

ARCTOS

ACTA PHILOLOGICA FENNICA

VOL. XVI

HELSINKI 1982 HELSINGFORS

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LORENZO BELO'S EULOGY OF ROME

An epigraphical document of the spirit of the Counter Reformation

I i r o K a j a n t o

ABBREVIATIONS

Forcella = V. Forcella, *Iscrizioni delle chiese ed altri edifici di Roma dal secolo XI fino ai giorni nostri* I—XIV, 1869—1884.

Galletti = P. A. Galletti, *Inscriptiones Romanae infimi aevi Romae extantes* I, 1760.

Pastor = L. Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste* VIII¹³, 1958, IX¹¹, 1958.

On the wall of the stairway of the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Campidoglio, there is a verse inscription, which in 19 elegiac distichs praises Rome as a sacred and Christian city while discrediting her pagan past. Further, the epigram clearly champions the papal hierocratic ideology.

The words cut in large letters below the text tell us that the inscription had been dedicated to Rome by Lorenzo Belo, the bishop of Capaccio. Because, in my opinion, the inscription is a good example of the new spirit that pervaded Rome in the wake of the Counter Reformation, it may be of interest to discuss it in some detail.

The inscription has been published by Galletti I p. cccxxix No. 31 and by Forcella I 68. Although Forcella reproves Galletti's copy as 'inexact', his own copy is actually more inaccurate.¹ For the original, see the photograph (p. 34). Here is the transcribed text:

¹ Line 2 *ex ere* for *exere*, 11 *hilaratat* for *hilarat*, 15 *et* for *es*, 33 *reposcente* for *re poscente*.

FELIX ROMA RECENS VETERI FELICIOR VITAE
 EXERE IVRE POTES CELSIVS ALMA CAPUT
 LVDVS ERAS EREBO SECTANS ORACVLA SORTES
 NVNC AVTEM CHRISTI REGIA FACTA MICAS
 PACIS ALVMNA VIDES DIVORVM PYRA CRVORE
 MCENIA FRATER NOB SANGVINE IKEDA PRIVS
 NON ALITVT QVONIAM IVPAE COEESTIS AT AGVVS
 DIVINO FRVERIS SIC MELIORE CIBO
 EXCVTIS HOC IMMITE TVGV PHLEGETHONTIS ET ATRA
 MORTIS ET AETERNAE MVNERA LVCIS HABES
 TALIS LIBERTAS HILARAT TE DVLCIVS ILLA
 QVAM PEPERIT EIVTVS SCEPTRA SVPERBATEREN
 TOT LICET EXIMIS FRVERIS DECORATA THEATRI
 PORTICIBVS THEMIS ARCVBVS ATQVE FORIS
 NVNC TAMEN ES SANCTIS OPEROSIS AEDIBVS ARTI
 MIRA CONSTRUCTIS CVLTA VERENDA MAGI
 INTEGRA PVRA MANENT VETERV MONVMENTA NITORE
 AVGENT NON POTVIT CVNCTA ABOLERE DIES
 MAXIMA CONSPICVE SVRGVNT CAPITOLIA PVLCHRE
 ORNARIS LARIBVS FONTIBVS AMNE VIIS
 HEM QVÆ PVRPVREI MOX EST EXORTA SENATVS
 MAIESTAS PRISCI NON HABVERE PAREM
 SCIPIADE DECII VETVS OMNIS MARTIA PROLES
 CEDANT HIS DIVIS QVOS PIA CONDIS HVMI
 HIS ETENIM PIETAS ANIMIS INSERTA QVIRITVM
 CVLTRICEM SOBOLEM TOLLIT IN ASTRA TVAM
 SACRAQVE DVXERVNT NON FAVNI PRIMA BICORNIS
 SED QVÆ VERIDICO PROTVLIT ORE DEVS
 ARMIPOTENS FATEOR FVERAS ET CLARA TRIVMPHIS
 QVIS VETVS IMPERIVM QVAM PATET OR BIS ERAT
 QVID TVM NON NE TVIS SACRATIS LEGIBVS OR BIS
 PARET HIC ATQVE NOVO DIVES IN AXE IACENS
 RE POSCENTE ADIMIS VELDAS DIADEMA SVPREMV
 SCEPTRA DICAS MAGNOS TV FACIS ATQVE DVCES
 DENIQVE ROMANOS PRÆFECIT CHRISTVS OLYMPO
 PONTIFICES CLAVES AETHERIS VNDE GERVNT
 TERRA MINOR CCELO SACRA VIS EST GRATIOR ARMIS
 GRATIVS IMPERIVM MAIVS ET IPSA TENES

PATRIÆ DICAVIT
 LAV·BELVS EPISC·CAP·

- 1 *Felix Roma recens, veteri felicior urbe,*
 - 2 *Exere, iure potes, celsius, alma, caput!*
 - 3 *Ludus eras Erebo sectans oracula, sortes,*
 - 4 *Nunc autem Christi regia facta micas.*
 - 5 *Pacis alumna vides divorum pura cruore*
 - 6 *Moenia, fraterno sanguine foeda prius.*
 - 7 *Non alit ut quondam lupa te, coelestis at agnus,*
 - 8 *Divino fruere sic meliore cibo.*
 - 9 *Excute hoc immite iugu(m) Phlegethontis et atrae*
 - 10 *Mortis et aeternae munera lucis habes.*
 - 11 *Talis libertas hilarat te dulcius illa*
 - 12 *Quam peperit Brutus sceptrum superba terens.*
 - 13 *Tot licet eximiis fueris decorata theatris,*
 - 14 *Porticibus, thermis, arcubus atque foris,*
 - 15 *Nunc tamen es sanctis operosis aedibus arte*
 - 16 *Mira constructis culta verenda magis.*
 - 17 *Integra plura manent veteru(m) monumenta, nitorem*
 - 18 *Augere, non potuit cuncta abolere dies.*
 - 19 *Maxima conspicue surgunt Capitolia, pulchris*
 - 20 *Ornari laribus, fontibus, amne, viis.*
 - 21 *Hem quae purpurei mox est exorta senatus*
 - 22 *Maiestas prisci non habuere parem.*
 - 23 *Scipiade, Decii, vetus omnis Martia proles*
 - 24 *Cedant his divi quos pia condidit humi!*
 - 25 *His etenim pietas animis inserta Quiritum*
 - 26 *Cultricem sobolem tollit in astra tuam.*
 - 27 *Sacraque duxerunt non Fauni prima bicornis*
 - 28 *Sed quae veridico protulit ore Deus.*
 - 29 *Armipotens fateor fueras et clara triumphis,*
 - 30 *Quis vetus imperium quam patet orbis erat.*
 - 31 *Quid tum? non ne tuis sacratis legibus orbis*
 - 32 *Paret hic atque novo dives in axe iacens*
 - 33 *Re poscente adimis vel das diadema supremum,*
 - 34 *Sceptrum dicas, magnos tu facis atque duces?*
 - 35 *Denique Romanos praefecit Christus Olympo,*
 - 36 *Pontifices claves aetheris unde gerunt.*
 - 37 *Terra minor coelo, sacra vis est gratior armis,*
 - 38 *Gratius imperium maius et ipsa tenes.*
- Patriae dicavit / Lau(rentius) Belus episc(opus) Cap(utaquensis).*

The dedicator of the epigraph was at his time a fairly wellknown person, the author of a number of books.² He was one of the numerous sons of Pietro Belo, the procurator of the Inquisition. His year of birth is unknown, but as his first books, already showing mature learning, were printed in 1562, he was probably born in the 1530s. After studying at the university of Rome, where he obtained a doctor's degree *in utroque iure*, he entered upon the ecclesiastical career. In 1574, still a presbyter in the diocese of Rome, he was raised to the see of Capaccio, a nearly deserted mountain town in the archbishopric of Salerno.³ Since the place was unhealthy, and his own health precarious, he had to move to Salerno, where he stayed with his mother to the latter's death in 1579. He left the care of his diocese to one of his brothers, who exploited it to line his own pockets.⁴ Lorenzo spent his remaining years in Rome, where he passed away in 1586. He is claimed to have been buried in S. Maria in Aracoeli, but the sepulchre is not extant.⁵

² For his biography, see M. Piccialuti, *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* 8, 1966, 31sq., with a full bibliography.

³ L. Jadin, *Capaccio*, *Dict. hist. géogr. eccl.* 11, 1949, 823sqq.

⁴ See G. Cappelletti, *Le chiese d'Italia* XX, 1966, 348.

⁵ The record of the burial seems to derive from F. Ughello, *Italia sacra* VII², 1721, col. 475 No. XXXIII. After briefly reporting his promotion to bishop and his death, he continues: *cujus memoria extat Romae in Ecclesia Aracaelana in cenotaphio*, and quotes the epitaph: *D.O.M. / Petro Bello Romano consultatori ac procu/ratori inquisitionis, Laurentio Bello epis/copo Caputaquensi, Pompeo Bello episco/po Bisinian(ensi), Caesari Bello prothonotario apo/stolico, Octavius Bellus i(uris) c(onsultus) patri dulciss(imo) / ac tribus charissimis fratribus merit(o) posuit / anno Domini MDXC*. P. F. Casimiro, in his *Memorie istoriche della chiesa e convento di S. Maria in Aracoeli di Roma*, 1736, 285, knew the epitaph only from Ughello, and so did Galletti I p. cccxxviii No. 28 and Forcella I 764. On the other hand, in S. Maria sopra Minerva there appears to have been an almost identical epitaph, dedicated in 1600, Ughello I, 1717, col. 524 No. 31. Apart from minor differences in abbreviations and orthography, only the end differs from the one claimed to exist in Aracoeli: *patri dulciss(imo) ac tribus ornatissimis fratribus moer(ens) posuit anno Domini MDC*. Galletti I p. cccxxviii No. 29, however, records the epitaph in a form that seems more correct: *D.O.M. / Petro Belo Romano / consultori et procu/ratori fisci sancte / inquisitionis, / Laurentio Belo episcopo / Caputaquen(si), / Pompeo Belo episcopo / Bisinianen(si), / Caesari Belo protonot(ar)io / apostolico / Octavius Belus i(uris) c(onsultus) / patri dulciss(imo) et / tribus*

Lorenzo Belo's literary production is a reflection of the age, the Counter Reformation of the latter half of the sixteenth century. Even the panegyric description of Pastor reveals the great change in the intellectual atmosphere brought about by the reformist Popes, especially by that austere monk, Pius V (1566—1572). Intent only on wiping out heresy and on improving morals, with a zeal bordering on cruelty, he was indifferent and even hostile to humanism and to classical antiquity.⁶ Because he thought pagan statues unfit to decorate the palace of the head of Christianity, he gave part of the great Vatican collection to the city of Rome,⁷ to the cardinals, and even to outsiders like emperor Maximilian and the city of Florence. The rest certainly remained in the Vatican, but was no longer accessible to the public.⁸ Poets and scholars received no encouragement from him. The only type of literature promoted during his reign were theological publications.⁹

In this nearly monastic atmosphere, admiration for and imitation of antiquity, which has reached a high-water mark in the sunny days of Leo X, was visibly ebbing. The humanists, who once felt no qualms about using pagan phrases and pagan mythological names of things Christian and even of Christian deities,¹⁰ were returning to the traditional Christian language.¹¹ A telling example is the classical phrase *Quod bonum faustum*

suavissimis / fratribus mestiss(imus) / posuit anno D(omini) / MDC. Moreover, No. 30 he quotes an epitaph 'in gyro orbicularis lapidis', *familiae ossa Belorum*. These inscriptions have been omitted by Forcella. Either there were two family graves, one in Aracoeli, the other in sopra Minerva, or Ughelli has made a mistake in placing the epitaph in Aracoeli. At any rate, Galletti seems to have seen the epitaphs in sopra Minerva. Notice that the names are here given in the correct form of *Belus*, not *Bellus*, as in Ughello and in the copies derived from him. The other inscription, *familiae ossa Belorum*, also suggests that the family grave really existed in sopra Minerva.

⁶ Pastor VIII 64—72; O. Chadwick, *The Reformation*, 1970, 281—284.

⁷ Pastor VIII 81. The grateful city recorded the gift in two inscriptions, no longer extant, Forcella I 61, 62.

⁸ Pastor VIII 82—84.

⁹ *Ibid.* 93—96.

¹⁰ Cf. my *Papal Epigraphy in Renaissance Rome*, 1982, 46—48.

¹¹ Chadwick (see n. 6) 272sq.; A. G. Dickens, *The Counter Reformation*, 1975—1968, 62.

felixque sit, which in the age of Leo appeared at the beginning of the catalogue of the professors at the university of Rome. In 1569, as suggestive of paganism, it was replaced by *In nomine sanctae et individuae Trinitatis, Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*¹² A similar case may be quoted from the epigraphy of the Capitol. At the height of the Renaissance, in 1530, the conservators who restored the cistern in the courtyard of the Palazzo dei Conservatori, implored Jupiter, not God, to fill the cistern with water and to protect his sacred hill!¹³ Naturally there was no real belief in Jupiter. All was mere literary decoration, fashionable in the age of humanism.¹⁴ In the new age, an inscription like this would have been unthinkable. Instead, at the completion of the restoration of the Palazzo dei Conservatori, the persons in charge, Prospero Boccapaduli and Tommaso Cavalieri, set up two epigraphs, which faced each other at the entrance to the Palazzo.¹⁵ The one on the left still paid tribute to the legacy of antiquity:

S(enatus) p(opulus)q(ue) R(omanus) / maiorum suorum praestantiam / ut animo sic re / quantum licuit imitatus / deformatum

¹² Lettera dell'abate Gaetano Marini al chiarissimo monsignor Giuseppe Muti Papparuzzi, già Casali, nella quale s'illustra il ruolo de' professori dell' archiginnasio romano per l'anno MDXIV, 1797, 17.

¹³ The first part of the inscription, rediscovered ca. 60 years ago, is extant in the courtyard: *[Nos] vas condidimus, / [p]luvia tu, Iuppiter, imple, / [p]residibusque tue / rupis adesse velis.* The latter part is given by Forcella I from an old copy, which is probably somewhat inaccurate: *Antonius Militius, Stephanus Teulus, Sanus Corona conservatores cisternam hanc vetustate deformem in meliorem formam restituendam curarunt.* I do not give the line divisions or the abbreviations, because they are probably not original. Forcella dated the epigram to the papacy of Leo X (1513—1521), whereas Carlo Pietrangeli, *Iscrizioni inedite o poco note dei palazzi capitolini*, Arch. d. Soc. rom. di Storia patria 71 (1948) 127 argued that the conservators were in office in 1530. The decree to restore the cistern is recorded by E. Rodocanachi, *Le capitole romain antique e moderne*, 1904, 64.

¹⁴ For other examples of inscriptions in which Jupiter does service for Christian God, see my paper *Notes on the language in the Latin epitaphs of Renaissance Rome*, *Human. Lovan.* 28 (1979) 183. In one of them, a priest's career is described thus: *Iuppiter hunc primum sacris prefecerat*, Forcella I 493, S. Maria in Aracoeli.

¹⁵ The inscriptions are still extant, Forcella I 64, 65.

iniuria temporum / Capitolium restituit / Prospero Buccapadulio / Thoma Cavalerio / curatoribus / anno post urbem conditam / CXC CXC CCCIII.

The other epigraph, on the right, is the exact antithesis of the former:

S(enatus) p(opulus)q(ue) R(omanus) / Capitolium praecipue Iovi / olim commendatum / nunc Deo vero / cunctorum bonorum auctori / Iesu Christo / cum salute communi supplex / tuendum tradit / anno post salutis initium / MDLVIII.

One could almost suspect this to have been a deliberate 'correction' to the famous epigraph on the cistern. Instead of Jupiter, it was Jesus Christ that was prayed to protect the Capitol. Notice, also, the ingenious balancing of the archclassical dating *post urbem conditam*, very rare in Roman epigraphy,¹⁶ in the former by *post salutis initium* in the latter.

However, the very fact that the former epigraph, blazing the glory of the ancient Romans, was set up at all, is not without significance. In contrast to Pius V and his entourage, Rome still had many people who cherished the values of humanism and of the Renaissance. Although pride of place belonged to Christianity, the splendour that was Rome was not forgotten.¹⁷

¹⁶ The most famous case is the epigraph on the house of the Manlii, dated *ab urb(e) con(dita) MMCCXXI*, i.e. 1468, cf. my *Papal Epigraphy* (see n. 10) 72 n. 14. Another example is a classical inscription (Corp. inscr. Lat. VI 1265 = Dessau, Inscr. Lat. sel. 5937), found during Paul IV's papacy. The stone pillar, extant in via di Consolazione, has an addition recording its finding: *Pauli IIII pon(tificis) max(imi) / iussu / cuius beneficio / maiorum monu- men/ta servantur, ut / antiquum locum / indicet ubi nuper / effusus fuerat / erectus est / an(no) sal(utis) MDLVI / ab urbe condita / ∞ ∞ XXXIX*. This new inscription was published in Bull. comm. arch. munic. I tav. IV p. 285. Notice that the system of dating is exactly similar to that in the Capitoline epigraphs.

¹⁷ We do not know the author of the epigraphs. The other dedicator, Prospero Boccapaduli, is, however, known to have composed other important inscriptions, viz. the epigraphs recording the construction of a fountain in the Forum boarium, Forcella XIII 146, and especially the inscriptions, set up in Aracoeli, celebrating the hero of Lepanto, Marco Antonio Colonna, Forcella I 719 and 751. Prospero's authorship has been established by M. U. Bicci, *Notizia della famiglia Boccapaduli*, 1762, 130—37. But because Bicci, who could use the family archives, does not claim that Prospero had written the Capitoline epigraphs, he probably had no knowledge of Prospero as their author.

Gregory XIII (1572—1585) was more cultured than his predecessor. Himself something of a scholar, he patronized the learned.¹⁸ Consequently, a great number of books were dedicated to him,¹⁹ among them a work by Lorenzo Belo (see n. 24). The great majority of the works were, however, theological. The new atmosphere remained, and there was no return to the humanism of the old type.

Lorenzo Belo is known to have had relations with some of the leading exponents of the new intellectual world, such as cardinal Sirleto.²⁰ The story of Sirleto, since 1572 the head of the Vatican library,²¹ is typical of the age. Though receiving a good classical education, he soon repudiated any deeper interest in the classics as 'tentation' — quite like St Jerome in the past. Instead he dedicated his intellectual energies to the study of the Bible and of the writings of the Fathers.²² Lorenzo Belo's development was not dissimilar. Before turning to jurisprudence, he is known to have studied *lettere*, the humanities.²³ His extant writings bear witness to the breadth of his classical learning. Though most of them dealt with ecclesiastical or religious problems,²⁴ he had no scruples about quoting the classics in support of a particular point. Thus one of his earliest printed books, *De mortuis coemeterio restituendis*, 1562, abounds in classical quotations. Within one folio (f. 32), for instance, he quotes

¹⁸ Pastor IX 189sqq.

¹⁹ Ibid. 201—203.

²⁰ This is known from the extant letter of Lorenzo to his *padrone* Sirleto, Codex Vat. Lat. 6194 II f. 311. The letter shows that cardinal Sirleto greatly helped Lorenzo Belo for getting his works published.

²¹ Pastor VIII 96.

²² G. Denzler, Kardinal Guglielmo Sirleto (1514—1585). Leben und Werk. Ein Beitrag zur nachtridentischen Reform (Münchener Theol. Studien I, Hist. Abt. 17, 1964) 144.

²³ F. Vecchiotti & T. Moro, Biblioteca picena II, 1791, 154sq.

²⁴ Lorenzo Belo's works have been listed by Piccialuti (see n. 2). A few of his books exist only in manuscripts, and others have been lost, among them works not recorded by Piccialuti; cf. Marini, op. cit. (see n. 12) 55 n. 9, who mentions *Enchiridion sacri conc. Trid. ex his, quae ad curam animarum et morum reformationem, atque ad potestatem et officia Praelatorum pertinent*, dedicated 1574 to Gregory XIII, as well as a number of poems, all of them in a codex in Libreria Albani. These works have been lost due to the destruction of the library, see Pastor IX 201 n. 3.

Virgil, Tacitus, and Ovid. Greek classics were equally familiar to him. On f. 17 he cites Plato's proposed law against sumptuous burials, f. 18 he refers to Aristotle, f. 20 to Athenaeus, etc., throughout the book. But classical learning was no longer an end in itself and the great men of antiquity no longer admired masters. They had value only if they could be pressed into Christian service.

Lorenzo Belo was also a poet. A few of his poetic compositions are extant while others may have perished (see n. 24). Only one is in Italian, a sonnet of 14 verses, Christian in content.²⁵ A brief elegiac poem, included in the collection of poems celebrating the victory of Lepanto, has also been ascribed to him.²⁶ Although the author's name here appears as *Laurentii Belii*, not *Beli*, the theme of the poem is characteristic of our author, *De utroque M. Antonio pugnante apud Actium*, which is a comparison between Mark Antony and the hero of Lepanto, Marco Antonio Colonna. While the former was defeated, the latter gained a victory because he, due to his piety, enjoyed divine assistance.

The most important of his extant poems is *Enchiridion vitae Jesu Christi*, printed in 1586. The poem, composed in elegiac distichs, describes only Christ's early life. Others, *iam absolutos*, were to follow. It is probable that their publication was cut short by the death of the author and that the manuscripts were destroyed together with *Libreria Albani* (see n. 24). The language and the verse structure of the poem are fairly fluent. Neither is it quite devoid of poetic similes or graphic descriptions. On the whole, however, the poem makes rather dull reading, mainly due to his habit of drawing moral lessons from almost all the incidents of the story. Classical references and reminiscences are naturally few. In the preface he certainly refers to Lucretius' example of making *philosophiae praecepta* more attractive by presenting them in a poetic form,²⁷ and recommends his own poem as school reading in place of *obscenae et amatoriae epistulae*, a clear reference to Ovid, a favourite school author. In this connection he quotes Horace, *Os tenerum pueri balbumque poeta figurat*, etc. (epist.

²⁵ In *Le lagrime di San Pietro del signor Luigi Tansillo da Nola*, 1585.

²⁶ In *foedus et victoriam contra Turcas iuxta sinum Corinthiacum Non. Oct. MDLXXI partam poemata varia Petri Gherardi Burgensis studio et diligentia conquisita ac disposita*, 1572, 258.

²⁷ Cf. Lucretius 1,931—50 and 4,6—25.

2,1,126sqq.). On p. 31 there is a further reminiscence of Lucretius, *O miseris hominum mentes, o pectora caeca* (Lucretius, 2,14). Otherwise one finds only insignificant references to Odysseus (p. 6), to *hydra* and *Socratici viri* (ibid.), to the legend of the Golden Age, used to illustrate the life of John the Baptist (p. 12).

It is not without significance that while he appears to have known Lucretius rather well, he put even this archpagan and Epicurean classic to the service of Christ.

We do not know anything about the circumstances of the dedication of the Capitoline epigraph. In literature it is mentioned only by Marini (see n. 12). From the very beginning it may have stood where it now is, since Galletti, who first published it in 1760, reports it to be 'in palatio conservatorum in pariete'. Though this is a mere guess, it is possible that the inscription was written during Lorenzo Belo's last years in Rome, between 1579—1586.

The theme of the epigraph is the contrast between the worldly power of pagan and the spiritual authority of Christian Rome. While the humanists had eulogized the glory of ancient Rome, the bishop shows that this celebrated city had been marred by dire superstition (3,27), by fratricide (6), — a favourite charge against pagan Rome, see St Augustine, *de civ.* 15,5 — and by the arrogance of her rulers and generals (12,23). Since pagan Rome had no part in salvation, she was doomed to eternal death, characteristically symbolized by the pagan mythological names of *Erebus* (3) and *Phlegethon* (9). New Rome, on the other hand, had been made sacred by the blood of the martyrs (5—6, 24—26).

For all this, the author's attitude to pagan Rome is not entirely derogatory. Ancient Rome could boast of the magnificence of her public buildings (13—14) while the noble churches made new Rome even more distinguished (15—16). But 17—20, in eulogizing Rome as a city, he admits that the monuments of the ancients which had survived intact, increase the splendour of the city. This reflected a general stance. Not even during the papacy of grim and austere Pius V was the care of ancient monuments entirely neglected, not to speak of the more enlightened Gregory XIII.²⁸

²⁸ Cf. above for the removal of the statues to the Capitol and for the inscriptions recording the gratitude of the city for the gift.

The epigram dedicated by bishop Lorenzo Belo illustrates the revised attitude to classical antiquity during the Counter Reformation. Ancient Rome was certainly much better known than it had been in the Middle Ages, and its archaeological remains were appreciated and even taken care of. But the deep admiration of the humanists for the ancient people, for their customs, institutions and even ideas, lost ground to the traditional Christian interpretation of the pagan past, familiar to us from St Augustine and others. Still, there was no real return to the medieval positions. The value set upon elegant Latinity remained, and so did the habit of classical quotations and reminiscences.

The most important passage of the poem is, however, in the end. After showing that the worldwide Empire of ancient Rome had been won by arms (29—30), he argues that new Rome has no cause to feel inferior. The whole world now obeys the sacred laws of Rome, and she (i.e., the Pope!) can, if need be, make and remove kings and mighty rulers. This is due to the fact that God has made Roman pontiffs holders of the keys of Heaven. Because earth is less than Heaven and holy power, i.e. spiritual authority more agreeable than armed might, the Empire of Christian Rome is both greater and more agreeable.

The idea of the temporal as well as spiritual power of the Pope, *in utroque gladio*, pleaded here by Belo is exactly similar to the argument of his treatise, dedicated to Pius V, *De potestate pontificia creandi et destruendi potestates et dignitates seculares in toto terrarum orbe*, still existing only in a manuscript.²⁹ The doctrine of the temporal power of the Pope, developed by scholastic philosophers, especially by Giles of Rome,³⁰ was summed up in Boniface VIII's famous bull *Unam sanctam* in 1302. According to this doctrine, both the spiritual and the temporal authority came from God and originally belonged to the Vicar of Christ. The temporal sword was, however, delegated to the secular authority, who wielded it on behalf, and under the control of, the Pope. Because the spiritual was greater than the temporal, the temporal power was subject to the spiritual, while the latter was subject only to God.

²⁹ Codex Vat. Lat. 5495, consisting of 21 folios in a small format.

³⁰ W. Ullman, *Medieval Political Thought*, 1975, 100—29; Fr. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* 2.II, 1962. 187sq.

During the 16th century, the idea of the temporal power of the Pope came under heavy attack from the protestants.³¹ Even in the catholic world, many theologians maintained a modified view, according to which the temporal power of the Pope was only indirect. He could intervene in *temporalia* if faith was threatened. One of the advocates of this view was St Bellarmine (1542—1621). In Rome, however, the traditional medieval doctrine reigned supreme. Bellarmine's book was very nearly put on the Index librorum prohibitorum during Sixtus V's reign because he overly limited the temporal power of the Pope by contending that it was not direct.³²

Lorenzo Belo was one of the traditionalists. He even exceeded the usual arguments. While the Pope's temporal power was usually seen in his right to remove secular rulers *ratione peccati*, by reason of sin, Belo stressed the positive side of the doctrine, the Pope's right of *creandi potestates seculares*.³³ The Capitoline epigram upholds the same idea. Thus line 34 explicitly praises the Pope's right to 'make' kings.

It is possible that the *raison d'être* of the epigram was the desire to proclaim the temporal power of the Pope in an age when it was hotly contested by the enemies and questioned even by the friends. This is why it was set up in a secular building, not in a church, and moreover in a conspicuous place.

³¹ G. Glez, Pouvoir du pape, Dict. Théol. Cath. XII.2, 1935, 2572sqq.

³² Ibid. 2758.

³³ In the preface of his treatise (see n. 29) he argues that too little attention had so far been given to *ius creandi seculares dignitates*.