

Results of the Reformation: Ritual, Doctrine and Religious Conversion

In contrast to traditional visions of violence, war, and oppression, accounts of religious toleration and accommodation, although perhaps grudging and on the local level, are beginning to be brought to the fore of European histories of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These studies usually examine areas with significant religious minorities, and reveal that common people were cognizant of different religious beliefs and practices, and actively engaged in religious debate within the community.¹ Despite the cooperation and relations between faiths, lines drawn between religious communities still existed, if blurred or often crossed. And in this milieu of competing religious identities and communities, there were still those who deliberately chose the path of conversion; consciously giving up one spiritual identity for another.

Inquisition trials of reconverts to Catholicism in the seventeenth century, found in Italy, demonstrate that the majority of converts conceived of themselves as exchanging religious identities.² In the seventeenth century, from the Catholic Church's perspective, being a Protestant constituted a crime that was solely within the Inquisition's jurisdiction to prosecute. Therefore, any Protestant wishing to become a Catholic would have to be tried, sentenced, and given a penance by the Inquisition. Only after making a full abjuration of their criminal errors and performing the assigned penance could converts become Catholics in good standing. The documents that form the basis of this paper, then, are the inquisitorial records generated by this official conversion process.

The surviving records I examine in this paper, found in Florence and Rome, described conversion experiences that occurred over the course of the seventeenth century; the records found in Florence begin as early as 1638 and end as late as the 1690s, while those from Rome begin in the 1680s and continue until 1709.³ The records are incomplete, therefore making it difficult to calculate definitively the total number of converts the Holy Office dealt with every year, or over the course of the seventy years discussed

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here. The records that do survive, however, indicate very small numbers of converts.

Furthermore, the converts themselves were atypical in seventeenth-century European society, since they were non-Italians who migrated to Italy and then converted to Catholicism. As a part of the trial procedure, inquisitors were required to record each defendant's name, place of origin, previous heretical beliefs and errors, and motive for conversion; only then could the defendant make a complete abjuration and be assigned a penance. Inquisitors often included additional important information, such as the defendant's age, family background, and travel experiences, especially as these factors pertained to the defendant's motive for conversion. This information reveals that, not surprisingly considering the precondition of mobility, most of these converts were male, and relatively young; under ten percent of the trials examined here involved women, and the vast majority of defendants were under the age of thirty-five.

The records of these trials, therefore, describe the circumstances in which an individual, usually young, male, and definitely mobile, born and raised in a Protestant religious tradition, chose to convert to Catholicism. This paper, then, will discuss a confluence of several religious interstices; I intend to discuss the specific concepts defendants formulated to explain the attraction of Catholicism in several broad categories, most of which express the ritualistic, and therefore social, aspects of post-Tridentine Catholicism as it was practised. The motivations behind conversion also highlight the performative nature of religious identity in early modern Europe. These converts conceived of religion, and religious identity, as a series of actions they performed in a ritualistic setting.⁴ The doctrinal discussions and the converts' own contributions to the conversion narrative will be discussed concurrently, along with their ritualistic concerns, in order to display the intellectual interplay between inquisitors and converts, for both of whom ritual possessed powerful connotations and stimuli. The trials also reveal that to effect a conversion several factors often worked in concert, rather than one factor alone receiving the credit. Finally, the penances assigned to converts in need of expiating the sin of having been born and raised Protestant will be examined as another example of inquisitors' efforts to instill good post-Tridentine Catholic practice and a fundamentally Catholic personal identity in new Catholics.⁵

As most of these trials demonstrate, the personal accounts of conversion to Catholicism emphasize the social aspects of seventeenth-century religious experience, especially with respect to Catholicism's ritualistic aspects. The trials reveal that religious conversion was effected through the individuals' contacts with other Catholics: family members, co-workers, and employers, for example. Others came into contact with Catholicism through devotional literature, often in combination with personal interactions. The interest of these personal meetings, moreover, generally took place in connection with some ritual aspect of Catholicism. This contact between Catholics and

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Protestants demonstrates an inherent tension in these trials. Most religious denominations in this time officially prohibited communication with members of other religious communities for this very reason: the possibility of defection to the 'enemy'.⁶ The Catholic Church, and the Inquisition, formulated policies and rules to define the relationships between Catholic and Protestants, as exemplified in an inquisitors' manual written in the seventeenth century, Desiderio Scaglia's *La prattica*. This manual demonstrates that, while the official theory was to keep Catholics as completely separate from other religious traditions as possible, even Inquisitors had to acknowledge that such severance was impossible to achieve in practice. As these conversion narratives demonstrate, however, this contact could work both ways. Devout Catholics, instead of becoming Protestants, could convince Protestants to become Catholic. The best way to attract converts, and the most common way as revealed in these trials, was also the most inherently dangerous.

These trials display that tension, between official policy and lived experience, represented respectively by inquisitor and defendant, although the tension between the doctrinal bases of religious belief and the practices of believers can be overdrawn. Inquisitors were interested in ritual (in the Counter Reformation, promoting the correct kind of rituals, especially), and the defendants were clearly interested in at least some doctrine. Yet these trials demonstrate that, for the most part, differences between educational and social backgrounds of inquisitors and defendants accounted for variant views of religious belief and practice. These differences existed among Protestant pastors and their congregations as well.⁷

Many scholars have pointed out that Protestant sects, despite the official, doctrinal emphasis on *Sola Scriptura*, relied on ritual as much as the Catholics,⁸ and these trials provide unique evidence for this. Defendants display a variety of educational backgrounds and degree of knowledge in the conversion trials; only a few converts were familiar enough to give a complete description, not only of Catholic but also of Protestant doctrine. In most trials, the descriptions concern ritualistic differences that, although they may point to doctrinal differences, do not engage in a doctrinal discussion. Defendants include other information concerning their conversions but, in general, they emphasized the ritualistic differences that distinguished one practising community from another as well as one individual religious identity from another.

In the transition from one religious community to another inquisitors played a role, seemingly at odds with the usual function of persecuting and punishing the heterodox, of shepherding a willing convert toward the true faith. While other scholars have pointed out the resemblance an adversarial inquisitorial process bore to priests' solicitation of honest and complete confessions of the penitent,⁹ in this procedure inquisitors were faced with the 'sinners' most willing to make a complete and sincere confession of wrongdoing. It became the inquisitors' responsibility to channel the defendants'

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newfound zeal for the Catholic faith in appropriate directions. How they did so demonstrates that inquisitors, to at least some extent, understood the communal nature of religious practice and used it in creating new Catholic religious identities.

Rites and Observances

As Desiderio Scaglia declared in *La prattica*, any person born of heretical parents and raised to follow their 'laws and rites' fell within the Inquisition's jurisdiction, even when the conversion was voluntary.¹⁰ The 'rites' pertaining to Catholicism and Protestantism, central to Scaglia's concept of religious difference, also played a central role in the conversion narratives found in these trials. Converts often emphasized the rites and observances of the Catholic Church as a reason for conversion; those that gave this as their only reason for conversion tended to share certain social characteristics. They often were young men who had left home, a Protestant area, and travelled to Italy in the household of a patron and employer. Other converts, older when they left home, cited the influence of Catholic rites in their conversion experiences alongside other factors.

For example, Giovanni Menghi of Iaur in Silesia, about eighteen years old at the time of his conversion from Lutheranism in 1638, left home at the age of eight to serve various military patrons.¹¹ Having arrived in Italy six weeks earlier with his current patron, Captain Bernardino Forta, a soldier from Pistoia, Menghi asked to convert to Catholicism. He declared that the true faith displayed superior observances and Eucharistic rights compared with the Lutheran religion. His patron introduced Menghi to Father Cosimo Maria, a German-speaking priest, who educated Menghi in correct Catholic beliefs. But when asked to describe the errors of the sect in which his parents raised him, Menghi could not do so. He held that he understood nothing of Lutheranism, since he had not ever been interested in religion, even as a child while still living with his parents.¹² When asked to describe correct Catholic doctrine, presumably taught to him by Father Cosimo Maria, Menghi testified that he now believed that good works were necessary for salvation and Purgatory existed. He also believed in the intercession of the saints, and thought that listening to the Mass was integral to salvation.¹³ Menghi was probably ignorant of Protestant theology, as he claimed, and Father Cosimo Maria evidently taught him the bare basics of Catholic belief.

Father Cosimo Maria was instrumental in other conversions as well. Gasparo Koch, who left home to serve the Marchese Gucciardini at age 12, also could not explain his Lutheran beliefs because he was a self-described '*persona idiota*', and converted to Catholicism because of its rites and customs (*vedendo [g]li riti e costumi*).¹⁴ After spending six weeks under '*la disciplina*' of Father Cosimo Maria, Koch had a view of Catholicism similar to Menghi's;

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Koch mentioned believing in practical acts such as veneration of the saints, fasting in Lent, and that '*indulgenze siano il tesoro di S[anta] Chiesa*', a singular observation in these trials.¹⁵

The similarities between these two trials could be construed as demonstrating the influence of Father Cosimo Maria on his young charges, since they lacked a strong religious background. Other trials, though, demonstrate that converts who did not study with Father Cosimo Maria and were more knowledgeable about religious issues expressed similar motivations for conversion. Andrea Smelos, a young Lutheran who converted in 1638 under the guidance of his *padrone* Colonnello Ricasoli, also ascribed his conversion to the superior ceremonies of the Catholic Church, along with the union and concord of the church and good preaching (unfortunately, Smelos did not elaborate and name individual preachers).¹⁶ Unlike the previous young men, Smelos could recite some Lutheran errors. He talked about believing in only three sacraments (baptism, Eucharist, and marriage), denying the veneration and intercession of the saints, rejecting transubstantiation, and denying papal authority and the existence of Purgatory, as core incorrect Lutheran beliefs, all of which were the opposite of beliefs that structured Catholic ritual.¹⁷ Smelos, despite some doctrinal knowledge, privileged ritualistic concerns in his narrative, without any 'coaching' from Father Cosimo Maria.

The circumstances surrounding the conversions of these young men doubtless affected their concise narratives. In their view, their conversions were primarily to be attributed to their patrons, on whom they were dependent for their livelihoods. Their profession also meant that the young men lived in an environment that collectively practiced Catholic rituals according to the liturgical calendar. These young men, unusually mobile when compared to many of their contemporaries, left home at a relatively young age; either they were not entirely indoctrinated in a Protestant faith, or they had forgotten what they had learned. Furthermore, their only recent religious experience came through contact with members of the household, most likely in terms of participating in rituals. They also participated in these relationships as an unequal contributor, considering their status as servants to a powerful patron. The young men's experiences with developing new networks and participating in household religious rituals agreed with inquisitors' impulses to present Catholicism at its post-Tridentine best. Additionally, engaging in household rituals gave these young men a new model of how to conceive of themselves and their own personal religious identity; practising as a Catholic encouraged them to think of themselves as Catholic.

Other converts in Florence thought that the superior rites and ceremonies of the Catholic Church brought about their reconciliations. In 1645, Christopher Taren, a 29-year-old cavalry soldier (*miles equis*) from Germany, came before the Holy Office in Florence wishing to convert. He had been making a living in various parts of Tuscany, including Pisa and Prato.¹⁸ Taren named the rites and ceremonies of the church as his primary motivation for

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conversion. Taren explained that he had actively practised Catholicism in churches in Tuscany before coming to the Inquisition to formalize his conversion.¹⁹ As Gregory Hanlon has noted, the Calvinist Consistory in Layrac, France, kept a list of Calvinists who were caught attending Catholic services out of curiosity, which was actually quite long.²⁰ Interest in the enemy, on the part of grassroots members of both Protestant and Catholic churches, was quite common. In Italy, separated from a relatively strong Protestant community, Taren's curiosity went one step further. Taren was, though, one of the few converts to mention specifically that he had been practising as a Catholic before coming to the Inquisition. He internalized his new religious identity as a Catholic before coming before the Inquisition to formalise a transition he had already made. In his trial, Taren mentioned several incorrect Protestant beliefs when the inquisitors invited him to abjure; among the common list of denying papal power, sacramental confession, the existence of Purgatory, and the veneration of the saints, Taren also mentioned communion in both kinds as an incorrect belief.²¹

Judging by his list of errors, Taren was not extremely well educated in terms of religious doctrine. In terms of his doctrinal descriptions, he was of the same level of detail as the young men working as servants. Johann March of Amsterdam, however, displayed a higher level of doctrinal education. Reconciled to the church around 1650, March had spent six years in various parts of the world before arriving in Florence and deciding to convert. He credited '*i riti e la devozione*' of the church as reasons for converting, and various discussions with religious persons.²² Much of the language used to describe the conversion experience is formulaic, but March's abjuration of incorrect Lutheran doctrines contained more concrete details about the heretical religion. In addition to denying papal authority, veneration of the saints, the existence of Purgatory, the effectiveness of fasting, and particularly not eating meat in Lent, he added receiving communion in both kinds and denying transubstantiation by fully explaining the concept. Most importantly, March recognized the difference between justification by faith and by good works.²³ This would indicate that March was sufficiently educated, religiously well read, or well instructed to distinguish the key differences between Catholic and Lutheran doctrine in theory as well as practical effect.

All of the trials mentioning the rites and ceremonies of the Catholic Church as a motive for conversion occurred in Florence, with one exception. John Hayden of Amsterdam converted to Catholicism in 1686 in Rome. While serving as a soldier in Corsica for 30 months, he conversed with many Catholics and observed their rites and ceremonies. He stressed these rites and the antiquity of Catholicism as his main reason for conversion.²⁴ These trials occurred over a period of thirty years in Florence, and under the aegis of different inquisitors. This particular phrasing may have been one of a set of stock phrases, utilized broadly by inquisitors in Florence and Rome, all of which gave the priority to ritual in these conversion narratives. It is, however,

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still likely that ceremonial institutions were understood as a primary part of defining religion, and therefore religious identity, for both inquisitors and defendants, and therefore across educational and cultural divides as well as religious.

Union and Concord

These trials bring up a particular strength of Catholicism in post-Reformation Europe. In the midst of proliferating Protestant churches and rival versions of the true faith, Catholicism's unity, history, and long-standing traditions appealed to converts. The Catholic Church's stability was, in fact, an attractive attribute. Inquisitors used a common phrase to describe this: *unione e concordia*.

A young Hussite, Simone Laudio, was sixteen when he left home and came to Italy with an army captain in Arezzo. He then moved on to Florence four years before his reconciliation in 1637. He credited the '*unione e concordia*', or union and concord, of Catholic doctrine for his conversion. His patron, Francesco Cellesi, was instrumental in his conversion, as again was the German-speaking priest Cosimo Maria.²⁵ When the inquisitor asked him to describe his Hussite beliefs, in order to make a complete abjuration of past errors, Laudio asserted that he was a '*persona idiota*' in matters of religion. He had merely conformed to his parents' errors, and proceeded to list only a few specific Hussite practices, such as receiving communion in both kinds, not believing in confession as a sacrament, and disbelief in Purgatory.²⁶ In this trial, another young man who was relatively ignorant of religious matters converted most likely to please a patron and his new kinship network, so to speak. And the only reason given for his conversion consists of a stock phrase seen relatively frequently in the trial narratives.

George Auplus from London was more specific in describing the union of the Catholic Church. He decided to convert to Catholicism in Florence in 1698 because his own Anglican church had many divisions and sects, while the Catholic Church remained one and whole. He also came under the influence of two priests in Florence who persuaded him to convert: Father Elam, a Jesuit and the lector of the *Badia Scosese* and Father Lanton, a Dominican.²⁷ He described his previous heretical errors to some extent, mostly the common ones discussed in earlier trials, with the exception of mentioning that he had previously thought the Mass was not a sacrifice.²⁸ The number of foreign religious in Florence, or Italy, especially from Protestant countries, has yet to be determined. Obviously, this could very well have been a significant tool in converting travelling Protestants. Fathers Elam and Lanton could very well have been the source of Auplus' emphasis on Catholic unity; but other trials that do not involve these two priests at all also utilize these concepts as grounds for conversion. Thus it is probable that the Fathers and inquisitors

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involved in the case were drawing from a common background of post-Tridentine emphases in Catholic practice, which encouraged Aupulus to see a Catholic identity as a 'safe' religious identity.

Bartholomew Christmanom of Alsatia, forty years old at the time of his reconciliation in Florence in 1693, mentioned a similar reason for converting, although briefly. He left home at sixteen to live in Flanders and Brabant, and then came to Livorno and Florence. Christmanom resolved to convert because of the Catholic Church's '*uniformità*'.²⁹ He ascribes his conversion to the additional efforts of a Franciscan monk named Anselmo, who happened to be his converted brother, originally named Andrea.³⁰ Family clearly had an influence, but Bartholomew lists the disunity of Protestant churches as a motive for conversion first in his narrative. And Edward Constable of London, who converted in 1686, also mentioned the sheer diversity of Protestant dogma as motivation for converting to Catholicism. Constable cited St Paul as having said that the Catholic Faith was the one true faith, and converted accordingly, a conclusion that Luther and other reformers probably did not anticipate deriving from a reading of St Paul.³¹

Taken together, these trials illuminate a point usually understated: in the confusing proliferation of multiple religious denominations in the seventeenth century, the dogmatic, physical, and verbal unity of Catholicism, with the same mass, special devotions, and Latin being spoken in every church, could very well have appeared to be the secure choice to many converts. In this sense, post-Tridentine Catholicism worked as its authors intended.

Marriage and Family

In addition to converts creating new kinship networks for themselves, as the young men did with their patrons, these trials also reveal that many converts came into contact with Catholicism because of natal kinship networks created through mixed marriages. Scaglia, in his inquisitorial manual, expressly prohibited such marriages, as did most Protestant religious officials. Yet scholarly evidence demonstrates that such marriages did, in fact, occur, although not in large numbers. Keith Luria found evidence of a similar phenomenon in Poitou, where families in the sixteenth century raised their daughters to be able to adapt to either Catholicism or Protestantism, depending upon the religion of the family into which these daughters married. Gregory Hanlon found that mixed marriages occurred in seventeenth-century Aquitaine, and Etienne François found that such marriages were exceptional, but not unheard of, in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Augsburg.³² This points to the divide between religions not being completely rigid on the local level, and reinforces the idea that other bonds, such as kinship ties, may have affected and even surpassed religious ones on occasion. These studies, however, did not really examine how the issues of religious identity were viewed by the children of such marriages.

These conversion narratives in the trial records, however, reveal how mixed marriages could influence religious choices. Margaret Cassel from Ireland, one of the few women in these records, converted in order to marry. She was the daughter of a Catholic father and Protestant mother, but felt it appropriate to explain specifically that she was raised as Protestant because her father died when she was an infant. While her mother maintained a religious identity separate from that of her husband, Cassel chose a different path. She first converted to Catholicism in August of 1671 to marry a Catholic Irishman, but she lived in doubt as to which was the true religion. At one point, she lived with one of her uncles, and allegedly produced a son. Then Cassel converted to Anglicanism to marry an Englishman. After coming to Rome, she decided to convert to Catholicism one final time, at the age of 30.³³ Apparently Cassel converted to the religion of her husband, unlike her mother, which prompted a sequence of religious conversions before she reached the age of thirty.

In the trial series, however, it was more common for the defendant to be raised as a Protestant because of one parent, only to choose voluntarily the Catholicism of the other parent as an adult, but not because of marrying a Catholic. In 1709, Alexander Cominus, a Calvinist from Scotland, came to Italy with a *marchese* as a patron and decided to convert to Catholicism. He stated that he converted, however, through the encouragement of his mother, a Catholic married to a Calvinist, and through reading a Catholic catechism. Cominus, in his abjuration, emphasized ritualistic aspects of religion in describing his errors, such as denying the intercession of saints and the existence of Purgatory; these beliefs pertain to rituals he would have observed his mother performing in daily prayer.³⁴

The same was true of Christian Mayer, who converted to Catholicism in 1708, at the age of twenty-six. He claimed that the good example of his mother inspired him, despite being raised a Lutheran like his father. In addition, he felt that witnessing the physical devotions of Catholics while traveling abroad influenced his decision; the Catholic Church's emphasis on channeling Catholic devotion into new ritualized forms rendered belief and feeling visible, not only for other Catholics but as an example to Protestants as well. He abjured his denial of Purgatory, the need for confession, and papal power, in addition to promising that he would no longer read prohibited books on church holidays, or anywhere else, and keep fasts during Lent. In Mayer's case, his mother's devotion, the good example of lay Catholics, and, apparently, reading material combined to effect his conversion.³⁵

Family members also encouraged the defendants' conversion when their marriages, or their parents', were not an issue. Robert Pagge converted in 1709 because of conversations with a Catholic member of his family, in this case an aunt; whether his aunt was a convert or born and raised Catholic he did not specify. Originally from Ipswich, Pagge became interested in Catholicism while talking with his aunt on several occasions in London. Subsequently

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he visited the Queen's Chapel, and that of the Portuguese ambassador to England.³⁶ Further conversation with a priest, who continuously urged Page to reconcile with the true church, finally convinced the Englishman to convert. Subsequently he boarded a ship to Naples, and then made his way to Rome solely for the purpose of effecting his reconciliation, a long way to go to become a Catholic!³⁷ Again the narrative described the effect of interaction with devout Catholics, along with attending masses and conversations with a priest, as the main influences toward conversion. And Edmund Harter, aged twenty-six and originally from London, was persuaded to convert to Catholicism by his mother, who was a convert herself. She converted while travelling through France, and offered her son a good pension if he would convert as well. At first he declined, but on a trip to Como, Harter fell ill and promised God that he would become a Catholic if he survived. He lived, and made his confession in Florence in 1717.³⁸

These trials highlight an effect of mixed marriages, where the parents kept their personal religious identity separate from their spouses', which is often overlooked: the results of such a marriage in the next generation. The converts in these trials suggest that the children produced in these marriages were often raised in the fathers' religious tradition, although such a conclusion is necessarily tentative because of the low numbers of cases. The children of such marriages in these conversion trials, however, demonstrate the importance of considering the familial context in religious practice. Many of these converts cited the example of their Catholic parents' or family members' example in motivating their conversions; these examples must have been provided on a daily basis, as the Catholic parents practised their faith within the home, and outside the confines of public space devoted to official religious expression.

Persuasion

Inquisitors and converts, in these trials, described the living church's powerful influence. According to the abjurations, many defendants reconciled with the church because devout Catholics won them over, in some fashion. This contact between the faithful and potential converts could take several forms: informal conversations with Catholic laypeople, more formal interactions with religious, internal dialogues with polemical literature, or witnessing the physical devotions and rituals of Catholics. Most commonly, a combination of several of these interces of contact influenced the decision to convert. Many of these forms of contact took place in private space, or space not devoted specifically to religious purposes. For inquisitors, therefore, this contact was dangerous, and possibly indicative of sympathy with Protestantism on the part of Catholics. Scaglia, in his manual, emphasized that social contact with Protestants rendered Catholics suspect of heresy.³⁹ Forming and maintaining

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these relationships with Protestants was a clear avenue of conversion, but inquisitors were forced to recognize that the conversion experience could move one from Protestantism to Catholicism, or vice-versa. These interactions, therefore, were encumbered with an inherent tension.

A soldier from Austria, Andrea Helingher, cited receiving good exhortations and publications from zealous Catholics as his main reason for reconciling with the church.⁴⁰ He had been in Italy, in particular Pistoia, Prato, Livorno, and Florence, for three years. He also mentioned the example of another member of his company, a certain Berling, who converted to Catholicism, led by a German-speaking priest named Henry Horatio in residence at Santa Croce in Florence.⁴¹ The fact that Helingher had a member of his company, most likely a social peer as well as colleague, recommend a German-speaking priest to help in his reconciliation, did much to facilitate his conversion, originally inspired by the exhortations of Catholics and reading Catholic literature, another form of personal communication.

A case tried in Rome in 1686 also demonstrates that personal persuasion was an effective tool of attracting converts. Francis Tomson, from Belfast, was converted primarily through the efforts of fellow northern Irish converts of Presbyterian origins, whom he met in Livorno. Scaglia prohibited the establishment of such communities in Catholic lands, but the exigencies of trade meant that most cities in Europe in the seventeenth century possessed at least a few merchants of different faiths.⁴² Similarly, Elisabetta Vaisseur, from Conde in Normandy, converted from Calvinism because several Catholic women had invoked the Virgin Mary while she was ill in Genoa. These Catholic women induced Vaisseur to promise that she would convert if the Virgin Mary saved her from death, and Vaisseur kept her promise, entering the Hospital of the Converted in Rome in 1682. Prior to her conversion, she related having to overcome certain doubts concerning the sacraments, but does not specifically relate what these doubts were.⁴³ Contacts with other Catholics, in this case while travelling together, once again influenced an individual's choice of religious identity. Additionally, a crisis situation caused the swearing of a vow that was kept later once God, or the Virgin Mary, or other religious authorities, kept their end of the bargain. There are several examples of this in the Reformation, the most famous of which is Martin Luther's vow to St Anne to become a monk if rescued from a thunderstorm, although whether Luther would have been pleased to hear of such a phenomenon working to the Catholics' advantage is doubtful!

Abraham La Martiniét, from Nîmes in Languedoc, converted to Catholicism from Calvinism in 1703. Although the trial does not state La Martiniét's profession, or his reason for travelling to Italy, he was either very well educated, or the late date of the trial demonstrates an increasing general doctrinal awareness along the lines of Jean Delumeau's argument, because La Martiniét displayed a very detailed grasp of the differences between Catholic and Calvinist doctrine. In addition to the more common differences, such as

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the number of sacraments and the veneration of saints, seen in earlier trials, he also went into the differences in power structures and the nature of pontifical authority. All in all, he mentioned over twenty-five differences; points of doctrine not brought up in previous trials include the priestly marriage, marriage as the best state for people, as opposed to virginity, and deciding matters of religion according to individual conscience, and others.⁴⁴ As his reasons for converting, La Martiniet stated that he was '*illuminato internam[ent]e da Iddio*', and mentioned the exhortations and documents of Father Baldigiani, a Jesuit.⁴⁵ La Martiniet did not mention exactly what documents Father Baldigiani gave him to read, or what it was about these documents that was effective in persuading him to convert. This is the only trial in either the Rome or Florence series that discusses doctrinal issues in depth.

In 1696, Mary Hatton, an Anglican woman from London, the widow of 'Milord John Hatton', converted to Catholicism about eighteen months after arriving in Florence. Hatton began talking with two Catholic women staying in the same house. After many discussions with these two women, Hatton read Catholic literature, unfortunately not mentioned in the trial by title, and then sought out three '*sacerdoti*' for further discussion.⁴⁶ Reading and writing was clearly an important skill to Hatton; although she did not know Italian and required a translator for her trial, she wrote her confession herself, in English, which was copied into the case records.⁴⁷ In this trial, as in La Martiniet's, literature worked with, and was a supplement to, personal contact with Catholics. Often two or three motives, acting in concert, as seen above in many trials, provided the impetus toward reconciliation and a change in religious identity. In this conversion, orality and literacy complemented each other to effect the change in religion.

'Speaking' with Books

For some of the defendants in these trials, interaction with religious texts was not a complement to oral discussions with Catholic religious and laypeople, but represented the only significant contact these former Protestants had with Catholic beliefs and practices. For these defendants, their interactions with the written text became an internal dialogue, through which they were convinced of Catholicism's superiority as a religion and convinced to convert. For example, Jean Alies of France, who converted in Rome in 1686, ascribed his reconciliation to reading unnamed Catholic polemical and devotional literature, although not at such great length. He claimed that the literature demonstrated that Catholicism was the most ancient and united version of Christianity, and therefore the best method of achieving salvation.⁴⁸

However, Jacob, son of William Thomas, of 'Linlishgor' (Linlithgow) in Scotland, who converted in Rome in 1682, ascribed his conversion to reading a book six years earlier in Scotland entitled *Antidotus Papatus in tutto*

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contraria alla Fede Cattolica.⁴⁹ He did not describe what aspects of the book inspired his conversion; on the whole, his trial was quite short and devoid of further elaboration. But the book, *The Guide of Faith: or, A Third Part of the Antidote against the Pestiferous Writings of all English Sectaries*, published in 1621, claimed to demonstrate the ‘. . . perpetual and visible succession of the Catholique Roman Church’. The work, written by Sylvester Norris, is dedicated to King James, and begins by attacking ‘those newfangled writers, who spurning at the Testaments of their forefathers, call the Belief of all Antiquity in Question’.⁵⁰

Norris proceeded to explain that Protestants falsely base their religion on quotations from the Bible, interpreted out of context and without any guiding authority; his examples mainly concern justification by faith alone. This is the only time that Norris directly engaged in a doctrinal debate, and his response was to prove reformers, such as John Calvin, wrong by analyzing certain quotations from their works completely out of context.⁵¹ Norris argued against the veracity of Protestant sects by establishing the nature of the true church. His main concern was to argue against the Protestant sects’ separation of the concept of a true church into the visible and invisible. Norris quotes St Augustine and other Church Fathers as saying that the church must always be visible, thereby reinforcing Catholicism’s claim to antiquity. Norris asserted that the church had to be visible for three reasons. First, the church must be visible to instruct the faithful, and second to extirpate heresy. Third, the church, ‘[m]ust always be conspicuous and manifestly apparent, not only to members, but even to strangers and enemies thereof (to wit) for their conversion & vocation of gentills’.⁵² The Catholic Church had to be visible, and therefore the readily apparent true church, in order to attract converts; and the most visible part of the church, for these two converts, was manifest in the written word. Books were a powerful way in which the Catholic Church could attract and persuade converts, even in areas where there were no Catholic lay or religious people to inspire conversion.

In these abjurations, both defendants and Inquisitors demonstrated the successes of the Counter Reformation programme of stressing the traditional, ritualistic concept of Catholicism as a foil to the upstart heresies from the north. These confessions demonstrate that this strategy was at least somewhat successful, not only in preserving Catholicism in some areas, but in attracting converts from Protestant areas in Europe. Ritual was also inherently a social activity, and provided the physical and intellectual space for Catholics to persuade the converts as to the veracity of their religion. This contact between Catholics and Protestants, be it in person or through literature, was inherently dangerous from the inquisitors’ point of view. If a Catholic and a Protestant spoke about religion, the persuasion could act, in theory, to effect a conversion either way. A mixed marriage only intensified the inherent tension surrounding the religious lines both Catholic and Protestant officials attempted to prevent people from crossing. Yet these

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methods were the most effective way to bring about a definitive crossing of that border, the giving up of one religious identity in favour of another.

True Reconciliation

In both series of trials, only two men were re-converted to the Catholic Church after straying from the true religion. In the only trial written entirely in Latin, a Franciscan friar by the name of Augustinus Casimirus, aged twenty-five at the time of his trial in April, 1682, confessed to having joined a group of Calvinist heretics in Amsterdam in April, May, and June of 1681 because of extreme poverty; Christian charity was given along confessional lines, and could be used as an incitement to conversion.⁵³ Carolus Rabinet, a soldier from Paris, found himself in a similar situation. Five years before his reconciliation trial in Florence in 1709, he found himself in Berlin, for reasons unstated, although he was a soldier by profession. He had previously read some heretical books, and when he was in a state of '*estrema povertà*' he joined a sect of French Calvinists.⁵⁴ He claimed that although the Calvinists made him abjure the true faith in public, he hoped that he retained the Catholic faith in his heart, and never abjured internally; he only appeared to embrace Calvinism for temporal reasons.⁵⁵ He remained with the French Calvinists for one year, and apparently travelled with them, because when Rabinet arrived in Swiss lands still faithful to Catholicism, he abjured his errors to a Franciscan monk. After moving on to Dresden, however, he still attended prayer services with the Calvinists, and still later Rabinet went to a Protestant communion (it is unclear whether this communion was held by the same sect of Calvinists) one more time while in Cassel, a mere four months before making his way to Florence, and his reconciliation trial.⁵⁶ Inquisitors featured the assertions that the two men never abjured Catholicism in their hearts and kept their Catholic religious identity intact despite appearances to the contrary; obviously, the two men convinced inquisitors to accept their assertions at face value.

Both of these men abjured Catholicism and became a part of a Protestant sect due to extreme poverty, as they claimed, and maintained that they always held to the true faith in their hearts, and both show evidence of the same phenomenon seen earlier in the trials of young men who had travelled far from home with Italian *padrone*. In areas dominated by Protestants, at least some Catholics without a support network, and fallen upon hard times, at the very least publicly embraced another religion to obtain help, support, and a means of living.

Martin Brandenburg, from Beremburg, found himself in an even more extreme situation. His parents raised him as a Lutheran until he was twenty-four, when he travelled to France. On the return trip, he was taken captive by Turks and brought to Algiers. There he was a slave for three years, where he

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attended Mass with other slaves who happened to be Catholic. Eventually, Brandenburg made his way to Florence and decided to convert, citing the example of his fellow slaves as his primary reason. Participating in communal ritualistic experiences under such difficult circumstances could have been comforting and convincing. But he also asserted that Catholicism's conforming more closely to the Old and New Testament played a role in his decision.⁵⁷

Scaglia, writing in his inquisitorial manual, showed some sympathy for these kinds of situations. While he held that apostasy was wrong, and should be punished, he left room for individual inquisitors to be lenient in special cases. The most important mitigating circumstance that could move an inquisitor to mercy was fear of one's life. Scaglia warned, however, that leniency should only be shown to those whose prospective death had been real and imminent at the time of their apostasy, and who had not just been frightened by vague threats.⁵⁸ In practice, inquisitors were about as lenient in their sentences as they were with converts; the common theme that moved inquisitors to treating both kinds of cases compassionately was the defendants' sincerity and contrition.

Educating the Newly Faithful

Inquisitors had one final duty to perform before declaring the converts absolved of their past errors: pronouncing a sentence and assigning an appropriate penance. The types of penances assigned to converts are fairly standard practices for expiating sin for the time. But the penances also served a further purpose; that of inculcating appropriate practice and behaviour in new Catholics, as the Council of Trent intended. Inquisitors were responsible for channeling new devotional enthusiasm in positive and approved directions, mostly concerning correct ritualistic practice. And by inculcating new Catholics in ritual practices that were social as well as religious, inquisitors attempted to keep new Catholics from backsliding into their old belief systems, and resolve the inherent tension involved in crossing religious lines.

Most of the penances inquisitors gave converts fell into a specific, and not uncommon, pattern. The Inquisitor General of Florence, Fanano, told Menghi, who converted from Lutheranism in 1638, that for the space of one year he had to fast on Good Friday, eating only bread and water, and recite the Crown of the Virgin, a series of prayers dedicated to the Virgin Mary, every Sunday. For three years, Menghi was required to go to confession and receive communion afterwards at Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and the Feast of All Saints.⁵⁹ In 1642, the Inquisitor General Mazzarelli assigned Koch, a former Lutheran, a similar sentence of attending confession and communion at Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and All Saints, and reciting the Crown of the Virgin every Sunday for two years.⁶⁰ And Christopher Taren, a soldier from Germany reconciled in 1645, received exactly the same penance.⁶¹

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Beginning in the 1660s, the inquisitors' penances became somewhat more elaborate, and generally lasted for three years, not two.⁶² The inquisitors told Johan March that he had to recite the '*simbolo dell'Apostoli*', or the Apostles' Creed, every day, the Office of the Virgin once a week, the seven penitential Psalms at every Mass, and attend confession and communion five times a year, at Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, All Saints, and the Feast of the Assumption. His choice of confessor had to be approved by the Inquisition, as well.⁶³ In the penance sentence of Rodolphus Christian, reconciled in the 1670s, for three years the inquisitors wanted him to fast on bread and water on Good Friday, say the seven penitential Psalms at Mass, and go to confession and communion four times a year, on Christmas, Easter, All Saints, and Pentecost. In addition, he had to specifically visit the Church of Santissima Nunciata one time only, and say the Office of the Virgin once a week.⁶⁴ Miller, reconciled in 1675, was assigned one Credo and one Office of the Virgin a week, and Confession and Communion four times a year, all for three years, a fairly standard sentence given by inquisitors.⁶⁵

The only real deviations from these standards of sentences are found in the trials of two women; Anna Vuolfin's and Mary Hatton's trials show two minor, although interesting, differences. Inquisitors told Vuolfin that in addition to reciting the Credo once a day, and the Office of Christ once a week, she had to repeat a full rosary once a Mass, and not the seven penitential Psalms, as seen in the sentences for men described above. She also had to confess and participate in communion on the customary holidays.⁶⁶ Mary Hatton, besides having to recite one Office of the Virgin per Mass, and the Credo once a week, and confess and attend communion four times a year, had to recite five Pater Nosters and five Hail Marys once a week.⁶⁷ Inquisitors reconciled Vuolfin and Hatton in 1693 and 1696 respectively; perhaps the extra rosaries and Ave Marias, that none of the converted men described above received, were specifically assigned because of gender. At this point in the post-Tridentine Church, devotions concerning the Virgin Mary and revolving around saying the rosary or Ave Maria were very popular with women, and considered by the church as an acceptable means of focusing female lay religious devotion.⁶⁸

In fact, all of the penances derive from common Catholic practices, that would have been used by any practicing Catholic, either by the practitioner's own initiative, or as a penance assigned for minor sins admitted in the confessional. For someone born and raised as a Protestant, or completely ignorant of religious ritual as seen in some of the cases involving young male converts, these forms of penance introduced the new Catholic to important aspects of ritualistic practice. These rituals also happened to be symbolic of crucial doctrinal differences between Catholics and Protestants. Reciting the Office of the Virgin would highlight the Catholic devotion to Mary, rituals with which some of the new Protestant sects dispensed. The Credo brings believing in one holy, and united, Catholic Church immediately to the mind

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of the person saying it. A former Protestant, as was mentioned in many trials in this study, would not be in the habit of attending sacramental confession with a priest; the inquisitors' requiring new Catholics to perform this act four or five times a year, three years in a row, would certainly make the point that this ritual was fundamentally important to Catholic belief and practice. These penances would also encourage a new sense of individual religious identity as well. The converts would become truly Catholic, not because of a change in internal beliefs alone, but through the actions and rituals they were required to perform.

Propagation of the Faith

Thus inquisitors structured the converts' trials, and penances, to demonstrate and inculcate good religious practices representative of the spirit of post-Tridentine Catholicism and a new religious identity expressed through action. For example, by advocating confession, and practicing this ritual regularly, inquisitors, and Catholic reformers, hoped to emphasize Catholics' inner devotion, turning confession into an opportunity to examine individual consciences, and promote the confessor as a spiritual guide, thereby linking internal belief with a set of performative actions.⁶⁹ But, as the trials demonstrate, constructing religion as a set of rituals and practices was actually common ground for the Protestant converts as well. The testimony in the trials, therefore, was a collaborative effort between inquisitors and defendants; the language may have been formulaic, but the ideas within the testimonies display common points of reference. And the trials present both inquisitors' and defendants' ideas about religion, practice, and conversion. The converts themselves gave testimony as to why they chose the religious and geographical paths that led them to Catholicism, and in these conversion narratives those paths all held the common thread of communal involvement as it related to individual belief.

Despite official differences between inquisitors and defendants as to educational background, knowledge of doctrine, and official pronouncements concerning interaction between Catholics and Protestants, inquisitors recognized the importance of ritual practice and constructing religion as a communal activity as a means of deliberately inculcating a new religious identity among converts. The penances they gave these defendants, intended to channel newly-found fervour for Catholicism, demonstrate an awareness of the importance of ritual practice in maintaining the 'true faith', combining individual belief and identity with the community's performance of rituals, which was also a large component of the Catholic Church's attempt to maintain and improve religious practice and faith during the Counter Reformation. A century or more after the beginnings of Protestantism's challenge to Catholic dominance, the church's Counter-Reformation principles of education and

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developing the ritualistic involvement of Catholics, under the supervision of church officials, still held.

Finally, as these trials make evident, confessional lines between religious sects were prominent, and crossing those lines was filled with tension and uncertainty. While these trials took place in Italy, virtually a mono-confessional environment, many of these defendants came from multi-confessional backgrounds, both geographically and, in many cases, within their families. While multi-confessional communities and families existed, lived together, and cooperated, these trials show that the circumstances in which these negotiations took place were still uncertain and apprehensive. Converts who crossed those lines may have been searching for a clearer world-view, and a more fixed religious identity, both communally and personally, than that provided by their complex backgrounds.

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Notes

- 1 The following studies have all described the existence of doctrinal relativity in areas containing multiple faiths, and suggest that many people, on the local level, in contrast to official church positions of complete religious separation, blurred religious lines in everyday experience: Nicholas Griffiths, 'The Best of Both Faiths: The Boundaries of Religious Allegiance and Opportunism in Early Eighteenth-Century Cuenca', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 77, No. 2 (April 2000), 13–30; Gregory Hanlon, *Confession and Community in Seventeenth-Century France: Catholic and Protestant Coexistence in Aquitaine* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993); Michael C. Questier, 'Crypto-Catholicism, Anti-Calvinism and Conversion at the Jacobean Court: The Enigma of Benjamin Carier', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 47 (1996), 45–64; R. W. Scribner, *The German Reformation* (Atlantic Highlands, N. J., Humanities Press, 1986); Peter J. Van Kessel, 'The Denominational Pluriformity of the German Nations at Padua and the Problem of Intolerance in the Sixteenth Century', *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, 75 (1984), 256–76; Keith Luria, 'Separated by Death: Burials, Cemeteries, and Confessional Boundaries in Seventeenth-Century France', *French Historical Studies*, 24 (2001), 185–223; Keith Luria, 'Rituals of Conversion: Catholics and Protestants in Seventeenth-Century Poitou', Barbara D. Diefendorf and Carla Hesse, eds, *Culture and Identity in Early Modern Europe (1500–1800): Essays in Honor of Natalie Zemon Davis* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1993).
- 2 Keith P. Luria found cases of Protestants reconverting to Catholicism in seventeenth-century Poitou, and examined the experience of multiple individual conversions in a religiously heterogeneous area. The religiously mixed Poitevin population managed to coexist at the beginning of the seventeenth century, with patronage and kinship ties crossing religious boundaries. Capuchin monks in Poitou were successful, however, in reconverting some of the city's Protestants by using Catholic ritual to sharpen differentiation between the Catholic majority and

- Protestant minority, which Poitou's inhabitants had previously downplayed. Luria's models of isolation, and subsequent communal reconciliation, as a model of reconversion to Catholicism, however, derived from the accounts of the Capuchin monks soliciting converts, not the individual converts; Luria, 'Rituals of Conversion', pp. 66–77. Nicholas Griffiths analyzed the inquisitorial records pertaining to Francisco Antonio Ruter, a perfect study of religious ambiguity who drifted back and forth over the Catholic-Protestant religious divide several times over the course of his life, and posited the existence of an attitude that allowed Ruter to simultaneously consider himself both Catholic and Lutheran at the same time; Griffiths, 'Best of Both Faiths', pp. 13–15.
- 3 Documents pertaining to these conversions are found in the Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede (hereafter ACDF), and the Archivio Arcivescovile di Firenze (hereafter, AAF). Both contain trials of non-Italians who converted to Catholicism while travelling in Italy, or who had travelled to Italy specifically for the purpose of converting.
 - 4 Here I am adapting Judith Butler's ideas concerning gender and identity performance to a religious cultural setting. As Butler explained, 'performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual . . . [and] what we take to be an internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body'; Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, Routledge Books, 1999), Introduction, esp. p. xv. I argue that this theory is particularly applicable to religious culture, in which belief is assumed to be reflected in ritualized actions. Religious identity, in the early modern period, was as much performed through ritual on a daily basis as it was a matter of belief.
 - 5 Several secondary sources discuss the inculcation and emphasis of ritual in post-Tridentine Catholicism; for a synthetic overview, see Robert Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450–1700* (Washington, D.C., 1999), especially chapter five, in which he discussed the Jesuits' mission processions, the development of the Feast of Corpus Christi as a means of reinforcing the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the centrality of Mass to Catholic worship. Philip M. Soergel, in *Wondrous in His Saints: Counter-Reformation Propaganda in Bavaria* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1993), discussed how the Catholic Church, in Bavaria, emphasized the unbroken heritage of Catholicism through ritualistic pilgrimage and funerary rights to combat the spread of Lutheranism and Calvinism, as well as re-Catholicize formerly Protestant areas.
 - 6 Hanlon, p. 187; Desiderio Scaglia, *La prattica*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Borg.lat.571.XVII, fols 168v–171r. Scaglia, in this inquisitors' manual, discouraged laypeople from disputing with heretics, claiming that it wouldn't work anyway, although he did list several exceptions. On the whole, however, laypeople were instructed to leave dealing with heretics to clergy and religious.
 - 7 Keith Luria, 'Separated by Death: Burials, Cemeteries, and Confessional Boundaries in Seventeenth-Century France', *French Historical Studies*, 24 (2001), 185–223. Luria discussed the ways in which Huguenot congregations were dissatisfied with their pastors' more simplified ideas concerning burial practices, and fought to keep some older Catholic rituals, such as ringing church bells during funerary processions.
 - 8 Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (New York, Cambridge University

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- Press, 1997), chap. 6, 'The Reformation as a Ritual Process'. Muir emphasized that Protestants did not eliminate ritual from their concept of religious practice, but radically changed its forms, interpretations, and meanings.
- 9 Dyan Elliot, 'Seeing Double: Jean Gerson, the Discernment of Spirits, and Joan of Arc', *AHR*, 107:1 (February 2002), 43; Brian Patrick McGuire, 'Education, Confession, and Pious Fraud: Jean Gerson and a Late Medieval Change', *American Benedictine Review*, 47 (1996), 330–3.
 - 10 Desiderio Scaglia, *La prattica*, fol. 23v.
 - 11 AAF, *Inquisizione*, Busta 8, fol. 19r. 'Sono 8 anni ch'io lasciai la casa di mio P[ad]re e di mia M[ad]re quali come tutti gl'altri mie parenti sono heretici al setta luterana in Silesia vicino a Vvratislavia e venni a servire diversi padroni al campo cesareo in età all' hora di dieci anni'.
 - 12 AAF, fol. 19v. 'An crediderit aliquid et quid de Secta Luterana q[ua]ndo in ipsa fuit educatus. Responsit: Io non ho saputo ne creduto soca alcuna della setta luterana p[er] che da piccolò non son stato ammerato in cosa alcuna col nella Relig[ion]e'.
 - 13 AAF, fol. 19v. 'Io ho imparato che per salvar l'anima e necess[ari]o far buone opere; che si ritroria il Purgatorio; che ne bisogni dobbiamo ricevere a Dio; et all'intercess[ion]e de suoi santi e che bisogna udire la S[an]ta messa'.
 - 14 AAF, fol. 14r.
 - 15 AAF, fol. 23r.
 - 16 AAF, fol. 14v. '. . . in q[es]ta citta di Firenze menatori dal S. Colonnello Ricasoli e vedendo in diverse Chiese le ceremonie che usano li cattolici intorno al culto delle religione ascoltando le loro Prediche e messe e considerando l'unione e concordia di essi circa li dogmi della sud[et]te religione rimari molto inclinato alla S[an]ta Fede Catt[oli]ca'.
 - 17 AAF, fol. 13v. 'Che tre solamente siano li sacramenta della Chiesa cioè battesimo, eucharisto, e matrimonio'.
 - 18 AAF, fol. 35r. 'Christoforo Taren filius Martini Taren miles equis', and, 'Sono da tre anni in circa che sono in Italia, sono stato in diversi partii di q[est]o stato di Toscana, particolarment[en]te in Pisa e Prato'. In his manual, Scaglia warned against Catholics traveling to Protestant lands, for this very reason, religious curiosity, that might result in a conversion. Scaglia, *La prattica*, fol. 23v.
 - 19 AAF, fol. 37r. 'Ma poi venuto in Italia che sono tre anni in circa, havendo praticato con Cattolici e visti i riti e ceremonie della Chiesa Cattolica fosti insegnato da Pio bened[ett]o di Cassare affatto la setta e errori di luterò'.
 - 20 Hanlon, *Aquitaine*, p. 205.
 - 21 AAF, fol. 35v. 'Io ho verament[en]te creduto che sotto le specie sacramentali li trovi il vero corpo di N[ost]ro S[ignore] Gesu Xpo ma che si debba Comunicare sotto l'una e l'altra specie ogni volta'.
 - 22 AAF, fol. 57r. 'Ma essendo io stato p[er] lo spazio di sei anni in diverse parti del Mondo dove si vive nella fede Cattolica et avendo osservato i riti e la devozione con la q[ua]le la professando e finalment[en]te avendo in q[es]ta citta discorso con p[er]sone religiose timorate di Dio in materia di religione con l'aiuto del med[esim]o ho risoluto di lasciare la setta di Calvino, Giesu Ch[rist]o ma solament[en]te in figura memoria della passione di N[ost]ro Si[gn]ore G[iesu] C[hristo] . . . Che essendo corrotto la Natura Umana p[er] il peccato d'Adamo, niuno può con le proprie Operazione meritarsi cor' alcuna appo' Dio ma solament[en]te con la fede in Giesu Ch[rist]o'.

- 23 AAF, fol. 57r. 'Che nella sacra cena no[n] vi realm[en]te il Corpo e Sangue di N[ost]ro Sig[no]re'.
- 24 ACDF, Santum Officiium (S.O.), Stanza Storica (St. St.) 4–h, fol. 40r. 'Ma col-l'occasione (come dicesti) che sei stato p[er] soldato nell' isola di Corsica p[er] lo spazio di 30 mesi, hai conversato con Cattolici, et osservato li loro riti, e Cere-monie nelle Chiese de med[esi]mi . . . che la fede Catt[oli]ca e uniforme e la piu antica di treste l'altre, percio determinasti d'abbracciarla'. Hayden mentioned that his mother was Catholic, but did not ascribe any part of his motive to convert to her example, behaviour, or beliefs.
- 25 AAF, fol. 10r. '. . . [sono] allevato et instrutto nelle errori et heresie della setta di Gio-vanni Usso le ho tenute e creduto tutte fino alli sedici anni e da quattro anni in qua che son stato e sto con il S[igno]re Fran[ces]co Cellesi sono vistuto alla Cattolica con-forme al mio Padrone . . . havendo visto in diverse Chiese le Ceremonie Cattoliche intorno al culto della Relig[i]one ascoltando le loro Prediche e messe e contri devando l'unione e Concordia circa i dogmi della sud[ett]a Religione. . . mi sono fatto instruce nelle core della fede Catt[olic]a dal P[adre] Cosimo Maria tedesco'.
- 26 AAF, fol. 10v. '. . . per essere io persona idiota non ne so rendere piu raggione che tanto ma sono semplice reistruto conforme allo stile di mio padre e mia madre et ho tenuto e creduto tutte le heresie et errori. . . che io una volta mi sono com-municato sub utraq[ue] Specie alla mia Padria'.
- 27 AAF, fol. 89r. '. . . e mi sono mosso dall'authorita del Capo della Chiesa Romana p[er] che mi e parso che la Chiesa Anglicana non habbi in questo particolare fon-damento alcuno essendovi nella med[esim]a chiesa Anglicana molte divisioni di sette e la Chiesa deve esser'una et essendo anche stati in questa città diversi Reli-giosi Inglese e Irlandese e scogresi cioè il P[ad]re Elam Giesuita il P[ad]re Lettore di Badia Scosesse e di P[ad]re Lanton Domenicano i quail mi hanno p[er]suaso ad abbracciar la Santa Fede catholica'.
- 28 AAF, fol. 89v. 'Che non vi sia il Sacrificio della Messa'.
- 29 AAF, fol. 46r. 'Brabante e nella Fiandra avendo io veduto l'uniformita delle Ch[ies]e Cattoliche mi venne ispirazione di farmi Cattolico'.
- 30 AAF, fol. 122r. '. . . havuto anche motivo ad un mio fratello chiamato Andrea il quale essendo intelligente anch'esso ha abbracciato la San]ta Fede Catt[oli]ca e l'è fatto religioso di S[an] Francesco Reformati col Nome d'Anselmo'.
- 31 ACDF, S.O., St. St. M4 g–h, fol. 381r. 'Ma circa 3 anni sono (come dicesti) havendo tu osservato la diversità de dogmi tra gli eretici della d[ett]a tua Patria, e letto, che il S[an] Paolo dice, che la Fede Catt[oli]ca e la vera Fede, ti venne inspiratione de farti Catt[oli]co'. Sylvester Norris, in the polemical *The Guide of Faith: or, a Third Part of the Antidote against the Pestiferous Writings of All English Sectaries* (St. Omer, English College Press, 1621; Pollard-Redgrave Microfilm Collection, Indiana University, 1711:8), wrote that St Paul, in Ephesians 4:3, explained that the Church's true purpose was 'To keep the unity of the spirit and the hand of peace; To be of one accord and one judgement.' This indicates that emphasizing the unity and tradition of the Catholic Church was a powerful polemical argument.
- 32 Hanlon, pp. 103–104; Of these authors, only Hanlon and François discuss the conversion of spouses after marriage; Hanlon found that of eighty-eight women accepted by the Consistory in Layrac between 1578 and 1609, fifty-five were women who married members of the congregation. Etienne François, *Protestants*

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- et catholiques en Allemagne: Identités et pluralisme, Augsburg, 1648–1806* (Paris, 1993), pp. 204–6; François found that female spouses were more likely to convert than male, and most often from Protestantism to Catholicism.
- 33 ACDF, S.O., St. St. 4–h, fol. 50r. ‘Che essendo nata di padre Catt[oli]co e madre heretica protestante, dicesti esser stata da questa per esser morto tue Padre nell’età tua infantile, allevata et instrutta nelli errori et heresie de protestanti fino allo tua età di 19 anni, nel qual tempo (come asservisti) volendosi maritare con un tal’.
- 34 AAF, fol. 238r. ‘Ma poi p[er] le continue persuasioni et esortazioni di tua madre Cattolica conciasti ad’esser inclinato ad abbracciare la S[anta] Fede il che poi determinasti fermamente doppo haver’ letto un Cathechismo Cattolico’.
- 35 AAF, fol. 230 r–v. ‘Che si detta estenere da i libri prohibiti ne giorni vietati dalla Chiesa e debbano osservarsi li digiuni prescritti da essa’.
- 36 Scaglia had to admit that, although the Inquisition had the right to prosecute any heretic within their physical jurisdiction, avoiding the prosecution of dignitaries, ambassadors, and other people of importance was prudent. Scaglia, *La prattica*, fol. 26r. Other political and religious institutions in Europe obviously made similar accomodations.
- 37 ACDF, S.O., St.St. M4 g, fol. 65r. ‘. . . in Londra havesti occasione di conversare con una tua zia Cattolica, quale havendoti condotto molte volte nelle Cappelle della Regina e dell’Imbasciatore di Portogallo et havendoti fatto parlare con un Prete Cattolico quasi ti esortano continualmente a farti Cattolico della quali esortationi fin dal tempo ti risolvesti che alla p[rim]a occ[asio]ne. . . d’imbarcare Sa un Vascallo Inglese il quale dopo molto viaggio approdato in Napoli, conosciuta pertanto da te occ[io]ne opportune p[er] venire a Roma’.
- 38 AAF, fol.57r.
- 39 Scaglia, *La prattica*, fol. 90v.
- 40 AAF, fol. 163r. ‘In q[est]a città di Fiorenza p[er] le buone essortationi e documenti di persone religiose Zelanti risolvervi lasciare affatto l’heresie da te tenute e credere e fara Catt[olic]o’.
- 41 AAF, fol. 163r. ‘Sone da tre anni in circa che sono in Italia soldato a Cavallo di SAS nel qual tempo sono stato mi diversi parti di q[est]e stato particolarm[en]te nella città di Pistoia, Prato, Livorno, e Fiorenza et e mezz’anno già che sono stato in q[est]e pentiero di venire alla fide cattolica e Ap[osto]lica Romana . . . con un mio Compagno chiamato Cio Berling che ha abiurato avanti di (168v) VP Rma quail mi ha detto che in Santa Croce ei era il P Bau. Henrico Hortatio da Leodio, che ha la lingua Thedesca’.
- 42 ACDF, S.O., St. St. M4 g–h, fol. 330r. ‘. . . ma finalm[en]te tre mesi sono gionto in Livorno et in havendo havuta longiontura li discorrer[e] comè altri tuoi Paesani fatti già Cattolici i quali ti divero che questa era la vera Religione e ch’essi volevano morir’.
- 43 ACDF, S.O., St. St. M–4, g. ‘Ma sei settimane sono inc.a e perdo tu in viaggio pero venire a Roma in compagnia di alc[un]i Cattolici cadeste ammalata in Genova età p[er]suasiva de d[et]ti Catt[oli]ci invocarsi la B[eata] Vergine a liberarti dal male con promesa che dopo haveresti abbracciata la S[anta] Fede Catt[oli]ca et havendo rilasciata la sanita, dicesti, che se ti fossero stati levati alc[un]i dubbii, che havevi circa la sagram[ent]i della Chiesa’. Scaglia, fol. 26v.
- 44 AAF, fol. 219r.
- 45 AAF, fol. 219r, ‘. . . ondè venuto ultimam[en]te in questa Città di Firenze p[er] le

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- buone esortazioni e documenti del R[everendo] P[ad]re Baldigiani Giesuita risolvesti di lasciare affatto l'eresie da te credute e farti Cattolico'.
- 46 AAF, fol. 145r. '... fino a 17 o 18 mesi fa' e con l'occasione ch[e] in casa mia vi erano due alter dame Cattoliche cominciai da discorsi ch[e] vi facevano ad avere inclinazione a farmi Cattolica tanto più ed in quell t[em]po leggevo alcuni libri Cattolici e pend' dico 3 sacerdoti venivano a parlar colle suddette dame in material di religione perciò restai ancor io instrutta da medi[si]mi'. Women were, on the whole, statistically much less likely to be literate than men in early modern Europe. For a discussion of gender and literacy, see R. A. Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe: Culture and Education 1500–1800* 2d edn. (New York, 2002), p. 144.
- 47 AAF, fol. 150r. 'I Mary Hatton of London a fore sade . . . '.
- 48 ACDF, S.O., St. St. M4 g–h, fol. 237r. '... ma coll'occassione d'haver letto libri Cattolici, dicesti haver conos[ci]uto da tal lettura che la fede Cattolica e la più antica la vera et Unica per salvarsi'.
- 49 AAF, fol. 220v.
- 50 Sylvester Norris, *The Guide of Faith: or, A Third Part of the Antidote against the Pestiferous Writings of all English Sectaries*, (St. Omer, English College Press, 1621); Pollard-Redgrave Microfilm Collection, Indiana University, 1711:8, Dedication, pp. 1–3.
- 51 Norris, *Guide of Faith*, pp. 1–3.
- 52 Norris, *Guide of Faith*, p. 7.
- 53 ACDF, S.O., St. St. M4 g, fol. 141r. '... qua tu desponsace putabas veluti desperatus (prout dicisti) versari cepisti inter hereticos Calvinistas, et quarto in mensibus Aprilis, Maii, et medietatis Junii 1681 cum esset in consortio eorumdem hereticoru[m] sustinuisti discurrendo cu[m] illis, quod ipsi in sua Religione Caviniana poterant salvarì'.
- 54 AAF, fol. 252r. 'Cinque anni indietro trovandomi in Berlino Citta delle Prussia fu persuaso da diversi Francesi Eretici cola' esistenti ad abbandonate la S[ant]a Fede Catt[olic]a et abbracciai la loro setta di Calvino, al che da principio ripignai ma poi astretto dall'estrema povertà in cui mi trovavo'.
- 55 AAF, fol. 252r. '... siche devano abiurando infelicem[en]te in publico la d[ett]a S[ant]a Fede Catt[olic]a nella quale per grazia di Dio ero nato et allevato. . . ne mai ho abiurata internam[ent]e la s[udett]a S[ant]a Fede anzi l'ho sempre ritenuta nel cuore e solo nell' esterno feci quanto sopra per il sud[ett]o motivo temporale'.
- 56 AAF, fols 252r–253r. '... e dimorai in tal stato per lo spazio d'un anno e poi capitato in soletta luogo de suizzeri Catt[olic]i abiurai in mano d'un P[ad]re Francescano l'eresia di Calvino e fui da esso assoluto pienam[ent]e da tutto. Poi andato a Dresda dicevo con quegli eretici ivi esistenti d'esser ancor io della loro setta et interveniro alla loro preghiere e sermoni e Quattro mesi addietro trovandomi in Cassel intervenni una volta sola alla cena degl'eretici'.
- 57 AAF, fol. 121r.
- 58 Scaglia, *La prattica*, fol. 95r.
- 59 AAF, fol. 20r–v. 'Che per penitenza salvate digiuni il prossimo futuro Venerdì Santo in pane e acqua e che per in anno reciti ogni Sabato la corona della Beat[issi]ma Vergine che ti confessi e comunichi per tre anni nelle feste più solenni cioè Nativita e Ressurrett[ion]e de N[ostro] S[ignore] della Pentecoste e di tutti i Santi e così diciamo prontiamo, sententiamo e penitentiamo in ogni miglio modo e forma'.

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- 60 AAF, fol. 24r. 'Che p[er] lo spazio di due anni prossimi avvenire ti confessi e comunichi sacramentalm[en]te nelle solennita della Nativita e Resurrettione di N[ostro] S[ignore] Giesu christo della Pentecoste e di tutti li santi e Che per detto tempo reciti ogni Sabato la corona della B[eatissi]ma Vergine'.
- 61 AAF, fol. 38r. '. . . che per due anni proxim[o] avvenire digiuno in pane et acqua'.
- 62 Since these sentences come entirely from the Florentine documents, the slight change in duration of penance and some differences in the number of prayers to be recited probably can be attributed to an individual inquisitor's inclinations.
- 63 AAF, fol. 60v. 'Che p[er] lo spazio di tre anni reciti ogni giorno il simbolo de gli Apostoli; Che per il med[esim]o t[em]po di tre anni reciti una volta il Messe i sette salmi con le litanie, . . . et ad un confessore approato dall'Ordinario e di sua licenza ricevi il Sacramento dell'Eucharistia nelle solennita della Nativita e Resurrezz[io]ne di N[ostro] S[ignore] G[iesu] C[hristo] della Santa Pentecoste, dell'Assunzione di Maria Verg[in]e e di tutti i Santi'.
- 64 AAF fol. 75v. 'Che visti una volta a piedi la Chiesa della S[antissim]a Nunciata. Che per 3 ti anni prossimi a venire digiuni il Venerdi S[an]to in pane et acqua. Che per l'istesso tempo reciti una volta la Sett[iman]a la Corona della Beatiss[im]a Vergine Ma[ri]a e finam[en]te che p[er] d[ett]o t[em]po di 3 anni Confessi Sacramentalm[en]te 4 volte l'anno i tuoi peccati ad un sacerdote esposto dal suo ord[i]ni e di sua licenza di com[m]unichi nelle 4 solennita pri[n]ciali cioe della nativita, e Resurrett[ion]e di N[ostro] S[ignore] G[iesu] C[hristo] della Sac[ra] Pentecoste e di S[anti]s[sim]i Santi'.
- 65 AAF, fol. 131r. 'Che per tre anni continui reciti una volta la settimana il Credo'.
- 66 AAF, fol. 138r. 'Che p[er] tre anni continui reciti una volta il giorno il Credo; Che per il d[ett]o tempo reciti una volta la settimana la Corona del Sig[no]re; Che p[er] l'istesso t[em]po reciti una volta il Mese il rosario della Beatissima Verg[in]e; Che p[er] d[ett]o tempo di tre anni confessi Sacramentalm[en]te cinque volte l'anno i tuoi peccati ad un Sacerdote'.
- 67 AAF, fol. 148v. 'Che per tre anni a venire reciti una volta il Mese la Corona della Beatissima Vergine; Che per lo stesso tempo reciti una volta la settimana cinque pater noster e cinque ave maria; Che per il sud[ett]o tempo reciti una volta il giorno il Credo; Che per il med[esim]o tempo di tre anni confessi sacramentalmente'.
- 68 Domenico Sella, *Italy in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, Longman, 1997), p. 132.
- 69 Sella, *Italy*, pp. 123–4.

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