

Blythe Alice RAVIOLA

The Ideal Cardinal and the Role of the Papacy in *Dell'uffizio del cardinale* (1599) by Giovanni Botero

Abstract: *The paper aims to highlight the principal topics of Giovanni Botero's speech *Dell'uffizio del cardinale* (1599), the first part of it being dedicated to show what cardinals could do to improve Catholicism in the Reformation world, and the second one, known as *Discorso intorno allo Stato della Chiesa*, is based on the analysis of the papacy as an independent state: a state that was regional but with universal pretensions.*

Keywords: *Giovanni Botero – cardinal – Eastern Europe – papacy – politics – Reason of state*

On 29 May 1599, Giovanni Botero, the famous author of the *Ragion di Stato* (1589), signed the last page of a treaty about the role of cardinal entitled *Dell'uffizio del cardinale*, published in Rome by the printer Nicolò Muzio.¹ The book is dedicated to Fernando Niño de Guevara, born in Toledo in 1541, from the important family of the marquises of Tejares.

Named a cardinal in 1596 by Pope Clement VIII, Guevara was promoted to the office of General Inquisitor in Spain, in the New World, and in Italy. Reassuming in his person all the qualities that Botero attributed to a perfect cardinal, starting from the prudence of state (*prudenza di Stato*). In his beautiful portrait realized by El Greco around the year 1600, he looks at us behind the lenses of his black glasses with a truly scrutinizing and enigmatic gaze.² A modern man, authentic spirit of the Counter-Reformation spirit and a loyal vassal of the King of Spain, Guevara was incarnating the prototype of a protector for the former Jesuit Giovanni Botero.³

1 I consulted the edition preserved in the Fondazione Luigi Firpo – Centro Studi sul Pensiero politico (Turin, Italy): coll. Firpo 1577. See the fundamental catalogue of this Italian centre for the study of the political thinking: Andrea DE PASQUALE – Cristina STANGO (edd.), *Catalogo del fondo antico*, I–IV, Firenze 2005–2013, vol. II, *ad vocem* Botero, Giovanni.

2 The oil on canvas is in New York, at the Metropolitan Museum of Arts.

3 About his articulated biography see: Federico CHABOD, *Giovanni Botero*, in: Idem (ed.), *Scritti sul Rinascimento*, Torino 1967, pp. 269–374 (1st edition, Rome 1934; new edition *Con un saggio di Gennaro*

Dell'uffizio del cardinale is quite well-known among the specialists of history of the Church⁴ and it is not a completely original subject. In the same year (1599), Fabio Albergati, another scholar of the entourage of cardinal Federico Borromeo, wrote *De cardinale*. Other texts like those flourished around specific figures such as Borromeo, Cesare Baronio, Roberto Bellarmino and other cardinals who played a remarkable political role in Rome and in their dioceses.⁵

More recently, *Dell'uffizio del cardinale* has received new attention among the historians of art and literature due to its particular implications in those issues. In it, Botero speaks about religious pictures and architecture: he expresses severe judgement upon Michelangelo and his paintings, not conforming to Botero's idea of holy images. On the contrary, Botero consecrates Tiziano as excellent, decent, and proper artist.⁶

Less studied is another part of the volume, with the title *Discorso intorno allo Stato della Chiesa preso dalla parte dell'opera che non è stampata*. Even if it is said that it is not printed, this section was eventually printed and published in the Muzio edition and reprised several times in the numerous editions of the *Relazioni universali* with the title *Relazione dello Stato della Chiesa*.⁷ In this short article, we will pay attention to particular aspects of *Dell'uffizio del cardinale*, which are closely related to the politics of re-Catholicization of Eastern Europe, and to the *Discorso intorno allo Stato della Chiesa* or *Relazione dello Stato della Chiesa* as political speech. In both of these texts, the idea of service (outlined by Botero) is tightly linked to the concept of universalism and Christianity in the imperial Habsburg world.

Sasso Torino 2017); Luigi FIRPO, *Botero, Giovanni*, in: DBI, vol. III., Roma 1971 (http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-botero_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/).

4 A punctual analysis is in Valerio MARCHETTI, *Gli scritti religiosi di Giovanni Botero*, in: A. E. Baldini (ed.), *Botero e la 'Ragion di Stato'*. Atti del convegno in memoria di Luigi Firpo (Torino 8–10 marzo 1990), Firenze 1992, pp. 127–147.

5 See Giampaolo ZUCCHINI, *Botero e Albergati: ragion di Stato e utopia*, in: A. E. Baldini (ed.), *Botero e la 'Ragion di Stato'*, pp. 287–302; Marzia GIULIANI, *Il vescovo filosofo. Federico Borromeo e I sacri ragionamenti*, Firenze 2007, pp. 17–18.

6 On the artistic point see again V. MARCHETTI, *Gli scritti*, pp. 140–143. More recently: Laura FACCHIN, *Giovanni Botero e le arti figurative attraverso i secoli*, in: B. A. Raviola (ed.), *Boteriana I. Giovanni Botero a 400 anni dalla sua scomparsa*, Torino 2018, pp. 135–177 (check footnote 2 of p. 135 for the portrait of cardinal Guevara).

7 The *Discorso*, with the title of *Relazione dello Stato della Chiesa*, is part of: Giovanni BOTERO (ed. B. A. Raviola), *I capitani. Con alcuni discorsi curiosi*, Torino 2017, pp. 175–199. I will quote from this edition, translating the most significant sentences into English.

Eastern Europe as land of proselytism.

Firstly, it may be useful to remember that Giovanni Botero, after the *Ragion di Stato* and the treaty *Delle cause della grandezza e magnificenza delle città* (1590), wrote and published his masterpiece, the *Relazioni universali* (1591). More than a geographical description of the known world and more than a moral treaty on the Catholicism around the planet, the opera is a superb contemporary World History. On different levels, the author combines his extraordinary erudition, his devotion and his sharp political thinking. Many scholars have observed in their studies that the topics of economics, politics, ideals of a civilisation, anthropological intuitions, and missionary spirit are so interrelated that it is not easy to select a unique interpretation or dominant viewpoint.

In any case, focusing on Europe, it is clear that, at the end of the sixteenth century, Botero was emphasizing two problems: the dissemination of the Reformation on one hand, and the dynamic interaction among the states. The two issues were linked and gave the Church a mission – they had to stop the Reformation by any means necessary. Botero was more favourable to proselytism than war and knew they had to have a role in any political changes.

If France, with the drama of Huguenots and the ambiguous composition operated by Henry IV, was a world apart; if England and Scotland were afflicted by the plague of schism; if the Holy Roman Empire was still too much fragmented, many countries of the East of Europe could be – in Botero's view – saved. Even though he did not travel, Botero knew these regions well from the reports of his clergy. He served as secretary to two champions of the Counterreformation in Italy: the Archbishop of Milan, Saint Carlo Borromeo and his nephew, Cardinal Federico. Through them, he was able to reach the highest levels of the Catholic hierarchy.⁸ When Carlo died, he wrote a letter in his memory and dedicated it to Andrea Bathory, whom he personally met in Milan in the Borromeo entourage.⁹ This link encouraged Botero's attention to Poland and its government, beyond his own personal interest (he had asked the nephew of the Polish King Stephen, Bathory, to protect him).¹⁰ This attention was additionally promoted by the missions and operas of other important

8 F. CHABOD, *Giovanni Botero*, pp. 21–42; M. GIULIANI, *Il vescovo filosofo*, pp. 293–298.

9 Giovanni BOTERO, *Della morte dell'illustrissimo et reverendissimo monsignor cardinale di Santa Prassede arcivescovo di Milano del signor Giovanni Botero, mandata all'illustrissimo et reverendissimo monsignor Andrea cardinale Bathorio. Tradotta di latino in volgare dal molto reverendo padre Cornelio Peraccini da Pistoia, priore di Santa Maria dei servi in Milano*, Milano 1584.

10 At the end of the eulogy to Carlo Borromeo, Botero wrote to Bathory: “*Resta solo che io prieghi quella che, sendo io privato di un tale et santo padrone o, per dir meglio, padre, mi voglia essa far degno della sua grazia et servitù* [It remains for me to pray to Your Excellency that, as I missed such a patron saint, or – better said – a father, you will consider me worthy of his grace and service].” *Ibidem*, p. 7.

Jesuits such as Petrus Canisius in Southern Germany¹¹ and Antonio Possevino (from Mantua), author of *Moscovia* (1586).¹²

Reprising the thick pages of the *Relazioni universali* in which he described the political and religious situation of Poland, Bohemia, Moravia, Moscow and Scandinavia,¹³ in his *Dell'uffizio del cardinale* Botero updates the situation of “Red Russia” and “White Russia” (Belarus) and spend some words more for Poland. In “Red Russia”, dominated by Poland, most people are Orthodox and obey to the Patriarch of Constantinople. Anyway many nobles are catholic and the young sons of the powerful Duke of Ostrog (perhaps Konstanty Wasyl Ostrogski: is son Janusz converted to Roman Catholicism in 1579), who is Orthodox, were recently converted as some bishops who visited the Pope Clement VIII: “so we hope that all Red Russia will become catholic very soon”.¹⁴ In “White Russia” they still lived as Orthodox Greeks among “many errors” (“molti errori”),¹⁵ while Poland was in a better condition. “Great” Poland was “cleaner and sane than Little”¹⁶ because Lutheranism, Calvinism and Anabaptism were not too much diffused. The problem, mostly in Lithuania, was the idolatry: “they adore the beasts, the fire, the woods, the sun, the moon, the very high and ancient trees.”¹⁷ In Livonia (Latvia) villains souls still preserved some seeds of Catholicism, but they were affected by ignorance, while in the cities the Lutheranism had more appeal. Prussia was in the grip of heresy, having princes and habitants lost the “catholic truth”¹⁸ and risking the chasm of atheism. There were about 1000 Catholics living in Sweden and Gotland. King Charles IX Vasa, who had just dethroned the King of Poland, Sigismund III, preferred Calvinism. Norway and Denmark were Lutheran kingdoms. Some cities were protectors of Catholicism: Trier, Konstanz, Würzburg (Erbipoli), and Augsburg in Germany; Liège (Luik) in Belgium; and Salzburg and Vienna in Austria. Botero observed a complex situation in Bohemia and Moravia. In Olomouc and some regions under its jurisdiction,

11 A praise of his *Catechismus minimum* (1556) is in: G. BOTERO, *Dell'uffizio del cardinale*, p. 66.

12 As Chabod demonstrated, *Moscovia* was one of the books copied by Botero in his *Relazioni universali* (with reference to the new edition of 2017 see: F. CHABOD, *Giovanni Botero*, pp. 160–170). About the important reportage by Possevino see Giovanni MANISCALCO BASILE, *La «Moscovia» di Antonio Possevino SJ. Il resoconto di una missione impossibile*, Journal of Educational, Cultural and Psychological Studies 8, 2013, pp. 305–320.

13 G. BOTERO, *Le relazioni universali*, vol. I, pp. 131–176; 193–209; vol. II, pp. 609–641; vol. III, pp. 149–181.

14 “Onde si spera che tutta Russia rossa debba in breve diventar Cattolica” (G. BOTERO, *Dell'uffizio del cardinale*, p. 77). About the *entourage* of Clement VIII see a description written by Botero's friend Girolamo Frachetta: Artemio Enzo BALDINI, *Puntigli spagnoleschi e intrighi politici nella Roma di Clemente VIII. Girolamo Frachetta e la sua relazione del 1603 sui cardinali*, Milano 1981.

15 G. BOTERO, *Dell'uffizio del cardinale*, p. 77.

16 Ibidem.

17 Ibidem: “In più luoghi vi si adorano le bistic, il fuoco, i boschi, il Sole, la Luna, gli alberi di altezza o di vecchiezza notabile.”

18 Ibidem.

there were many people who were Catholic but also those who were Anabaptists. He hoped that Franz Seraph von Dietrichstein, the recently appointed Bishop of Olomouc, would restore the Christianity throughout this land with his “*dexterity, goodness, and value.*”¹⁹ Von Dietrichstein was a perfect example of a minister of the church: he was appointed Cardinal of San Silvestro in Capite in March of 1599 and then Bishop of Olomouc in May of the same year.²⁰ Quoting him, Botero once more shows his attention to contemporary history and his ability to analyze political strategies in many different contexts. Prague, in spite of the presence of an important college of the Society of Jesus, was full of Protestants of any kind, and Pressburg (now Bratislava) “*more infect than Moravia*”²¹. Another crucial space for the European Catholicism was Tirol, with the ecclesiastical principedom of Brixen (in Italian, Bressanone): that region – that linked the empire to Italy during the Council of Trento – was the one to stress to improve the Catholic faith and to contrast not only the Reformation but also the Islam gathering at the doors of Transylvania and Hungary.²² A solution, according to Botero, was to send more clerics to those lands, because, especially in Moldavia, “*people become heretics more because of the lack of catholic priests than for real inclination to heresy.*”²³ He suggested other remedies could be increasing charity (“*to see heretics going on the straight way and to go back to the womb of the Church, there is nothing*

19 Ibidem, p. 85: “*Ma sendo stato assonto all'amministrazione di quella Chiesa il signor cardinal Diatristan, si ha ferma openione che, mediante la sua molta destrezza, bontà, valore, vi debba notabilmente rifiorir la fede e ripullulare ogni virtù Cristiana.*”

20 About cardinal Dietrichstein and his important role see: Silvano GIORDANO, *La legazione del cardinale Franz von Dietrichstein per le nozze di Mattia, re d'Ungheria e di Boemia (1611)*, in: R. Bösel – G. Klingenstein – A. Koller (edd.), *Kaiserhof – Papstthof (16. – 18. Jahrhundert)*, Wien 2006, pp. 45–57; Tomáš PARMA, “*Bishops are not necessary for Reform*”, *Religious Orders in the Catholic Reconquista of Bohemia and Moravia: Two Case studies*, in: M. C. Giannini (ed.), *Papacy, Religious Orders and International Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Roma 2013, pp. 165–182. Many quotations of Dietrichstein also in Antonín KALOUS (ed.), *The Transformation of Confessional Cultures in a Central European City: Olomouc, 1400–1750*, Roma 2015; Tomáš ČERNUŠÁK and alii (edd.), *The Papacy and the Czech Lands. A History of Mutual Relations*, Rome – Prague 2016.

21 G. BOTERO, *Dell'uffizio del cardinale*, p. 85.

22 It is well-studied that this was an intense diplomatic canal, strengthened by the aristocratic marriages between Italian and imperial noble families and the cultural circulation of artistic models. For instance, see the case of the House of Lobkowitz, related to some of the most important Italian families and dynasties such as the Gonzaga: Pavel MAREK (ed.), *Svědeckví o ztrátě starého světa. Manželská korespondence Zdeňka Vojtěcha Popela z Lobkovic a Polyxeny Lobkovické z Pernštejna*, České Budějovice 2005. And see: Umberto ARTIOLI – Cristina GRAZIOLI (edd.), *I Gonzaga e l'Impero. Itinerari dello spettacolo*, Firenze 2005. About Hungary see: Péter TUSOR, *The Papal Concistories and Hungary in the 15th – 16th Centuries. To the History of the Hungarian Royal Patronage and Supremacy*, Budapest – Rome 2012 (= *Collectanea Vaticana Hungariae*).

23 “*Nella Moldavia [...] i popoli divengono eretici più per mancamento di sacerdoti catolici che per inclinazione che essi si abbiano all'eresia.*” G. BOTERO, *Dell'uffizio del cardinale*, p. 88.

better than alms and beneficence”).²⁴ He encouraged the creating of seminaries, following the example of some local princes:

“Two princes with a small state and few sources, as to say the prince of Transylvania and the one of Wallachia, moved presently against the reason of war, lowed the pride of Turks with courage and weapons [...] We should exploit these victories to propagate the faith, and this will happen any time we add the doctrine to the weapons, and the priests to the soldiers.”²⁵

The final suggestion to the cardinal was intolerant. If military defeats and theology were missing, the Catholic authorities had to follow the example of Muslims in the Ottoman Empire: they must separate children from their parents and grow them up apart until they lost “the memory of their law and rites.”²⁶ Another interesting and crucial point, in the phrase, is the typical idea of Botero that the small states could afford any kind of danger with the best result. It is the idea of the “medium” (*mezzano*) state theorized in the *Ragion di Stato*:²⁷ while the Catholic Habsburgs Empires (the Spanish and the Holy Roman Empire) could not afford the enterprise easily, there was a space, in Europe, that could give a political sample, even if in a completely different situation.

Papacy as an Italian and virtually universal state.

The *Stato della Chiesa* (the papacy) is a paradoxical case in the panorama of the ancient Italian states. Its leader was at the same time the pope and a king: a *sovrano pontefice*, as Paolo Prodi defined the pope:²⁸

“a sovereign and, at the same time, the main ruler of the Church, with spiritual and temporal power in his hands and with a strategic perception of his regional state, spread through the central part of

24 Ibidem, p. 69.

25 “Due principi di piccolo stato e di poche facultà, cioè il Transilvano e il Valacco, mossi a’ tempi nostri contra l’ordinaria ragion di guerra, hanno con l’ardire sgomentato e con l’arme abbassato l’orgoglio degli Ottomani [...] Resta che ci sappiamo di tante e gloriose vittorie valere per la propagazione della fede, il che avverrà ogni volta che alle armi si aggiungerà la dottrina e a’ soldati i sacerdoti.” Ibidem, pp. 122–123.

26 Ibidem, p. 123.

27 Friedrich MEINECKE, *L’idea della Ragion di Stato*, Roma 1970, pp. 65–70; Mario ROSA, *La cultura politica*, in: G. Greco – M. Rosa (edd.), *Storia degli antichi Stati italiani*, Roma – Bari 1990, pp. 59–101; Elena FASANO GUARINI, *Repubbliche e principi. Istituzioni e pratiche di potere nella Toscana granducale del ‘500–‘600*, Bologna 2010, pp. 50–51. Besides the classic edition by Luigi FIRPO (Torino 1948) and the one by Chiara CONTINISIO (Roma 1997; II edition 2009), see now: Giovanni BOTERO (edd. Romain Descendre and Pierre Benedittini), *Della ragion di Stato*, Torino 2016.

28 Paolo PRODI, *Il Sovrano pontefice. Un corpo e due anime: la monarchia papale nella prima età moderna*, Bologna 1982.

*Italy with territorial ambitions. Meanwhile, in Europe and in the rest of the world the papacy played the role of medium territorial state with universal pretensions.*²⁹

Botero understood the potential political power of the pope and the papacy. He had witnessed the conquering of Ferrara in 1598,³⁰ one of the most successful enterprises of the Church as a territorial dominion. At the end of the XVI century, the papacy was bigger than ever, because it included not only the central part of Italy (Lazio, part of Tuscany, Marche, Umbria) but also this new extension on the Adriatic sea: the lands of the Dukes of Este, the Romagna (Bologna and its surroundings) and the fundamental harbor of Ancona. All these properties permitted to the pope to rule on a large portion of the peninsula. Aside from Rome *caput mundi*, many cities and towns enriched the territory. In addition to Ferrara, Bononia and Ancona, there were Perugia, Fermo, Ascoli Piceno, Viterbo and Ravenna, Civitavecchia and its port, Comacchio and its fishing activity. The countryside was full of lakes; the most important rivers – Po and Tevere – were rich of water and fishes and they were useful like liquid roads useful to transport men, goods, and troops.

The papal borders inside Italy were quite clear: except for Venice, a historical enemy, the Kingdom of Naples was quiet and loyal. The principal reason was enunciated in the central point of the speech:

*"I will not say anything about the authority given by religion; anything about the interest that the other princes have into the preservation of the Ecclesiastical State because, if it ruins, they would ruin too; anything about the protection offered to the Church by the foreign princes, because of ambition of glory or because of reason of State."*³¹

The *Relazione dello Stato della Chiesa* explores the concept – the Boterian idea of Reason of state – moving from the consideration that the pope had an “infinite authority”³² and was “the supreme judge of the universe”.³³ Virtually the pope was the most powerful man in the

29 See Blythe Alice RAVIOLA, *L'Europa dei piccoli Stati. Dalla prima età moderna al declino dell'Antico Regime*, Roma 2008, pp. 42–46; Maria Antonietta VISCEGLIA, *La Roma dei papi. La corte e la politica internazionale (secoli XV–XVII)*, Roma 2018, specifically pp. 293–322.

30 For the Devolution of Ferrara of 1598 see: Lino MARINI, *Lo Stato estense*, in: L. Marini – G. Tocci – C. Mozzezzelli – A. Stella (edd.), *I Ducati padani*, Trento e Trieste, Torino 1979, pp. 59–66 (= *Storia d'Italia* coord. by Giuseppe Galasso, vol. XVII). More recently M. A. VISCEGLIA, *La Roma dei papi*, pp. 248–292.

31 “*Non dico dell'autorità che li [to the pope] arreca la religione; nulla d'interesse che gli altri principi d'Italia hanno della conservazione dello Stato ecclesiastico la cui depressione sarebbe rovina loro; nula della prontezza con la qual i principi stranieri si moverebbero a prender la protezione della Chiesa, o per vaghezza di gloria o per ragion di Stato.*” G. BOTERO, *Relazione dello Stato della Chiesa*, pp. 179–180.

32 *Ibidem*, p. 180.

33 *Ibidem*.

world, at least in the Catholic regions. In his extraordinary realism – a peculiar character that helps to fill the theoretical distance between Machiavelli and Botero³⁴ – the former Jesuit stated that the principal reason of weakness in the papacy was the threat of Reformation throughout Europe, in the strong presence of other religions in the world and also in some structural gaps. Beyond the main themes of *Relazioni universali*, Botero explains that the pope's dominion had other difficulties. The first issue was the swamps which were found in the Roman countryside. The remediation of Agro Pontino was indicated by Botero as an essential part of the papacy, due to the increase in hydraulic and technical capabilities.³⁵ A similar intervention was required in the acquired zone of Ferrara, in Romagna, where the region of Polesine was damaged by the floods of Po and the air was unhygienic. The second concern was the economy. It was vital for the papacy to improve trade throughout Italy and the ports of the Mediterranean Sea. The second issue, according to Botero, was economy: the pope had to improve trade all over the peninsula and also in the Mediterranean Sea using its ports. Third aspect: to fortify its cities. The pages dedicated to this argument are really brilliant. Moving from the Machiavellian perspective of inner security and exterior security, Botero demonstrates that, in his opinion, it is better to fortify or strengthen the borders than the “heart”³⁶ (the capital) of the state, even if the main city, normally, had its citadel that was a sort of natural protection: “*like nature strengthens some animals with the skull, but also with horns, so the Reason of State and of war encircles these cities with walls and strengthen them with citadels.*”³⁷ The city of Rome was in a peculiar position: it was not in the middle of the state and it was very far from Bologna, Ferrara and Ancona. Its city limits were not very strong, and the same could be said about the borders of the state

34 Though Botero criticized Machiavelli, (“*quite a brilliant man, but not very Christian*”, he said in the premise of his treaty *De regia sapientia*, 1583) and historiography stressed the difference between their thought and approach, there are common elements in their operas. They both examine the ideas of the greatness of cities and states and had similar concepts regarding their defence. See Luigi FIRPO, *Introduzione alla “Ragion di Stato” di Giovanni Botero*, in: Idem (ed.), *Scritti sul pensiero politico del Rinascimento e della Controriforma*, Torino 2005, pp. 57–82, Chiara CONTINISIO, *Introduzione to G. BOTERO, La ragion di Stato*, Roma 1997 and Romain DESCENDRE, *Introduzione to G. BOTERO, La ragion di Stato*, Torino 2016.

35 It would have been necessary to “*cut the woods, cult the land, dry the swamps and build big houses [...] where peasants could live without getting ill*” (G. BOTERO, *Relazione dello Stato della Chiesa*, pp. 182–183; in original “*non si può altramente rimediare che con tagliar i boschi et ridurla a coltura e con essicar le paludi e sopra tutto col fabricar ampi casamenti ove la gente possa ripararsi [...] che gli difendano dall'impressioni maligne dell'aere*”). It is useful to remember the same point – the notorious “*bonifica dell'Agro Pontino*” – became one of the central goals of fascist propaganda during the regime of Benito Mussolini.

36 Ibidem, p. 191.

37 Ibidem: “*Si come la natura non solo assicura la testa d'alcuni animali col cranio, ma l'arma ancora con le corna, così la ragione di Stato e di guerra et cinge simili città con muraglia e le rinforza con cittadelle.*”

(The Sack of Rome in 1527 is not mentioned here, while Botero positively mentions the walls fortified by Pope Pius IV).

It may seem that the preoccupation with the diffusion of heresy and the analysis of papacy as an autonomous medium state is contradictory. However, in Botero's thinking – as in Francesco Guicciardini's previously – the apparent contradiction is overcome by the strong cultural architecture of his opera. As a universal prince, the pope was required to regulate and preserve his domain to avoid any incursions. Only in the perfect conditions of equilibrium, considering that it was a sort of electoral monarchy, the papacy could project its influence across the world. As the author remarks, at that time:

*“The interests of princes do not imply a union against the Church. Princes prefer that the Church keeps its greatness because its weakness could empower any powerful prince. The pope is like a universal father and that the state of the Church could help any other state.”*³⁸

The help that the papacy could give was economic and political, as the Habsburgs knew in their expeditions against the Turks; but it was also spiritual and devoted to reach the universal unity of Christianity.

Conclusions

Though *Dell'uffizio del cardinale* and the *Relazione dello Stato della Chiesa* are complementary texts in the main corpus of Botero's books, they confirm the political acuteness of their author. They are completely part of his original reflection on religion, state, government and the peculiar interaction among these elements. Read in the context of Botero's bigger and more ambitious work – the *Relazioni universali* –, the two parts of the speech reveal the constant upgrade of the thinker³⁹ and his genuine passion for what was happening. However, another perspective that should be considered is the perspective of patronage. At the end of the sixteenth century, Giovanni Botero was in search for a commission. As

38 Ibidem, p. 193: “*Gli interessi poi de' principi non comportano unione e lega importante contro la Chiesa perché a tutti sta meglio ch'ella si mantenga nella sua grandezza che la sua depressione aggiunga qualche potenza a qualche principe per sé potente, conciosia che, sì come il papa è padre universale, così pare che lo Stato della Chiesa sia quasi Stato da cui ognuno possa promettersi aiuto.*”

39 About this aspect of Botero's opera see Blythe Alice RAVIOLA, *Le Relazioni universali di Giovanni Botero. Un viaggio politico nel mondo moderno*, in: G. Botero, *Le relazioni universali I-II*, Torino 2017, here vol. I, pp. LI-LX; EADEM, *Ultimo giro*, in: G. Botero, *Le relazioni universali, Parte quinta*, vol. III, Torino 2017, pp. VII-XXX; EADEM, «*Non si ha molta notizia di questi paesi*»: *Las Relaciones universales de Giovanni Botero entre historia contemporánea, catolicismo y visión global del mundo conocido (siglos XVI-XVII)*, in: G. Ciappelli – V. Nider (edd.), *La invención de las noticias. Las relaciones de sucesos entre la literatura y la información (siglos XVI-XVIII)*, Trento 2017, pp. 673–686.

former Jesuit and, at that time, as Oblate, he was very well known in the ambient of Rome. So he could still get protection inside the Church or, as he would have preferred, in the Spanish Habsburg monarchy. In the dedication to Cardinal Guevara, he flattered him by declaring that Spain was jealous of him and, during his stage in Italy, the court and the country wanted him back; as other signals show,⁴⁰ Botero too would have liked to move from Italy to the Iberian Peninsula.

As the biographers tell us, things went differently. Botero would have reached the court of Philip III not serving the king, nor Cardinal Guevara, but becoming tutor of the sons of the Duke of Savoy, Charles Emmanuel I.⁴¹ To him, it was the occasion to live in Spain for three years and deep in the reflection about power and religion. According to his Counterreformation vision of the world, proselytism and conversion were the right means; but the *Realpolitik* was overwhelming. Drastic alterations (*alterazioni*) were influencing changes to many established political assets. In the last part of the *Relazioni universali*, written around 1611,⁴² the section dedicated to Hungary, Bohemia, Sweden, Russia and Poland is extensive and mostly focused on the danger of Islam, as strong as the Protestant heresy. Cardinal Andreas Bathory, the Duke of Transylvania and tireless promoter of Catholicism, died in 1599, the year *Dell'uffizio del cardinale* was completed. As Botero reported, he was killed while attempting to flee after the Battle of Şelimbär.⁴³ Despite the Ottoman Empire was at war against Persia, its forces were threatening Hungary and Boemia more than ever. The peace treaty signed in 1596 between Russia and Poland (due to the Jesuit Possevino) was losing importance and a general religious crisis was affecting all those provinces, letting the Orthodox schism to diffuse all over.⁴⁴

The universal model conceived and recommended by Mercurino di Gattinara and Erasmus Rotterdamus for the young Emperor Charles V had failed during the long sixteenth century. Now, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the empire, the European nations,

40 Similar to the dedication to Cardinal Simón Tagliavia of Aragon in the American section of the *Relazioni universali* (G. BOTERO, *Le relazioni universali*, Vol. I, p. 345) and similar to a sonnet he wrote to one of the closest secretaries of Philip II, Gabriel de Zayas: see Blythe Alice RAVIOLA, *Un sonetto a margine del corpus delle Relazioni universali*, in: Eadem (ed.), *Boteriana I. Giovanni Botero a 400 anni dalla sua scomparsa*, Torino 2018, pp. 123–133.

41 María José DEL RÍO BARREDO, *El viaje de los príncipes de Saboya a la corte de Felipe III (1603–1606)*, in: P. Bianchi – L. C. Gentile (edd.), *L'affermarsi della corte sabauda. Dinastie, poteri, élites in Piemonte e Savoia fra tardo medioevo e prima età moderna*, Torino 2006, pp. 407–434.

42 Never published until 1895: see Carlo GIODA, *La vita e le opere di Giovanni Botero*, vol. 3, Milano 1895; now: G. BOTERO, *Le relazioni universali*, vol. III.

43 Ibidem, vol. III, pp. 153–154.

44 See the bitter and realistic considerations of Botero at pp. 286–289.

the small and medium states had to face the dissolution of that dream. New challenges were waiting for the Catholic Church and its pretended universal role.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ I would like to thank my friend and colleague Pavel Marek for involving me in this monographic number of *Theatrum Historiae*. Our conversations about Spanish Imperialism and the Holy Roman Empire provided the inspiration for this short contribution.