
The volume comes with two CD-ROMs attached: “San Pio X – la sua musica”, Coenobium Vocale, directed by Maria Dal Bianco (it contains fifteen pieces of liturgical music written by the young Sarto); and “Concerto Sinfonico per San Pio X”, Orchestra Regionale Filarmonia Veneta, directed by Marco Titotto, Organist Giovanni Feltrin (Concert for Saint Pius X in the Cathedral of Treviso, March 29, 2014).

This long book presents twenty-seven heterogeneous articles, in different ways related to Giuseppe Sarto - pope Pius X, elected on August 4, 1903, died August 20, 1914, later canonized by Pius XII, May 29, 1954. Edited texts were initially presented at some conferences and meetings organized in 2013-2014 (the most relevant an international conference, with the same title of this volume, “Reform of Catholicism? The activities and choices of Pius X”, held in Treviso and Venice, 24-25 October 2013), on the occasion of the centenary year of the death of Pius X. Contributions concern six fields in which the editors collected the Pius X’s pontificate (1903-1914), focused on a prominent question: What was Pius X’s reformist attitude? According to Brugnotto and Romanato, historians on this topic would be divided in two leanings: advocates of an innovative dimension of Pius X’s papacy and proponents of a catholic restorative perspective. The editors openly propose the first thesis. However, following Carlo Fantappiè’s article (“Modernità” e “antimodernità” di Pio X, pp. 3-37), Brugnotto and Romanto explain that the innovative character of the reforms of Pius X is the outcome of a well-balanced encounter between secular modernity and ecclesial anti modernity: Pius X tried to incorporate into the Roman Catholic Church some institutions of modern culture.
originating from the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. At the same time, he established a traditional magisterium, characterized by an anti-modern orientation.

It is impossible to summarize the contents of the six sections in which the book is organized. They concern the Pius X’s ecclesial reformist attitude (by the aforementioned Fantappiè, and Stefano Dal Santo, Stefano Chioatto, Gaetano Zito, Lucio Bonora); the catechesis and liturgical reforms and the restoration to prominence Gregorian Chant (Giuseppe Biancardi, Bruna Fregni, Juan Javier Florse Arcas, Paolo Magnani, Antonio Lovato, Michael Dubiaga, Bruno Fabio Pighin); the reform of canon law (Giorgio Feliciani, Chiara Minelli, Giuliano Brugnotto, Daniele Fregonese); Pius X’s catholic social teaching and governance of the catholic lay organizations (Marco Impagliazzo, Lino Cusinato, Giuseppe Adriano Rossi); Church policies towards secular governments and peoples (Gianni La Bella, Andreas Gottmann, Miroslaw Lenart, Umberto Castagnino Berlinghieri), and a final section “Alia” (Other issues), concerning the modernist crisis (Maurilio Guasco), Sarto’s venetian episcopacy before his pontifical election (Fabio Tonizzi), holiness patterns in Sarto as priest of Treviso dioceses (Ivano Sartor), Pius X’s attitude towards sciences (Quirino Bortolato), a review of new documents relating to Pius X by the Vatican Secret Archives (Alejandro Mario Dieguez), the relations with States (particularly France, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Italy) and the beginning of the First World War (Bernard Ardura), the itinerary of a saint (cardinal José Saraiva Martins). All these sections could be criticized for the absence of various themes. Nevertheless, overall, they offer range of in-depth studies of various kinds.

In general, we can discuss whether to assign a predominant dimension, in the pontificate of Pius X, to the modernist crisis and its repression (editors are not of this idea). But confining its investigation into a final miscellaneous section is unnecessarily reductive and weak on the historiographical level. According to Guasco in his essay on Pius X towards modernism, “It would be a serious mistake to reduce the entire pontificate of Pius X to the struggle against modernism [...] But it is certainly not
only the fault of historians if this accentuation has occurred” (p. 468, my translation from Italian). Then Guasco observes that was the Holy See, living Pius X and later, at the time of his canonization, to highlight the importance of the struggle against modernism led by Pope Sarto (cfr. *Ibidem*).

How to consider the answer that the numerous contributions offer, as a whole, to the question underlying the book? In fact, Pius X himself considered himself a pope of integralist Catholic orientation (in his first encyclical he proclaimed “the duty [...] of bringing back to the discipline of the Church human society, now estranged from the wisdom of Christ; the Church will then subject it to Christ, and Christ to God”: Pius X, *E supremi apostolatus*, number 9, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_04101903_e-supremi.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_04101903_e-supremi.html) accessed April 22, 2019), with no concessions of any kind to modernity. But he resorted to some reforms of ecclesiastical institutions, with the aim of achieving a full Christian restoration of society, through the Catholic Church, led by the pope. In short, the fundamental interpretation proposed by this book does not persuade and leaves room for further discussion among scholars. Anyway, the many articles published here can be considered a contribution, of various levels, to the knowledge of specific aspects of the pontificate of Pius X, as well as an example of the continuing sympathy and veneration received by the pontiff of Venetian origin in some sectors of contemporary Catholicism.

*Ca’ Foscari University of Venice*        

GIOVANNI VIAN