or parts of them, or with printed volumes purchased to accompany the training they received. Transcriptions and purchases are often suggested by their teachers, or guided by their own interests or curiosity. Analysis of their documents, both notebooks and publications, has enabled scholars to reconstruct the European circulation of both

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key texts of humanism and manuals and treatises related to a specific field of study.<sup>2</sup> Considering the university environment in early modern times, however, student travelers constitute only one of the channels through which a work could spread to a new milieu. Even professors, for example, often brought texts back with them from trips, or sent them as tributes to foreign colleagues with whom they maintained epistolary contact.

Finally, there was a practice of knowledge transfer that was conducted by academic institutions at the prompting of their rector or founder. European universities and academies invested resources and means to transport certain works from one region to another until they reached their own premises. To achieve this objective, they employed special text finders occasionally supported by teachers. In this way, they regularly enriched their libraries with titles of various kinds, sometimes including rare or even banned works, or texts that do not seem immediately related to a study subject.

This paper focuses on this last knowledge transfer practice, where an academic institution is responsible for the travel of manuscript and print works. The university selects and obtains a number of texts to move from one place to another according to its teaching needs and in line with its *curriculum studiorum*. In fact, the main motive for its action is to provide students with new books to draw on to stimulate their education. At the same time, however, the works that are transferred also serve the school to strengthen specific educational trends, more so than the textbooks already available to teachers are able to do. By focusing on this particular transfer of knowledge, it is therefore also possible to shed more light on the goals and strategies pursued by certain institutions. In other words, they enable a better understanding of their educational mission, adding information that cannot be found in their statutes, curricula or other documentation.

The case under the lens in the following pages concerns the treatise *Discorso sopra la corte di Roma*<sup>3</sup> by the Cardinal Giovanni Francesco Commendone, a figure

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2 A pioneer in this area of study was Ludwig Bertalot, who examined a series of manuscript anthologies belonging to German students who studied at Italian universities during the fifteenth century: Bertalot, “Humanistisches Studienheft,” 83–161.

3 The most recent printed edition of the text is due to Cesare Mozzarelli who, however, devoted only some summary information to the manuscript fortunes of the work in Europe in which, among other things, Poland does not appear and the eastern regions of the continent are absent: Commendone, *Discorso sopra la Corte di Roma*, 21–25. Before Mozzarelli, Daniele Rota prepared an edition of the treatise supplemented by a section on some of the manuscripts preserved in Italian and European libraries (namely Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Sweden, and Switzerland), so Poland is missing in this case as well: Commendone, *Discorso sopra la Corte di Roma e altri scritti*. Neither Mozzarelli nor Rota make use of a collation of the available sixteenth-century witnesses, which has never been done to date, but of an eighteenth-century

at the very center of a vast network of contacts between the Curia and the rest of Europe in the second half of the sixteenth century. The aim is to trace both its first circulation in Italy and its fortunes across the border, showing that it has been read in university circles and more specifically the Akademia Zamojska, located in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. To date there is no comprehensive study of the fortunes of Commendone's treatise production despite the fact that this would be highly useful in measuring the impact of his works in the different European milieus of the time. The following considerations take some steps in that direction, illustrating an unknown page in the fortunes of his political text. Commendone's popularity in the Commonwealth is hardly surprising since it was the country on the continent he frequented the most, by virtue of his activity there first as nuncio and then as legate.<sup>4</sup> Further confirmation of such a consensus can also be found in the Akademia Zamojska, where his *Discorso* received interest along with a selection of Italian political authors. Created and financed by one of the most influential and charismatic personalities in Polish history, the Chancellor Jan Zamoyski, the Academy was located in the town of Zamość, not far from the border with present-day Ukraine. Pope Clement VIII's Bull of October 29, 1594,<sup>5</sup> formalized its status as a university, the opening of which took place on March 15 of the following year.<sup>6</sup>

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manuscript that belonged to Pier Antonio Serassi and is currently preserved in the Biblioteca civica Angelo Mai in Bergamo (R 66.7.8). See Pirillo, *The Refugee-Diplomat*.

- 4 See the entry of Domenico Caccamo for the *Dizionario Biografico degli italiani*, XXVII, 1982. The first biography of Commendone is due to Graziani, *De vita Ioannis Francisci Commendonis Cardinalis libri quatuor*, published in 1669.
- 5 For the papal bull, refer to manuscript BOZ 1591 (33.5×21 cm., 200 ff., mf. 98412) preserved in the National Library in Warsaw with the title *Leges sive privilegium vetus Academiae Zamoscensis*. As for the royal privilege, on the other hand, this was ratified by Sigismund III only in 1601, thus confirming the founding act that was printed in the Academy's printing press in 1600.
- 6 Five years earlier, in 1589, Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini, the future Pope Clement VIII, was on a mission to Poland itself along with his nephew Cinzio. He was sent to carry out the delicate task of attempting a pacification between Sigismund Vasa and Archduke Maximilian III of Habsburg, who had been contending for the crown of the Commonwealth since the death of ruler Stephen Báthory in 1586. When the cardinal arrived in Poland on July 27, 1588, Maximilian of Habsburg had been a prisoner of the Swedish king for some months, and it was in Kraków that the future pontiff first met Zamoyski, who was firmly on the side of Sigismund Vasa. In order to negotiate the prisoner's release, the cardinal then went to Prague to discuss the negotiations with Rudolf and, on the occasion, also made a stop in Zamość, where an excellent college was already operating. That college represented the primitive nucleus from which Zamoyski would develop the university and was led, at that time, by one of the most celebrated poets of the Polish Renaissance, Sebastian Fabian Klonowic. Aldobrandini was positively impressed by the project, and testifying to the good reputation that the nascent university enjoyed in the eyes of the cardinal is the Academy's coat of arms in which that of the Aldobrandini would also

The institution was undoubtedly a creation of Zamoyski's, and his influence spanned the choice of teachers and curricula, covering in particular the school's first three decades of operation,<sup>7</sup> a period in which the university was developed to train Polish nobility. In the founder's famous inauguration speech on March 3, 1595, he "invites the Poles" (*Odezwe do Polaków*) to attend it, emphasizing how the school intends to make itself an instrument to strengthen the state<sup>8</sup> If, in fact, what strikes contemporaries today is the Commonwealth's religious tolerance, making it in the sixteenth century a country "without stakes" according to a well-known definition,<sup>9</sup> the organization of the state also exhibited certain elements of exceptionality, which were reflected in Zamość on the educational and cultural level in its extraordinary programs.

It is worth remembering that late sixteenth-century Poland was the largest country on the continent to have a mixed form of government, in which nobles and sovereigns collaborated on decision-making in the state, and the Academy catered to the ruling class, which flanked the king by carrying out an educational experiment unique in Europe. By guiding both the teaching program and the choice of study texts, the entire faculty in fact considered politics a genuine subject of study when it was not yet an autonomous discipline in the curricula of European universities.<sup>10</sup>

The Academy's curriculum was structured around the disciplines of the arts, law and medicine<sup>11</sup> and was divided into two stages, following the educational model developed by Johannes Sturm for the Protestant gymnasium in Strasbourg.<sup>12</sup>

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appear, incorporated, formed of Jacob's ladder surrounded by six stars. There is a handwritten report of this episode made by Giovanni Pietro Maffei under the title *Polonica legatio cardinalis Aldobrandini* and a copy of this relation is kept at the Civica Biblioteca – Archivi Storici "Angelo Mai" in Bergamo. See Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste*, and the entry by Agostino Borromeo on Ippolito Aldobrandini for the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, XXVI, 1982.

7 That is, from his founding of the Academy to the fire that damaged it in 1627, destroying its printing press, among other things.

8 As early as in a letter from Jan Zamoyski dated March 12, 1593, and addressed to his closest collaborator Szymon Szymonowic, the founder defines the future academy as a 'civil school' that would magnify the glory of God and the Commonwealth; the text of this famous letter can be found in Łempicki, *Działalność Jana Zamoyskiego*, 140.

9 The expression borrows its title from a now-classic study of Janusz Tazbir: Tazbir, *A State without Stakes*. See also Keenan, *Polish Religious Toleration*, 37–52.

10 For an overview of the history of politics as a university discipline, Scattola's work is crucial: Scattola, *Dalla virtù alla scienza*.

11 Theology does not appear because this would not enter the Academy's curriculum until 1648, authorized by Pope Innocent X.

12 In 1559 Jan Zamoyski spent time in Strasbourg where he visited the dynamic Protestant gymnasium created by Johannes Sturm, the *Schola Argentoratensis*. Scholars agree that that visit left a preponderant imprint on the teaching programs at Zamość. See Łempicki, *Działalność Jana Zamoyskiego*, 279–92; Dąmbska, "Filozofia w Akademii Zamojskiej," 87–114, 96–97; Kot,

The first part was of a propaedeutic character, focusing on the liberal arts and the study of Latin and Greek grammar, followed by a second part of *classes superiores* that was more specialized with an emphasis on the disciplines of rhetoric and dialectic and the reading of historical texts and political subjects.<sup>13</sup> For the school's use there was also a print shop, in which teachers personally prepared for printing some key volumes for their own teaching activities, and a library, the *Biblioteka Ordynacji Zamojskiej* (or *Bibliotheca Ordinationis Zamosciana*; hereafter referred to only as BOZ), consisting of both printed texts and manuscripts.<sup>14</sup>

The Academy Library's manuscript holdings are extraordinarily valuable in that they include such wide-ranging documents as lecture notes, drafts of publishing projects, and transcriptions of works used in the classroom. In this variety of materials, the treatises contained in the manuscripts are very useful in highlighting the different readings that were used for educational purposes, adding crucial information about teaching in the Academy. In addition to Polish and Latin, texts appear in national languages and, in particular, in Italian, testifying to the intense cultural exchanges between the teachers and the founder of the academy on the one hand and a large group of Italian intellectuals on the other. It is well known, after all, that Italian culture was of particular relevance in the education of Zamoyski and his teachers, who almost all studied in Padua at different times and kept up correspondence contacts with their Paduan colleagues.<sup>15</sup>

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*Promieniowanie Strasburga*, 487–508; Pietrzyk, *W kręgu Strasburga*.

13 See Lepri, *Knowledge Transfer*, 16–38.

14 The library contains documents from different sources, formed over centuries. Created by Stanisław Zamoyski, it first of all amalgamates the personal libraries of other members of the lineage. The collection includes the records of the Academy kept in the family castle, part of Stanisław Zamoyski's book collection, and the libraries of Aleksander Zamoyski and Warsaw Chancellor Andrzej Zamoyski (the part relating to family documents such as letters, notarial deeds, and papers related to the administration of property is now in the Central Archive of Ancient Documents in Warsaw, Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych). The *Registrum omnium librorum, qui extant in Bibliotheca Academiae Zamoscensis* is the first inventory of the printed holdings of the Academy's library; it was compiled by school law professor Adrian Krobski (1640–1708) in 1675 and covers about four thousand works. The section containing manuscript documents related to the life of the Academy and the activities of faculty members, the *Biblioteka Ordynacji Zamojskiej*, is currently located at the National Library in Warsaw, the Biblioteka Narodowa; on this section, see Kocówna and Muszyńska, *Inwentarz rękopisów Biblioteki Ordynacji Zamojskiej. Sygn. 1–2051*. Studies on the libraries of the Zamoyski family and the Academy are numerous, I will only refer here to *Biblioteka Ordynacji Zamojskiej. Od Jana do Jana* and Makowski, *Siedziba i organizacja biblioteki Jana Zamoyskiego*. More broadly, see also Horodyjski, "Zarys dziejów Biblioteki Ordynacji Zamojskiej," 243–51.

15 Also in the archives, there are a number of battle reports, valuable manuscripts purchased by Zamoyski, and a collection of public speeches given by him and other prominent Polish figures.

## Commendone's treatise in the library of the Akademia Zamojska

The work addressed in the present article is included in one of the Italian manuscripts kept in the Academy's library and referred to in its catalog as BOZ 1145. The first to describe it is Paul Oskar Kristeller in the *Iter italicum*, where he specified it to be a miscellaneous codex and pointed out two important works within it: the *Discorsi politici* by the diplomat Fabio Albergati, which begins at folio 135, and *Gli aurei avvertimenti del Guicciardino*, covering folios 185–236.<sup>16</sup>

It is important to clarify that the *Discorsi* that Kristeller records are not the well-known treatise by Albergati published in Rome in 1602, but rather his first work as an author, namely an occasional text known under the title of *Discorso di Fabio Albergati al Cardinale di S. Sisto sul modo, con cui dee governarsi un Carelli Nipote di Papa*. As for the *Aurei avvertimenti*, on the other hand, it is evidently the *Ricordi* by the famous Francesco Guicciardini, and the text preserved in the Polish archive corresponds to the first draft of the text, also known as version A, according to the distinction made by Raffaele Spongano.<sup>17</sup> Guicciardini and Albergati are well-known authors, which is why Kristeller dwells on their texts; however, their texts cover only a limited portion of the manuscript volume that spans 320 pages.<sup>18</sup>

The first part of it has no heading, but from reading it, it is easy to establish that it is the *Discorso sopra la corte di Roma* by Giovanni Francesco Commendone.<sup>19</sup> The treatise is followed by the aforementioned *Discorso* by Albergati, the *Aurei avvertimenti* by Guicciardini and a series of short texts such as *Avvertimenti al Cardinal Farnese nella sede vacante di Papa Paolo III* (from folio 247), *Delli fondamenti dello stato et delle parti essenziali che formano il principe di Scipione Castro* (from folio 260), and *Discorso come l'Imperio dipenda dai papi* (from folio 315, with several glosses), which is another text authored by Commendone. It would not even be necessary to get to the bottom of the list of titles to realize that the collection of writings contained in the final part of BOZ 1145 preserves an incomplete version of an anonymous work quite popular in the late sixteenth and early decades of the seventeenth century, the *Thesoro politico*, of which Albergati's *Discorso* is also a part. It

16 Kristeller's survey of the manuscript collection of the *Biblioteka Ordynacji Zamojskiej* held in the National Library dates back to 1958: Kristeller, *Iter Italicum*, 418–20.

17 This was the base text for all sixteenth-century editions. See the introduction to Guicciardini, *Ricordi*.

18 Both the printed catalogue of the Narodowa Library and the online one describes the contents of BOZ 1145 in the following way: "*Discorsi politici* Fabio Guicciardino." The author, who received the first name of Albergati, the surname of the Florentine historian, is obviously non-existent. The error was reported to the library some time ago.

19 Comparing the version in the manuscript with the text of the editions edited by Rota and Mozzarelli shows that only the first page is missing from the treatise in BOZ 1145.

is, as said, an incomplete version of the *Thesoro*, but the part that is missing happens to be present in the library of the Academy; it is found in manuscript 1144, which numerically comes before the volume under consideration here.<sup>20</sup>

The *Thesoro*, which owes its name to the title of the *editio princeps* published in Milan in 1589, consists of some thirty works that bring together different genres of political literature, although reports by Venetian diplomats and instructions for the use by cardinals and papal nuncios predominate.<sup>21</sup> There are several editions of the text published throughout Europe, which, although different in the selection of documents between them, made it possible for a number of short texts, such as Alberghati's own writing, to be read by a wider audience than through manuscript circulation alone. The version of the *Thesoro* preserved in BOZ 1145 and BOZ 1144 contains no information, for example in the proemial or marginal parts, to determine whether it is a manuscript redaction that predates the printed editions, or is a copy or reworking of a specific edition. It will be shown in the next paragraph that some information available in unseen documentary sources, together with the material characteristics of the paper that makes up the BOZ 1145 manuscript and a number of internal references in the works themselves, make it possible to indicate an *ante quem* date for the composition of this version of the *Thesoro*, as well as to date the version of the treatise by Commendone contained in the manuscript that arrived in Zamość.

### The first circulation of the *Discorso* and its journey from Italy to Poland

Focusing on the possible ways through which Commendone's work may have arrived in the Akademia Zamojska, the most suggestive hypothesis is that it came from the very hands of its author by virtue of his extended stays in Poland. For three years in fact, between 1563 and 1565, he was papal nuncio to the country and then returned as legate between 1571 and 1573 in an extremely delicate phase of the nation's history coinciding with the death of Sigismund Augustus and the election of a new sovereign. In any case, the moment when his *Discorso* is taken

20 *Commentarij di Francia del Soriano, Relatione di Francia del Correro*, f. 151, *Relatione d'Inghilterra del Michele*, c. 323, *Ritratti del Regno d'Inghilterra*, f. 583, *Descrittione del Regno di Portogallo*, f. 627, *Particolari Informazioni di Venetia*, f. 657.

21 In the *editio princeps* the identity of the author is hidden behind the pseudonym of Alberto Coloresco. For an overview of the various editions, reprints and translations of the work, see Bozza, *Scrittori politici italiani*, 68–71. The most important studies are by Balsamo, "Les Origines Parisiennes," 7–21; Baldini, "Origini e fortuna del *Thesoro Politico*," 155–65; and, in particular, Testa, "Alcune riflessioni," 679–87; Testa, "Per una interpretazione," 347–62; Testa, "From the »Bibliographical Nightmare« to a Critical Bibliography," 1–33.



across the border, by him or otherwise, appears connected to its first dissemination through manuscript copies that were produced from the autograph in Roman circles in the early 1570s.<sup>22</sup>

Information about the earliest circulation of the treatise is contained in three letters that Alessandro Avogaro sent to Commendone's secretary Antonio Maria Graziani in the period from fall 1571 to spring 1572, now preserved in the Graziani family archives in Vada, in the Italian province of Livorno.<sup>23</sup> Avogaro was papal referendary at the time, and a few years after sending the letters, between 1578 and 1582, he will be a coadjutor to the bishop of Cittanova. Before obtaining coadjutorship, he was part of Commendone's circles in Rome.<sup>24</sup>

Avogaro's first letter is dated October 31 of the same year: the sender informs Graziani that Commendone's writing on the court of Rome is receiving interest in Rome, adding an estimate of the copies in circulation, about a hundred, and the price at which they are being sold of two scudi d'oro each. A couple of months later, on December 15, 1571, Avogaro announces that he has sent him the first part of the treatise, but he also warns that he has been unable to compare it with the original, as he could not find the work among the cardinal's documents kept at the residence of Diego de Ávila, protonotary apostolic between 1563 and 1597. In the same letter, however, he goes so far as to speculate that the text came into the public domain because of the lack of prudence of Andrea Spinola, papal referendary and cleric

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22 The date of composition of the work is beyond the scope of this article. I limit myself to mentioning here that two distinct theses have been advanced to date, one placing the composition of the treatise in the early 1550s and the other ten years later. Scholars such as Domenico Caccamo, who prepared Commendone's entry for the *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, and Cesare Mozzarelli, who edited a modern edition of the *Discorso*, considered, for example, that it was written in the middle of the century, more precisely Caccamo identifies 1553, while Mozzarelli the following year, 1554. Both also pointed to Girolamo Savorgnan, Bishop of Šibenik, as the work's sender. Other scholars that have dealt with Commendone's treatise have expressed differing opinions, such as Ludwig von Pastor and Daniele Rota, who shifted the composition of the *Discorso* to 1564 (Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste*, Vol. 7, 636–37; Commendone, *Discorso sopra la Corte*, 325). They also raised questions around the identity of the sender by pointing to another figure rather than Savorgnan, Girolamo Ragazzoni, coadjutor to the bishop in Famagusta, on the east coast of Cyprus, and later bishop in the same city.

23 These documents have emerged as part of *Nuncio's Secret Archives*, a project that aims to reconstruct in its entirety the archives of Commendone and his secretary Antonio Maria Graziani. The project is funded under the Italian PRIN 2017 program (cod. 2017JMPYTA) and led by Professor Elena Bonora, whom I thank for making the documents from the archives available to me.

24 When Avogaro sent his missives to Graziani, Commendone was not in Rome, from which he had been absent since 1567; he was in Vienna as legate extraordinary to promote an alliance against the Turks and contain the Cyprus War, but in November 1571 he moved from Vienna to Warsaw where Pius V had appointed him (two years earlier) as permanent legate.



of the Camera as well as prefect of the Annona between 1576 and 1579. Finally, Avogaro once again writes about the treatise in a letter dated March 1, 1572, in which he reveals that the copyists who transcribed and put the manuscript into circulation in Rome claim that the first copy was made at the home of Cardinal Marcantonio Da Mula, who was seriously ill at the time the missive was sent.<sup>25</sup>

The information about the autograph and the copies produced by the copyists and quickly introduced to the Roman market begs the question of whether the manuscript exemplar preserved in the library of the Akademia Zamojska is one of those copies. An analysis of the paper that makes up BOZ 1145 (and BOZ 1144, which contains the part that completes the *Thesoro politico*) makes it possible to establish that three different alternating watermarks appear in the volume, which would demonstrate a transcription of the texts in a precise place and time frame. The copyists who made the miscellany used the same paper stocks produced in Rome between 1571 and 1578.<sup>26</sup> In particular, the paper on which the copy of the *Discorso* and much of the text of the *Thesoro politico* is transcribed contains a watermark—depicting a lily inscribed in a circle—produced in Rome around 1571. The dating of this paper stock corresponds to the period when Avogaro wrote to Graziani about the first manuscript dissemination of Commendone's work and also provides valuable information about the version of the *Thesoro* found in the BOZ 1145 collection. In fact, the watermark on the paper makes it possible to rule out the possibility that this is a copy or rehash of one of several printed editions, since the princeps, as mentioned in the previous pages, dates back to 1589.

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25 Cardinal De Mula died a few days later, on March 17. The three letters cited are respectively: Archivio Graziani, b. 62 A, doc. 176; b. 62 A, doc. 191; b. 62 A, doc. 42. I thank Dr. Marco Iacovella for kindly orienting me through this rich material from Graziani's archive.

26 The watermarks respectively depict a lily inscribed inside a circle, a bird on a pedestal and inscribed in a circle and a bird inscribed in a circle, all appearing in the best-known repertoires of watermarks such as the classic ones by Gerhard Piccard and Charles-Moïse Briquet. For convenience, I indicate here with the number 1 the watermark with the lily, with 2 that of the bird on a pedestal and with 3 the image with the bird without a pedestal. Watermark 1 always appears in BN BOZ 1144, with the exception of the last text (entitled *Particolari informazioni di Venetia*) in which we find both watermark 1 and watermark 3. Similarly, in BOZ 1145 most of the texts (*Discorso sopra la corte di Roma di Commendone*, Guicciardini's *Avvertimenti*, *Ricordi per ministri*, *Delli fondamenti dello stato* and the *Discorso sopra l'imperio del Turco*) are written on paper with watermark 1. The remaining three texts present, respectively, watermark 2 on the *Discorso di Fabio Albergato* and the *Avvertimenti al Cardinal Farnese*, while the document that closes the collection, the *Discorso di come l'imperio dipenda dai Papi*, the only one with different glosses, is the only one to have watermark 3. Watermark 1: Briquet, n. 128680 (Rome, 1571); Briquet, Watermark 2: no. 153737 (Rome, 1578); Briquet, Watermark 3: no. 42384 (Rome, 1577). Even the hands that drafted the documents of BN BOZ 1144 and BN BOZ 1145 corroborate the material evidence of the paper, as the stroke can be traced back to late sixteenth-century handwriting.

In addition to the pieces of information that can be drawn from the material features of the paper that makes up the manuscript volume, the history of the writings of Albergati and Guicciardini contained within it also lead one to place its creation in the early 1570s. First, the drafting of Albergati's *Discorso* dates to a period that cannot be earlier than 1572, as the author joined the family of the dedicatee, Filippo Boncompagni, at the beginning of that year and publicly delivered the speech contained in the text on the occasion of the celebrations of Boncompagni becoming a cardinal in June.<sup>27</sup>

As for Guicciardini's *Avvertimenti*, their compilation took place between 1523 and 1525,<sup>28</sup> but the autograph manuscript remained in the Guicciardini family archives until the mid-1960s when a nephew of the author, Piero di Niccolò Guicciardini, delivered this or a copy of it (the autograph was lost) to Fulvio Orsini in Rome. Orsini at that time was auditor of the Apostolic Camera and was beginning to establish himself as an internationally renowned philologist and antiquarian, though he was above all librarian and curator of the antiquities collection of Cardinals Rinuccio and Alessandro Farnese, a house to which he would offer his services for decades.<sup>29</sup> The first known manuscript copy of Guicciardini's *Avvertimenti* to come out of Orsini's personal archive was obtained in 1574 by Piero del Bene, abbot of Belleville and an influential figure at the French court in those years. Del Bene, also known to be the dedicatee of some of Giordano Bruno's works during his stay in France, sent that very copy to his friend Jacopo Corbinelli, an Italian exile in Paris who would become the editor of the first printed edition of the historian's *Avvertimenti* in 1576.<sup>30</sup>

Focusing, therefore, on the 1570s and considering the Academy founder's efforts to find texts for the use of teachers and students, it is also possible to

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27 Bozza, *Scrittori politici italiani*, 100–1. See also the entry on Fabio Albergati by Elena Fasano Guarini in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Vol. I, 1960.

28 Guicciardini wrote this version of the text when he was in the service of Pope Clement VII, on whose behalf he governed the lands of Romagna and, at the same time, worked to build a network of alliances between the Italian states that would give life to the League of Cognac, the last attempt to block the expansion of Charles V of Habsburg on the peninsula. On the archive of the Guicciardini family, the classic study by Ridolfi is still valuable, *L'archivio della famiglia Guicciardini*, 55–100 (for the description of Francesco Guicciardini's documents).

29 See the entry on Fulvio Orsini by Federica Matteini for the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, LXXIX, 2013; De Nolhac, *La bibliothèque de Fulvio Orsini. Contributions à l'histoire des collections d'Italie et à l'étude de la Renaissance*; Ruysschaert, "Fulvio Orsini et les élégiaques latins," 675–84.

30 Lepri and Severini, "Jacopo Corbinelli editore," 497–556; Luciani, *Francesco Guicciardini*, chapter X. See also the entries on Jacopo Corbinelli and Piero Del Bene contained in *Giordano Bruno. Parole, concetti, immagini*.

make another assumption about the route taken by Commendone's *Discorso* to the Commonwealth.

Exactly in the middle of that decade, Zamoyski traveled to Italy with the aim of persuading, on behalf of King Stephen Báthory, some brilliant scholars to become professors at the University of Kraków. These included, in addition to Zamoyski's beloved teacher Carlo Sigonio, who followed his studies during his stay in Italy (1561–1563), the French scholar Marc-Antoine Muret, and the aforementioned Fulvio Orsini, whom he met personally in Rome in 1577.<sup>31</sup>

None of the three scholars accepted his invitation, but on that occasion Zamoyski may have received from Orsini, along with the polite refusal to move, the valuable collection of Italian texts that make up BOZ 1145. As it turns out, Orsini possessed a copy of Guicciardini's *Avvertimenti* that came directly from the Florentine historian's archive. Right the manuscript later brought by Piero del Bene to Paris sheds light on the fact that Orsini also had a copy of Commendone's *Discorso*. This was made known by Corbinelli, the aforementioned curator of the first printing of the *Avvertimenti*, who in a letter to the humanist Gian Vincenzo Pinelli described what his traveling friend brought him from Rome:

“Our abbot returned and brought me Guiccardino's *Avvertimenti Aurei* as you consider them and certain writings of Cardinal Commendone over the Court of Rome.”<sup>32</sup>

### Commendone as a master of politics in the Academy's curriculum

Without a doubt, Commendone enjoyed peculiar popularity in the Commonwealth during the events following the death of the last ruler of the Jagellonian dynasty, Sigismund Augustus. As already mentioned, in the spring of 1573 the legate participated in the deliberations of the Diet in Warsaw to decide on a new king. He supported the candidacy of Maximilian II's son, Archduke Ernest, as the Curia hoped that an Austro–Polish accord would be the prelude to a wide-ranging alliance including the Habsburgs, the Venetians, the Spanish, and the Holy See. As a second choice, there was Duke Henry of Anjou, who would still guarantee the Curia the presence of a Catholic king in the country.

31 Pollak et al., *Nowy Korbut, Piśmiennictwo staropolskie*, 433.

32 “Il nostro abate tornò e portommi gl'avvertimenti aurei del Guiccardino come gli stimate voi et certe scritte del Cardinale Commendone sopra la Corte di Roma.” Quotation from folio 29r of the manuscript T. 167 sup. kept in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana that contains a number of letters to Gian Vincenzo Pinelli between 1572 and 1587. All translations, otherwise stated, are mine.

The oration commonly known as the *Oratio ad Polonos* delivered by Commendone before the Diet exerted a great impact on the audience, and as much as the Polish lower nobility, the *szlachta*, did not want a Habsburg on the throne, his rhetorical and argumentative skills were striking. Zamoyski was among the approximately three thousand present and was not the only one impressed by the cardinal's eloquence since his oration was immediately printed in Kraków.<sup>33</sup> That may have been when Zamoyski began to see him as a master of politics, to the point of including his treatise, a few years later, among the readings at his academy.

Looking at the manuscript miscellany BOZ 1145 kept in the library of the Akademia Zamojska in its entirety, the texts of Commendone, Guicciardini, and the *Thesoro* have traits in common that complement each other. The A version of Guicciardini's *Ricordi* contained in the compilation was composed when the author was at the height of his diplomatic career and is a very different text from the later versions we read today, written in the aftermath of the Sack of Rome. While the latter are intimate and crepuscular, aptly known as "memories," the first version focuses on education in political practice, providing rules and examples.

Similarly, in the *Discorso* the mechanisms of the Curia and the ways to wisely move within it are revealed. The treatise is divided into three parts that deal with "this court, the courtier and you,"<sup>34</sup> i.e., of the sender who wished to find employment in the court of Rome.

Commendone writes that the pope leads a republic; that is, he is an elected prince and because of this his reign never falls into tyranny. Being part of his court is not limited to living in it; it involves participating in its growth by serving in various capacities one or more lords. The individuals who make up the court are distinguished first according to their income and then according to their education. The general categories are those that group the rich, poor, and mediocre, and economic status influences how individuals relate to others—envy, suspicion, frustration, indifference—and relate to their lord.<sup>35</sup> For those of more modest finances, the most appropriate role is that of chancellor, while for the more wealthy it is that of

33 Commendone, *Oratio ad Senatam equitesque Polonos habita in castris apud Warszawiam VIII Aprilis anno 1573*, s. l. né d. printed by Mikołaj Szarfenberg. The only known copy is in the University Library in Toruń. In the same year Commendone's oration was also printed in Paris and translated into. See Estreicher, *Bibliografia polska*, XIV, 328; Estreicher, *Catalogue général des livres imprimés de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, XXXI, col. 285.

34 "di questa corte, del cortegiano e di voi." Commendone, *Discorso sopra la Corte di Roma*, 45. In the manuscript versions of the treatises produced in the centuries following the sixteenth, the three parts correspond to distinct sections accompanied by titles. An in-depth analysis of the content of Commendone's text and the possible copyist interventions that could have affected the use of the manuscript will be the focus of a forthcoming article of mine.

35 Commendone, *Discorso sopra la Corte di Roma*, 47.

Camera clerks; to move from one promotion to the next, it is good to prove oneself to be more affluent than one is, because in difficulties it lends security to those who invest them with roles of greater prestige. Certainly, for those who “can make a living from their own” (*possono vivere del loro*), the preferred roles are those closest to the pope, which varies according to educational degree.<sup>36</sup> Among them, there must always be at least two “literate and virtuous” (*litterate e virtuose*) persons, the auditors and the secretary. Likewise, cardinals must be doctors of law to support the pontiff in the management of the Curia.<sup>37</sup> The treatise is enriched by historical excursuses with which the author highlights a theme that is particularly dear to him, namely, the continuous mutation of the court over the years and centuries marked by a “present infirmity” (*infirmità presente*) that necessitates the recovery of a church of origins.<sup>38</sup>

Commendone describes the regular and radical transformations of the Roman court that accompany the transition from one pontiff to the next as opportunities for social climbing, where crisis recalls Guicciardini’s reflection on the meaning of crisis as providing opportunities and quick fortunes.<sup>39</sup> The change brought about by crisis as a space for individual action and for its own sake is not the only element of affinity between Commendone’s treatise and Guicciardini’s *Avvertimenti*. Both texts contained in BOZ 1145 also have a specific focus on the definition of roles in politics

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36 Commendone, *Discorso sopra la Corte di Roma*, 82.

37 Commendone points out that the courtier of the Roman Curia not only performs specific offices for the benefit of the court, but that those offices have been ordered through formal requests to the pontiff and made official by him, Commendone, *Discorso sopra la Corte di Roma*, 79.

38 Commendone, *Discorso sopra la Corte di Roma*, 72, 78. If reform of the papal court is the first step towards a global reform of the church, Commendone also acknowledges that it would be difficult to find a way to implement it as it would above all involve stopping abuses by those who have no interest in doing so. He therefore evokes the possibility of instituting new laws, but concludes by arguing that the priority is to reform people and then the rules. Commendone also considers the difficulties that can be encountered in the court regardless of the role one plays, focusing on two main obstacles: bad luck and envy of others. According to the author, they are both inevitable but, at the same time, containable by those who suffer them. In the first case, he advises to “keep, in addition to the provision of ordinary expenses, a suitable sum of money that will make us overcome misfortunes” (*tenere, oltre alla provvisione della spesa ordinaria, una somma conveniente di denari che ci faccia superiori alle disgrazie*). The second difficulty, on the other hand, envy, “is largely diminished and sometimes extinguished entirely with humanity and courtesy, just as with the many and proud ostentations it increases and ignites infinitely” (*diminuisce in gran parte e talora s’estingue del tutto con l’umanità e la cortesia, siccome con le molte e superbe ostentazioni si accresce e si accende in infinito*). Commendone, *Discorso sopra la Corte di Roma*, 88.

39 On the Curia as a place of crisis as well as opportunity, see Prosperi, “La figura del vescovo fra Quattro e Cinquecento,” 247–48.

since each *polis* corresponds to appropriate actors, that is, prepared for the needs of the environment in which they operate, where the former exclusively analyzes the Roman court and the latter adds the princely courts. A similar interpretation can be advanced for the *Thesoro politico* as well, and it appears to be a kind of complement to the other two. At a time when the ideological clash between the Protestant and Catholic worlds strains international diplomacy, gathering accurate and reliable information about one's neighbors or enemies is a problem that concerns all countries as well as a crucial aspect of political education.<sup>40</sup> In that respect, the *Thesoro* provides a competitive advantage in political action because it supplies an objective picture of Europe by describing state realities, events, and strategies in place.

The three works are probably among the texts recommended in the Academy's *classes superiores*, which constitute the most advanced stage of pupils' education, where the study of law and history is deepened. The school's library reflects these educational needs by keeping in its catalog two substantial sections centered on these subjects, namely "history" and "exotic books," which mentions several historical and historical-political works in Italian, French, and Spanish.<sup>41</sup> As noted above, providing instruction for developing effective behavior in the political arena was among the primary goal of the Academy, and the Italian treaties discussed so far are in keeping with this goal. They also appear to be consistent with a certain philosophical orientation that marks its teaching and includes the study, along with Aristotle's, of the Stoic dialectic.

Although many dialectics circulated during the sixteenth century, for example, those of Johannes Sturm and Philip Melancthon, the Stoic dialectic taught in the Academy constituted a unique and pioneering experience compared to Europe at the time.<sup>42</sup> The basic text for teaching Stoic dialectics and the actual manual in the Academy was *Dialectica Ciceronis*, a volume published in Zamość's printing house in 1604 and edited by Adam Burski, one of the school's most important teachers.<sup>43</sup>

40 See Pirillo, *The Refugee-Diplomat*; and the classical study Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*. Importanti sono anche Infelise, *Prima dei giornali*; Del Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice*.

41 The *Registrum omnium librorum, qui extant in Bibliotheca Academiae Zamoscensis* (see above footnote 14) distinguishes the texts according to nine subjects of study: theology, law, medicine, philosophy, history, rhetoric, poetics, and mathematics and exotic books. Within each disciplinary grouping, the volumes are further divided into subcategories based on format: first the in-folio editions, then the in4 and in8 editions, followed by the in16 editions.

42 See the academy's curriculum described in the school statute in Lepri, *Knowledge Transfer*, 143–50.

43 It is important to stress that this trend is not new, since already in the previous century Lorenzo Valla in his *Repastinatio dialecticae et philosophiae* and Rodolphus Agricola in *De inventione dialectica* (1475–1480) had moved in the same direction. Among the few who have attempted



The innovative nature of this educational experience was not exhausted in the systematic recovery of Stoic logical thought and its application to the practice of politics but rather by the fact that the teaching was affected by a nominalistic inspiration derived precisely from Stoic doctrine.

Indeed, the debate between nominalists and realists on universals that inflames the Middle Ages does not disappear in the early modern age; on the contrary, a nominalistic view characterized thinkers such as Lorenzo Valla, Rudolph Agricola, Juan Vives, and Mario Nizolio who, criticizing all philosophical abstraction, sought new ways of ordering knowledge and, more generally, reality.<sup>44</sup>

The nominalistic tendency present in the Academy, which led to the assumption that universal principles do not transcend the world of phenomena and sensible experience, influenced teaching at every level. It was taught in the school that the rules for proper political practice could only be found in the empirical dimension because politics does not have its own metaphysics; that is, there are no universals on which to base political knowledge. Therefore, it is not surprising that works such as Commendone's treatise, Guicciardini's *Avvertimenti*, and the *Thesoro* received attention: if the key to guaranteeing the success of a given action lies in having a complete casuistry of possible roles and scenarios, then their texts are the ones to analyze since they offer an exhaustive collection of *exempla* and *consilia*. In other words, the works contained in the manuscript that came from Italy did not simply take the form of a corollary to the studies, as an addition to the syllabus in its final stage. The way in which the political discipline was understood and, consequently, explained to the Academy's students needed the support of those kinds of treatises because they were, in intent and content, an explication of the philosophical vision shared by the teaching staff.

By following the long journey taken by Commendone's *Discorso* from the circles of the Roman Curia to the Academy operating in Zamość, information of a

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a recovery of Stoic logic is Pierre de la Ramée, who reviewed the logical systems of various ancient schools at the beginning of his *Scholarum dialecticarum [...] libri*, printed in 1581. His description of the Stoic doctrine, however, consists of a few pages and is entirely functional to his general intent to undermine the authority of Aristotle. Within this panorama, Burski's book represents a brilliant exception in terms of completeness. Certainly, a complete clarification of the relationship between propositional logic and that of terms will take place only at the end of the nineteenth century, with the fundamental work of Gottlob Frege (Frege, *Begriffsschrift*, 1879), to which is added half a century later the watershed contribution by Jan Łukasiewicz, who provides a comprehensive picture of Stoic logic. On Adam Burski, see Facca, *Humanizm i filozofia w nauczaniu*.

44 For a still valuable overview of the topic, see Vasoli, *La dialettica e la retorica*. Lodi Nauta's studies are fundamental: Nauta, "De-essentializing the World," 196–215 and again Nauta, "The Critique of Scholastic Language," 59–79.



different nature, such as the news in the documents in the Graziani archive and the watermark data from the BOZ 1145 paper, now make it possible to add new elements to his intellectual biography. Until now, Commendone has enjoyed more attention for his role as a papal envoy than as a political writer, and his *Discorso* has been mainly related to courtly literature, crediting the author only with having applied the genre to the ecclesiastical context. Five hundred years after his birth, new sources and information now provide an opportunity to reread his treatise in a different way and to place it historically in such an unprecedented setting as a Polish university in the late 16th and early seventeenth centuries.

As shown in the previous pages, the curriculum implemented in the Akademia Zamojska, which incorporated a number of key texts including the *Discorso* into its library, thus achieved the development of specific skills of the future ruling class with the aim of strengthening its reach. Indeed, the educational plan draws a peculiar politician who rejects all abstraction and bases his authority on knowledge of the contemporary situation. Commendone in this context thus loses the robes of the legate to put on those of the political author, and his writing enters into dialogue with other works, such as Guicciardini's *Avvertimenti*, opening a new chapter in studies on the rise of politics as an academic discipline.<sup>45</sup>

In conclusion, the transfer of books implemented by the Akademia Zamojska and particularly by its founder for the library adds important pieces to the history of education in the early modern era. On the one hand, it helps bring into focus the school's educational strategies, as books were selected according to specific educational purposes. On the other, it brings a concrete example of the dual nature, material and immaterial, of academic networks in the early modern world. It has been wisely observed that we can efficiently study these networks only by paying more attention to the history of mobility and objects, in other words, the material dimension of networks.<sup>46</sup>

Indeed, it is the movements of people and their artifacts such as books that make visible relationships that might otherwise remain invisible. It is material realities that support conceptual possibilities, creating connections that makes certain kinds of intellectual gatherings and transactions possible.

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45 Next step in the current study is an investigation that focuses on the ways in which dialectical tools such as examples (*exempla*) and precepts (*consilia*) were handled and categorized in miscellaneous manuscripts containing humanistic political literature.

46 See Findlen, "Introduction."

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