



BRILL

JOURNAL OF JESUIT STUDIES 7 (2020) 570-591



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The Jesuit Giambattista Tolomei (1653–1726): Cardinal and Philosopher

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Abstract

This article sets out what is known of the life of Giambattista Tolomei (1653–1726), sometime rector of the Jesuit school in Ragusa (Dubrovnik), of the Collegio Romano, and the Collegio Germanico, cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, philosopher, theologian, bibliophile, and philologist. Tolomei's life intersected a series of significant events in the church's history and that of the Society of Jesus: on-going conflict with Jansenism, the Chinese Rites controversy, significant innovations in the Society's intellectual curriculum, and its renewed incorporation within the upper echelons of the Roman Curia. Tolomei played a key part in all those developments, and his role in what transpired is explored here—placed in context to establish his significance to the Society's history in the early eighteenth century and beyond.

Keywords

Giambattista Tolomei – Jesuit cardinal – Jansenism – Chinese Rites controversy – Roman Curia – Concilio Romano – Collegio Romano

The Society of Jesus has always had an ambiguous relationship with the dignities and offices of the hierarchical church: considerable pressure had to be placed on its earliest members for them to accept bishoprics or red hats in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹ Equally, Catholic anti-Jesuitism before

1 Ángel Santos Hernández, *Jesuitas y obispos: Los jesuitas obispos misioneros y los obispos jesuitas de la extinción*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 1998–2001), 1:21–22.

the suppression, unlike Protestant critiques, often lamented the Jesuits' lack of obedience to *either* pope *or* local authority.² And yet Rome was the major center of Jesuit activity throughout the early modern period with a surprising number of Jesuits flourishing within the papal curia and obtaining considerable honors as they did so.³ Giambattista Tolomei was one such: the first, most celebrated, and perhaps most consequential of the three fathers elevated to the Sacred College in the early eighteenth century. An erudite scholar who mastered eleven languages, Tolomei was a one-time rector of the Jesuit school in Ragusa (Dubrovnik) and the Collegio Romano before his promotion in 1712.

Tolomei's career and his impact on the Collegio Romano or the Roman Curia have never been much studied so the following article is something of an introductory survey—my intention in having written it is both to synthesize disparate information and also to outline how study of a single figure, such as he, can illuminate the wider picture. Tolomei successfully navigated the political obstacles the Society's early eighteenth-century controversies placed in his path and he won favor within the upper echelons of the papal administration. Tolomei's activities as cardinal between 1712 and his death in 1726 indeed underline how strongly various popes valued his theological services and also the important role that theologians, including Jesuit theologians, could play in legitimizing favored policies at this time. Thus, Tolomei was active both in Clement XI's (r.1700–21) move against the disobedient French bishops who rejected his condemnation of Jansenism in the bull *Unigenitus* (1713) and in Benedict XIII's (r.1724–30) instigation of the Concilio Romano in 1725. In both cases, Tolomei provided comprehensive theological cover for the pope's position and helped him to shore up wider support within Rome and beyond.

1 The Sources for Tolomei's Life

Tolomei's place in historiography has thus far been marginal and few accounts of his life survive, contemporary or more recent. By far the best, and most extensive, *vita* is that included by Francesco Antonio Zaccaria (1714–95) in his

2 See, for instance, Sabina Pavone, "Anti-Jesuitism in a Global Context," in Ines Županov, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Jesuits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 833–54, esp. 836, 838–40.

3 For an overview of the Jesuit presence in Rome, see Paul Murphy, "Jesuit Rome and Italy," in Thomas Worcester, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 71–87.

Bibliotheca Pistoriensis (Library of Pistoia) (1752).⁴ This text, written by another Jesuit, Pietro Maria Salamonio (1698–1768), first appeared as a post-mortem elegy in the *Giornale dei letterati d'Italia* (Journal of Italian men of letters) albeit only in incomplete form.⁵ Salamonio nevertheless offers an unusually detailed biography of his subject, which raises questions as to his purpose in writing—in particular, whether he intended the text as a first step towards a more official account that could have helped advance Tolomei's cause for sainthood. Besides this, other accounts of Tolomei's life include the three-page entry about him in Lorenzo Cardella's *Memorie storiche de cardinali della Santa romana Chiesa* (Historic recollections of the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church), the notes in Sommervogel's *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Library of the Society of Jesus), and Miko Korade's short entry in the *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús* (Historical dictionary of the Society of Jesus).⁶

Manuscript and archival sources for Tolomei are limited and highly dispersed: a few relevant documents lie in the Historical Archives of the Jesuit order, others in the Collegio Romano, a couple in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, and one outlining the contents of his will in the Archivio di Stato di Roma. One of the best sources is, in fact, the correspondence between Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) and Barthélemy des Bosses (1668–1738), a young Jesuit theologian whom the philosopher befriended.

This paucity of evidence surrounding Tolomei perhaps goes some way to explain his relative absence from modern historiography—he features respectably in Villoslada's history of the Collegio Romano, but only tangentially in more far-reaching scholarship about the development of science or the early eighteenth-century papacy. Of course, scholarship on the eighteenth-century papacy is itself comparatively light, and this too exacerbates the challenge of a full and contextualized account of Tolomei's life. My scheme below therefore follows a broadly chronological approach, with sections that consider

4 Pietro Maria Salamonio, "Jo. Baptistae Ptolomaei Societatis Jesu, Presbyteri Cardinalis Tit. S. Stephani Rotundi in monte Coelio Vita a Petro Maria Salamonio eiusdem Societatis descripta," in *Bibliotheca Pistoriensis*, ed. Francesco Antonio Zaccaria (Turin: Typographia Regia, 1752), 336–70. [This is the work referred to in the text as the *Life of Tolomei*.]

5 Pietro Maria Salamonio, "Vita del Card. Gio Battista Tolomei," in Pietro Caterino Zeno, ed., *Giornale dei letterati d'Italia* 38 (1727): 1–98.

6 Lorenzo Cardella, *Memorie storiche de' cardinali della Santa Romana Chiesa*, 9 vols. (Rome: Stamperia Pagliarini, 1792–97), 8:144–46. Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Paris: A. Picard, 1890–1909), 8:86–89. Miko Korade, "Tolomei, Giovanni Battista," in Charles O'Neill and Joaquín M. Domínguez, eds., *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús: Histórico-biográfico*, 4 vols. (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2001), 4:3809–10. An entry for Tolomei in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome: Treccani, 1960–) 96:34–36 was published by Vincenzo Tedesco while this essay was in print.

Tolomei's progress from his early origins in Pistoia, his decision to enter into the Society of Jesus, his work in the Jesuit colleges in Ragusa and Rome, and, finally, his experiences as a cardinal at the papal court. At the very least, this highlights the range of contexts in which this most learned of *eminentissimi* played a role.

2 Tolomei's Early Career

Salamonio's *Life of Tolomei* traces the history of the Tolomei family back to the Ptolemies of Egypt (305–30 BCE) or, at least, to Otto III's (r.996–1002) campaigns in the Italian Peninsula in the tenth century (a not unusual approach to mythical genealogy in the early modern period).⁷ However, Giambattista himself was born on December 3, 1653 in the town of Gamberaja, in the parish of S. Maria a Terenzano three miles from Florence. His father Jacopo was the son of Captain Giambattista, auditor of the Grand Duchess Vittoria de' Medici (wife of Ferdinando II, r.1621–70). Tolomei's mother was Maria di Francesco Pulliciani, the daughter of a line thought to be related to the wealthy Florentine "della Casa" family. The Tolomei of Pistoia were probably also related to Celso Tolomei (1572–1634), a Sienese nobleman whose legacy founded the Collegio Tolomei in 1676, though by what route is uncertain.⁸ Giambattista had a sister Maria Maddelena who became an abbess, and a brother Salvatore Francesco;⁹ he certainly had a nephew, Gianfilippo, who followed his uncle into the Society some time after 1712.¹⁰

Salamonio's *Life* offers a lengthy physical description of his subject in maturity: a tall man, well-built, and hearty, with a long face and clear olive skin, which had become somewhat pale on account of his many years shut away at study in dark interiors.¹¹ Tolomei's daily routine had been ascetic and intense: for thirty-five years he ate no dinner and worked relentlessly through the

7 On the actual origins of the Tolomei as a leading family in Pistoia, see Antonio Ruiu, *Il Monte senese dei Gentiluomini nel Principato medico: Inquadramento storico-storiografico e profilo comparato degli assetti politico-istituzionali e socio-economici interni, per la fondazione del Granducato* (Pisa: Plus, 2008), 15–16.

8 Roberto Giorgi and Laura Bonelli, eds., *L'Istituto di Celso Tolomei: Nobile collegio, convitto nazionale (1676–1997); Un grande ente culturale senese* (Siena: Tipografia Senese, 2000).

9 Salamonio, "Jo. Baptistae Ptolomaei Societatis Jesu Vita," 339. Carlos Gregorio Rosignoli, *Maraviglie di Dio nell'anime del Purgatorio* (Rome: Ferretti, 1839), 49–50 mentions a further sibling Angela.

10 Giuseppe Antonio Patrignani, *Menologio di pie memorie d'alcuni religiosi della Compagnia di Gesù*, 3 vols. (Venice: Niccolò Pezzana, 1730), 1:187.

11 Salamonio, "Jo. Baptistae Ptolomaei Societatis Jesu Vita," 365.

night.¹² One consequence of this is that Tolomei was able to acquire his remarkable repertoire of languages: French, Spanish, English, Latin, Greek, Illyrian, Hebrew, Chaldean, Syriac, and Arabic (besides, of course, his native Tuscan). Most accounts of Tolomei's linguistic range are anecdotal, but his known activities and correspondents makes their claims plausible. In any case, one of the ways in which he first drew attention to himself in Rome was his spirited rendition in Latin as a teenager in front of Cardinal Francesco Barberini (1597–1679), Felice Rospigliosi (1639–88; nephew of the late Clement IX [r.1667–69]), and sixty other prelates.¹³

Tolomei began his studies with the Jesuits in Florence at the college of S. Giovannino around the age of eleven. He followed the traditional curriculum by studying rhetoric, but at fifteen was sent away to Pisa where he turned his hand to law. Yet, according to Salamonio, Tolomei had already felt the call of a religious life at this tender age—hence the visit to Rome where he impressed the above-mentioned cardinals. Tolomei was soon busy studying philosophy under Giulio Cesare Corradi (c.1650–1701/2), dedicating his thesis to Cardinal Rospigliosi, who was apparently much taken by Tolomei's lively manner. The young would-be cleric returned to Tuscany in 1671, where he entered the University of Siena to continue his legal studies as his family expected him to. Yet, in practice, he went to listen to the lectures of the Jesuit Ercole Maria Isnardi (fl.1670) on Scholastic theology. Salamonio claims that Tolomei first asked his father's permission to join an order around this time but was rebuffed on the grounds that, as the firstborn son, he was destined for other things. Tolomei joined the Society of Jesus only on February 18, 1673—after his father had died—and apparently with the fervent desire to undertake missionary work in the Indies. He took his vows on February 19, 1675 and returned to Rome for two more years of study in the Collegio Romano before taking up his career proper within the order.¹⁴

The Rospigliosi, also from Pistoia, seem to have helped in Tolomei's early career—something that underlines the ongoing importance of local connections and ties of patronage throughout the Italian church at this time.¹⁵ However, Tolomei's initial progress was nevertheless relatively unpromising, in

12 Salamonio, "Jo. Baptistae Ptolomaei Societatis Jesu Vita," 353–54.

13 Salamonio, "Jo. Baptistae Ptolomaei Societatis Jesu Vita," 340.

14 "Son entrato nella Compagnia con ispirazione di server di proposito Iddio e salvar l'anima. 2. Mi sento inclinatore all'indie, ovvero ad altre disastrose missioni. 3. Desidero patir ingiurie e calunnie, per imitar davvero Gesù-Cristo." Salamonio, "Jo. Baptistae Ptolomaei Societatis Jesu vita," 341.

15 Renata Ago, *Carriere e clientele nella Roma barocca* (Rome: Laterza, 1990). On the Rospigliosis of this generation, see Irene Fosi's entry, "Rospigliosi, Giacomo," in the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 88:497–502.

spite of the former pope's family's patronage: he did not undertake the voyage to the Indies of which had dreamed, but instead spent two years teaching at the Jesuit school of Ragusa (1677–79). Tolomei's first published work, the funeral oration for Nicolò Bona (1600–78), a hero of the republic who died in Ottoman captivity, dates from this time.¹⁶ Tolomei returned to Rome once again in 1679 and taught at the Collegio Romano—reading between the lines, his expertise in the Illyrian dialect would seem to have been sought after by those in training for missionary work. Theology became his focus only in 1681, when he studied under Bartolomeo Caregno (*fl.*1680) and Angelo Alemanni (1637–1710), as a prelude to his ordination as priest in 1684. In 1686, the now thirty-three-year-old cleric was sent to the Collegio dei Pinti in Florence but was recalled to Rome after just three months to teach Sacred Scriptures at the Gesù. One of his early sermons from this time, on the stigmata of St. Francis d'Assisi (1182–1226), survives in the archives of the Gregorian University.¹⁷

From 1687 to 1691, Tolomei served as the Society's procurator general, undertaking further on-the-job training in canonistic jurisprudence to supplement the knowledge of civil law that he had acquired during his time in Siena. It was in his procuratorial capacity that Tolomei wrote to the Propaganda Fide at this time to complain that Jesuits in The Netherlands were being used as substitute parish clergy, *de facto* subject to the authority of the apostolic vicar. The subject was a delicate one, given the tensions surrounding the revival of Catholicism and the church hierarchy in the Low Countries, but Tolomei took a hard-line position, insisting that the Jesuits' privileges be reaffirmed and implemented (his petitions seem to have met with only mixed success).¹⁸ Tolomei undertook his solemn profession of vows as a full member of the Society only in August 1692, at the age of thirty-nine.

Salamonio cites a letter by Tolomei to the Jesuit superior general Tirso González (1624–1705; in office 1687–1705) around this time that professed his profound desire to return to teaching. No doubt it was after having received a favorable response to this request that Tolomei returned to the Collegio Romano where he held a string of appointments and responsibilities for the next fifteen years: professor of logic (1692–93), professor of natural philosophy (1693–94), professor of Hebrew (1693–96 and 1708–10), professor of metaphysics

16 G. B. Tolomei, *In funere Illustriss. D. Nicolai Bona, Joannis filii, oratio habita Ragusii a P. Joanne Baptista Ptolomaeo, S.J. rhetorices professore in Collegio Ragusino* (Ancona: Francesco Seraphini, 1679). I have not located a surviving copy of the original pamphlet, only a reprint (Dubrovnik: Pet. Francisci Martecchini, 1855).

17 "P. Tolomei sopra le stimmate di san Francesco, 1685," Archivio della Pontificia Università Gregoriana (hereafter APUG), manuscript 733. The manuscript also contains a second sermon that Tolomei preached before cardinals at the Gesù in Lent 1692.

18 Tolomei, undated letter (c.1690), APUG 212, fols. 182^r–185^v.

(1694–95), professor of ethics (1695–96), and professor of controversies (1698–1706).¹⁹ Tolomei attracted the greatest fame in this last role: the teaching of controversies at the Collegio had fallen into abeyance since Robert Bellarmine's (1542–1621) days (1576–87), but he was able to reinstitute it in the same tradition—and with such a degree of success that it remained in the curriculum continuously until the Society's suppression in 1773.²⁰ Villoslada, in his history of the Collegio, notes that Tolomei held his classes on controversies “all'ingresso dei Grammatici” (at the grammarians' entrance) after lunch, transferring them to the morning only in 1709—a move that apparently impacted the time available for discussion significantly, though whether this is evidence of their popularity he does not explain.²¹

Tolomei also served as the Collegio's rector from 1698 to 1701 and, in this capacity, had to deal with competition from the professors of the Sapienza, who complained that the Jesuits were encroaching on their traditional territory in the teaching of law. Tolomei's personal views on this subject are not known but, in 1699, he formally accepted the Roman Rota's decision to prohibit the Collegio from establishing a “separate and divided chair” in canon law and to concentrate on moral theology.²² The chair was in fact re-established in the Collegio in 1724, although we do not know what role (if any) Tolomei, then a cardinal, played in this.²³ From 1710, Tolomei also served as rector of Collegio Germanico, a separate seminary that trained missionary priests for the Protestant parts of German-speaking lands and Hungary. However, he remained the Collegio Romano's librarian and its lecturer in Hebrew during that time and, in the meantime, also acquired further curial responsibilities: as examiner of the prelates promoted to the episcopacy, and as a consultor of the Congregation of Rites, of the Index, and of Indulgences and Sacred Relics.²⁴

19 Ignazio Iparraguirre, “Elenco dei professori del Collegio Romano,” appendix to Ricardo Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano dal suo inizio (1551) alla soppressione della Compagnia di Gesù (1773)* (Rome: Apud Aedes Universitatis Gregoriana, 1954), 322–34.

20 Mario Fois, “L'organizzazione dell'insegnamento alla Gregoriana prima del 1773,” *Gregorianum* 85 (2004): 113–31, at 126. See also Giuseppe Domenici, “La genesi, le vicende ed i giudizi delle controversie Bellarminiane,” *Gregorianum* 2 (1921): 513–42, at 527.

21 Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano*, 230n. This is taken from APUG 142, fol. 112^r.

22 Paul Grendler, *Jesuits and Italian Universities, 1548–1773* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2017), 319–46, esp. 334–35. Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano*, 246–48.

23 Fois, “L'organizzazione dell'insegnamento alla Gregoriana prima del 1773,” 127.

24 Christoph Weber, *Die ältesten päpstlichen Staatshandbücher: Elenchus Congregationum, Tribunalium et Collegiorum Urbis, 1629–1714*, *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte. Supplementheft* (Rome: Herder, 1991), 737.

On Tirso González's death in 1705, Tolomei was selected as elector for the local province for the new Jesuit general congregation and he participated in the choice of the new superior general. Des Bosses wrote to Leibniz that Tolomei had a good chance of being elected himself—the latter responded by exclaiming, how “having observed in person and through letters the virtue and learning of Tolomei, I shall congratulate with joy and pleasure this eminent man as head of your society.”²⁵ In the event, Tolomei received only four votes on the first ballot.²⁶ Leibniz commented: “I suspect our Tolomei is pleased that honor came to him without obligation, for he was universally judged worthy of being elected.”²⁷ And, indeed, Tolomei seems almost immediately to have tried to get the pope to give him a brief, absolving him of all administrative duties and allowing him to concentrate on his scholarship. Yet no such brief ever arrived.

Tolomei's other activities during this period included responsibility for policy in relation to the Society's eastward expansion. In 1706, he advised the Slovenian Jesuit Gabriel Hevenesi (1656–1715) to establish an arm of the Society that adopted the Greek rite in order to operate in South-Eastern Europe and the Levant.²⁸ He was heavily involved around the same time in the papal response to the so-called Chinese Rites controversy—Leibniz's correspondence with Des Bosses contains numerous references to this—and various pamphlets in the Vienna State Library published in 1709–10 would seem to represent the fruits of his labors.²⁹ By 1710, Tolomei was corresponding with John

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- 25 Leibniz to Des Bosses, February 2, 1706, *The Yale Leibniz: The Leibniz-Des Bosses Correspondence*, trans. and ed. Brandon C. Look and Donald Rutherford (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 8–9.
- 26 Des Bosses to Leibniz, March 2, 1706, *Yale Leibniz*, 28–29. John Padberg, Martin O'Keefe, and John McCarthy, eds., *For Matters of Greater Moment: The First Thirty Jesuit General Congregations* (St. Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1994), 373–74.
- 27 Leibniz to Des Bosses, May 21, 1706, *Yale Leibniz*, 38–39.
- 28 This information is included in Giorgio Guzzetta to Benedict XIV, undated letter (c.1706), Nicolaus Nilles, *Symbolae ad illustrandam historiam ecclesiae orientalis in terris coronae S. Stephani* (Innsbruck: F. Rauch, 1885), 1:89–90.
- 29 Des Bosses to Leibniz, July 30, 1709: “After writing this letter I received a letter from Tolomei, in which he bade me greet you in his name and indicated how pleasing your views were to him, most of all your thoughts on the Chinese rites. But he would be even more pleased to have the book you published on this matter entitled *The Latest News from China*—no doubt, so that it might become known in Rome what learned and moderate Protestants think about the Chinese situation, and so that not all opinion is formed from the reports of Dutch traders, who seek profit and entice buyers through endless ridicule of the Jesuits,” *Yale Leibniz*, 136–37. Leibniz sent Tolomei a copy of his short tract on Chinese Religion: Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, “Über den Kult und die Religion der Chinesen [August 1709],” in *Briefe über China (1694–1716): Die Korrespondenz mit Barthélemy des*

Pataki (d.1729), a Jesuit who was seeking confirmation as general supervisor of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Transylvania (then in union with Rome).³⁰ Ruggiero Giuseppe Boscovich (1711–87), an important late eighteenth-century man of science, mentions him as having been a member of the Accademia degli Arcadi (alongside the three popes he served), where he seems to have been acclaimed under the pseudonym “Filoteo Aridio” in 1712.³¹

3 Tolomei as Scholar

Tolomei’s initial fame rested on his prowess as a scholar—and he was a prolific author during his years at the Collegio Romano. Carlos Sommervogel set out his complete literary corpus (along with various short contemporary literary compositions about him).³² However, just four works by Tolomei made it into print during his lifetime: the funeral oration for Nicolai Bona in Ragusa (noted above), the *Philosophia Mentis et sensuum secundum utramque Aristotelis methodum pertractata metaphysice et empirice* (Philosophy of the mind and senses according to Aristotle’s method investigated both metaphysically and empirically) (Rome: Ex Typographia Reverendae Camerae Apostolicae 1696), an exhaustive presentation of Aristotelian physics; *De Christo Deo polemico-dogmaticae conclusiones* (On the nature of Jesus Christ, polemic-dogmatic conclusions] (Rome: Typis Joan. Jacobi Komarek, 1698), a theological work on the nature of the divine; and *Preces quotidianae ad impetrandam bonam mortem* (Daily prayers for dying well) (Rome: Bernabó, 1713; and at least four

Bosses S.J. und anderen Mitgliedern des Ordens, ed. Rita Widmaier and Malte-Ludolf Babin (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2017), 110–23. Tolomei’s response to this text is not recorded in the subsequent passages of the Leibniz-Des Bosses correspondence that address his preoccupation with the Chinese Rites, *Yale Leibniz*, 140–41 (September 6, 1709); 160–61 (January 18, 1710); 198–99 (February 8, 1711). Tolomei’s writings on the Chinese Rites controversy include the following: “Libellus supplex P. Joan Bapt. Ptolemaei Clementi XI P.M. oblatu au 1709,” and “Libellus supplex post decretum pontificium Anni 1710 Clementis XI oblatu,” Vienna State Library, *Ms 117*, vol. 2, fols. 197–239 and 247–53.

30 On Tolomei’s correspondence with Pataki, see Robert Seton-Watson, *A History of the Romanians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), 175; and Radu Nedici, “Avatarurile unei cariere ecleziastice: Ioan Pataki, de la misionar apostolic latin la episcop unit de rit grec,” *Annales Universitatis Apulensis: Series historica* 15, no. 1 (2011): 181–94, at 181n and 187.

31 Edoardo Proverbio, “Boscovich: Scientist and Man of Letters,” *Memorie della Società Astronomica Italiana: Supplementi* 22 (2013): 34–54, at 45. Anna Maria Giorgetti Vichi, ed., *Gli Arcadi dal 1690 al 1800: Onomasticon* (Rome: Arcadia, Accademia Letteraria Italiana, 1977), 128.

32 Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 8:86–89.

further editions), a new set of prayers in the tradition of the *Ars moriendi*. Most of Tolomei's other works remain in manuscript, although a number of his polemical dissertations were included in a later collection *De Romano B. Petri Pontificatu, dissertationes polemicae* (On St. Peter's Roman papacy, polemical dissertations), *Miscellaneorum ex Mss. Libris Bibliothecae Collegii Romani Societatis Jesu Series altera* (Rome: Ex officina libraria Collegii scriptorium Civilitatis Catholicae, 1867). Amongst Tolomei's surviving manuscript works are a tract about Suárez and Scholastic method,³³ a second dissertation *De sacramento ordinis et ecclesiastica hierarchia dogmatica et historica pertractatio* (On the sacrament of ordination and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, a dogmatic and historical discussion), a third *De sacramento et disciplina penitentiae dogmatica et historica dissertatio* (On the sacrament and discipline of penance, a dogmatic and historical dissertation), and the five-volume *Additiones et vindiciae ad librum primum et secundum Cardinalis Bellarmini de Romano Pontifice* (Additions to and opinions about the first and second books of Cardinal Bellarmine's *On the Roman Pontiff*).³⁴

The significance of Tolomei's scholarship would ultimately seem to lie in his place at a critical juncture in the Society's contribution to the history of science. Late seventeenth-century Jesuits had to grapple with the increasing separation of the study of physics from metaphysics and with questions about the relationship between theology and natural philosophy—the latter partly under pressure from the Holy Office and partly as a result of advances in scientific knowledge.³⁵ Anna Rita Capoccia sees Tolomei as a key individual within that chain of figures who circumvented the Society's official precepts to incorporate

33 This manuscript was published in translation, John Reddington, *The Act of Faith in the Theology of Suárez according to the Tenets of an Unedited Manuscript Attributed to John Baptist Cardinal Tolomei* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1939).

34 *Recentioris theologi ad alium theologum recentiorem Responsio in qua confirmatur eximium Doctorem P. Fr. Suarium non fuisse constantem in illa sententia sua, quae invenitur in eiusdem Tractatu de fide d. 3 s. 12 n. 9 et sic se habet: "In omni assensu fidei..." Si tamen ea sententia intelligatur prout ibi iacet et ab adversario theologo sustinetur*, APUG 366; *De sacramento ordinis et ecclesiastica hierarchia dogmatica et historica pertractatio*, APUG 367; *De sacramento et disciplina penitentiae dogmatica et historica dissertatio*, APUG, 368; *Additiones et vindiciae ad librum primum et secundum Cardinalis Bellarmini de Romano Pontifice*, BAV, Vat. Lat. 8070–74.

35 Ugo Baldini, "The Development of Jesuit 'Physics' in Italy, 1550–1700: A Structural Approach," in *Philosophy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Conversations with Aristotle*, ed. Constance Blackwell and Sachiko Kusakawa (Farnham: Ashgate, 1999), 248–79, at 268 and 271n49. See also Maria Pia Donato, "Scienza e teologia nelle congregazioni romane: La questione atomista, 1626–1727," in *Rome et la science moderne entre Renaissance et Lumières*, ed. Antonella Romano (Rome: École française de Rome, 2009), 595–634, at 632n.

atomist and Cartesian philosophy in their syllabi.³⁶ Luca Ciancio, who has studied reactions to the geophysics of Athanasius Kircher's *Mundus subterraneus* (Subterranean World) (1665), argues that Tolomei was the theologian who most successfully reformulated Kircher's conclusions within an Aristotelian framework: he cycles through a series of dissertations in the *Philosophia mentis* that draw on biblical, patristic, and Scholastic authorities to affirm the created world's temporal, finite, and teleological nature—however, Tolomei goes on to incorporate both Aristotle's idea of an immobile Earth central to the universe and also Kircher's postulations about the planet's fiery center, claiming that phenomena such as volcanoes and hot springs offered indisputable proof.³⁷ Ciancio concludes that Tolomei's treatise indicates how a thus-minded cleric could still reconcile new ideas about the world within a framework of orthodox doctrine. Yet, this new Aristotelianism had its limits: ideas about the composition of the Earth could be incorporated within Tolomei's mindset, but those concerning heliocentrism could not. Tolomei accepted that the heavens might be constructed from elemental matter, but he rejected heliocentric theories as irreconcilable with experience, Scripture, and the decrees of the Roman congregations.³⁸

Francesco Beretta has noted that Tolomei ultimately still based his Scholastic framework on the Thomist hierarchy of disciplines, which determined his fundamental choices in natural philosophy and excluded *a priori* any possibility that he could accept a heliocentric truth. Nevertheless, this predisposition to exclude the latest theories does not mean that Tolomei was ignorant of them, nor of recent astronomical discoveries—indeed, far from it, Tolomei's work engages observations of sunspots, not only earlier in the century by Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) and Christoph Scheiner (1573–1650) but also by Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655) in the 1630s and Giovanni Domenico Cassini

36 Anna Rita Capoccia, "Modernità e ortodossia: Strategie di conciliazione e dissidenza nell'insegnamento della filosofia nei collegi gesuitici del primo Settecento," *Les Dossiers du Grihl* (2009), <http://journals.openedition.org/dossiersgrihl/3678>; DOI: 10.4000/dossiersgrihl.3678 (accessed February 20, 2020). See also Anna Rita Capoccia, "L'insegnamento della filosofia cartesiana nel Collegio Romano agli inizi del XVIII secolo," *Roma moderna e contemporanea* 7 (1999): 499–535.

37 Luca Ciancio, "'Immoderatus fervor ad intra coërcendus': Reactions to Athanasius Kircher's Central Fire in Jesuit Science and Imagination," *Nuncius* 33 (2018): 464–504, esp. 487–89.

38 On Tolomei's views in relation to other Jesuit professors of his generation, see Luís Miguel Carolino, "Astronomy, Cosmology, and Jesuit Discipline, 1540–1758," in Ines Županov, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Jesuits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 670–90, esp. 682–83.

(1625–1712) in 1677.³⁹ Miroslav Hanke has also recently re-evaluated the importance of Tolomei's *Philosophia mentis* to probability theory, concluding that Tolomei's logic of probability should be seen as a major staging-post in the paradigm shift amongst Jesuit philosophers from non-mathematical (or pre-mathematical) to mathematical models.⁴⁰

Tolomei's role in late seventeenth-century intellectual circles is also celebrated in some quarters on account of his known correspondence with the philosopher Leibniz. Leibniz came to Rome in April 1689 and probably met Tolomei then, alongside other Jesuits associated with the papal curia.⁴¹ Yet, the bulk of Leibniz's correspondence with Tolomei and his associates derives from the early years of the eighteenth century. A 1702 essay by Leibniz extols "the philosophy of the Reverend Father Tolomei, a man well versed in the opinions of both the ancients and the moderns, whose distinguished doctrine I myself examined in Rome."⁴² A letter of October 11, 1703 congratulates the future cardinal for his skill at setting out the positions of the various schools of natural philosophy and another from 1705 describes the *Philosophia mentis* as an "exceptional book."⁴³ Francesco Beretta notes another missive that Leibniz sent to Francesco Bianchini two days after his paean to Tolomei of 1703, regretting deeply how Italian talent was wasted under a papal regime that censored so much intellectual freedom.⁴⁴ Moreover, Leibniz alluded to Tolomei's lack of intellectual liberty (either in Rome or within the Society) in a letter to Des

39 Francesco Beretta, "L'héliocentrisme à Rome, à la fin du xvii^e siècle: Une affaire d'étrangers?; Aspects structurels d'un espace intellectuel," in *Rome et la science moderne*, ed. Romano, 529–54, at 552.

40 Miroslav Hanke, "Jesuit Probabilistic Logic between Scholastic and Academic Philosophy," *History and Philosophy of Logic* 40 (2019): 355–73.

41 André Robinet, *G. W. Leibniz: Iter Italicum (mars 1689-mars 1690); La dynamique de la République des Lettres* (Florence: Olschki, 1988), 132–33. James O'Hara, "Leibniz and the Jacobite War: Reports and Reflections of the Battle of the Boyne and Events in Ireland 1689–91," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History* 91 (1991): 1–20, at 5.

42 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, "On Body and Force, Against the Cartesians (May 1702)," in *Leibniz: Philosophical Essays*, ed. and trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1989), 256.

43 The 1703 letter is reproduced in Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano*, 237. Leibniz to Giambattista Tolomei, December 17, 1705, <http://philosophyfaculty.ucsd.edu/faculty/rutherford/Leibniz/translations/TolomeiG.pdf> (accessed February 20, 2020). Three other letters from Leibniz to Tolomei have been published in Malte-Ludold Babin and Rita Widmaier, eds., *Briefe über China (1694–1716): Die Korrespondenz mit Barthélemy Des Bosses S.J. und anderen Mitgliedern des Orden* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2017), 38–45 (December 27, 1693), 48–51 (October 15, 1703), and 62–63 (December 17, 1705).

44 Beretta, "Héliocentrisme à Rome," 552. For the text of this letter, see Enrico Celani, *L'epistolario di Monsignor Francesco Bianchini veronese* (Venice: Fratelli Visentini, 1889), 27–28.

Bosses from 1706: “I have heard that the censors (who very often are hypercritical and inclined to envy) have set in motion I know not what process against a recent book by our great Tolomei.”⁴⁵

Leibniz, always intrigued but—in equal measure—often also mystified by the impact of curial politics and processes on Catholic intellectual life, wrote still later to Des Bosses to complain about Tolomei’s apparent capitulation in such matters: “I do not understand well the subtlety of the process observed in Rome, when I see that the Most Reverend Father Tolomei is content with the papal decision and yet the supreme pontiff seems to have wanted to establish something new.”⁴⁶ The following year, Leibniz sent Tolomei via Des Bosses a copy of his *Theodiciée* (Theodicy) (1710), and received an apparently detailed critique in return.⁴⁷ Des Bosses, who passed the critique on, intimated that it was not entirely favorable, but Leibniz’s reply acknowledging receipt does not suggest that he was overly concerned:

Your Tolomei, a remarkable man, seems to doubt whether a best possible series of things can be admitted, because there is not a most perfect creature. And I, too, concede this, but I deny that a series of things can be considered a creature; for a series of infinite things cannot be considered one whole, as I have demonstrated elsewhere. Nevertheless, a series of things is certainly infinite with respect to what is posterior, as they say, or it lacks an end, even if it does not lack a beginning. In my judgment, unless there were a best series, God clearly would have created nothing, since he cannot act without a reason, or prefer the less perfect to the more perfect alternative. In any case, I am happy that my thoughts are approved of by such a man. No doubt he could amend and improve them in many ways.⁴⁸

It is worth adding here, to complete this section, that Tolomei was important as a man of letters for more than just his written works and correspondence: he was also a bibliophile who collected and conserved books and artefacts within the Collegio Romano. Indeed, Tolomei’s work for the library was the area with which he came to be particularly associated in the history of that institution. As library prefect for much of the 1690s Tolomei enjoyed considerable powers of patronage and, in 1694, he obtained a budget of two hundred *scudi* a year, of

45 Leibniz to Des Bosses, July 11, 1706, *Yale Leibniz*, 44–45.

46 Leibniz to Des Bosses, April 25, 1711, *Yale Leibniz*, 200–1.

47 Des Bosses to Leibniz, September 7, 1711, *Yale Leibniz*, 210–11.

48 Leibniz to Des Bosses, January 28, 1712, *Yale Leibniz*, 212–13.

which at least 175 was earmarked for the purchase of new books.⁴⁹ As rector, Tolomei may have commissioned the Collegio's first library catalogue, organized by subject, in four volumes. Salomonio speaks of this in his elegy:

The daring of the school alone was little to our rector: [...] that the library of the College, as well as the ancient impressions of various authors classics, which were lacking, supplied and remade of what was then in good taste, and of all those chosen volumes, which in any material and language went from hand to hand. Having had nothing but the desire of the ancient and of the modern, and to spare them the trouble of tracing the excellent writers in the particular classes and placing the four large volumes in folio into the exterminated indices of the subjects, which compiled with incessant labor.⁵⁰

Tolomei also appears to have lobbied on the library's behalf, both within the Collegio and the order. His 1719 will donated his personal collection of books to it, mandating only the condition that the College should continue to employ a permanent assistant to the Prefect to assist him in his duties.⁵¹ Besides his

49 Aurora Miguel Alonso notes that surviving records of this exchange and perhaps some other documents relating to Tolomei's tenure of the library are in "Scritti, documenti e carte varie riguardanti la storia, l'istituto e le rendite della Biblioteca del Collegio Romano," Biblioteca nazionale centrale di Roma, *Mss Fondo Gesuitico 882*, "Los fondos jesuitas en las bibliotecas de Roma: Una aportación para su conocimiento," *Revista general de información y documentación* 28 (2018): 345–72, at 354. See also Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano*, 188–90. See also *Lettere, note di libri, fatture, ordini di spedizione ecc. di Donato Donati di Livorno, per libri ordinatigli dal P. Gio. B. Tolomei per la Biblioteca del Collegio Romano: Anni 1700–1705*, APUG 578.

50 "Il dar moto alla sola scuola era poco al nostro rettore: [...] che la libreria del Collegio, oltre che alle antiche impressioni di vari autori classici, che vi mancavano, fornita fosse e rifatta di quanto allora trovavasi di buon gusto, e di tutti quegli scelti volumi che in qualunque materia e lingua andassero di mano in mano. Ottenne egli pertanto che a quella si fermasse annuale assegnamento, acciocché i professori non avesser che desiderare sì dell'antico che del moderno. E per risparmiare agli stessi la fatica di rintraciar nelle classi particolari gli scrittori in esse eccellenti fece disporre i 4 grossi volumi in folio gli indici sterminati delle materie, che da se nel corso letterario aveva compilati con incessante travaglio." See also Miriam Viglione and Irene Pedretti, eds., *Catalogo degli Incunaboli della Biblioteca della Pontificia Università Gregoriana* (Rome: Homolegens, 2008), vi. Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano*, 192.

51 "Che si mantenga in Collegio Romano continuamente un soggetto per servizio o cura della libreria, il quale per lo più dovrà essere fratello, e abile cura, mantenimento e provvisione de' libri, e principalmente sia uno unicamente destinato a tal impiego, come compagno del P. Prefetto della libreria, e ad esso subordinato." Several copies of testament exist: APUG ms 142, ARSI, *Hist. Soc.* 56, fols. 273–74. Archivio di Stato di Roma, *Notai A–C, busta 5817*, fols. 68^r–71^v. See also Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano*, 191.

interest in the library, Tolomei also showed special concern for the Museo Kircheriano: he took responsibility for the repair and extension of its gallery in 1716 and his will specifies a further annual payment of twenty-four scudi for the gallery.⁵² Tolomei was one of the cardinals who accompanied Clement XI at the grand opening in 1718.⁵³ A bust of him, now lost, was made and displayed there in the gallery's first room to commemorate him.⁵⁴

4 Tolomei as Cardinal

Tolomei was one of eleven men whom Clement XI promoted to the Sacred College on May 18, 1712.⁵⁵ Ángel Santos Hernández has suggested that Tolomei's elevation to the purple caught the Society's leadership by surprise.⁵⁶ However, Des Bosses had heard a rumor to the effect that Tolomei would be promoted as early as March 1706 so it cannot have been unexpected by everyone.⁵⁷ Tolomei himself nevertheless felt the need to write a brief explanatory letter to the Society's general.⁵⁸ He was, after all, the first Jesuit cardinal since Nidhard (promoted 1671, died 1681) but the first *Italian* Jesuit, resident in Rome, since Sforza Pallavicino (promoted 1657, died 1667). Moreover, Pallavicino had himself been the only such Italian Jesuit cardinal since Bellarmine (promoted 1599, died 1621).

The significance of Tolomei's promotion, and what it tells us about the Society's situation in the curia, is thus unclear. Ludwig Pastor (1854–1928) in his

52 "Non restò delusa la sua speranza, massime quando succeduto al governo del collegio il Padre Giovanni Battista Tolomei, ora dignissimo cardinal di S. Chiesa, amante delle scienze, cooperò molto all'impresa, onde per le di lui industrie restò chiusa muri e quindici finestre di vetro tutta la corsia della loggia che si stende a palmi 372, nella quale a poco a poco fu fabricato e dipinto il soffitto a volta, sessanta armarii, oltre quindici cassoni, e preparate due camera che nello spazio poi di dieci anni sono state ripiene di quanto ora vi si vede collocate," Filippo Bonanni, "Notizie circa la Galleria del Collegio Romano," ARSI, *Rom.* 138, 172^r–188^r, reproduced in Alberto Bartola, "Alle origini del museo del Collegio Romano," *Nuncius* 19 (2004): 327–49, quotation at 338. Bartola also reproduces two further letters of relevance: by Tolomei, June 6, 1716; Bartola, "Alle origini del museo," 350; and by Filippo Bonanni to Michelangelo Tamburini, June 10, 1716, Bartola, "Alle origini del museo," 327.

53 APUG ms 143, 95–96. Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano*, 279.

54 See also Alfredo Serrai, "La *Bibliotheca Secreta* del Collegio Romano," *Il bibliotecario* 3 (2009): 17–51.

55 Remigius Ritzler and Pirminius Sefrin, *Hierarchia Catholica Medii et Recentioris Aevi*, vol. 5: *A Pontificatu Clementis Pp. IX (1667) usque ad Pontificatum Benedicti Pp. XIII (1730)* (Padua: Typis Librariae apud Basilicam S. Antonii, 1952), 28. There is a brief of promotion, mentioned in Hernández, *Jesuitas y obispos*, 1:178–79.

56 Hernández, *Jesuitas y obispos*, 1:176.

57 Des Bosses to Leibniz, March 2, 1706, *Yale Leibniz*, 28–29.

58 ARSI, *Hist. Soc.* 56, fol. 271.

great *History of the Popes* only remarks on it in passing—however, he does note the controversy that Jesuits in the college of cardinals were liable to cause. Charles VI (r.1711–40) urged the pope to make Álvaro Cienfuegos (1657–1739) a cardinal throughout the 1710s but Clement resisted on the grounds that Jesuits were already represented in the college—initially by Tolomei and, from 1719, also by Giambattista Salerni (1671–1729).⁵⁹ Tolomei seems to have cautioned against Salerni’s promotion, even though they were, or had been, friends.⁶⁰ Cienfuegos was not made cardinal until 1720, although Tolomei seems to come out in favor of this development.⁶¹ Tolomei sponsored the publication of a new edition of the Jesuit Girolamo Piatti’s *De cardinalis dignitate* (Rome: Ex Typographia Giorgii Plachi, 1713), an act from which we may also deduce some desire to associate himself with the earlier Jesuit cardinal—and possibly also to remind Rome of the compatibility of his vows and his new red robes. Tolomei’s promotion was nevertheless celebrated in Siena, apparently beyond “the usual short letter of courtesy” (as Salamonio puts it).⁶²

Tolomei himself sent a short elegiac to his nephew to commemorate it:

*Quotquot enim senis Ptolemaeae semina gentis,
Ex quibus, ipse licet ultimus, et unus eram.
Laetitiae testes, charta perarata fideli,
Ad te, quae legeres, misimus officia,
Legisti, generique meo incrementa daturus
De nostris ortum ducere fassus avis etc.*⁶³

59 Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages: Drawn from the Secret Archives of the Vatican and Other Original Sources*, trans. Ralph Francis Kerr, 40 vols. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench Trübner & Co., 1891–1953), 33:355. Hernández, *Jesuitas y obispos*, 1182.

60 “Reverend Father Tolomei recently wrote me from Rome that Father Giambattista Salerno of our society, a learned man and, as appears from another letter written to me, an extremely cultured one, has set out from Rome for Germany. Tolomei desires that at some point he be introduced to you through me, which indicates that he will be traveling through this area as well,” Des Bosses to Leibniz, October 5, 1708, *Yale Leibniz*, 112–13.

61 “Votum Cardinali Ptolomaei de non promovendo Patre Salerno,” and “Votum de proposita promotione Patris Cienfuegos,” reproduced in Nicolaus Nilles, *Symbolae ad illustrandam historiam ecclesiae orientalis in terris coronae S. Stephani*, 2 vols. (Innsbruck: F. Rauch, 1885), 1:1015–16 and 1021.

62 Salamonio, “Jo. Baptistae Ptolomaei Societatis Jesu vita,” 356. Salamonio’s remarks are corroborated by Niccolò Nasoni: see Giovanni Battista Tedesco, “Niccolò Nasoni e la città di Siena: Tra la vita di contrada e la vita d’Accademia,” *Patrimó: Revista da Faculdade de Letras [da Universidade do Porto]: Ciências e técnicas do património* (2008–9): 437–51, at 442.

63 Salamonio, “Jo. Baptistae Ptolomaei Societatis Jesu Vita,” 357.

(For however many are the seeds of the old man of the clan of the Ptolemies, of these, I was, you see, my very self, the last and only one. By the witness of Joy, written on a true document, we have sent the duties for you to read. You have read and are to give offspring to our race after agreeing to extend the line drawn from our ancestors)

Tolomei continued to reside in the Collegio Romano even as cardinal—according to Des Bosses, he lived there as a simple Jesuit, “[taking] breakfast daily with our order in the Collegio Romano, forbidding anything to be served to him alone.”⁶⁴ Leibniz later replied to Des Bosses that he hoped that this would mean Tolomei “might [now] find enough leisure [...] that he could complete the work of the cardinal whose undertaking he has assumed for himself, I mean Bellarmine.”⁶⁵ Nevertheless, Tolomei was already an active member of Clement XI’s administration by the time Leibniz wrote and had attained a wide range of curial duties in various congregations. In 1714, he appears in the lists of the Congregation of the Council, of the Examination of Bishops, the Index of Forbidden Books, of Rites, and of Relics.⁶⁶ In 1720, he was present at the special congregation Clement XI convened to move against Philip V of Spain’s disgraced chief minister Cardinal Giulio Alberoni (1664–1752); he was then a member of the special judicial commission Clement established to assess Alberoni’s guilt.⁶⁷

The most significant area in which Tolomei assisted Clement XI was in the policing and suppression of Jansenism. Villoslada notes how Tolomei’s experience teaching controversies meant that he was often called to give opinions about cases that reached Rome—in particular, “della causa Quesneliana” (referring to Pasquier Quesnel’s *Réflexions morales sur le Nouveau Testament* [Moral reflections on the New Testament], the subject of heated debate between Jesuits and Jansenists that Clement XI eventually condemned in 1708).⁶⁸ Clement set up a special congregation to deal with the Jansenist heresy in 1714 for which Tolomei had produced two “discorsi” within a year (July 1714 and

64 Des Bosses to Leibniz, August 28, 1712, *Yale Leibniz*, 258–59.

65 Leibniz to Des Bosses, July 20, 1715, *Yale Leibniz*, 340–41.

66 Weber, *Ältesten päpstlichen Staatshandbücher*, 763, 767, 770, 775.

67 Pastor, *History of the Popes*, 33:170–71. Three charges were presented against Alberoni: that he deceived the pope regarding the auxiliary army against the Turks, Philip V held him responsible for hostile measures in ecclesiastical matters in the diocese of Tarragona, and he had never said Mass nor received Holy Communion at Easter. This came after Alberoni’s fall from power in Spain (December 5, 1719).

68 Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano*, 232. See also William Doyle, *Jansenism* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 39–46.

January 1715): both set out how to act against the disobedient bishops who refused to accept Clement's ruling in *Unigenitus*.⁶⁹ Tolomei was later also amongst the cardinals who examined the dogmatic explanation advanced by the French bishops and the Sorbonne against *Unigenitus* that Clement XI then refused to approve.⁷⁰ He was further involved in drawing up of the bull *Pastoralis officii* (August 28, 1718), which confirmed *Unigenitus* and declared that Catholics who did not accept it cast themselves outside the church.⁷¹ Tolomei appeared as one of the cardinals of the Holy Office charged with executing papal instructions on this subject again in 1720 and 1721.⁷² Moreover, Maria Pia Donato has drawn attention to a further case in 1723 when Tolomei was once again called to rule on the orthodoxy of scientific teachings, this time in his capacity as a member of the Congregation of the Index.⁷³

Tolomei continued to take a particular interest in Eastern churches and in the situation of Christians in the East during his cardinalate. Cesare Santus has uncovered evidence that he discussed the question of the status of the Greeks of Corfu with the future Cardinal Angelo Maria Querini (1680–1755): Querini protested that the Greeks were schismatics but Tolomei argued that he should consider them still to be Catholics, since, from the Roman point of view, the Union of Florence (1439) was formally still in force. Moreover, Tolomei considered the Greek patriarch as true as the Latin patriarch (a position that would have been contrary to theories of papal monarchy, if he truly held it).⁷⁴ His views shocked Querini, which seems to be why the latter recorded them. However, Tolomei may not have been an outlier either within the Society or amongst its curial representatives: Querini also recalled a later conversation with Benedict XIII (r.1724–30) about a now lost work by Giambattista Salerni, *Dissertatio de licito Latinorum cum Graecis in sacris commercio* (Dissertation on how the Latins may deal with the Greeks in sacred things), which put forward a similar sort of view.⁷⁵

Tolomei took part in two conclaves as cardinal—in 1721 and 1724—and our knowledge of both events depends largely on the old narrative sources, in

69 Giuseppe Mazzatinti, *Inventari dei manoscritti delle biblioteche d'Italia III* (Forlì: Luigi Bornaadini, 1890–1906), 3:153. Pastor, *History of the Popes*, 33:251n7.

70 Pastor, *History of the Popes*, 33:286–87.

71 Pastor, *History of the Popes*, 33:292n4.

72 Pastor, *History of the Popes*, 33:313n. Archivio Segreto Vaticano, *Miscellanea di Clemente XI*, vol. 152.

73 Donato, "Scienza e teologia nelle congregazioni romani," 622.

74 Cesare Santus, "La *communicatio in sacris* con gli 'scismatici' orientali in età moderna," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 126 (2014): 325–40, at 333.

75 Angelo Maria Querini, *Commentarii de rebus pertinentibus ad Ang. Mar. S.R.E. Cardinalem Quirinum* (Brescia: Rizzardi, 1749), vol. II, libro I, cap. XI, 173–75, 190–95.

particular Petruccelli della Gattina and Pastor. Petrucelli cites an assessment of candidates in 1721 by the duke of Modena's agent Domenico Maria Giacobazzi (1691–1770), which mentions Tolomei by quoting a line attributed to Pasquino: "St. Peter, if you give the keys to Jesus [i.e. the Jesuit], he'll never return them!"⁷⁶ The implication is clear and reflects a long-standing prejudice that the Society would monopolize the papal tiara if a Jesuit were even once to wear it. Nevertheless, Pastor still included Tolomei in his reconstruction of the *papabili* for the 1721 election, basing his view on Austrian and French assessments.⁷⁷ Tolomei regularly received votes in scrutinies throughout the conclave, including five in the sixth scrutiny (the most of any cardinal).⁷⁸ Overall, however, the voting records would tend to indicate that on this occasion he was not really a serious candidate.

Tolomei seems to have stood a better chance of election in 1724: Petruccelli suggests that this time the emperor Charles VI added Tolomei to his list of acceptable candidates during the course of the negotiations, apparently at the personal request of his confessor.⁷⁹ Tolomei regularly gained more votes in each scrutiny than in 1721: his apogee came on the morning of April 10, when he received four votes and eight accessions (constituting support from over twenty-five per cent of the cardinals present).⁸⁰ This attempt to get him elected, like another on April 26, when he received nine votes, may have been quite serious. However, after its failure Tolomei's prospects drifted slowly and the machinations surrounding the conclave shifted focus to other candidates.

Even if Tolomei had no realistic prospect of election in either 1721 or 1724, he still had more influence over the outcomes of both conclaves than the votes cast for him might suggest. In 1721, shortly before Michelangelo Conti's election as Innocent XIII (r.1721–24), Tolomei was influential in defending him against accusations of Jansenist sympathies made in propagandist pamphlets smuggled inside and distributed amongst the cardinals.⁸¹ In 1724, Tolomei was likewise involved in a major quarrel between cardinals Nicola Gaetano Spinola (1659–1735) and Annibale Albani (1682–1751) (Clement XI's cardinal nephew),

76 Ferdinando Petruccelli della Gattina, *Histoire diplomatique des conclaves*, 4 vols. (Paris: Lacroix, 1864–66), 4:6.

77 Pastor, *History of the Popes*, 34:11, 13.

78 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Barb. Lat. 4447*, fol. 13^r.

79 Petruccelli, *Histoire diplomatique des conclaves*, 4:25.

80 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Barb. Lat. 4448*, fol. 105^v.

81 Pastor, *History of the Popes*, 34:22n. See the letters of Cardinal Rohan to Louis XV, April 29, 1721, and to Cardinal Dubois, May 3, 1721, reproduced in Eugène Michaud, "La fin de Clément XI. et le commencement du pontificat d'Innocent XIII. (1721)," *Revue internationale de théologie* 5 (1987): 42–60 and 304–31, at 312, 313–14.

which required intervention from the conclave marshal—a role for which Petruccelli accuses him of “hypocritical dissimulation.”⁸² Tolomei’s presence in Albani’s party certainly reinforced the strength of accusations of immorality and heresy against Giulio Piazza (1663–1726), who was the candidate of the Austrian faction. Pastor argues that Albani’s success in detaching Tolomei and a group of others from the “zelanti” who had been working for Piazza’s election was crucial.⁸³ However, Petruccelli implies that Tolomei had little influence: he and other more austere cardinals could do no more than ask themselves why, if Albani had the votes, he would not propose a more “saintly” figure as pope?⁸⁴ Yet, Tolomei was amongst those who broke the impasse by proposing Pietro Francesco Orsini (1649–1730) as a compromise candidate and, alongside Belluga (1662–1743) and Albani, he seems to have been crucial in persuading Orsini to accept his election as pope (a process that apparently took three hours).⁸⁵

Tolomei’s later career during the pontificates of Innocent XIII and Benedict XIII was relatively muted. Few records of his activities during Innocent’s reign survive: he was one of five cardinals present at the consecration of the new church of Sant’Ignazio in 1722 but we know of little else of what he did.⁸⁶ Tolomei nevertheless remained active during Benedict XIII’s pontificate and was amongst the minority of cardinals who spoke out against Niccolò Coscia’s (1681–1755) elevation to the Sacred College.⁸⁷ He was also one of five cardinals who scrutinized the twelve articles submitted by the archbishop of Paris Louis Antoine de Noailles (1651–1729) as part of his defence of his ongoing opposition to *Unigenitus*.⁸⁸ Most importantly, Tolomei was involved in a series of debates concerning the Concilio Romano (1725) and wrote a now lost treatise evaluating and supporting the arguments of the cardinals who protested Benedict’s decision to side-line them from the council.⁸⁹ Luigi Fiorani believes that such criticism of Benedict’s conduct relating to the Concilio was related to a

82 Petruccelli, *Histoire diplomatique des conclaves*, 4:28–29.

83 Pastor, *History of the Popes*, 34:104.

84 Petruccelli, *Histoire diplomatique des conclaves*, 4:47–48.

85 Pastor, *History of the Popes*, 34:106.

86 Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano*, 183.

87 Pastor *History of the Popes*, 34:125. On this, see also Orietta Filippini, *Benedetto XIII (1724–1730): Un papa del Settecento secondo il giudizio dei contemporanei* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 2012), 158.

88 Pastor, *History of the Popes*, 34:222.

89 A reference to this is in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Vat. Lat. 8688*: [fol. 1^v] “Fu detto che il signor cardinal Tolomei avesse dimostrato in una dottissima scrittura, che il Papa non poteva in alcun modo assistere a Concili senza che vi fossero ancora tutti i cardinali”—Fiorani has not, however, located the treatise. Fiorani, *Il Concilio Romano del 1725* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1977), 38–39.

belief—true or false—that he was hostile to the Jesuits.⁹⁰ At any rate, Tolomei's participation in the Concilio seems to have been his last major public activity. A manuscript in the Vatican Library contains two letters from Tolomei to Benedict XIII, from February 27 and March 7, 1725, offering advice on the administration of sacraments and rites in missions, which are the last known records of his life.⁹¹

5 Tolomei in Context

At the end of 1725, Tolomei's health was failing. Salamonio tells us he was suffering from dysuria and had already exhausted himself from having washed pilgrims' feet and from having traipsed around Rome's basilicae during the jubilee that year.⁹² By January 10, 1726 Tolomei's condition had worsened into a fever. A note in the *Memorie del Collegio* for January 19 records that he died that day in the last room in the corridor of S. Saverio, the part of the building nearest the Palazzo Pamphilj; this was the room he had occupied as a cardinal, adjacent to the one in which he used to study and give audiences.⁹³ The celebrated Jesuit archaeologist Contuccio Contucci (1688–1768) gave Tolomei's funeral oration in the great hall of the Collegio Romano and the text was immediately circulated in print.⁹⁴ Tolomei's will requested that he be interred in the common vault of the fathers of the Collegio Romano ("mia solita e propria abitazione" [my only and true dwelling]). However, he is in fact buried in Sant'Ignazio, on the left side of the chancel in front of the high altar. Besides the donations to the Collegio Romano mentioned above, Tolomei's also made small bequests to Gianfilippo Tolomei and to his majordomo, Gian Francesco Mariani. Tolomei also mandated the distribution of alms from his estate in both Rome and Pistoia and specified that his family be paid three times the usual payment for cardinals to pray for his soul.

What then should we make of Tolomei's life and career? At the end of his *Life*, Salamonio compares him to Bellarmine: "truly he was one of those wisest of men who have an exceptionally advanced understanding of Church

90 Fiorani, *Il Concilio Romano*, 41.

91 Tolomei to Benedict XIII, February 27 and March 7, 1725, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Vat. Lat.* 12885, fols. 61^v–63^v, 64^r–68^v.

92 Salamonio, "Jo. Baptistae Ptolomaei Societatis Jesu vita," 363.

93 Villoslada, *Storia del Collegio Romano*, 232.

94 Contuccio Contucci, SJ, *Oratio habita in funere Em. ac Rev.mi Joannis Baptistae card. Ptolomaei* (Rome: Ex Typographia Hieronymi Mainardi, 1726). The text is reproduced in Salamonio, "Jo. Baptistae Ptolomaei Societatis Jesu vita," 370–78.

learning”—a man whose writings constituted a worthy addition to the more famous Jesuit’s own *Controversies*.⁹⁵ Yet Tolomei, in truth, never attained the acclaim of his more famous forerunner—in life or in death. His career perhaps attests, most of all, to Jesuits’ embedded position in the church by this time and the capacity of an individual father to catch the pope’s ear. The revenge of the Jansenists, which ravished the Society in the generation after Tolomei’s death, was yet to gain traction and the favor showed to him by three popes underlines their reflexive instinct to look to Jesuits both for defensive cover and for theological expertise. The spasms of Gallican sentiment, which troubled Clement XI’s pontificate in particular, had only a limited effect on this policy. Moreover, the Jesuits’ international networks, within which Tolomei seems to have been an important node, provided a basis for popes to test opinion in the wider church. In Clement’s case, this led to a slow progression towards outright condemnation of the Chinese Rites but also to a surprisingly pragmatic approach to responding to critics of *Unigenitus*. Tolomei, as a leading papal counsellor, played an important part in both decisions and also in the Society’s efforts to reconcile papal obedience with inquiries into the frontiers of knowledge in this epoch.

95 Salamonio, “Jo. Baptistae Ptolomaei Societatis Jesu vita,” 370.