Leonine lasciviousness and Luther

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Heiko Oberman’s brilliant and evocative portrait of Martin Luther vividly describes the effects on Luther’s developing sensibilities and theological principles of the actions of the Renaissance papacy. In his chapter entitled “The Fool in Rome,” Oberman suggested that

... noticing how much blasphemous behavior went on in the Holy City disturbed [Luther] deeply. ... [H]e remembered clearly the shock and horror he had felt in Rome upon hearing for the first time in his life flagrant blasphemies uttered in public. He was deeply shocked by the casual mockery of saints and everything he held sacred. He could not laugh when he heard priests joking about the sacrament of the Eucharist. ... [In] Rome he had to stand by while servants of God thought it funny to blaspheme the most sacred words of the institution.

Oberman was careful to offer the qualifications that “Luther was by no means alone in his criticism,” and that

... it was not the moral decay, the vice and immorality at the center of the Church, that made Luther doubt whether the pope was indeed the vicar of Christ. ... His misgivings began with the indulgence controversy in 1518–19, when he had to recognize that God’s grace was for sale in Rome. Even after the papal excommunication had driven a wedge between Wittenberg and Rome, the Reformer never claimed moral superiority. It is not the profligacy of the Church of Rome that divides us[,] “there are just as many bad Christians among us as under the pope.” It was not Rome the proverbial cesspool of vice that gave birth to Luther the Reformer.

Instead, rather more limitedly, “Luther’s reminiscences of his trip to Rome are an invaluable aid to understanding why the Augustinian monk started on that lonely journey which would ultimately bring him to the reformation breakthrough.”

By the time of the indulgence controversy of 1518–19, Julius II—who was pope when Luther journeyed to Rome in 1510–11—had been succeeded
by Leo X (Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici; reigned 1513–21), and it was Leo who was fated to be remembered as the pope who excommunicated Luther, thus formalizing the breach between the Catholic Church and the Protestant reformers. Luther’s critique of the Leonine papacy that elicited his excommunication was in part prompted by papal conduct that the Augustinian friar understandably regarded as utterly inconsistent with fundamental Christian principles: by Leo’s time, fully one-third of the revenues in the papal budget resulted from the sale of either ecclesiastical offices or plenary indulgences⁴ (the Church’s full remission of the penalties previously imposed upon sinners who had expressed contrition⁵). Many of the indulgences available for purchase in Germany were being brazenly peddled in order to secure funding for the construction of a new St. Peter’s,⁶ which had been mandated by the capitulations issued by the 1513 conclave that had elected Leo pope. Moreover, the established offices in the papal Curia—the very ones available for purchase—were supplemented, and to some extent supplanted, by new ones: the office of the datary, “organized as an independent financial department,”⁷ was responsible for collecting and allocating revenues specifically from the sale of offices, and was answerable to the pope alone.⁸ In the words of one modern student, the practice of sale of offices “reached its full development under Leo X,” who “more than any other pope of the period ... squeezed the system for every ducat ... it was worth.”⁹ At Leo’s death, the celebrated Neapolitan poet Jacopo Sannazaro wrote: “Sacra sub extrema, si forte requiritis, hora cur Leo non potuit sumere: vendiderat” (If ... you ask why Leo in his last hour wasn’t able to take the sacraments: he had sold them).¹⁰

In his 1520 address To the Christian Nobility, issued subsequently to the bull of condemnation, Luther fulminated against the luxuriousness of life at the papal court and the trade in benefices in the “warehouse” of the datary (in his vivid and vituperative characterization); although his assertions about papal revenues may have been exaggerated (1 million ducats annually from curial benefices alone), the Venetian envoy to the Vatican—on the basis of personal observations made during Leo’s pontificate—estimated the pope’s yearly income to be at least 500,000 ducats, of which 200,000 alone came from the datary and other ecclesiastical dues.¹¹

Prior to Luther’s critique, Leo himself had made some temporizing and equivocal attempts at reform. At the April 25, 1513 session of the Fifth Lateran Council, he appointed a committee of cardinals, bishops, and generals of religious orders, which was organized later that year into subcommittees charged with reform of the principal curial offices: the camera, chancery, Rota, Penitenzieria,¹² and secretariat; but among the members of each subcommittee were representatives of the offices in question, whose presence effectively served to prevent any genuine reform. Lorenzo Pucci, the datary himself, was a member of the fourth subcommittee, as was Pietro Delfino, general of the
Camaldolese Order and one of the most loyal servants of the House of Medici; they scarcely qualified as disinterested parties.\(^\text{13}\)

Such was the wanton sale of offices and indulgences that provoked Luther’s response.

But what of those other elements, those “reminiscences of [Luther’s] trip to Rome” that “are an invaluable aid to understanding why the Augustinian monk started on that lonely journey which would ultimately bring him to the reformation breakthrough”: not the more specific matter of the indulgence controversy, that is, but the more general matters of “the moral decay, ... vice[,] and immorality at the center of the Church,” of “the profligacy of the Church of Rome,” of “Rome the proverbial cesspool of vice”? What authoritative historical evidence exists that can serve in efforts to portray that “lascivious” Rome that Luther and his fellow reformers experienced and condemned? What sorts of documentable “licentious” papal behavior might have elicited Luther’s ire? Some evidence of music-historical significance furnishes answers.

The musical activities of the court of Pope Leo X are uncommonly well attested by contemporary archival references, many of which may be classified in the category of ambassadorial dispatches: reports from envoys to the Vatican from other Italian cities and courts to their employers.\(^\text{14}\) Such reports are often replete with atmospheric descriptions of musical performances, and in aggregate they afford a detailed and evocative picture of the life of the papal court in the early modern period. Although the references attesting Leonine musical life date from after Luther’s visit to Rome, they nonetheless document the sorts of activities that he and his fellow reformers would have found objectionable: the lavishness, profligacy, and even hedonism of some Leonine convivia, which entailed liberal consumption of expensive comestibles and inebriating potables; the ready invocation and deployment of classical images and material, which documents the phenomenon that Oberman felicitously described as the papacy’s “passion for the Italian Renaissance”; the court’s secularism, the bawdiness of the plots of the comedies performed in Leo’s presence, and his unrestrained enjoyment thereof; the explicit celebration of concupiscence, within a community of prelates who were nominally celibate; the almost ceaseless fraternization with jesters; and the carnivalesque transvestism that sometimes characterized the performative activity of the Leonine court. It is to these illustrative texts that I now turn.

In the first category are texts that illustrate the convivial life of the Leonine court, of which the following are emblematic. (In all such cases, the venue was private.)

Il convito che fece il s. Alberto da Carpi la domenica sera che fu l’ultimo di febraro ne la casa del cardinale di Mantua dove lui sta, fu tale per quello che ne ho potuto intendere. Prima erano tre tavole ne la sala magiore, a l’una era nel primo loco di dentro il s. Alberto, apresso lui era la sposa, poi la molgie [sic] del conte Aniballe
Rangone, poi la nuora di Iacopo Salviati, poi la sorella di la sposa, poi madonna Magdalena, poi la molgie di messer Ulisse da Fano ... ; poi erano quattro gentildonne romane tute di veste di brocato et perle et gioie ..., et a l’incontro del s. Alberto era il Duca con una capa spagnola mezo travestito. La 2a tavola era tuta di cardinali, il primo era Medici, poi altri, ... La 3a era di archiepiscopi, episcopi et altri signori et gentilhomini, tra li quali principalmente era l’ambasciater de Francia, li dui spagnoli, Portogallo, venetiano et quello di Rhodi, poi il s. Christoforo Pallavicino, messer Lascari, Prothonotario Caracio [Caracciolo], et altri gentilhomini, et cortigiani tanti. ... Dopo cena si recitò una commedia, et Strasino apresso dixe una sua farsa, ma da sé solo. In ultimo ... vene una collazione de confectione che fu estimata passare tuto: erano circa 200 servitori cum uno piato de confetione per ciascuno in mano et sopra a circa cento de questi piati era una figura di zucharo de 3, 4, 5, fino in 6 libre di zucharo, dorata et depinta come è solito, et per vero intendo dal spetiale che dite confetione costorno 240 ducati, al fine de la collazione fu licentiat ognuno.

(The banquet that Signor Alberto da Carpi gave on Sunday evening (which was the last day of February [1518]) at the home of the Cardinal of Mantua, where he is staying, was as follows, as far as I have been able to understand: First there were three tables in the large room; at one, in the prime interior location, was Signor Alberto, next to him his bride [Cecilia Orsini, nipote of Leo, whom Alberto had married on February 13], then the wife of Count Annibale Rangone, then the daughter-in-law of Jacopo Salviati, then the bride’s sister, then Madonna Maddalena, then the wife of Messer Ulisse da Fano, ... next were four Roman ladies all in brocade gowns and pearls and gems, ... and opposite Signor Alberto was the Duke, in a Spanish-style cloak and partly disguised. The second table was all of cardinals; the first was [Giulio de’] Medici, then others. ... The third was of archbishops, bishops, and other lords and gentlemen, among whom were primarily the ambassador from France, the two Spanish [ambassadors], [the ambassadors of] Portugal, Venice, and Rhodes, then Signor Cristoforo Pallavicino, Messer [Janus] Lascaris, the protonotary Caracciolo, and other gentlemen and many courtiers. ... After supper a comedy was recited, and Strascino next declared one of his farces (“dixe una sua farsa”), but just by himself (“ma da sé solo”). Finally ... there came a serving of confections that was esteemed beyond all else; there were about two hundred servants, each with a platter of confections in his hand, and on top of about one hundred of these platters was a figure fashioned of sugar, from three, four, five, up to six pounds of sugar, gilded and painted according to custom, and in truth I hear from the apothecary that the said confections cost two hundred forty ducats; at the end of the course, each was given leave.)

Beltrando Costabili’s account of the occasion documents the easy fraternization of ecclesiastical figures (Leo’s first cousin Cardinal Giulio di Giuliano de’ Medici, archbishop of Florence and papal vice chancellor, and his fellow representatives of the ecclesiastical hierarchy: cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and the protonotary) with secular political figures (aristocrats and high-ranking ambassadors) and letterati (the distinguished Hellenist Janus Lascaris)—fraternization, moreover, on an occasion that also demonstrably entailed the conspicuous consumption of a costly commodity like sugar, which elicited such detailed comment in the ambassadorial report, and the performance of a comedy (evidently by an ensemble of comici, to judge from
the context\textsuperscript{16} and of a farce by one of Leo's celebrated jester-musicians,\textsuperscript{17} Niccolò Campani, known as lo Strascino from the title of a farce that he himself had authored, in which he had performed in 1511.

Among the principal other venues for such convivial activity that entailed musical performances was Leo's hunting lodge at La Magliana, outside the city of Rome. It is one of the exquisite ironies of history that Leo was at La Magliana in June 1520 when he issued \textit{Exsurge Domine} [Arise, O Lord], the \textit{Bulla contra errores Martini Lutheri e sequacium} [Bull Countering the Errors of Martin Luther], which threatened Luther with excommunication should he fail to recant within 60 days of receipt of the bull. Given the pope's momentary surroundings, he invoked an uncommonly apt image of "[a] wild boar [that] has invaded Thy vineyard."\textsuperscript{18}

Intorno la Magliana se son fatte di bellissime cacie et con gran piacere di sua S.t à che invero el Sig.r e ha ultra quantità de cani et tele cinque mont[i]eri excellent.m i, a li quali el Papa prima che ritornasse da la Magliana fè donare xxv due.6 d'oro per uno et un confessionale, et ... ce ammazaro un cervo grossissimo serrat in le tele in pochissimo loco, dove el Papa intrò ad piede cum lo speto a la mano et in l'altra lo ochiale ... Concluido ad V.S. III."ma che il Papa et de caccia et de musica de flauti piferi etc. ha piacer grandissimo del spesso [sic] a le spese de Aragona, et casa nostra triumpha ogni giorno de suono de piferi flauti storti cornetti et omni genere musicorum de modo che se'1 vi fussero de belle dame da ballare representariano un paradiso terrestre.

(Some of the most beautiful hunting was done around La Magliana, and to His Holiness's great pleasure, because, truthfully, His Lordship [Leo's frequent companion Cardinal Luigi d'Aragona], besides a number of hunting dogs and cloths ["tele"], has five most excellent hunters, to each of whom the Pope, before returning from La Magliana, had given twenty-five gold ducats and a confessional. And ... they killed a very large deer there, enclosed in the hunting cloths in a very tight space, which the Pope entered on foot with his spear in one hand and his monocle in the other. ... I conclude with Your Most Illustrious Ladyship that the Pope takes the greatest pleasure in the entertainment provided at d'Aragona's expense, and in the hunt, and in the music of recorders, \textit{piffari}, etc., and every day our house exults in the playing of \textit{piffari}, recorders, crumhorns, cornets, and every kind of music, such that—were there some beautiful ladies to dance—they would represent an earthly paradise.)\textsuperscript{19}

The wistful reference to the absence of "beautiful ladies" whose dancing would have represented "an earthly paradise" is tantalizing: Who would such women have been? And what would their role at such gatherings have entailed? One recalls that Cardinal d’Aragona—who absorbed the entertainment’s expense on the occasion chronicled here—was himself the illegitimate issue of Neapolitan royalty, and is customarily said to have fathered the renowned courtesan Tullia d'Aragona.\textsuperscript{20}

The secularism of the musical components accompanying Leonine convivial activity was sometimes such that it provoked even Leo's censure
(although this should not occasion inordinate surprise, since his religiosity and special devotion to the liturgy are also documented by contemporaries21):

Il titolo de Duca et Duchessa de Modena del magnifico et sua Consorte se va pure divulgando: et heri mattina, essendo io dopo la messa restato a desinare con Nostro Signore et essendo a tavola, se apresentò [Giovanni] Mainente da Reggio et cominzò a cantare certi soi sonetti che haveva facto in laude de dicta mogliera del Magnifico, neli quali la nominava Duchessa de Modena; et Sua Santità stete così un poco sopra de se et poi disse: perché non cantate voi qualcatra cosa, hora che sono li di sancti de Pasqua, come è la gloria et tedeum et lassati stare queste cose de amore? Et cusi epso Mainente se mise a cantare la gloria in excelsis.

(The title of Duke and Duchess of Modena of Your Magnificence and His Consort is becoming more and more widely known; and yesterday morning—I having stayed after Mass to dine with His Holiness and being seated at the table—[Giovanni] Manente da Reggio22 presented himself and began to sing some of the sonnets that he had written in praise of the said wife of Your Magnificence, in which he named her Duchess of Modena; and His Holiness thus thought it over for a bit and then said, “Why don’t you sing something else, now that these are the holy days of Easter, like the ‘Gloria’ and ‘Te Deum’, and leave these amorous things aside?” And thus Manente set himself to singing the “Gloria in excelsis.”)23

The following complex of references simultaneously documents the activity of another of Leo’s notorious jester-musicians—Messer Camillo “Querno” de Monopoli napolitano—and the cross-dressing that characterized Querno’s performative activity; the unseemly consumption of alcoholic beverages at Leonine convivia (some of it by the pope himself); and the deployment of classical images and material (in this case an invocation of the figures of Venus and Cupid). Il Querno—“eager, fat-faced, long haired”—

would stand by the window and eat the tidbits that the Pope held out to him ... and after sipping from that prince’s own flagon, would extemporize verses, but on the condition that on every subject set him at least two verses should be paid the table as tribute and, as punishment for an empty or silly line, he should have to drink the very weakest wine. As a result ... of this merry feasting, he got a bad case of gout. ... When Leo died ... Camillo returned to Naples and there, ... crushed by the double misfortune of extreme poverty and incurable disease, he ended his life ... indignant at the cruelty of Fortune ... he stabbed himself in the stomach with a pair of shears.24

In 1519, on the Feast of Saints Cosmas and Damian—which inevitably occasioned some of the most unrestrained revelry that ever occurred at the Leonine court—Querno appeared costumed as the Roman goddess of love, accompanied by her son:

[U]no poeta neapolitano ... sta cum el Papa, nominato el Querno, servitor del Ducha de Hadri ... N.S. ... me disse che questo Querno faceva boni versi, ma me par che lo habiano redutto al termine del quondam abbate de Gaiaeta, cum sit che il giorno di S.60 Cosmo e Damiano, che fu alli 27 del passato, fu vestito da Venere cum dui
Cupidini e recitò un quaderno de versi. El Papa ge dà 100 duc. de provisione et lo hanno posto in rotulo cum 150 fiorini de stipendio alla lectura de le feste et fa la oracione del studio. El Papa lo fa manzare in su uno schabelletto basso alla presentia sua et inanci ch’el manza ogne [vivanda?] canta sei versi de diversa sententia.

([A] Neapolitan poet named “il Querno,” servant of the Duke of Adria, resides with the Pope. His Holiness told me that this Querno recited good poetry, but it seems to me that they have reduced him to the condition of the late “Abbot” of Gaeta [the jester Giacomo Baraballo], it being that on the day of Saints Cosmas and Damian, which was on the twenty-seventh of last month [September], he was dressed as Venus, with two little Cupids, and he recited a notebook of verses. And the Pope gives him an allowance of one hundred ducats, and they’ve placed him on the roll with a stipend of one hundred fifty florins for declamations at festivals, and he does the oration for the Studio. And the Pope makes him eat in his presence on a low, small stool, and before he eats each course he sings six verses on different themes.)

On another occasion, the corpus of classical materials and images was expanded to include a reference to Bacchus himself, the Roman god of revelry; indeed, the musical elements on this occasion were explicitly designed in celebration of Bacchus:


(On the said day [August 2] the Pope had ... a sumptuous supper. ... And after supper he had musical performances, ... that is, first, maybe ten dressed in violet, who sang and in turn played (on the lirone, two recorders, lute, and harpsichord) a song in Bergamasque style. Then an equal number dressed in yellow, who sang and in turn played (on trombones and cornetti) a German song. Then an equal number dressed in pink, who sang and in turn played (on lironi) a Spanish song. Then crumhorns. Then boys who were singing in the English style. Then all the instrumentalists and singers sang and played together, in twelve parts. The English were singing a macaronic tano; all the lyrics were à propos of the first day of August and of Bacchus.)

A special category of reference is formed by the texts attesting the performance of theatrical works, almost invariably comedies, and comedies that typically made liberal use of salacious and ribald imagery. The first two references, once again, are to musical and theatrical performances on the occasion of the Feast of Saints Cosmas and Damian in 1519. Although the first of the accounts is unspecific as to the themes of the comedies performed, the second—an entry in the diary of Leo’s traditionalist, chronically-troubled master of ceremonies, Paris de Grassis—suggests that the “vernacular comedy” was
more or less devoid of edifying content and that its substance was instead “more ridiculous than moral”:


(On the twenty-seventh day of the said month [September]. On the day of Saints Cosmas and Damian, the Pope ... in memory of his great-grandfather, and because of their having been Medici saints—had a solemn Mass said in the Sistine Chapel, all the cardinals and ambassadors and other prelates having been invited, to whom he then gave a sumptuous meal, and he had performances of comedies for them, dances, music and “attizadorì”).

Post missam dedit Papa prandium omnibus cardinalibus, qui voluerunt ibi manere, et post prandium fecit recitari comediam vulgarem potius ridiculam quam moralem, et donavit cantoribus iocalia solita.

((After mass, the Pope gave dinner to all the cardinals who wished to remain there, and after dinner he had a vernacular comedy performed, more ridiculous than moral, and he presented the singers with the customary emoluments.))

Another of the references to a theatrical performance calls for more substantial comment, since it is considerably longer and more detailed, and thus sustains a fuller interpretation. The occasion was the 1519 Carnival, and carnival festivities, as one well appreciates, could accommodate almost unfettered celebrating. On this particular occasion, the principal performative element complementing the convivial activity was a performance of Ludovico Ariosto’s celebrated comedy *I suppositi* (*Assumed Identities*), with elaborate musical *intermedii: entr’acte* interludes. The venue was a space in the Vatican residence of Cardinal Innocentio Cibo, Leo’s nephew and a Palatine cardinal. The stage set was designed by none other than Raphael of Urbino. Both Ariosto’s title *I suppositi* and the English-language word “suppository” ultimately derive from the same Latin root (the verb *supponere*), and Ariosto’s text is laced with bawdy homoerotic allusions and references to the anus—especially as it is associated with flatulence—and to anal intercourse. In that context, Leo’s hearty (and unseemly) laughter, in which he was joined by other members of the audience, assumes a particular significance, given the substance and objectives of this paper:

A lo Ill.m o et Ex.m o  mio colendiss.m o  il Sig. Duca de Ferrara: Fui a la comedia, domenica sera, e feceme intrare Monsig. de’ Rangoni, dove era Nostro S. con questi suoi Reverendissimi Cardinali gioveni in una anticamera de Cibo, et li passegjava N.S. per lassar introdure quella qualità di homini li parea; et intrati a quel numero voleva S. Santità, se avviamo al loco de la comedia, dove il prefato N.S. si pose a la porta, e senza strepito, con la sua benedictione, permesse intrare chi li parea;
et introsi ne la sala, che da un lato era la scena, e da l’altro era loco facto de’ gradi, dal cielo de la sala sino quasi in tera, dove era la sedia del Pontificio: quale, di poi forno intrati li seculari, intrò et posesi sopra la sedia sua quale era cinque gradi alta da terra, et lo seguitorno il Reverendissimi con li Ambasadori, et da ogni lato de la sedia si poseno sicondo l’ordine loro. Et seduto il popolo, che potea esser in numero de dui milla homini, sonandosi li pifari, si lassò cascare la tela, dove era pinto fra’ Mariano con alcuni diavoli che giugavano [i.e., North Italian for “giocavano”] con esso da ogno lato della tela, et poi a mezo della tela vi era un breve che dicea: Questi sono li capreci de fra’ Mariano. Et sonandosi tuta via, et il Papa mirando con el suo ochiale la scena, che era molto bela, de mano de Rafael, e representavasi bene per mia fé Ferara de prospective, che molto forno laudate; e mirando anchora el cielo che molto si representava belo, e poi li candeleri, che erano formati in lettere, che ogni lettera substenea cinque torcie, e diceano: LEO X. PON. MAXIMUS, sopragiunse el Nuncio in scena, e recitò l’argomento, in demostrare che Ferrara era venuta lie sotto fede de Cibo per non tenerisi de minor vaglia di Mantua, che era stà portata l’ano passato da S. Maria in Portico: e bischizzò sopra il titol de la commedia, che è de’ Suppositi, de tal modo che’l Papa ne rise assai gagliardamente con li astanti; et per quanto intendo se ni scandalizorno Francesi alquanto sopra quelli Suppositi. Si recitò la Comedia et fu molto bene pronuntiata; et per ogni acto se li intermediò una musica di pifari, di cornamusi, di due cornetti, di viole et leuti, dell’organetto che è tanto variato di voce, che donò al Papa Monsignore Illustissimo di bona memoria [D’Aragon], et insieme vi era un flauto, et una voce che molto bene si commendò: vi fu ancho un concerto di voci in musica, che non comparse per mio juditio così bene come le altre musiche. L’ultimo intermedio fu la moresca, che si rappresentò la Favola di Gorgon, et fu assai bella . . . . De Roma, adì VIII marzio M.D.XVIII, hora 4a noctis. De V.S. 1 1 1 .

(On Sunday evening, I was at the performance of the comedy, and [Cardinal Ercole] Rangone had me come to one of Cibo’s antechambers, where His Holiness was with these Most Reverend young cardinals of his, and His Holiness was pacing back and forth there in order to admit those who, in his opinion, were the proper sort of person; and the number that His Holiness wished having entered, we set out for the performance venue, where His Holiness positioned himself at the door and—without commotion—permitted those whom he wished to enter with his blessing; and one entered the room, where on one side was the stage and on the other a space made of graduated seating, from the ceiling of the room almost to the floor, where the chair was reserved for the Pontiff, who—the laity having entered—himself entered and seated himself in his chair, which was five steps above the floor, and the Most Reverend Cardinals and ambassadors followed him, and they arranged themselves around the papal chair, each in his place in the order. And the people, who may have been two thousand in number [this is surely an exaggeration, given the size of the venue], having been seated, [and] the piffari playing, the curtain was dropped, where—on both sides of the curtain—Brother Mariano [Fetti] was depicted with several devils who were playing with him, and then in the center of the curtain was lettering that read “These are the Fancies of Brother Mariano.” And the piffari playing still, and the Pope gazing through his monocle at the set, which—made by the hand of Raphael—was very beautiful (and upon my faith, Ferrara was being very well represented in perspective, which was much extolled); and further—one gazing at the sky, which was beautifully represented, and then the candlesticks, which were formed into letters, such that each letter was formed by five torches, and read “Leo X Pon[tifex] Maximus”—the nunzio appeared upon the scene and delivered the prologue [“argomento”], explaining that Ferrara had come there under Cibo’s authority so as not
to be judged less worthy than Mantua, which the previous year had been brought by [Cardinal] Santa Maria in Portico [Bibbiena]; and the nunzio expounded on the title of the comedy, which is I Suppositi, such that the Pope laughed quite heartily along with the audience; and so far as I understand, the French were quite scandalized by I Suppositi. The comedy was performed, and very well declaimed; and after each act was interpolated the music of wind players, bagpipes, two cornets, viols and lutes, and the positive organ that has a great variety of registers, which the Most Illustrious Monsignore [Luigi] d’Aragona of happy memory gave to the Pope, and there was a recorder and voice together, which was very highly praised; there was also an ensemble of voices, which in my judgment did not seem as good as the other music. The final intermedio was the moresca, which depicted the fable of the Gorgon, and it was quite beautiful. ... From Rome, the eighth day of March, 10 p.m. From Your Most Illustrious Lordship’s servant Alfonso Paolucci.)

The references to the classical material deployed on several of these occasions leads to my two final texts, and here the venue changes from the private residential spaces of the papal palace (and other papal properties) to the more public spaces of Leonine Rome. In both cases, the occasion, once more, is Carnival, and the fact that the performance venues were thus grand and reasonably public spaces invited (indeed, demanded) the use of others of the traditional festival arts, in the first case, a procession of ox-drawn floats, each of which depicted one of the Egyptian or Greco-Roman gods or goddesses or demi-gods (Isis, Neptune, Hercules, Atlas, Æolus, Vulcan, and Venus), or the she-wolf who adopted Romulus and Remus, mythical founders of Rome, or an historical figure of the classical world (Alexander the Great):

la festa de agone ... fo uno bellissimo spectaculo; ... se partectero de Capitolio con undeci carri triumphali [sic; recte: “tredici”; the account later describes thirteen floats] con varie insignie tucti in ordinanza; el primo carro havea lo insignie de una Italia, da poi con intervallo de gente armate li subseguiva el carro con la imagine della dea Isis, dea de la terra in colosso facta ad similtudine de uno simulacro de dicta dea, che ha el papa in la sua logia antiquissimo et bello; da poi era el carro de Neptuno innudo con el tridente in colosso; el quarto era uno Herculi, che duceva molti homini catenati; el quinto era uno Atlante con la sphera in le spalle; el sexto era Eulo, dio de li venti, el septimo Vulgano con li sui ministri Piragmon, Brontes et Steropes; l’uctava era el Venere con una Roma de sopra; el nono era uno Alexandro magno ad cavallo in lo suo Bucefalo in figura de uno gran colosso; el decimo era uno mondo con una vipera de sopra, lo undecimo una lupa; el XII et XIII in altre figure tucti intervallati l’uno da l’altro et in colossi; da poi subseguivano gente armate et a piede et ad cavallo con li ioculatori secundo se usava in li triumphi antiqui. Subseguivano circa cento punti benissimo vestiti ad l’antiqua ... et erano menati ad mano doi camelli vivi jovenecti li quali novamente son stati donati al papa ... et subseguivano molti altri adolescenti ad cavallo in mirabili cavalli. ... da poi subseguiva el figliolo del sr. Joanzorzo Cesarino et lu i ... et portava lo stendardo de lo populo Romano et el senatore ... et li andavano ad lato li conservatori ... et li precedevano molti cavalli ... con molti soni de tamburi, trombate et altri instrumenti et andarono tucti de directo dal Capitolio al castello donde era il papa et passaron in borgo per fine ad la piazza de san Piero et retornaro in agone molto tardo et fo uno nobiliss’re spectaculo de una gran gente et una gran pompa.
(the Festival of the Agone ... was a most beautiful spectacle. ... They departed from the Capitoline Hill with eleven [sic; recte: thirteen] triumphal floats with various insignia, all in square formation; the first float had the insignia of an “Italy,” then—after some intervening armed soldiers—there followed a float with a colossal image of Isis, goddess of the earth, similar to an image of the said goddess that the Pope has in his loggia, beautiful and most ancient; then there was a float with a colossal nude Neptune with his trident; the fourth was Hercules, who was leading many shackled men; the fifth was Atlas with the earth on his shoulders; the sixth was Æolus, god of the winds, the seventh Vulcan with his ministers Piragmon, Brontes, and Steropes; the eighth was Venus with Rome above; the ninth was Alexander the Great, mounted on horseback on his Bucephalus, represented as a huge colossus; the tenth was the world with a viper atop it [since antiquity a symbol of the universe, as is suggested by the viper’s appearance here in conjunction with an image of the world]; the eleventh, a she-wolf, the twelfth and thirteenth, other figures, all separated from one another and colossal; armed soldiers, both infantry and cavalry, then followed with the entertainers, in accordance with what used to be done in the ancient triumphs. About one hundred boys followed, very well dressed in ancient style, ... and two live young camels, which had just been given to the Pope, were being led by hand ... and many other adolescents followed, mounted on marvelous horses. ... Then the son of [the standard bearer] Signor Giangiorgio Cesarini followed, and [Cesarini himself] ... and he was carrying the banner of the Roman people – and the Senator, ... and the Conservatori were going alongside him ... and many horses ... were preceding them, with much playing of drums, trumpets, and other instruments, and they all went directly from the Capitoline to Castel Sant’Angelo, where the Pope was, and they passed through the Borgo, ending in St. Peter’s Square, and they returned to Piazza Navona very late, and it was a most noble spectacle, involving many people and great pomp.)3 2

The last text is in many respects the most telling, since it—and several documentary references that surround it and thus broaden and deepen its context—may indirectly reveal a profound Leonine anxiety about Luther’s activities. First the text, authored by Baldassare Castiglione, whose Il cortegiano enjoys legendary status:

N.° S."er è stato sempre in Castello insino al lune [i.e., February 11, 1521] di sera, dove ha havuto piacere di vedere passare mascare, musiche e moresche, benché però cosa molto excellente non si è fatta ... La dominica di sera, in Castello, li Sanesi fecero una moresca nel cortile, assai bella, la quale fu di questa sorte che, poi che fu notte, li morescenti, che erano otto giovani sanesi, vennero in Castello accompagnati da circa cinquanta servitori, tutti in giuppone di raso e calze ad una certa loro livrea, e gran torze in mano, et così se misero nel cortile dil Castello et allargorno uno pavaglione di raso berrettino, sotto il quale erano li morescenti. El Papa stava con molti altri signori alle finestre che rispondono sopra il cortile. La moresca fu di questa sorte, che prima usci una donna, la quale con certe stantie in octava rima pregò Venere che gli volesse dare uno amante degno, e, così detto, se ne tornò. Dipoi a suono di tamburino cominciò dal pavaglione uscire la moresca, che era otto heremiti, li quali in habito griso, ballando, se menavano in meggio incatenato uno Amore. Et così, poi che hebben[o] ballato uno poco, si fermorno e comincirono a parlare, e dissero che questo era quello inimico del mondo che faceva tutti e’['] mali, et però lo voleano castigare: et qui, ognuno col suo bastone, ballando ballando, cominciarono a darli,
e lui ballando a parare con la pharestra, perché quelli heremiti gli haveano tolto l’arco. Ballato alquanto, questo Amore se inginociò, e fece una oratione a Venere sua matre, pregandola che lo liberasse dalle mani di costoro. Et così fece per due volte. In ultimo comparse Venere, la quale mandò quella donna che l’havea pregata che li desse lo amante degno, per vedere de ingannare questi heremiti, et essa, accostatasi a loro, li diede a bere un certo liquore che li fece dormire. Et così poi subito scatenò Amore, et gli rese l’arco et i strali, e tutti li suoi ordegni, onde cominciò a saettare questi poveri frati, li quali svegliati si lamentavano forte, et pur ballavano intorno ad Amore, tutti innamorati di quella donna, alla quale cominciorono a dire parole amorose, et essa a loro. In ultimo li pregò a dimostrare il valor suo, acciòché essa potesse conoscere s’elli erano degni dil suo amore, onde essi, buttata via la schiavina, restarono giovani ben vestiti in habito de galanti, e cominciorono a ballare un’altra volta la moresca, al fin della quale la donna gli pregò che se mostrassero quanto valevano in arme. E così presero una spada da due mani per uno, et fecero una bella moresca con quella. Apresso tolsero una targa da pugno, con la spada da una mano, et fecero l’altra moresca, nella quale se ammazzorno tutti, eccetto che uno il quale fu amante de quella donna. Et così fu finita la festa, assai bella invero. Il lune al tardo N.S.°°° venne in pailazzo, e vidde correre li somari, al consueto. Doppo, la sera, venne a basar li piedi di S.S. ti à el figliolo dil Conte di Capra e la moglie,... Fatto questo, N.S.°°° se ne andò alle stantie di Mons. R.°°°°°° Cibo, et in quella sala era preparata una bella scena, nella quale se recitò una comedia non troppo bella. Popolo assai vi era, ... La comedia durò assai, che fu insino appresso alle vj hore, poi il Papa venne a cena. ... Heri che fu il di de carnevale N.S.°°° andò a vedere correre le bufale ad una finestra sopra la porta della guardia. ... La sera havemmo un’altra comedia della medema sorte, ciò è non miglior della prima. L’apparato è molto bello, le comedie non bone, li recitori mediocri. Queste sono state le feste dil carneval di Roma.

(Until Monday evening [February 11], His Holiness was continuously at Castel Sant’Angelo, where he was pleased to watch the masquerading, musical performances, and moresche pass by. ... Sunday evening, in the Castello, the Sienese staged quite a beautiful moresca in the courtyard, which was of this kind: once night fell, those performing the moresca, who were eight young Sienese, came into the Castello accompanied by about fifty servants, all in satin jackets and stockings that are like a uniform for them, and large torches in hand, and thus they arranged themselves in the courtyard of the Castello and opened up a grey silk tent, within which were the performers of the moresca. The Pope was standing with many other lords at the windows that overlook the courtyard. The moresca was of this type, that, first, a Lady appeared, who in some stanzas in ottava rima asked Venus that she consent to give her a worthy lover, and having thus spoken she left. Then to the sound of a tambourine the moresca began to emerge from the tent: there were eight hermits, who—dressed in grey habits and dancing—held a shackled Cupid in their midst. And thus after having danced a bit, they paused and began to speak and said that this Cupid was the enemy of the world, who was responsible for all evil, and they therefore wanted to punish him: and at this point each with his baton, dancing and dancing, began to strike him, he dancing to parry their thrusts with his quiver because the hermits had taken his bow. Having danced a bit, Cupid knelt and delivered an oration to his mother, Venus, begging that she deliver him from their hands. And he did so twice. Last to appear was Venus, who dispatched that Lady who had asked Venus for a worthy lover in order to see about duping these hermits, and she—approaching them—gave them a certain beverage to drink that made them sleep. And, so, she then immediately unshackled Cupid and gave him the bow and arrows and all his tools, whereupon he
began to shoot at these poor friars, who, having been awakened, were complaining
loudly and yet dancing around Cupid, all of them enamored of that Lady, to whom
they began to speak amorous words, and she to them. Finally, she asked them to
demonstrate their valor so that she would be able to determine if they were worthy
of her love, whereupon—having thrown away their rough cloaks—they were left
as well-dressed youths in gallants’ attire, and they began to dance the moresca
again, at the conclusion of which the Lady asked that they demonstrate how valiant
they were at arms. And thus each took a two-handed sword and with it danced a
beautiful moresca. Then, with the sword in one hand, they took a round and small
shield and they performed another moresca in which all were killed, except for one,
who was the Lady’s lover. And thus the festival concluded, truly very beautiful.)

Elsewhere, I have attempted an interpretation of the complex metaphor
expressed in the 1521 moresca as a kind of oblique, ironic celebration of
concupiscence, within a community of celibate clerics (see Figure 5.1). The following facts—poignant, remarkable coincidences of history—are
indisputable: during the very week that the eight Sienese morescanti—having
been struck by Cupid’s arrows—were removing their grey friars’ habit to
reveal their inner gallant (and thus were symbolically rejecting monasticism
by shedding their ecclesiastical attire and competing with one another for
the Lady’s affections), Leo’s representative, the special papal legate to the
Imperial Diet in Worms—humanist Archbishop Hieronymous Aleander—
was referring explicitly to Luther’s repudiation of monastic vows in his
address to the Diet on Ash Wednesday 1521 (February 13), in which Luther
was condemned as heretical.

Pur fo a palazzo per intender qual cossa dal Papa, il qual trovò lezeva una grande
opera li dete il reverendissimo Ancona, trata di le cosse di fra Martin Luther. E il
Papa lexe più di 3 hore, qual li dete grande affanno, poi volse lezer il suo officio
et mandò a scusarsi per uno secretario l’hora era tarda a darli audientia.

(was just at the Vatican Palace to hear something from the Pope, whom he found
reading a large work. ... [I]t concerned the matter of Friar Martin Luther. And
the Pope read for more than three hours, which gave him great anxiety.)

Ludwig Pastor suggested that

[h]ad this not been related by an absolutely trustworthy witness [Castiglione], it
would seem incredible. So far did the irresponsible frivolity of Leo X carry him,
that, at the very time when Luther’s case was being dealt with before the Diet of
Worms, and when many monks in sympathy with the reformer were breaking
their vows and entering wedlock, this sort of trifling could be enacted on the
stage under the Pope’s very eyes, and be made almost matter for encomium.

But as the report of the Venetian envoy suggests, Leo’s troubled emotional
state had clearly not been ameliorated by the moresca’s cavalier, ironic
treatment of the matter.
As one final index of the secularism of Leonine cultural sensibilities, I cite the sexually explicit text of a chanson by composer and Leonine employee Antoine Bruhier, *Jacquet Jacquet mon con est ersarget* [sic; recte: esraget], preserved in a Florentine manuscript that was probably copied between 1518 and 1521 and reveals many, many resonances of Leonine musical culture.⁴⁰

Although these texts are abstracted from their larger context, and form only a subset of the many references to musical performances at Leo’s court, the act of abstracting them does not exaggerate their significance, nor does it
distort the effect of their content; they are not fundamentally misaligned with the picture one gains from reading the entirety of the extant documentation.

Events such as those reconstructed here were often unapologetically secular in nature and suggest something of the character of daily cultural life at the papal court in the early modern period, with its place for decidedly non-Christian, classical material and iconographic elements, its occasional transvestism and carnivalesque sensibilities, the utter buffoonery of figures like il Querno, and the performance of comedies containing obscene allusions to the anus and flatulence, which could elicit a pontiff’s unrestrained laughter. Classical texts, images, and conceits (Venus, Bacchus, and others) furnished the iconography for many of the secular events attested; other events (those involving the performance of Renaissance comedies, for example) were unabashedly bawdy in character.

The Roman goddess of love, Venus, who was portrayed on at least three occasions (the 1519 Feast of Saints Cosmas and Damian and the 1520 and 1521 Carnivals), is the emblem of some strands of that secularism, specifically pagan/Christian oppositions (just as in the nineteenth century she was expressly opposed to the saintly Elisabeth as rival for the affections of the Christian knight Tannhäuser in Wagner’s opera and was furnished there with sensuous music that she deploys in her attempts to seduce and corrupt the knight). Venus’s appearance at these Leonine festivities and her triumph over the Christian friars in the 1521 morescā epitomize the prominent place of classical images and secular elements in the cultural life of the Renaissance papacy, as does the appearance of Bacchus in August 1520, Cupid in 1521, and other such figures.

Leo established a chair in astrology at the University of Rome, “La Sapienza,” and, as Jean Seznec reminds us, the zodiac, constellations, and planets “play a curiously prominent part” in the decoration of the Vatican: the vault of the Sala de’ Pontefici in the Borgia apartments, decorated at Leo’s behest, surrounds the names of St. Peter’s successors with celestial symbols. An abiding interest in mythological imagery as appropriate iconographic material for projected works of art was characteristic of Leo’s family more generally. In one of Giorgio Vasari’s letters, which concerns a canvas depicting Venus and the Three Graces intended for Leo’s nephew, Cardinal Ippolito di Giuliano de’ Medici, the artist reported that “the Cardinal and [Leo’s cousin] Pope Clement were so pleased with that satyr that when I have finished it, they want me to do a much larger painting showing a battle of satyrs, a bacchanalia of fauns, and other woodland deities.” In another letter concerning the Bacchanalia and the Harpocrates, addressed to Leo’s distant relative Ottaviano de’ Medici, Vasari reported that “I have been made to do all this by Pope Clement, at the instance of our Cardinal [Ippolito].” Such suggests the Medici popes’ enthusiasm for the classical ideals and images whose fuller recovery was the essential program of the Italian
Renaissance, and in turn that program’s “unnatural alliance with the papacy,” which was so fundamental to the Renaissance as a historical phenomenon.44

Writ large, the culture of the Leonine court therefore exemplified that fragile, uneasy—but nevertheless extraordinarily powerful and fruitful—synthesis of two such disparate belief systems and complexes of attendant literary and pictorial material, the Judaeo-Christian and the Greco-Roman. Seznec wrote of a stubborn disquiet, of a perceived need to reconcile the pagan cult of life with Christian spiritual values, of “this balancing of two universes, so anxiously striven for by Renaissance thought”;45 and for a moment, at least, humanism and art appear to have held the two in equilibrium.46

When necessary, classical material could be interpreted in allegorical terms in an effort to avoid censure, in Seznec’s words, as a means of justifying the use of pagan imagery. Pagan fables and figures could be Christianized, invested with spiritual meaning for didactic purposes; after all, Christ made use of parables himself.47 Such seemingly incongruous substitutions are thus only apparently paradoxical: ecclesiastics in Leo’s entourage responsible for festival programs that featured classical material prominently (such as Tommaso Inghirami) were “merely being true to their education,” and one would be mistaken to ascribe this characteristic of the Renaissance to the clergy’s impiety or an unseemly epicureanism; it was fundamental to the culture of the Church in the early modern period.48 But as early as the fifteenth century, some ecclesiastical figures had also rejected any attempt to justify the use of pagan images on grounds of their supposed susceptibility to allegorical interpretation.49

Indeed, the larger attempt at a synthesis of the two traditions, Christian and classical, that had manifested itself very early in the history of European civilization had also engendered comment and concern from the beginning. In the second century C.E. Tertullian had fulminated, “What ... has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? what between heretics and Christians?”50 From one perspective, therefore, the overtly secular character of the daily lives of the Renaissance popes, especially in the wake of the Lutheran reformation, is initially arresting: the papacy, after all, was an ecclesiastical institution. On the other hand, interpreting Leonine culture in terms of such a dichotomy fails to capture an important feature of the Renaissance papacy. The Renaissance papacy was as much a temporal as an ecclesiastical institution (such distinctions are more of the present time than theirs). Leo and other Renaissance popes comfortably combined a reverence for the liturgical-musical practices of the Cappella Sistina (Leo’s religiosity is attested by his contemporaries) with a temporal ruler’s taste for contemporary comedies, an interest in classical texts and images, a hedonistic overindulgence in food and drink, and a delight in performances of secular music, not to mention an abiding concern for the pope’s prerogatives as head of state, which popes jealously guarded: when other European states
revealed an understandable interest for their own purposes in appropriating
the right of nomination to ecclesiastical offices, Leo expressed his concern to
his secretary Pietro Bembo and to Vincenzo Pietro Quirini of the Camaldolese
Order—"si riducesse l'autorità nostra e di nostri successori ad autorità solo
spirituale" (our authority, and the authority of our successors, would be
limited to spiritual authority alone.)^1 Leo’s contemporary Giles of Viterbo,
a devoted servant, exemplifies "the strange anomaly of the austere ascetic
and tireless preacher of poverty lending his encouragement to the raising of
a monument [new St. Peter’s] which from almost every point of view would
seem to embody attitudes and values directly antipathetic to his own."^2

However unusual such combinations may seem in retrospect to modern
students of the Renaissance papacy—who inhabit a post-Lutheran world—
the references attesting Leonine cultural patronage unequivocally document
that they were utterly characteristic of the time; they convey the rich texture,
seemingly anomalous variety, and unquestionable vitality of secular cultural
and musical life at Leo’s court.

It was the often-hedonistic character of events like those reconstructed
here that was partly responsible for the revolutionary contemporary reform
movement, in that the sensibilities of Luther and others, formed in a different
and more austere culture, were offended.^3

An even more immediate result may have been the election of Leo’s
successor, the ascetic Adrian VI, whose elevation to the papal throne upon
Leo’s death in 1521 might be interpreted as an implicit criticism of the
resolutely secular nature of Leonine culture. Indeed, Adrian was among the
more notable of Luther’s contemporaries who similarly execrated the city of
Rome; in 1523, Adrian issued a confession of guilt, read by his nuncio at the
Diet of Nuremberg: “We know that for years there have been many abominable
offences in spiritual matters and violations of the Commandments committed
at this Holy See, yes, that everything has in fact been perverted. ... The first
thing that must be done is to reform the Curia, the origin of all evil.” Erasmus,
who had voyaged to Rome five years earlier than Luther, reported that
“[w]ith my own ears I heard the most loathsome blasphemies against Christ
and His apostles. Many acquaintances of mine have heard priests of the Curia
uttering disgusting words so loudly, even during mass, that all around them
could hear.” Even so ardent a leader in the internal reform of the Church
and faithful a servant of the papacy as St. Ignatius Loyola had been advised
against going to Rome because of its depravity.^4

Adrian’s simplicity and parsimony, as Hubert Jedin observed, constituted
the greatest imaginable contrast with the sumptuousness of life at Leo’s court:^5
When the newly-elected Adrian entered Rome, an eyewitness reported that
“Certo ha bona statura et bona efigie ... et dicho cussi, come lo vidi, me parse
veder uno frate di la Carità, et iurarei fusse stà frate” ([h]e is certainly tall and
good-looking ... and therefore I tell you that, as soon as I saw him, I thought
I was looking at a friar of the [monastery of the] Carità, and I would swear he had been a friar).56

Leo woefully underestimated the hunger for spiritual renewal and ecclesiastical reform.

Surrounded as he was by the most brilliant court in Europe, in the Rome of the high Renaissance, which Bramante, Michelangelo and Raphael were busy adorning with their masterpieces, exalted to the sky by the humanists enjoying his favour, Leo X might well have persuaded himself that schism and Council were but a bad dream, the anti-Roman opposition of those beyond the Alps and the cry for a reform of the Curia no more than a protest of late-comers, malcontents, and everlasting fault-finders. His was a dreadful mistake.57

The reconciliation of the twin legacies of the ancient world, classical and Christian, which was so fundamental to the character of Leo’s cultural and musical sensibilities and experiences, was thus “a dream of scholars and philosophers, for whom the approaching Reformation holds a terrible awakening.”58 The unanticipated appeal and explosive energy of Luther’s reform movement were such that the papacy was abruptly “startled out of its passion for the Italian Renaissance.”59

Within a very few years, the Rome that Leo had known disappeared. In May 1527, less than six years after his death, during the papacy of his cousin Giulio di Giuliano (Clement VII), Rome was sacked by the army of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, many of whose infantrymen were Lutherans; it was an event that traumatized Latin Christendom and fundamentally reoriented Roman artistic sensibility. Leo and Clement, in J.R. Hale’s words, had “peered with little comprehension at the spiritual quickening in Germany and Switzerland,”60 and, indeed, one’s sense in reading the accounts of the occasions reconstructed here and in evaluating Luther’s general reaction to such activity (as expressed in such texts as the address To the Christian Nobility) is that the two contemporary “conversations”—the Leonine and the Lutheran—although each was to some extent directed to the other, failed to engage the other: failed to elicit the desired, expected response from its intended recipient. The ultimate irreconcilability of these two sensibilities had the almost inevitable effect of precipitating Luther’s reformist revolution. And the pointillist assemblage of music-historical evidence offered here affords an atmospheric picture of precisely that kind of papal behavior to which the reformers took such vehement exception.

Notes

1. This article, in a somewhat different form, presents material that also appears in my monograph, Cummings, 2012. Oberman.

2. Oberman, 146–50.
3. Oberman, 356.

4. Barraclough, 189; it is in the nature of Barraclough's synthetic essay that, understandably, he would not have provided a precise citation for his statement. Citing von Hofmann, 1: 86, 89, 94, 98–9, 176, and 2: 135, Lunt, 1: 29 and 136, states that, during Leo's pontificate, the sale of offices alone produced nearly one-sixth of the ordinary revenues in the papal budget; presumably the other one-sixth (thus totaling Barraclough's one-third) was produced by plenary indulgences. For further discussion of the sale of offices and documents illustrating the phenomenon during the two Medici pontificates of Leo X and his first cousin Clement VII (Giulio di Giuliano di Piero de' Medici; reigned 1523–34), see Lunt, 1: 135–6, and 2: 536–7. On plenary or partial indulgences—which pardoned all or part of the penance enjoined by a bishop or priest—see Lunt, 1: 112–14, 121–2, and 124. The typical formula of an indulgence issued during the early-medieval period freed those "truly penitent and confessed" who visited a church on a specified occasion from a prescribed period of enjoined penance; their visit was of financial value to the church visited, since the pilgrim would customarily make a voluntary offering. It became the custom for the pope to reserve a portion of the receipts for himself, and by the sixteenth century it had probably become the rule rather than the exception that plenary indulgences were conceded with the expectation that there would be such a division of the proceeds; although delivered to the papal collectors or bankers and sent to the camera, the portion reserved by the pope was ordinarily designated for a specific purpose, such as the repair of the churches of Rome or the crusade against the Turks. Indulgences that resulted in the largest financial returns to the papacy were those issued during jubilee years. For documents illustrating indulgences granted during the papacy of Leo's immediate predecessor, Julius II, see Lunt, 2: 483–5.

5. On the tradition of sale of remission of penalties, see Lea.

6. Oberman, 75, 189.


8. Lunt, 1: 26–8, 130, and 136.

9. Partner, especially 272 and 274.

10. Sannazaro, 2009, 360–61, 522. When Leo died, it was rumored (incorrectly) that he not been able to receive Extreme Unction.

11. Jedin, 1: 181–5; the Venetian envoy's observations are reported in Relazioni degli ambasciatori, series 2, 3: 72. On Leo's income and expenses, see especially Partner, especially p. 265 and the accompanying notes.

12. On the institution of the Penitenzieria, see Haskins, and Lea.

13. Jedin, 1: 131. See also Delfino's letters in Petri Delphini, 7ff., which refer to his work as a member of the sub-committee.

14. All of these texts are assembled and evaluated in my book on Leo (Cummings, 2012).

15. March 1, 1518; Beltrando Costabili to Duke Alfonso di Ercole d'Este. Cruciani, 483–4; Ademollo, 72–9, quotation 77–9. The otherwise unidentified Duke is likely Lorenzio di Piero di Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, as Professor Linda Carroll plausibly suggested to me.

16. By this I mean the careful succeeding reference to lo Strascino's performance of "una sua farsa" "da sé solo." See the original text and my translation.

17. On lo Strascino and Leo's other jester-musicians, see Cummings, 2009a.

18. Bainton, 114; Oberman, 22, 249. When Luther failed to recant, he was formally excommunicated on January 3, 1521; Luther subsequently burned Leo's bull outside the Wittenberg city walls. The bull is transcribed in full in Cherubini, 614–18 and opens: "Exurge Domine, & judica causam tuam, memor esto improperiorum tuorum, eorum quae ab insipientibus siunt tota die: inclina autem tuam ad preces nostras, quoiam surrexerunt vulpes quaerentes demoliri vineam, cujus tu torcular calcati solus, & ascensurus ad Patrem, ejus curam, regimem, & administrationem Petro tanquam capit, & tuo Vicario, ejusque successoribus instar triumphantis Ecclesiae commissisti. Exterminare nititur eam aper de sylva, & singularis ferus depascitur eam."

19. May 1, 1518; Antonio de Beatis, Cardinal Luigi d'Aragona's chaplain and amanuensis, to the Marchesa Isabella d'Este Gonzaga: Luzio, Isabella d'Este, 64 n. (3), collated with Pastor, 8: 473, Document 9.

20. See, for example, d'Aragona, XIX and n. 5.
21. See, for example, Pirro, especially 7, and the primary sources cited, especially the text addressed to the pope’s nephew Cardinal Ippolito de’ Medici authored by Genet; the same text is translated in Sherr, 395. See also Pirrotta, 104; Giovio, 1549, 333; Shearmur, 1972, 15–16 and n. 93; and Pastor, 8: 78–9 n. §, where Pastor assembled references illustrative of Leo’s piety from the diary of his master of ceremonies Paris de Grassis, a demanding individual whom it was difficult to satisfy.

22. Another of Leo’s jester-musicians, on whom see Cummings, 2009a.

23. April 9, 1515; Cardinal Ippolito di Ercole d’Este to his brother Duke Alfonso. Ferrajoli, 570.


27. September 27, 1519, Feast of Saints Cosmas and Damian; Michiel, fol. 308v; Blackburn, 1992, 34.

28. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 12275, fols. 361v–2r; Paride de Grassis, Diarium. Blackburn, 1992, 24, 37. The text is also published in Delicati, 76 (381r).

29. For a fuller treatment of this material, see Cummings, 2009b.


31. For a fuller reconstruction of this occasion, see Cummings, 2007.


35. The Diet opened on January 27, 1521; Jedin, 1: 199.

36. On Aleander, see Jedin, 1: 198 and n. 1, and Oberman, 36.

37. Bainton, 137–8.


39. Pastor, 8: 177. See also the reflection of Pastor’s analysis of the moresca in Hale, 105. For an extremely sensitive and evocative discussion of the contemporary sensibilities that are a backdrop to the 1521 moresca performance, see Gombrich, 1985, 104–8 and 220–22 nn. 21–37. For bringing this important reference to my attention, I am grateful to my former colleague William L. Tronzo, then Professor of Art History at Tulane.


41. Seznec, 57.

42. Seznec, 77. See also Cox-Rearick, 188–98.

43. Seznec, 265 n. 26.

44. Seznec, 137.

45. Seznec, 83.

46. Seznec, 320.

47. Seznec, 93, 271, and 273.

48. Seznec, 262–3, 266.

49. In a letter to Corbinelli, Giovanni Dominici da San Miniato argued that “[i]f you would attain to true knowledge of right and wrong, you will do so far more readily by studying the Scriptures—where truth is revealed directly and without lying concealment.” Dominici, LXI–LXII, as in Seznec, 275 n. 62.
50. Tertullian as quoted in Gilson, 9-10 and 103 n. 2. See also Seznec, 42.

51. See Bembo and Quirini's dispatch in Cian, 374ff. See also Jedin, 1: 134-5 and 135 n. 3. For an elucidation of the context for Leo's remark, see Oakley, 231 and n. 26.

52. O'Malley, 8.

53. On ecclesiastical reactions to the secular quality of the cultural life of Renaissance Rome, see also, for example, O'Malley, 5.

54. Oberman, 149 and nn. 55-6.

55. Jedin, 1: 206. For further on the effects of Adrian's election, see Gaisser, especially 50ff.

56. September 5, 1522; see Sanuto, 33: 432.

57. Jedin, 1: 137.

58. Seznec, 146.

59. Oberman, 8.

60. Hale, 84.