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Italy Seen Through the Eyes of Anselmo Adorno. A Testimony of the Middle Ages

Borghi B.*
University of Bologna (Italy)

ABSTRACT

Anselmo Adorno was one of the most prominent and influential men of Western Europe in the late Middle Ages in the area between Flanders, the Duchy of Burgundy and Scotland. Negotiator, wise, magistrate, Anselmo left us the journey report *Itinerarium Terrae Sanctae Anselmi Adorni*, written by his son Giovanni, a source of extraordinary wealth for the details and descriptions of places, customs and customs of the peoples of the eastern Mediterranean. Of particular interest is also the description of the cities, the urban and rural landscape, the routes that Adorno travelled in his journey between 1470 and 1471. The article will therefore take the moves from this precious testimony to describe the Italy visited by the pilgrim of Bruges, including Genoa, a family town of Rome, Brindisi and the Apulian cities of Naples, and the route that from the eternal city led to Venice, Cologne and finally to the West Flanders.

Keywords: Pilgrimage; Anselm Adorno; Italy; Urban and Rural Landascape; Late Middle Ages

Anselmo Adorno fu uno degli uomini più in vista e influenti dell'Europa occidentale del tardo medioevo nell'area compresa tra le Fiandre, il ducato di Borgogna e la Scozia. Negoziatore, saggio, magistrato, Anselmo ci ha lasciato la relazione di viaggio *Itinerarium Terrae Sanctae Anselmi Adorni*, scritta dal figlio Giovanni, fonte di straordinaria ricchezza per i dettagli e le descrizioni dei luoghi, degli usi e dei costumi delle popolazioni del Mediterraneo orientale. Di particolare interesse, inoltre, la descrizione delle città, del paesaggio urbano e rurale, delle rotte e delle vie che l'Adorno percorse nel suo viaggio tra il 1470 il 1471. L'articolo prenderà pertanto le mosse da questa preziosa testimonianza per descrivere l'Italia visitata dal pellegrino di

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E-mail address: b.borghi@unibo.it

Bruges, tra cui Genova, città di origine della famiglia, Roma, Brindisi e le città pugliesi, Napoli, e il tratto che dalla città eterna lo condusse a Venezia, Colonia e infine nelle Fiandre occidentali.

Keywords: Pellegrinaggio; Anselmo Adorno; Italia; Città; Tardo Medioevo

1. Some information about Anselmo Adorni and his family

The Adorno family were Genoese merchants and bankers present in Bruges from the end of the 13th century¹ (Basso, 2011; Petti Balbi, 1994, 2005) who always had a special interest in and devotion for the city of Jerusalem.

Their ancestor Oppicino (Opitium, Opice) had visited the Holy Land before coming to Flanders in 1269, probably attached to the court of Robert of Bethune or that of Guy de Dampierre² (Chiavari Cattaneo Della Volta, 2002; Mitzi-Kirkland, 2008; Gaillard, 1843; Geirnaert, 1983; Borghi, 2018); his descendents, Pietro and Giovanni, the father and the uncle respectively of Anselmo visited the Holy City in the first decades of the 15th century³ (Gaillard, 1843; Viaene, 1982) while Anselmo and his eldest son, Giovanni, following tradition, left the "most noble city" (Heers, & De Groër, 1978) of Bruges on February 19, 1470.

Anselmo was not just an ordinary pilgrim en route to the Holy Land. He was considered to be one of the most outstanding and influential men of the Middle Ages in that area of Western Europe between Flanders, the Duchy of Burgundy and Scotland and he has left us with an account of a journey Itinerarium Terrae Sanctae Anselmi Adorni written by his son Giovanni⁴. It is an extraordinarily rich source both for its detailed descriptions of places, customs and costumes of the populations of the Eastern Mediterranean as well as for its narration which highlights the educated and sensitive curiosity of such a man of culture.

Anselmo was born in the Belgian city on December 8, 1424. The son of Pietro Adorno, co-founder of the first public library in the southern Netherlands (Derolez, 1972; Mitzi-Kirkland, 2008, p. 1043) and of Elisabetta Braderichx who belonged to an ancient Flemish family; he had many political and diplomatic roles and was a pilgrim to the Holy Land between 1470 and 1471. As an expert in ancient history he was certainly interested in tracing his Italian origins and his connections with the humanist Filippo Buonaccorsi; Anselmo followed his father's library traditions by writing in his own hand Cicero's Sommium Scipionis⁵.

During his long career he came into contact with the most important players in the European political scene in the second half of the 15th century kingdom, he was made superintendent of the domains of the Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Brave (Paravicini, 1991; MacDonald, 2001; Brown, 1982; Small, 2012) in Flanders and in Artois and, he was twice burgomaster (hostruan) of Bruges. It is thanks to Anselmo's grandfather and father that the Jerusalemkapel was built in the Belgian city in 1435 and this is seen as a personal copy of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Its spatial transposition and narrative structure of the «domestication of the Jerusalem experience» (Mitzi-Kirkland, 2008; Van Herwaarden, 2003) was compled by Anselmo on his return from the Holy City (Geirnaert, 1987, pp. 2-30).

From an early age, Anselmo had distinguished himself by his cavalier-like upbringing: at the age of 17 in fact, he took part in the famous White Bear jousting tournament piercing 'the target's heart' and competing against Jacques de Laing, the "Good Cavalier" and against Corneille, the "bastard" of Burgundy. In 1443 he married Margherita van der Bank with whom he had twelve children. **Figure 1**

Anselmo was soon called upon to render his services to his native city as captain of one of the six areas with ties to the court of the Duke of Burgundy, first with Philip the Good whose ambassador he was and then with Charles the Brave; he was given the honour of having Mary Stuart, sister of James III, King of Scotland (Boardman & Lynch, 2000) as his guest in his own home when she and her husband Lord Boyd had to flee from the kingdom after a court revolution. Thanks to this hospitality, Anselmo was given the difficult task and responsibility for a conciliatory mission following the events in Scotland leading to the resumption of peaceful relations between the Kingdom and the Duchy of Burgundy.

On his arrival in Scotland, Anselmo was introduced into the court of the Scottish King who made him a Knight of the Order of the Court of Saint Andrews⁶ and Lord of Corthuy, hence becoming a personal advisor to the King whilst continuing in the service of the Duke of Burgundy.

On his return from Scotland, Charles the Brave entrusted him with the delicate mission of taking care of the treaties with the main Italian courts and visiting the Muslim states in the near Middle East in order to report on the situation there. The Prince was in fact planning to weaken the power of the Ottoman Turks who were making a display of their strength against Christian Europe while continuing to maintain control over the holy places of Jerusalem. Adorno, whose mission instructions were kept a secret left Bruges therefore on February 19, 1470 and returned on August 14, 1471. Figure 2

Anselmo continued to cover central roles in political, diplomatic and civil life. Charles the Brave, to show his deep satisfaction over the successful outcome of the mission to the territories of the Eastern Mediterranean nominated him as his councilor and chamberlain. He was soon entrusted with a new and delicate mission. Mary Stuart, who had lived in Bruges for two years as a refugee had decided to return to Scotland with her husband, having been reconciled with her brother James III. They left Bruges on October 4, 1471 accompanied by Adorno and his wife Margherita; Adorno was given the task of organizing the first meeting between sister and brother. The visit was also the occasion for Anselmo to present the King with a luxurious copy of his *Itinerarium Terrae Sanctae* written in Latin by his son Giovanni and to give the King the information and news he had collected during his stay in the Middle East.

On his return to Bruges and after the death of his wife Adorno was soon involved in a new diplomatic mission: the planning of an expedition or 'crusade' against the Muslims for which he had been sent for the first time to the Orient. In fact this was one of Philip the Good's greatest ambitions; from 1461 he had been secretly seeking the support of the King of Persia. The plan, with the support of Pope Paul 11, had progressed under the bellicose Charles the Brave who established an embassy at the court of Uza Hasan (Ossoncassaen, Assenbach, Ussum Cassau) with the aim of renewing old negotiations. It was probably, as in the case of the visit to the Holy Land, a political mission verging on a spy mission (Adorno, Anselmo, 1960; Lacaze, 1972; Richard, 1997; Walsh, 1977).

Adorno thus left Bruges in March 1474 with a select group of companions. In the meantime, other Venetian delegates preceded him in the negotiations, which unfortunately did not produce the hoped for results. Charles the Brave on learning about the unsuccessful outcome quickly recalled Anselmo who was then in Germany back to Bruges where he was made a burgomaster on his return. However, things were changing and after the death of the Duke of Burgundy in 1477 and a rather unfavourable and negative period was about to unfold for Adorno.

Accused of having mishandled the city finances he was imprisoned and blamed for wasting public money. However, the real motivation behind his arrest was another one, that of having personally profited from the support of Charles the Brave and this had probably aroused a certain degree of jealousy among both existing and aspiring local politicians. Even although public opinion was on his side and they wanted him to be cleared of the accusations the judgment that followed pronounced him unfit for any public office in Bruges.

After the death of Mary of Burgundy in 1482 Anselmo returned to Scotland to the Court of King James III understandably bitter about the treatment received from the Belgian administrators. His problems however did not cease, and one of the Scotlish king's most bitter enemies Alexander Gordon soon targeted Anselmo, the then chief executioner in the north of Scotland. Drawn into an ambush, Anselmo Adorno was killed on January 23, 1483. He was 59.



Figure 1: Portrait of Anselmo Adorno and his wife. Flemish drawings, XV century, belonged to the count Thierry de Limburg Stirum

Source: Gazette des Beaux Arts, Bibliothèque nationale de France, t. XXXVII, p. 78

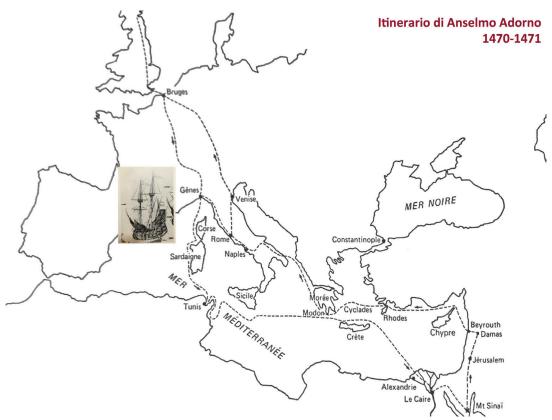


Figure 2: Itinerary of Anselmo Adorno, 1470-1471

Source: Elaboration by author



Figure 3: Globe in 1473

Source: Weltchronik by Hartmann Schedel, Nuremberg, 1493, f. 13b

2. The reasons for such a choice: the journey to the Holy Land

As may be recalled from the beginning, the final result of the account of Anselmo Adorno's journey can be traced back to a search for a confirmation: the invasive necessity of showing a fresco of a as faithful as possible picture of the reality of a commercial area which had already been weakened in an attempt to organize t with the blessing of Pope Pious 11 and the support of the principal European prices, the last crusade. The geopolitical picture was however rather complicated (Babinger, 1992; Bayne Fisher & Jackson & Lochhart, 1986; Defilippis, 2009, 2010).

Uzan Hazan, who had conquered, at the time of Anselmo's journey Caldea, Cilica, Mesopatania, Cappadoccia, Armenia and the lands of the Tartars, wanted to expand his territories and was counting on help from the Christian West to oppose Mehemed II. This was a difficult task considering that almost all of the area of Eastern Europe was in the hands of the Ottoman Empire: Albania (excluding some ports), Schiavonia, Dalmatia (with the single exception of Ragusa), Bosnia, apart from some cities which still recognized the sovereignty of the King of Hungary, Serbia and Bulgaria. A year later, after the return of Anselmo from the Holy Land, thanks to agreements and alliances with the Venetians the first attacks were launched against Mehemed II in 1472 culminating in the Battle of Erzingian which was won however by the "Great Turk" on August 11, 1473. The various Venetian ambassadorial delegations to the Hasan's Sultanate to convince him to attack the Ottomans again were in vain (Contarini, 1487, 1980). Uzun desisted so that Mehemed was able to deliver the final blow and turn his attention resolutely towards Europe and in particular Italy where his fleet disembarked at Otranto in 1480.

The manuscript of Anselmo's journey to the Holy Land, published in the edition compiled by Jacques Heers and Georgette De Groër in 1978 (Heers & De Groër, 1978; De la Coste, 1855) is not the original one drawn up by his son Giovanni that had been requested by his father in the six months following their return to Bruges. Neither is it the one given as a present by Anselmo himself to the King of Scotland, James III, it is probably a luxurious copy brought to Edinburgh by Adorno when he embarked with his wife and James III's brother-in-law from Calais to Scotland on October 4, 1471. It is almost certainly a copy made in Bruges.

The copy made in 1855 for the personal use of Edmond de la Coste was discovered and purchased on January 2, 1894 by the rector Hautcoeur from the librarian Camille Vyt of Gand and then gifted to the library of the Catholic Faculty of Lille. This copy however is incomplete and contains some uncomplete parts in dots as well as some inaccuracies; the second part of the version of Anselmo's journey does not differ much from the first part and also contains recollections of the journey made by the group of pilgrims returning from Rome to Bruges.

Hautcouer, the rector, underlines the point that the manuscript used by La Coste «had been lent to him by J. Van Praet who directed the Stamped Section of the present-day National Library from the beginning of the French revolution until his death in 1837» (Heers & De Groër, 1978, pp. 19-20). We are also in possession of the Flemish version of the account made by Romboud Doppere in 1490 and published in 1893 by the Belgian E. Feys; it is still kept in the archives of the civilian Hospices of Bruges. The Doppere version follows the latin version of Anselmo's journey quite faithfully but with

numerous clear linguistic expressive inflexions in French and Flemish which produced a text not without several grammatical and syntax errors due to the rather scant use of vocabulary.

The reflections that follow about Adorno's journey refer to the copy of the manuscript conserved in the Lille Library and we acknowledge our indebtedness to Heer's and Groer's edition and that of Edward de la Coste.

3. Italy as described by Anselmo: splendid, superb and elegant cities and overland routes. The outward journey: from Pavia to Rome and Genoa

Anselmo and Giovanni Adorni shared their departure from Bruges with Lambert Van de Walle, Pierre Reyphius and Jean Gausin all members of noble Flemish families; together with them were Antoine Franqueville, Charles the Brave, Duke of Burgundy's chaplain, Father Odomaire, a monk from Furnes and Daniel Colebrant, all eager to join the group on its journey of adventure towards the Holy Land. A journey that would touch all the then known continents: Europe, Asia and Africa. The universal notoriety of Bruges and the fear of appearing to be biased prevented Anselmo from describing the beauty and elegance of his hometown.

After mentioning the lands that he crossed through both on the outward journey and on the inward one, enumerating them in a rather curious fashion — England, Picardy, Artois, France, Champagne, Burgundy, Savoy, the Alps, Lombardy, Italy, Tuscany, Liguria, Sabaudia, Bavaria, Saxony and the Rhine towns — the true and real diary of the journey begins, as it should, from Rome, seen as "the capital of the whole world", known in the past "for its power" and today "for its holiness" the place the pilgrims reached after having travelled traits of the Via Francigena on April 18.

From Edward de la Coste's version, we learn that the cities visited and the trail followed by the pilgrims towards Rome to receive the blessing of the Pope before pursuing the route to Jerusalem.

Of great interest are those pages that describe the city of Pavia – where Anselmo met his 26-year-old son with whom he continued his journey to the Holy Land. Pavia – a city of an «oblique shape, longer than it is wide, blessed with a large number of tall square towers made of bricks like those in Perugia, Lucca, Viterbo and Mantua – a city that we visited» (De la Coste, 1855, p. 20). The pilgrims were struck by the beauty of the castle and the park built by Giovanni Galeazzo Visconti; the houses resembled those of Milan, simple and plain externally yet beautiful and comfortable internally. In the centre of the square stood a statue of a knight bearing bronze weapons called "reggisol" (sun king) by its inhabitants (De la Coste, 1855, p. 22). Mention is also made of the university renowned for its learned experts, doctors in civil law, divided into 'Cismontani' and 'Ultramontani', its illustrious teachers and students who normally wore a scapula (statulum) on the top part of their tunics. The city excelled in its abundance of wheat and red wine.

On March 26, 1470 the adventure brigade left for Genoa accompanied for a mile by the students and 'doctors' of Pavia. Having crossed the River Po by boat they reached the town of Voghera and then Tortora famous for its textile production and finally Serravalle «where the Appenines begin as well as the dominion of the Genoese» (De la

Coste, 1855, p. 25)¹⁰. The journey then proceeded towards San Pier d'Arena a locality of tall beautiful marble built houses "which seemed to us more remarkable than those of Genoa" before reaching the ligurian city on March 28.

The account continues with the description of the stages travelled to get to Rome: Recco, Rapallo, Chiavari, Sestri, Machalana, Framula, Borghetto, and Spessa and then describes the crossing of the Magra River by boat to reach Sarzana and then on to Pisa, Casciano, Castelfiorentino, Estago and Poggibonsi «through which the road followed by our travelers on the way from Lombardy to Rome passes» (De la Coste, 1855, p. 33)¹¹. Then the noble and ancient city of Siena, Buonconvento, San Quirico, Recours(Ricorsi), Paglia, Acquapendente, San Lorenzo, Borcherio (Bolsena), Montefiascone, Viterbo ("which is a remarkable city"), Ronsellon (Ronciglione), Sutri, Monterosi and Tourbacha (Baccano) before arriving in Rome on Ash Wednesday, April 18. **Figure 4**

It was here, in the city known as the "mistress of the world" – that once knew how to raise "her head like cypress trees among the viburnum" and now lies almost obliterated and reduced to a field of ruined buildings destroyed "by the blows of destiny" – that Adorno twice met Pope Paul 11, he, who was able to return the city to "a glory greater than that of the past". The Pope who received him with full honours (Campbell, 1995, p. 318; Macquarrie, 1982, pp. 20-21)¹² granted the forgiveness of sins to Anselmo as well as to all the members of his family and Communion on Easter Day as well as to other nobles and princes, he also granted him permission to visit the lands of the "infidels". The benediction was sealed with the gift of a precious "agnus Dei" wax medallion which was hung from the neck and which depicted a mystical figure of a lamb on one side and one or more saints on the other side to protect the pilgrims from dangers, ward off storms and heal them from diseases.

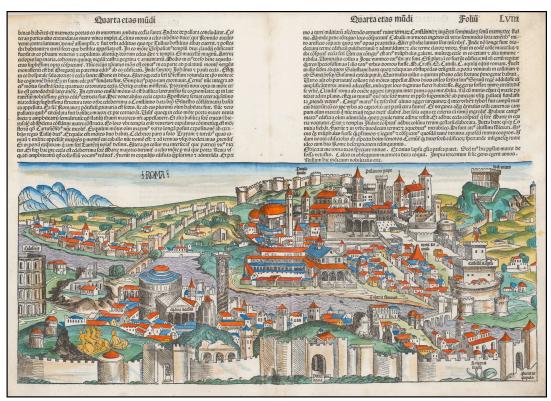


Figure 4: Rome

Source: Weltchronik by Hartmann Schedel, Nuremberg, 1493, f. LVIII

Having received permission to leave, Anselmo moved on towards Genoa, the port of embarkation for Jerusalem. He arrived there on May 2 after stopping for a few days in the splendid city of Pisa¹³ because of a fierce storm. They then reached the Ligurian city in a few days on a small boat captained by a certain Martino from Rapallo.

Genoa is situated in "a ring of mountains" on the edge of the Mediterranean which extends to the main parts of the world, Asia, Africa and Europe and is called "superb" and "magnanimous and strong" by the Italians.

In Anselmo's opinion, Genoa was «the most illustrious and most beautiful Italian city» (Heers & De Groër, 1978, p. 42)¹⁴, a city, as Gabriella Airaldi recalls «totalmente jetèe à la mer», and «has little in common with other maritime cities» (Airaldi, 2006, p. 154) it is comparable to the city of Damascus for its pleasant appearance. **Figure 5**

There are several different traditions recorded in the diary regarding the origin of the name of the city. Some maintain that it derives from the fact that Jano, the great-grandson of Noah, founded the city. When he arrived in Italy from "Greater Asia and Babylon", he named it *Janicola* because of its small size and after having expanded it he decided to call it *Jana*. Others claim that the original name was *Janua* (the port of the Roman god Janus, god of ports those double-faced figure brings to mind the two sides of a door) due to the fact that the city was a port of access for all of Italy. Others pointed to the «writings of their ancestors who wrote it not as *Jana* but as *Genua*. They claim that Genoa derives from the word "genua"- knee. Just as one's knees start to move and go forward and not backwards in the same way Genoa kept on expanding and continued to grow with the help of good Fortune» (Heers & De Groër, 1978, p. 44)¹⁵.

Water from a spring, channeled over the sides of the walls, flowed like a stream towards the city; every piazza, which were normally small in size and the narrow streets were blessed with fountains which collected the water and distributed it through pipes and conduits throughout the city centre.

There were many beautiful sights that aroused Anselmo's curiosity such as houses in marble with iron doors and above all the basilicas (there were sixteen parochial churches with four religious orders and abbeys) adorned with precious ornaments and a great number of saintly relics. In the Church of San Lorenzo, according to tradition, were to be found, among other things, the ashes of John the Baptist and the «holy and venerable chalice made of the purest and finest emerald which was used by Our Lord on Mount Sinai to celebrate, on Holy Thursday, the last Supper with his disciples¹⁶. As soon as Anselmo saw it he remained enchanted and fascinated by it. It was a huge gem («some people said that it was the plate on which Erodiade placed the head of John the Baptist which was brought to Erode's table»); and, although Anselmo had seen a much larger quantity of precious stones among the treasures of Saint Mark in Venice none of them were worthy of such great admiration as that vase of a hexagonal shape, measuring six palms of the hand and adorned with two handles made from the same single emerald. The chalice was not the only relic that the city guarded with such devotion. In the rural church of Saint Bartholomew about a mile from Genoa the Holy Face of Jesus was revered, this being a sudarium which according to tradition showed an impression of the image of Christ (Wilson, 1991, p. 162; Wolf, 2005; Rizzoli, 2003)¹⁷.

The port of Genoa, because of its size and the depth of its waters could accommodate the largest ships in the world against the sides of the wharves; they were so big that they sat "on the water like castles".

Of the three jetties made in marble and cut stone, one had at the end of it a tower from the top of which shone a lantern throughout the night which helped boats to enter and leave the harbour. In front of the harbour on a rocky promontory which closed off the other extremity of the harbour was another tower called Lighthouse Cape on which stood another lantern «to guide those who entered the harbour by night. These lanterns were as large as a big oil jar». From the tower¹⁸ built on the road between Genoa and the West, the so-called "Via di Francia", which was the coastal route between the harbour entrance and the Promontory, one could enjoy a splendid view of the entire city surrounded by its double wall defenses.



Figure 5: Genoa, xylograph, Anonymous artist Source: *Weltchronik* by Hartmann Schedel, Nuremberg, 1493

The city was densely populated, its inhabitants were "serious, reasonable and moderate" divided into three categories: the *Capellaces*, or city leaders, the most famous families who included among their ancestors illustrious doges like the Adornis, the Campofregosis, the Guarchis and the Motaldis. The second category was that of the *Nobili* belonging to the Spinola, Doria, Fieschi and Grimaldi families. The third category, finally, was composed of the rest of the citizens, that is to say, the *Popolani*. In general, members of the same family or lineage lived on the same street or square. Sometimes

they owned a church together or a house or a "loggia" where family members met every day to make decisions or to converse.

Outside the city walls, about four miles away, perched on the mountain slopes were to be found some very gracious houses (they looked more like castles than houses due to their beauty and dimensions). Furnished with delightful gardens, full of orchards and vineyards, which, whad they been connected together contiguously they would have formed another city just as beautiful and extensive as Genoa». The soil although full of stones and rocks produced, thanks to the temperate climate, mushrooms and excellent quality fruit.

On May 7, towards dusk, Anselmo and his companions boarded a large ship¹⁹ and after unfurling the sails to the sound of mortars and trumpets set sail with a favourable wind towards the island of Corsica.



Figure 6: Bag for relics, Rhineland, XIV century, silked and gold cloth Source: Cologne, Schnütgen Museum

4. The Return Journey. From Brindisi to Rome

The Mediterranean sea routes led our travel companions to the Holy Land past Corsica and Sardinia: there are extraordinary suggestive descriptive pictures of the cities of Carthage and Tunis, the islands of Pantelleria, Malta, Sicily and Candia. The journey then continued overland between the cities of Alessandria and Cairo through many

holy places: Saint Catherine's monastery, Mount Sinai, Gaza and Jerusalem following an itinerary already well-defined and planned of medieval pilgrimages (the mountains of Sion and Oliveto, Bethlehem, the mountains of Judea and Quarantena, Betania, the Jordon, the Dead Sea, Nazareth, Mount Tabor and Mount Hermon and Lake Tiberiade. The journey then continued to Damascus and Beirut following the maritime routes between the Island of Rhodes and the coasts of the eastern Adriatic and as previously mentioned, the group reached land again.

Of particular interest, are the accurate descriptions of cities, churches, and buildings as well as the detailed descriptive account of the surrounding areas and of Nature all around the overland journey on the Via Appia-Traiana which the pilgrims explored right across Puglia and the lands of Campania as far as Rome and then from the Eternal City to Venice and Bruges.

Puglia (Calò Mariani, 2003, 2007; Chiavari Cattaneo della Volta & Lercari 2002; Giovitti, 2005; Federico, 2012, pp. 163-171; Izzi, 2006; Otranto, 2007; Porsia, 1984; Stopani, 1992) was a province situated for the most part by the sea, very extensive in area and «I believe it is the most fertile in the world for the production of oil and wheat» (Heers & De Groër, 1978, p. 380)²⁰. It produced excellent wine in abundance and was the biggest breeder of animals especially pigs. It was a flat region with a temperate climate and very pleasant due to the presence of orchards and different kinds of aromatic herbs that grew wild in the fields. The soil appeared to be sandy, which led to the roads always being kept in excellent condition because they were not subject to erosion by rain, and on the contrary, this made them more compact and thus stable and safe. Apulia boasted a large number of enjoyable cities famous for their beauty including Lecce, Taranto, Nardò and Otranto.

Brindisi, where the pilgrims next landed, escaping from a storm on November 25, 1470, is situated on the coast in a strategic position and is blessed with some of the most beautiful and fortified small bays in the whole region: «all our sailors tell us that they had never seen anything like it. In fact, the outer harbour which is for the use of large ships is very large and protects boats from the winds that come from all directions and from storms» (Heers & De Groër, 1978, p. 380). There was a huge cliff on one of the sides on which was situated the Church of Saint Christopher which contained a column said to have been carried by the saint «on his shoulders across the Straits». The inner harbour, on the other hand, is for smaller crafts. The two harbours were overlooked and protected by imposing towers.

The city of Brindisi was scarcely populated. Its ruins showed its ancient size, they had been partly demolished by dissenting internal factions and by a powerful earthquake. The origin of its depopulation could be traced back to the shipwrecks near the Lighthouse on the Straits of Messina of thirty galleys whose crews had been made up of men of arms from Brindisi. A small well fortified castle could be seen on the sea, built by Frederick Barbarossa with seven towers it had also contained a magnificent abode which was later completely destroyed. It was from this port that the Emperor Frederick 11 embarked for the Holy Land.

Among the city churches, mention is made of the Cathedral, the Seat of the Archbishop decorated with a splendid mosaic floor where the body of Saint Theodor and numerous other relics are kept. There were two big columns behind the building which according to tradition had been erected by Virgil who died here; the Church of our Lady of Casale

is also mentioned because it contains a painting made by Luke, the evangelist and it is an object of cult and miracles.

The pages of Anselmo's dairy continue with a detailed narrative, unique in its kind, of the territories visited before reaching Rome.

There are recollections of the town of Carovigno (which had fifty families), Ostuni and Monopoli, whose inhabitants lived off their olive groves that seemed to our travelers to be more pleasing and imposing than those admired in Syria and Barberia; the village of Mola which is reached by crossing the large town of Polignano was inhabited by many more women than men «there are four women for every man» (Heers & De Groër, 1978, p. 386)²¹. Bari was next, a city by the sea although it did not really have a port of its own but only a "beach". Anselmo remembers the grandiose beautiful cathedral built with «monolithic stone columns», and the Church of Saint Nicholas where Charlemagne reserved a canonical seat for him and where the body of the 'blessed' Nicholas is buried, preserved in a marble coffin under a precious altar. From his remains, according to tradition, a holy oil flows with which on the occasion of important festivities, the eyes and foreheads of the faithful are anointed; a ceremony which Anselmo was fortunate to witness.

After leaving Bari the pilgrims reached Giovinazzo, then Molfetta where there was a monastery dedicated to Saint Dominic and then on to the Church of Our Lady of Martyrs situated about a mile from the town where the bodies of numerous martyrs were buried. The priests who looked after the church and lived in nearby houses were used to welcoming the many pilgrims who went there. After having visited Bisceglie they arrived in Trani which was considered to be the most beautiful and richest city of the cities of Puglia: situated by the sea it had a port which was ideal for mooring small boats, triremes and little galleons which made it one of the most flourishing commercial cities in the peninsular. The houses were elegant and most of them were situated along the docks and made with white marble with their facades cut "in diamond pointed shapes"; the beauty of the place lay in fact in the refined houses built in stone, richly adorned with precious reliefs softened by little columns in the windows which reminded Anselmo of the castle in Damascus and the houses of Beirut (Heers & De Groër, 1978, p. 392)²².

Trani's population included a significant Jewish community, a part of whom had converted to Christianity. Their descendents were hence called 'new Christians' and they had built most of the beautiful houses mentioned above²³.

The journey then continued to Barletta and Manfredonia, mentioned for its abundant sources of water and the presence of many varied species of birds (geese, ducks, cranes and other kinds); just like Brindisi, the city –which took its name from King Manfred who founded it – did not really have a harbour as such but was a safe haven surrounded by mountains which protected it from strong winds

The travelers then came to Mount Saint Angelo where many sweet-smelling herbs grew: rosemary and sage which grew wild. On the top of the mountain were the remains of the defensive walls of an ancient castle and a church described by Anselmo as "wonderful and stupendous" which could be reached after climbing sixty four steps. The choir area was a cavern, a natural cave of large dimensions richly adorned with several altars and chapels built and consecrated by Saint Michael.

Anselmo informs us that in truth «there is another altar on the left where Saint Michael appeared to the Beato Lorenzo, the bishop of Siponto. Behind the altar there is a font whose water cures many illnesses and had come out of the ground miraculously at the time the church was consecrated» (Heers & De Groër, 1978, pp. 396-397)²⁴. Above the cave, Adorno mentions an enchanting woodland of huge large trees. From the charming woods one could see the «marvelous " countryside and the Adriatic Sea. In other words this place is deserves to be seen; because of its position many pilgrims visit it every year as it is considered as being a chosen and holy site for the remission of all sins» (Heers & De Groër, 1978, p. 400)²⁵. The Abbey of Saint Leonard is situated six miles from Manfredonia and was built in honour of the saint who made many miracles «as can be seen by the number of offerings made to the same church and all the miracles granted in particular the thanks given by the founder and his sons who were miraculously released from prison in the auditorium of Saint Lorenzo, where they founded the above mentioned church»²⁶.

In truth, Anselmo tells us, that Frederick Barbarossa, «because of the victories that the Prussian knights won bravely fighting the Saracens, gifted them this abbey with all its lands to enjoy and possess; they still own them and they have adorned the place with splendid buildings. Consequently there are still six or seven knights resident there with other monks and churchmen, they look after it and spend seven canonical hours singing devotedly» (Heers & De Groër, 1978, p. 400)²⁷; it was here that Anselmo was received "notabilter".

The city of Foggia, on those plains could be found a great quantity of game and where the King of Naples used to stay during the summer to hunt and capture wild birds was described as "squalid"; Anselmo mentions the cathedral where Saint William who came from Antioch and his son were buried after dying in the town during a pilgrimage. In their hands could be seen the symbol of the devotional practice of Jerusalem, the date palm which was planted on their tombs, much admired and still considered a relic today.

The pilgrim from Bruges describes the city of Troia, situated in the "delightful" valleys where the war between King Ferdinand of Naples and Duke John of Calabria was fought; the wall mosaic of the cathedral reminded him of the church of Pisa. Mention is also made of Mount Creper clearly visible from all along the coastline and whose ascent is very dangerous because of the high winds.

This is followed by descriptions of Casalbore (which had sixty families), Paduli and Benevento, the seat of the archbishop's palace whose beautiful entrance door is described, a triumphal archway, very similar to the one in Rome. Along the walls of the cathedral could be found a round shaped church very similar to that of Santa Maria Rotonda in the eternal city. The body of the apostle Bartholomew lay behind the altar in the choir area (Borghi, 2008).

The small fortified town surrounded by mountains of Pellosa is also mentioned and is reached by following a "very bad road", and from which on the other hand an "excellent" road wound its way to the foot of the mountains covered with olive groves and where a very good Greek wine was produced. The countryside was dotted with small castles.

Finally, having passed through the towns of Montesarchio, Arpaia, Arienzo and Acesa the group reached Naples, once called "Partenopeo, after the name of a virgin buried

there". **Figure 7** An ancient Italian city, also called "Noble" and "Free" due to the presence of numerous nobles, counts and knights who lived there. Before reaching the safe harbour, Anselmo caught sight of the islands of Capri, Ischia and Procida. Fifteen days before their arrival in Naples the city had been hit by a violent storm, which had destroyed the solidly built pier and all the boats moored there, were "broken". Faced with so much virulence the inhabitants thought there had been a big earthquake. Anselmo describes the city because its form is like a "moon crescent", inhabited by people who «shine because of their beauty, especially the women, who are happy, charming, well-proportioned and friendly, much more than elsewhere» (Heers & De Groër, 1978, p. 400)²⁸; their costumes resembled those worn by the Catalans merchants displayed their wares. The houses from an architectural point of view were similar to those of the East with flat roofs and they were built in marble. The Bruges pilgrims had the opportunity to visit the home of Count Matalon, which was described as «magnificent, worthy of a prince thanks to its decorations» (Heers & De Groër, 1978, p. 408, 410)²⁹.



Figure 7: View of Naples, tavola Strozzi, painting on wood, XV century Source: Museo nazionale di San Martino, Naples

The town was not just bestowed with superb houses but also basilicas including the Cathedral, monasteries and convents of four mendicant orders. The church of the monastery of Saint Augustus outside the city beyond Porta Capuana contained the body of King Ladislaus and his chancellor «this truly deserved to be seen on its own». From the top of Mount Saint Erasmus one of the most beautiful sights of the city and the harbour could be seen.

The city boasted the presence of various fortresses including "Castel Nuovo" rebuilt by King Alfonso and in Anselmo's opinion it was the perfect castle and thanks to its beauty, strength and wealth, superior to all the other castles in the cities he had visited with the exception of Milan; other fortresses included that of Ovo, a stronghold built on a rock in the middle of the sea and those of Pizzofalcone (*Pichefalcon*) and Capuano built on the top of two adjacent hills.

Adorno does not fail to point out Naples's fame for its much-frequented university with over a thousand students at the time. Anselmo also calls the road that wound its way from Castel dell'Ovo, cut through caves and rocks, a "real miracle". The road was half a mile long and wide enough to let a cart go by. Here too was the cave that had inspired the poet Virgil. At the entrance to the cave there was a small chapel that could only be reached after having climbed many steps: «People pass through the cave continuously

just like on a public road because it cuts the distance considerably; otherwise they would have to climb up the mountain and then go down the other side. The place really deserves a visit. The cave is quite tall because one can pass through on horseback carrying a straight lance» (Heers & De Groër, 1978, p. 414)³⁰.

Having gone through it, one can see the small town of Pozzuoli surrounded by high mountains from which stones are extracted and then heated in ovens in the valley and then transported to other areas to be "boiled". Among the mountains, mention is also made about Solfatara, one of the volcanoes that make up the Campi Flegrei, situated about two miles from the centre of Pozzuoli.

The fearful inhabitants call them "mouths of hell" probably according to Anselmo because the place was considered to be suitable for the purification of sinful souls.

Returning towards Naples, Anselmo noticed the natural spring baths extending along the sides of a large lake "of unfathomable depth" ³¹.

The journey subsequently continued towards the ancient city of Aversa, praised by Roman historians for its splendor and the virtue of its inhabitants and built by Roberto il Guiscardo to "dominate Naples and Capua". Anselmo then passed through Sessa and Garigliano situated along the river of the same name and of ancient Roman origin then Traghetto and Mola where there was an "excellent inn" and a beautiful garden full of orange trees from where one could admire the city of Gaeta. The surrounding region produced olives, vines, wheat and an excellent wine in large quantities; next came Itri, Fiondi situated on the borders of the Kingdom of Naples and the Pontificate State. In fact as Anselmo informs us that no horses were allowed to leave the town without the authorization of the Count of Fiondi.

The road continued to pontificate city of Terracina then Sermonetta and Velletri which Anselmo remembered for the big bell that was rung each time the inhabitants felt the need for justice just like in Constantinople (Heers & De Groër, 1978, p. 422)³².

In front of the municipal buildings stood a quadrangular piece of white marble fixed to the ground portraying on one side a bowl and on the other side a jug. There was a double iron chain on the top. Whoever sat on the stone could carry with themselves wherever they went a wooden bowl or a jug tied to their belt with a cord and beg without any sense of shame (Heers & De Groër, 1978, p. 422, 424).

After passing through the little town of Marino which belonged to the ancient noble Colonna family situated ten miles from Rome on a vast fertile ploughed plain, Anselmo and his companions on the adventure reached the Eternal City "our communal homeland, after many difficulties" on January 11, 1471 "safe and sound".

And it is from Rome, in the Lille version of the manuscript that the journey and story ends. Leaving by the Western gate the pilgrims returned through the Eastern gate: «This way we have made our journey in line with the shape of a circle following the circumference of the place of departure to that of our arrival» (Heers & De Groër, 1978, p. 424)³³.

5. From Rome to Bruges

Manuscript number 330 was completed with further annotations, comments and notes and edited by Anselmo's son Giovanni dating back to 1480 and has reached us thanks

to the 18th century transcription by Edmond de la Coste who we already mentioned at the beginning of our text which helps us learn about the pilgrims' return journey from Rome to Bruges with great interest and involvement.

The journey therefore continued from the Eternal City towards Venice going through Siena again «one of the universities where many professors who teach all kinds of subjects can be found. There is a college for students called Sapienza. If I had sons who had acquired the first rudiments of the sciences I would if I could bring them here or to Perugia to continue their studies» (De la Coste, 1855, p. 135)³⁴; next was Florence, adorned with beautiful houses like the private ones of Cosimo de Medici or Giacomo de Pazzi; On February 9, they arrived in Bologna «which is considered to be the mother of studies and the source of all law» and where there is «a magnificent abode belonging to signore Giovanni Bentivoglio, who is like the Lord of the city: on his orders we were shown all over his house» (De la Coste, 1855, p. 136)³⁵.

The journey also touched the city of Ferrara, welcoming and joyous where «the women were charming, kind and beautiful and made all those who feel sad happy again just by their lovely smiling glances to passers-by» (De la Coste, 1855, p. 136)³⁶. They arrived in Venice on February 15. Anselmo underlines three aspects about the city, which deserve to be remembered: the very beautiful St Marks Square, the Doge's palace and the Arsenal.

Adorno admires the painting above the altar of Church of Saint Giuliana showing the Pope and the Turk with their hands stretched out towards a letter which is being avidly seized by the latter. The painting is seen by Anselmo as being "prophetic": «The Church of the Lord will be reformed and will obey God just like in the times of my Vicar, Peter. The door of faith will open to the gentiles and they will lead over Christians by their virtue» (De la Coste, 1855, p. 138)³⁷.

Anselmo was received with great warmth and friendship by the noble citizens including Lorenzo Bembo, Giovanni di Brigandini and Ambrogio Contarini (De la Coste, 1855, p. 484)³⁸.

They left Venice on March 6 stopping at the monastery of Chartreux where Anselmo's brothe, Giacomo Adorni, the monk was buried; then the cities of Trento, Salmone, Merano, Innsbruck, Bressanone and then on horseback across the mountains where they met Sigismondo, the Count of Tirolo; then across the Duchy of Austria, Stiria, Corinzia, Cariola and after that to Mols, Strasbourg, Zinghelstein, Worms, Oppenheim and Mens. After navigating the Rhine for several days they arrived in Cologne continuing towards Berchen, Julich, Aiz, Maestrich, Anversa and Brabant. After a journey that lasted a year, Anselmo arrived in Bruges "the sweetest city in the world" and among the "most beautiful merchant cities that we have seen", and "the richest in wealth' after Gand, the main city and capital of Flanders" (De la Coste, 1855, p. 488). They were welcomed with great joy by their friends and citizens.

Conclusions

As in every diary, Anselmo's account also ends with "an excellent and wise conclusion". After having visited numerous regions, and having observed from near the customs of people as "a direct experience", Adorno states that nothing is perpetual and lasts for

ever in this world, but everything is changeable and transitory. He talks about "huge poverty", of "little faith and justice" and of an "unquenchable thirst for wealth and honour" because Man is by his very nature greedy for power and inclined to satisfy his own passions. Happiness does not exist, everything is changeable (Heers & De Groër, 1978, p. 424, 426).

For both Anselmo and Giovanni, the couple that remind us a lot of Marco Polo and Rustichiello from Pisa, the example of men from the past does not seem to count, they too, "let themselves be seduced by the lies and vain glory of the world", as fragile as a "crystal glass".

One thing is certain: *Itinerarium Terrae Sanctae Anselmi Adorni* is a precious testimony of a XV century pilgrim's vision of the world, albeit under false pretences. The human and natural scenarios described in the diary in polychrome are both varied and unusual. Anselmo was initially attracted by the world around him which he approached with consolidated experience and familiarity; his spirit of observation regarding many European voices and customs and exotic traditions have been restored to us thanks to this extraordinary source of recollections.

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¹ The writer confirms the presence of Genoese merchants in the Middle Ages in Bologna between the middle of the XV century and the beginning of the XV1 century numbering between 25-30 each year totaling around 150 overall. As well as the presence of the Genoese in the Flemish city there was also a significant immigration coming from England.

² Anselmo's grandfather, Pietro was known to have been the companion in arms in Africa and Syria in the XIII century of the Count of Flanders, Guy de Dampierre.

³ Giovanni was made Knight of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Pietro visited the Holy Land twice.

⁴ Giovanni Adorni, on his return from his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, stayed in Rome and Jerusalem and lived in Gand and Lille where he became rector of the collegiate church of Saint Peter's.

⁵ From the library catalogue of the Church of Jerusalem in Bruges at the end of the XV century beginning XVI century *De sommo Cipionis scripti per Alsemum Adorunum*, cited in *Corpus Catalogorum Belgii*, (p. 24), n° 5, entry 24.

⁶ Saint Andrew is the patron saint of both Scotland and Burgundy, certainly a happy coincidence.

⁷ Ambrogio Contarini informs us that he had learnt during his journey in Persia that even though Uzun Hassan's cavalry could amount to around 50,000 men, the king refused to join the operation.

⁸ «Civitas ipsa est oblonga, magis longa quam lata, multis altis turribus fulta que quadre sunt, ex petris coctis veluti etiam sunt Perusio et Luca, Viterbio et Mantue, civitatibus quas etiam vidimus».

⁹ Anselmo believes that the statue represents Teodorico, king of the Goths.

^{10 «...}ubi incipiunt montes Apennini et dominia Januensium.»

¹¹ «...Pungeboni, ubi est rectum iter Romanum venientibus ex lombardia...».

¹² In his diary, Anselmo recalls the same kindness that he had received some days before in Milan from Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza and that received from Giacomo Doria in Genoa because of his family ties with the Adorno family and his Italian heritage. Anselmo visited many Italian cities; he admired their civic and religious architecture and nobody better than him was in a better position to bring out in or at least encourage the "Italian" transformation of James III of which Antonio di Pietro Averlino, known as the 'Filarete' was one of the maximum exponents.

¹³ Anselmo was struck by the beauty of the city, in particular, the tower with its five hundred columns; and by the cemetery and port, which was "very protected" where the Arno river enters the sea.

¹⁴ «Janua inter Ytalie urbes magna ex parte illustrior ac pulchrior michi visa est».

 $^{^{15}}$ Veluti genua non ad retrocedendum sed ad ambulandum ac progediendum facta sint, ita semper apliatur ac, favente fortuna, de bono in melius Janua crevit».

¹⁶ This is just one of the explanations that has been handed down over the years regarding the mysterious relics of Christ of those who see the Holy Grail as an emerald in the shape of a large chalice.

¹⁷ According to tradition, the precious and venerable relic had been gifted in the XIV century by the Byzantine Emperor Giovanni V to the doge Leonardo Montaldo. Even if studies carried out in 1969 by Colette Dufeur Bozzo attributed the date of the frame to the XIV century, it is presumed that the image dates back to a previous era.

¹⁸ The tower was situated along the link road between Genoa and the east, the so-called Via di Francia, the coastal route between the harbor entrance arch and the promontory on the highest level of the Sampierdarena coastline where many of the abodes of the noble families were built. At that time the road was probably on top of the cliffs overlooking the sea towards the lighthouse.

¹⁹ The choice of the kind of boat and leaving from the port of Genoa had been carefully thought out. On the advice of their friends and their protectors our pilgrims had chosen a large boat for its extra comfort compared to a trireme for its ability to deal with rough seas. Anselmo was against sailing from Venice for various reasons among which «the scarcity of local inhabitants and because of the number of people of different nationalities who spread diseases from one to the other with their breath», and because he had just learned of the death of forty-nine people before his departure.

²⁰ «Maxima est et fertilissima in oleo et blado qua in orbe melior, credo...»

²¹ «...ita quod quatuor sunt femine respectu unius viri».

²² «In aspectu pulchre et sumptuose dicte domus sunt, quarum anterior ex marmoribus albis paries in forma dyamantum acutorum scissus».

²³ The cathedral is remembered and described by Anselmo, as always, in meticulous detail, for all its magnificence and its splendor and for containing a crypt with numerous relics.

²⁴ «Aliud vero est in sinistra parte in loco in quo sanctus Michael se ostendidit beato Laurencio episcopo Sipontino. Retro altare magnum est fons quidam, cujus quidem aqua diversorum morborum est sanitiva, qui miraculose ex terra tempore quo ecclesia consecrata erat, exsaliit».

²⁵ «...tota circumcirca amenissima patria ac Adriaticum sinus circumspicitur. Locus breviter hic visu est dignus ac pro situ ejus devotissimus eumque multi singulis annis peregrini visitant quia locus preelectus atque sanctus esse censetur et remissio a pena et culpa pariter omnium peccatorum...», in Heers, J. & De Groër, G. (Eds.) (1978), p. 386.

²⁶ «Ymmo et adhuc pendent illa primo apportata per conditorem, seu fundatorem, ecclesie ac filios suos qui, adjutorio sancti Leonardi a carceribus liberati miraculose, eo in loco dictam ecclesiam condiderunt.».

²⁷ «Hanc vero abbatiam Feodericus barba rubia, propter victorias quas domini de Prusia contra Sarracenos vigorose optinuerunt, illis cum omnibus possessionibus ad gaudendum et possidendum dedit, quam adhuc tenent multumque cum edificiis pulchris locum decoraverunt. Continuo sex aut septem ididem domini residentes sunt, qui una cum aliis fratribus et presbiteris quos ibi tenent, septem horas canonicas devote canendo persolvunt».

²⁸ «...precipue mulieres que speciose, venuste, forma admodum honesta et liberales sunt ut nichil supra...».

²⁹ «...quam pro quocumque principe ornatam satis ac magnificam judicavimus.».

³⁰ «Ad introitum grote parvula est capella sursum in lapidoso monte sulpta, que per gradus multos ex eode lapide scissos ascenditur. Per hanc grotam populus continuo, uti per publicam stratam, ineat tanquam per viam multo propinquiorem, alias necesse esset montem ascendere pariter et descendere. Res quidem est visu dignissima. Que etiam grota admodum alta est quod erecta lancea in equo deferri potest.»

³¹ It probably refers to Lake Agnano

³² It is said, in fact, that the 'Great Turk' owned next to his palace, a similar bell. When it rang, he summoned whoever had rung it and listened to their requests. Anselmo stresses the effectiveness of the method because it renders justice to everybody.

³³ «...in qua finem facio, ut ipsa veluti punctus circuli principium ac terminus notus sit, per opponentalem portam egressi per orientemque reversi sumus, unde iter nostrum factum ad figuram circuli, ducta liena pro circumferentia loco exitus et reditus, comperiretur.».

³⁴ «Est una ex Italie universitatibus in qua est doctorum copia legentium in omni facultate et est collegium unum scolarum quod Sapentia vocatur. Ego si juvenes haberem fundatos in primi scientiis vellem si possem ad proficiendum ibi collocare vel in Perusio...».

³⁵ «Est un in ea una excellens domus que domini Joannis de Bentervelge sive domini Joannis Bentivoli qui est uti dominus civitatis...eujus jussu domus sua ubique nobis ostensa fuit.».

³⁶ «Habet muliebrem gentem placabilem, urbanam, formosam que tristem letum faciunt...».

³⁷ «...ecclesia Dei reformabitur et obediens erit Deo sicut tempore Petri vicarii mei. Aperietur gentibus porta fidei et dominabuntur christianis in virtutibus.».

³⁸ In De la Costa's edition reference is made to Lorenzo Contarini. It is probably an error since Lorenzo lived in the XVI century (1515-1552). It must refer to Ambrogio Contarini (1429-1499).