

**The Reception and Application of the Encyclical *Pascendi***  
The Reports of the Diocesan Bishops and the Superiors  
of the Religious Orders until 1914

edited by Claus Arnold and Giovanni Vian

**The Reception of the Encyclical *Pascendi*  
in Germany**

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**Abstract** With regard to the special situation in Germany, where Catholics formed a minority in a predominantly Protestant Constitutional Monarchy (which was nevertheless viewed rather favourably by the Roman Curia), the German bishops succeeded in receiving a dispensation from some of the regulations of *Pascendi*. In their reports, the bishops presented their dioceses in a favourable light and tried to immunize them against further Roman action. A certain tendency towards a minimizing interpretation of the scope of anti-modernism is manifest.

**Summary** 1 The Reports from Germany Begin to Arrive: Examples from Prussia and Bavaria. – 2 The Upper Rhenish Church Province. – 3 Diocesan Reception of *Pascendi* in Mainz. – 4 Conclusion.

**Keywords** Pascendi. Germany. Bishops. Georg von Kopp. Paul Wilhelm von Keppeler.

After the publication of the encyclical *Pascendi* more or less enthusiastic letters of adherence and congratulations began to pour in to the Vatican from all over the world.<sup>1</sup> Only the episcopal conferences of Germany were keeping quiet – mainly because for many German bishops the encyclical came as badly-timed as a toothache. The Fulda Episcopal Conference waited until December 1907 to comment and thus was even later in reacting on the papal letter than the ecclesiastical province of Haiti.<sup>2</sup> Even though there were only few ardent anti-modernists like the bishop of Rottenburg Paul Wilhelm von Keppeler or the bishop of Treves Michael Felix Korum in the German episcopate, it was less the theological than the political and social context, which pained the bishops.<sup>3</sup> Not only in the liberal public,

1 ASV, *Segr. Stato*, 1908, rubr. 82, fasc. 1-8. Cf. Vian, “La *Pascendi*”. My thanks go to Friederike Ockert M.A. and Charles Talar who helped me in translating the present text.


2 ASV, *Segr. Stato*, 1908, rubr. 82, fasc. 4, ff. 173-8: Letter of the Archbishop of Port-au-Prince, 10 November 1907, with a declaration of the adherence of all the bishops, superiors and professors of the Grand Séminaire of the ecclesiastical province of Haiti.

3 See for following the presentation in Trippen, *Theologie und Lehramt im Konflikt*, 51-109.

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but also in German Catholicism itself the mood in 1907 was extremely irritated. Earlier in the year a group of fairly harmless and respected Catholic laymen had been criminalized by Rome as conspirators, because they had wanted to work for a relaxation of the rules on the *Index librorum prohibitorum*.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Pius X had publicly praised the theologian Ernst Commer,<sup>5</sup> who had excelled in his criticism of the recently deceased and immensely popular reform theologian Herman Schell. Commer had also opposed the initiative for a memorial for Schell, which had been organized in a large part by the Bavarian Catholic establishment: professors, public servants, nobility and even two archbishops. So with *Pascendi* nobody wanted to imagine the echo that would occur if the German bishops publicly proclaimed the establishment of new diocesan councils of supervision and of new colleges of censors. Especially pro-government bishops like the prince bishop of Breslau, Cardinal Georg Kopp, feared the reaction of the German states if the denominational climate should worsen. Against this background, the Fulda Bishops' Conference met for a special meeting on 10 December 1907 in Cologne (instead of Fulda) – this city being chosen because of its favourable traffic routes.<sup>6</sup> As an exception, the archbishop of Cologne Cardinal Antonius Hubert Fischer, who was less critical towards the encyclical than Cardinal Kopp, chaired the conference. Despite strong internal tensions, the Conference could agree on a pragmatic line: on 14 December, a joint letter in Latin was sent to the Pope. This letter can now be evaluated for the first time,<sup>7</sup> and it was not sparing in its praise for the ingenuity of the Pope, who wittingly had recognized the errors of the Modernists. The bishops stressed they would like to hasten with the implementation but that this would have to be done *caute et prudenter* (carefully and wisely), because one was responsible for *difficiliores provinciae* (difficult stretches of land), which here alluded to the political and religious situation in the German Reich. Therefore, the bishops asked for two concessions: first they wanted the names of the cen-

4 Busemann, “Diese Laien aus Münster!”, 165-84. Cf. now the comprehensive study: Busemann, *Katholische Laienemanzipation und römische Reaktion*. The present article is dedicated to the memory of Jan Dirk Busemann (14-10-1975 – 15-11-2015). He was a student in the seminar on the modernist crisis which Hubert Wolf and I taught at Münster in Winter 2000/2001. Later he became a valued member of the Münster working group on Index and Inquisition. His dedication to Theology, his sober-mindedness, his courage and dry humour, even in the face of great adversity, will remain exemplary.

5 Last on this topic: Weiß, “P. Thomas Esser, Sekretär der Indexkongregation”, 431-2, 448-9.

6 See Tripfen, *Theologie und Lehramt im Konflikt*, 89-107, here supplemented by Vatican records. For the Bavarian Bishops' Conference, which acted accordingly to the Fulda Bishops' Conference but had to overcome special difficulties regarding the *placetum regium* for *Pascendi* cf. Vogl, *Die Bayerischen Bischofskonferenzen*, 875-7.

7 The entire documentation in: ASV, *Segr. Stato*, 1908, rubr. 12 fasc. 1, ff. 32-51: Colonia Congresso episcopale. Indirizzo e adesione alla Enciclica.

sors, who already existed for granting the *Imprimatur*, to not be publicly announced, so as to attract less attention. They also wanted to delegate the tasks of the new supervisory councils to the normal weekly meeting of the Episcopal *Ordinariat* or *Generalvikariat* so that outwardly nothing new would happen. By alluding to the large administrative strength of the German dioceses by world standards, they pointed out that the purpose of the encyclical could thus be achieved even better.<sup>8</sup>

8 ASV, *Segr. Stato*, 1908, rubr. 12 fasc. 1, ff. 41-2: "Beatissime Pater, Sanctitas tua haud mirabitur, sed pro rerum circumstantiis opportunum vel maximum iudicabit quod nos, Episcopi Borussici regni una cum Moguntino, Argentoratensi, Metensi, Rottenburgensi et Saxoniae Praesulibus, a conventu Fuldensi elapso vix uno aut altero mense, iterato ad coeundum iter arripuerimus. Pro loco congressus in praesens elegimus metropolim Coloniensem, ad quam ob situs commoditatem facilius plerisque aditus patet. Causa vero ac ratio, cur media in hieme et tam accelerato ad conveniendum nos arrinxerimus, in promptu est nec repetenda aliunde, quam ex gravissimis Tuis litteris encyclicis, quas de modernistarum erroribus nuper edidisti. Arduum revera opus erat, sed pro temporum indigentia perutile, immo necessarium, modernistarum multiplices multiformesque errores palam partim grassantes, partim clanculo serpentes, tum naturalis tum supernaturalis scientiae luminibus admotis detegere ac plane dignoscere, eorum origines radicesque investigare ac dispicere, effectus funestos et exitiales indigitare, demum remedia in populorum salutem invenire ac proponere. Quapropter Deo sint laudes Tibique debentur gratiae perennes: ex quo enim locutus es cum auctoritate pariter et animi libertate, ex tunc veritas christiana ut fulget salutaris orbi illuxit ad dissipandas errorum tenebras efficacissimus. Ad cohibendum tantum malum, magno verborum pondere Antistitem, quotquot sunt per orbem positi, coadiutorium opem provocasti: en nos sincere paratos praecepta ac mandata a Te sapienter provideque concinnata pro viribus fideliter exequi. Quoniam vero hic terrarum Ordinariis difficiliores obtigerunt provinciae, quamvis non lasse ac remisse, caute tamen et prudenter in re tanti momenti nobis erit procedendum. Ideo convolvimus collatis consiliis deliberaturi, quid pro locorum rationibus ad finem melius securiusque assequendum magis expediat. Pro faciliore autem mandatorum executione in praesentiarum plurimum nos invat, quod praevia censura librorum in curiis nostris, tecto tamen censoris nomine, iam diu usuvenit et per doctos viros strenuo labore manutinetur. Simile quid decendum nobis videtur de consilio a vigilantia quod vocatur, a lege Sua Pontificia praescripto. Iamdudum enim in dioecesibus nostrae regionis inventum reperitur 'consilium, quod dicitur, curiae Episcopalis' a Pontificio ore tantopere commendatum, coalescens ex viris gravioribus et maturioribus, in theologiae et sacro iure bene versatis, et quod rei caput est, non solum rerum gerendarum dexteritate, sed etiam personarum amplissima cognitione excellentibus. Cui consilio, quod singulis hebdomadibus regulariter bis vel ter Ordinario praeside congregatur, inter alia maioris momenti negotia illud potissimum munus incumbit assiduas vigiliis exercendi super clerum eiusque vitae honestatem et orthodoxam fidem. Quibus serio consideratis inspectisque variis locorum difficultatibus, consultius magisque e re esse opinamur, ut invigilandi officium etiam pro futuro penes 'consilium illud curiae Episcopalis' remanent, quam ut peculiaris in hunc scopum commissiones instituantur. Nec timendum est, ne decretalis Tua dispositio tali modo agendi vi sua ac robore destituatur, sed certo certius exspectandum, fore ut ad effectum producendum tutior efficaciorque reddatur. Itaque enixe precamur, ut Sanctitas Tua ratum habere velit, quod pro rerum circumstantiis de retiro nomine censoris et admittendo consilio curiae Episcopalis ad exercendum vigilantiam opportunum visum est. Ceterum, uti fas est ac decet, praecepta et monita Tua prae oculis fideliter habentes, promptos paratosque nos exhibemus omnium virium contentione una Tecum collaborare, ut quae inimicus homo agro Dominico superseminavit zizania errorum radicitus evellantur et extirpentur. Adiutrix adstet nobis pia et immaculata Virgo Maria ac praepotenti prece sua

The answer from Rome was sent already on December the 17th: the Pope granted the requested indulgences in consideration of the particular situation in Germany. However, the bishops should only *de facto* make use of them without explicitly mentioning the Roman dispensation. Therefore, they should cut their letter to the relevant passages and send it off again, so that it could then be published in Rome and Germany as a simple declaration of adherence to *Pascendi*.<sup>9</sup> Thus it happened, and Cardinal Fischer sent a truncated letter (“où les passages qui demandoient certaines indulgences ont été éliminés”)<sup>10</sup> as a quasi-Christmas present on December the 24th.<sup>11</sup>

But the bishops did even more: on December the 10th, they had also set up a working group to draft a “Pastoral Letter to the Clergy” about *Pascendi*. The work was essentially done by the rhetorically gifted Bishop of Rottenburg Paul Wilhelm von Keppeler. This letter did not only have to please in Rome, but also had to reassure the German public, because a lively discussion had arisen on whether academic theology in the Catho-

apud Deum filium suum pro nobis intercedat. - Interea ad pedes Sanctitatis Tuae provoluti humiliter petimus ac rogamus, ut nobis gregibusque curae nostrae concreditis Apostolicam benedictionem impertiri digneris”.

9 ASV, *Segr. Stato*, 1908, rubr. 12 fasc. 1, f. 43. Minuta of the Letter of Cardinal Secretary of State Merry del Val to Cardinal Fischer: “et illud necessarium putat admonere, debere vos huiusmodi facultate uti tantummodo per modum facti, quin liceat cuiquam manifestare, contra iussa Encyclicarum Litterarum, vestrum gratia, esse factam”.

10 Covering Letter of Cardinal Fischer to Merry del Val, ASV, *Segr. Stato*, 1908, rubr. 12 fasc. 1, f. 47.

11 ASV, *Segr. Stato*, 1908, rubr. 12 fasc. 1, ff. 49-50. Truncated text: “Beatissime Pater, Sanctitas tua haud mirabitur, sed pro rerum circumstantiis opportunum vel maximum iudicabit quod nos, Episcopi Borussici regni una cum Moguntino, Argentoratensi, Metensi, Rottenburgensi et Saxoniae Praesulibus, a conventu Fuldensi elapso vix uno aut altero mense, iterato ad coeundum iter arripuerimus. Pro loco congressus in praesens elegimus metropolim Coloniensem, ad quam ob situs commoditatem facilius plerisque aditus patet. Causa vero ac ratio, cur media in hieme et tam accelerato ad conveniendum nos arrinxerimus, in promptu est nec repetenda aliunde, quam ex gravissimis Tuis litteris encyclicis, quas de modernistarum erroribus nuper edidisti. Arduum revera opus erat, sed pro temporum indigentis perutile, immo necessarium, modernistarum multiplices multiformesque errores palam partim grassantes, partim clanculo serpentes, tum naturalis tum supernaturalis scientiae luminibus admotis detegere ac plane dignoscere, eorum origines radicesque investigare ac dispicere, effectus funestos et exitiales indigitare, demum remedia in populorum salutem invenire ac proponere. Quapropter Deo sint laudes Tibique debentur gratiae perennes: ex quo enim locutus es cum auctoritate pariter et animi libertate, ex tunc veritas christiana ut fulget salutaris orbi illuxit ad dissipandas errorum tenebras efficacissimus. Ad cohibendum tantum malum, magno verborum pondere Antistitem, quotquot sunt per orbem positi, coadiutorium opem provocasti: en nos sincere paratos ad iussa tua ac monita fideliter pro viribus exequenda omnique studio animique contentione una Tecum collaborandum, ut quae inimicus homo agro Dominico superseminavit zizania errorum radicibus evellantur et extirpentur. Adiutrix adstet nobis pia et immaculata Virgo Maria ac praepotenti prece sua apud Deum filium suum pro nobis intercedat. - Interea ad pedes Sanctitatis Tuae provoluti humiliter petimus ac rogamus, ut nobis gregibusque curae nostrae concreditis Apostolicam benedictionem impertiri digneris”.

lic theological faculties at the state universities was still possible under the conditions of *Pascendi*. Against this background, the German bishops expressed their “grateful receipt” of the letter and “their willing obedience” – to then immediately undermine the system logic of *Pascendi*: “We may take comfort in the fact that the system as described and condemned in the letter has not been represented by a single Catholic layman or clergyman in Germany in its entirety and to the ultimate consequences”. This, however, was not really a consolation, but exactly the alleged tactics of the “modernists” Pius X wanted to debunk. Also the following phrase was coined on the German situation:

Our confidence and our gratitude lies with the men of science who research at our theological faculties and seminaries with great zeal, who work in close connection with the Church’s Magisterium to introduce our seminarians to the vast field of theology and stimulate further work and enrollment in scientific methods.<sup>12</sup>

For the moment this calmed public tempers and Rome did not protest either.

## **1 The Reports from Germany Begin to Arrive: Examples from Prussia and Bavaria**

In a quantitative perspective, the German bishops were playing in the champions league of report writing. Not counting the three apostolic vicariates, replies from 17 of 25 dioceses were written, and only the missing reports from Bamberg, Fulda, Gnesen-Posen, Kulm, Metz, Paderborn, Ratisbon<sup>13</sup> and Treves<sup>14</sup> tarnish the image. The strong German representa-

**12** See citation in Trippen, *Theologie und Lehramt im Konflikt*, 106-7: “Wohl dürfen wir uns getrösten, dass das im Rundschreiben gezeichnete und gerichtete System von keinem katholischen Laien oder Geistlichen in Deutschland in allen Teilen und bis in die letzten Konsequenzen vertreten und verfochten wird”. “Unser Vertrauen und unsere Dankbarkeit wenden sich den Männern der Wissenschaft zu, welche in unseren theologischen Fakultäten und Seminarien mit großem Eifer, in engstem Anschluss an das kirchliche Lehramt, unsere Priesteramtskandidaten in das weite Gebiet der Theologie einführen, in allen Zweigen zu weiterer Arbeit anregen und in wissenschaftliche Methoden einschulen”.

**13** There is also no draft for a report in the Diocesan Archives of Ratisbon, nor in Bamberg and Paderborn.

**14** Felix Michael Korum of Treves, an integralistically minded bishop, had congratulated Pius X on the publication of *Pascendi* in November 1907, assuring him (in French) of the *sentire cum ecclesia* of the entire clergy and laity of Treves. At the same time Korum sent a very generous gift of 50,000 Reichsmark to the Pope who was celebrating the 50th anniversary of his priesthood. Pius X thanked Korum with a long handwritten letter in Latin. Perhaps Korum saw no necessity for a report after this special papal applause. Cf. the material in Bistumsarchiv Trier, Abt. 108 No. 356, f. 26 and No. 357, f. 46.

tion is also an indication that the registering of the reports in the Roman Archives is generally reliable. The small deviance of the German bishops was not a sign of a Teutonic sense of duty, but an expression of a joint action of the episcopate at the national level: after having managed a common position in Cologne and having received the Roman indults, the great majority of German bishops implemented what they had discussed. But this was done with little enthusiasm. Some examples: with a year delay at the end of August 1909, the chairman of the Fulda Bishops' Conference and Prince Bishop of Breslau, Cardinal Georg von Kopp sent a very short and almost insolent letter to Rome with only one contextually relevant sentence: "I am delighted to say that we could not find any poisonous misconception called modernism in this diocese".<sup>15</sup> The pro-government vicar capitular of Warmia, Franz Dittrich, a church historian who wrote a significant study on Cardinal Contarini,<sup>16</sup> sent a similar letter.<sup>17</sup> Most of the other German bishops, however, at least politely thanked the Pope for his indults. To lengthen their letters, they quoted extensively from the provisions of *Pascendi* and also tried to linguistically tune into the heresiological phrasing of the Encyclical. Thus, the reports swarmed with terms like *infectio*, *pestis* and *labes*, and at least semantically the topos of heretical contagion was paid homage to.<sup>18</sup> However, the German reports lacked the term *lues*, which was rather often used in the non-European reports on 'modernism'. In particular, the bishops tried to make their dioceses appear in a friendly light. Accordingly, the bishop of Eichstätt praised his 'Tridentine' seminary,<sup>19</sup> which immunized the diocese against 'modernism' and implicitly denigrated the theological university faculties.<sup>20</sup> The bishop of Osnabrück stressed the glorious past of the *Kulturkampf* that still continued to evoke a great deal of loyalty in the Catholic people towards bishop and Pope. What also supposedly immunized the people against modernism was the deterrent example of the "sect of Lutherans" in Northern Germany, "who had lost all rule of faith".<sup>21</sup> In Bavaria however, the Bishop of Passau, Sigismund Felix von Ow-Felldorf, admitted that the younger clergy read

15 ASV, *Congr. Concist., Positiones*, Breslau 1, prot. 964/1909: "so freue ich mich sehr, dass sich in dieser Diözese nichts von jenem giftigen Irrtum, den man Modernismus nennt, finden ließ".

16 Dittrich, *Gasparo Contarini*. See Arnold, *Die römische Zensur*, 32-8.

17 ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, Q 4 cc, f. 174.

18 On this topic see for example Schmidt, "*Et si conservi sana*", 131-51.

19 On the problem and the specific dispute in 1900: Wolf, "Priesterausbildung zwischen Universität und Seminar", 218-36.

20 ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, Q 4 cc, f. 178.

21 ASV, *Congr. Concist., Positiones*, Osnabrück 1, prot. 573/1909.

modernist and non-Catholic periodicals.<sup>22</sup> An appeasing word came from Munich, where, after all, the center of German Reform Catholicism was.<sup>23</sup> Franz Joseph von Stein, decried by the anti-modernists as a state bishop, had to admit that Munich had experienced the suspension of a university theologian through the case of Joseph Schnitzer. He declared however, that Schnitzer remained without influence on the clergy – a claim that, in view of his loyal disciples from Leonhard Fendt to Joseph Bernhart and Friedrich Heiler,<sup>24</sup> did have to astound. The archbishop had apparently considered to proceed against the Catholic reform periodical *The Twentieth Century* (*Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert*); but fortunately the publication had already been discontinued. This claim however was questionable, because the periodical had only changed its title to a much more radical one: *The New Century – The Voice of the German Modernists* (*Das Neue Jahrhundert – Organ der deutschen Modernisten*).<sup>25</sup> Archbishop of Stein concluded his letter on a hopeful note: “All in all, with great gratitude to God and your venerable person, I do not want to leave unmentioned, that the cause of the modernists seems to weaken gradually in my Diocese”.<sup>26</sup> Incidentally, von Stein was the last Archbishop of Munich and Freising, who did not become a cardinal.

A lack of episcopal cooperation could also be felt in Würzburg. Bishop Ferdinand von Schlör firstly reported back to Rome in April 1909 – this however in German and in cursive German handwriting addressed to the Papal Nuncio Andreas Frühwirth OP in Munich.<sup>27</sup> Frühwirth returned the letter to the bishop requesting him to please write in Latin to the Holy Father and to confirm his report by oath. In reaction, bishop Schlör personally brought the German letter back to the Nuncio on a trip to Freising and told him that he should translate the letter into Latin or Italian himself. He refused to add the oath, because what a bishop assured to the Pope could only be the truth! Schlör’s irritated reaction can be explained by the constant difficulties he had had since the Roman crackdown on the theo-

22 ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, Q 4 cc, ff. 202-5.

23 See here for a more extensive understanding: Weiss, *Der Modernismus in Deutschland*.

24 Cf. Weitlauff, *Der ‘Fall’ des Augsburger Diözesanpriesters*. On Schnitzer’s theology see: Klapczynski, *Katholischer Historismus?*

25 Hausteine, *Liberal-katholische Publizistik im späten Kaiserreich*.

26 ASV, *Congr. Concist., Positiones*, München and Freising 1, prot. 79/1909: “Alles in allem will ich aber mit großer Dankbarkeit gegen Gott und Deine verehrungswürdigste Person nicht mit Schweigen übergehen, dass die Sache der Modernisten sich in der mir anvertrauten Diözese nach und nach abzuschwächen scheint”.

27 For the following documentation in ASV see, *Segr. Stato*, 1913, rubr. 255, fasc. 4, ff. 137r-150r.

logian Herman Schell in Würzburg.<sup>28</sup> Now that *Pascendi* had come, Schlör had had the idea of letting the entire Faculty of Theology at the Bavarian state university in Würzburg sign the encyclical, thus quasi immunizing themselves against any future denunciations. In his report Schlör also tried to make the faculty appear in a favourable light, allegedly having difficulties only with the Schell advocate Francis Xavier Kiefl,<sup>29</sup> whom, the bishop claimed, he had under control. This immunization experiment backfired on Schlör, when in 1913 the Würzburg church historian Sebastian Merkle was censored.<sup>30</sup> Schlör's report from 1909 can be found in the relevant fascicles of the Secretariate of State files from 1913,<sup>31</sup> showing that an overly optimistic report could later be used against a bishop.

## **2 The Upper Rhenish Church Province**

But let us move from Bavaria to the Upper Rhenish Church Province, which at that time included the dioceses of Freiburg, Mainz, Rottenburg, Limburg and Fulda. The report by the Bishop of Limburg Dominicus Willi OCist especially praised the Fulda seminary where the Limburg priests were trained in the spirit of Roman neo-scholasticism. And since they neither had a university nor a bigger Catholic publishing house in the diocese, he was happy to report that Limburg was thus free of modernism.<sup>32</sup> With Archbishop Thomas Nörber of Freiburg and Bishop Paul Wilhelm von Keppler of Rottenburg the ecclesiastical province had two pastors who had suppressed reformist tendencies vigorously in their seminaries before 1907, being criticized for this by the liberal public.<sup>33</sup> But even Thomas Nörber, despite his anti-modernist tendencies (and incidentally being the only German Bishop who formally confirmed his letter by oath) followed the strategy of the German bishops by emphasizing that "a formal modernism could not be found anywhere in his diocese". He also presented the University of Freiburg's Faculty of Theology in a mild light; it was clearly based on scholastic philosophy. Only the dogmatic theologian Karl

**28** On the case Schell see Hausberger, *Herman Schell*. The first denunciation of Schell had come from the late Bishop of Mainz Paul Leopold Haffner and his adviser Fr. Heinrich Pesch SJ respectively: Arnold, "Zwischen 'liberal' und 'ultramontan'", 28-9.

**29** Hausberger, *Franz Xaver Kiefl*.

**30** Schepers, "Dokumentation der römischen Zensurverfahren", 580-3. On Merkle cf. Burkard, *Sebastian Merkle*.

**31** Haustein, *Liberal-katholische Publizistik im späten Kaiserreich*.

**32** ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, Q 4 cc, ff. 37-9.

**33** See for example Arnold, *Katholizismus als Kulturmacht*, 173-9; Fischer, *Die Freiburger Erzbischofswahlen 1898*.



Braig, a “Tübingen man” and prevented successor of Johannes von Kuhn, met a very mild censure for allegedly following the historical and not the scholastic method; but at least he was trying to cling to the doctrine of St. Thomas. Nörber was only severe with the church historian Georg Pfeilschifter, who liked ecclesiastical reform ideas and, in his presentation of history, rather emphasized the less advantageous side than stressing the direction of the Church by the Holy Spirit. But he had been severely admonished and remained under observation. The large production of the very laudable Catholic publishing house Herder was already monitored by several internal censors. Nörber’s message was that everything was completely under control and that there was no need for Roman intervention.<sup>34</sup> His suffragan Keppler of Rottenburg<sup>35</sup> followed his example and effectively presented himself as a victim of the liberal press in a long handwritten epistle to the Pope, because he had dismissed a seminarian and censured the Catholic historian Heinrich Günter because of his studies on “legends”.<sup>36</sup> Keppler praised the Tübingen Catholic theological faculty as a whole, finding fault only with one associate professor, namely Wilhelm Koch, who was a problem he had under control.<sup>37</sup> Of his 1159 priests allegedly only five showed modernist tendencies. Thus, no threat of modernism in Württemberg. At the beginning of his letter Keppler referred to the joint pastoral letter from the bishops that he had written himself. He claimed that this letter alone had kept many who fancied modernism away from it. Although Keppler did not deny the modernist danger and shared the fear thereof, through his energetic response he effectively immunized his diocese against further intervention.<sup>38</sup>

So now let us get to Mainz. As befits the “Holy See of Mainz”, the *ecclesiae romanae specialis vera filia*, the Mainz report was one of the few reports which were found in the personal papers of Pope Pius X.<sup>39</sup> The romantic notion that Pius X placed this report under his pillow, has a certain charm of its own. But a much more mundane explanation imposes itself: the reports in the *Spoglio Pio X* rarely show any trace of editing or

34 ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, Q 4 cc, ff. 33-5: “In theologia dogmatica tradenda professor historicam sequitur methodum; attamen sensui et doctrinae eiusdem S. Thomae adhaerere vult et studet”. Cf. the copy in ASV, *Arch. Nunz.*, Monaco 267, fasc. 3. The German original of the report is quoted in Fischer, *Die Freiburger Erzbischofswahlen 1898*, 276.

35 Hausberger, “Der Rottenburger Bischof”, 163-77.

36 See Köhler, “Heinrich Günters Legendenstudien”, 307-37; Engelhart, *Zwischen Rebellion und Gehorsam*.

37 Seckler, *Theologie vor Gericht*; Wolf, “Hätte ich doch Stenogramme lesen können”, 91-108.

38 ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, Q 4 cc, ff. 186-8.

39 ASV, *Segr. Stato, Spoglio Pio X* 6, fasc. 26, ff. 28-30.

reading by the Pope or his secretaries. They all arrived with the first great momentum in 1908, and then must have been laid aside for later reading. It seems as if Pius X did not manage to read all of them before his death, which is why the reports were never forwarded to the Holy Office or the Consistorial, but just remained in his private papers.

Nevertheless, we remain interested in the Mainz report. It had been sent by Bishop Georg Heinrich Maria Kirstein, a native citizen of Mainz. Despite his popularity in Mainz, in historical research Bishop Kirstein is not counted among the great thinkers on the chair of St. Boniface.<sup>40</sup> And yet research in the Mainz Cathedral and Diocesan Archives have shown that the draft for the machine-written copy of the report was written by him,<sup>41</sup> and not by the Canons Ludwig Bendix and Franz Joseph Selbst, who both are considered the actual makers of his episcopate. Bishop Kirstein praised his clergy in detail: they were free of modernism, because the clergy had been schooled in the famous ultramontane Mainz Seminary or in the *Collegium Germanicum* of Rome or (as Kirstein himself), during the time of the *Kulturkampf* in the seminary of Eichstätt. In Mainz the ecclesiastical spirit and the philosophy of Aquinas filled the minds of the teachers. Thus, the bishop was implicitly hinting at Mainz being a stronghold of neo-scholasticism in Germany, a position that had developed since the time of Bishop Colmar and was embodied by great theologians such as Johann Baptist Heinrich.<sup>42</sup> Here again, we have an implicit criticism of the state faculties for Catholic theology and praise for “Tridentine seminaries” as the safer option. In the seminary, the bishop continued, strict censorship was exercised: therefore, it had been necessary to dismiss a seminarian in the past year, because he had read the Reform Catholic periodical *Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert*. Even the Catholic publisher Kirchheim at Mainz, who had shown a reformist tendency in recent years – the publishing house where the controversial series “Weltgeschichte in Charakterbildern” (World History in character images)<sup>43</sup> had been published –, was now under control and censorship. Thus, also in Mainz everything was under control.

40 Lenhart, “Dr. Georg Heinrich Kirstein”.

41 Dom- und Diözesanarchiv Mainz (DDAMz), Generalia, M, Modernismus: Minutae for the report of Bishop Kirstein of November 5th, 1908.

42 On the schools of neo-scholasticism in Germany cf. Walter, “Den Weltkreis täglich von Verderben bringenden Irrtümern befreien”.

43 See Weber, *Der ‘Fall Spahn’*, 88-121.

### 3 Diocesan Reception of *Pascendi* in Mainz

The example of Mainz also allows us to take a look at the concrete reception of *Pascendi* in a diocese. Here the conference of the Deans in the Episcopal Palais of Mainz on 18 February 1908 played a central role.<sup>44</sup> Chaired by Bishop Kirstein, Canon Dr. Franz Joseph Selbst extensively lectured on the subject of modernism, referring not only to the encyclical, but also to the preceding *Syllabus* of 1907, the central papal allocutions and to the Pastoral Letter of the German bishops whose “wisdom and prudence” he emphasized. He even encouraged the study of *Pascendi*, but not in order to detect heretics among the clergy, but rather to – literally – understand the “signs of the times”. These, for Selbst, concerned both the anti-religious spirit of the liberal and socialist press as well as the reform Catholic aspirations of the magazine *Das Zwanzigste Jahrhundert* in distant Munich. Selbst also warned against an excessive integralist reception: “It does not help, if the term modernism is applied to everything we do not like or what we do not understand”.<sup>45</sup> Nonetheless, the encyclical, properly understood, should become the “guideline of thinking and conduct”. For this purpose, Selbst recommended moderate theological commentaries on *Pascendi*, which had been published by the Graz’ theologian Anton Michelitsch<sup>46</sup> and the Würzburg apologist Philipp Kneib, the pupil and successor of Herman Schell. The recommendation of the brochure of the Mainz diocesan priest Kneib is especially noteworthy.<sup>47</sup> It had been published with the Imprimatur of Selbst (as Dean of the Cathedral Chapter) with Kirchheim in Mainz, and described artfully the public debate on *Pascendi* in the high-brow Feuilleton of the *Internationale Wochenschrift*, conducted by important authors such as Ernst Troeltsch, Rudolf Eucken, Albert Hauck, Albert Ehrhard and Joseph Schnitzer.<sup>48</sup> Kneib’s tendency was to respect the papal letter but to minimize its impact and concrete consequences, especially on the university theology:

First it should be noted that in Germany the implementation regulations [of the encyclical] cannot be executed in their full extent, because there

44 DDAMz, Generalia, C. III, Konferenz der Dekane im Bischöflichen Hause, 18. Februar 1908.

45 DDAMz, Generalia, C. III, Konferenz der Dekane im Bischöflichen Hause, 2: “Es ist nichts damit getan, dass etwa das Schlagwort ‘Modernismus’ auf alles angewendet werde, was uns nicht gefällt oder wovon wir nichts verstehen”.

46 Michelitsch, *Der biblisch-dogmatische ‘Syllabus’*.

47 Kneib, *Wesen und Bedeutung der Enzyklika gegen den Modernismus*.

48 See Trippe, *Theologie und Lehramt im Konflikt*, 125-32; Klapczynski, *Katholischer Historismus?*, 242-52.

are no openly biased, outspoken modernists nor any theologians who openly act in the spirit of modernism. The bishops will do the same thing they have been doing all along, according to their supervisory tasks. Only that they will have a particular eye out for anything modernist. However, they should neither hinder nor inhibit a freedom that is neither arbitrary nor based on unprincipled excess, as your mentioned circular alludes to. We must remind ourselves: Do not see any ghosts before they have actually appeared.<sup>49</sup>

A similar domestication of anti-modernism, namely in terms of the continuation in Mainz of the already traditional ultramontane battle against liberalism and socialism, can be found in the pulpit lectures of the popular Mainz parish priest Carl Forschner, the Diocesan President of the Catholic men's and workers' associations. These also appeared in print with Kirchheim. For Forschner, *Pascendi* did not primarily mean the fight against an alleged 'modernism' amongst the clergy, but rather an outward ideological struggle against liberalism and socialism: i.e. *Weltanschauungskampf* as before.<sup>50</sup> Yet it must not be overlooked that in Mainz the anti-modernism of *Pascendi* did not help to open minds. A famous victim – at least he portrayed himself this way in his memoirs – is Romano Guardini, who at the time was in the Mainz seminary. Guardini had studied under Wilhelm Koch in Tübingen and had discussed his worries regarding the traditional dogmatic and apologetic theology with another alumnus of the seminary. The fellow candidate informed the Spiritual Director who in his turn informed the Regent. Guardini was then admonished and all but excluded from the priesthood.<sup>51</sup>

The example of Carl Forschner is also interesting in another perspective. In his struggle against socialism and liberalism he favoured interconfessional Christian unions, whereas in the neighbouring diocese of Treves, under the integralist Bishop Korum, the purely catholic *Arbeitervereine* were favoured. This was, of course, more in accordance with the intentions

49 Kneib, *Wesen und Bedeutung der Enzyklika gegen den Modernismus*, 69: "Zunächst ist darauf hinzuweisen, dass in Deutschland die Ausführungsbestimmungen [der Enzyklika] nicht in ihrem ganzen Umfang durchgeführt werden, weil es eben ausgesprochene Modernisten und in dem Geiste des und der Grundrichtung des Modernismus offen Befangene nicht gibt. Die Bischöfe werden gemäß ihres Aufsichtsrechtes nichts anderes tun, als was sie bisher auch taten. Nur werden sie besonders gerade aus Modernistisches achten. Wie wenig sie aber einer Freiheit, die nicht Willkür und gewissenlose Maßlosigkeit ist, hindernd und hemmend entgetreten wollen, zeigt ihr bereits erwähntes Rundschreiben. Hier dürfen wir die Mahnung aussprechen: Nur keine Gespenster sehen, ehe sie wirklich erschienen sind".

50 Forschner, *Kanzelvorträge über den Modernismus*. Cf. Tacchi, "Carl Forschner". I want to thank Mr Francesco Tacchi, Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, at this point for his information.

51 Guardini, *Stationen und Rückblicke*, 76-91.

of Pius X. The majority of German bishops, however, favoured the Christian unions, and as a result of this famous *Gewerkschaftsstreit*<sup>52</sup> mainstream Catholicism in Germany turned against 'integralism' which was seen as a polarizing and dysfunctional element. This 'anti-integralism' was strengthened during the Great War, when German Catholics were depicted as 'semi-modernist' by French Catholic propaganda<sup>53</sup> and persisted in the Weimar Republic.<sup>54</sup> The inner polarization of German Catholicism under Pius X comes up at least once in the reports: shortly before his death in 1912, Cardinal Antonius Hubert Fischer, the archbishop of Cologne, implored Pius X that he should not lend his ears to the exaggerations of Fr. Albert Maria Weiß OP, who had recently described all Germany as infected by "religious liberalism".<sup>55</sup> Ironically, Weiß had been one of the major inspirators of *Pascendi*.

## 4 Conclusion

In a global survey it can be reconstructed that the Encyclical *Pascendi* was implemented very inchoately, at least according to the standards of a centralized bureaucratic rule. In this perspective, a high degree of episcopal indolence and resistance can be acknowledged, even in Germany. Pius X had every reason to be disappointed: the suspected secret sect of the modernists within the Church could not be uncovered by the bishops, and the anti-modernist oath of 1910 can be seen as an expression of dissatisfaction with this episcopal blindness. However, the high deviance from the reporting requirement and the often formalized and interpretative-immunizing responses of the bishops should not lead us to underestimate the effect of the encyclical. It was not only an act of 'symbolic communication' and a staging of anti-modernism. The success and the formal modernity of *Pascendi* do not show in a perfect bureaucratic implementation, but rather in other respects: although the encyclical was addressed to the bishops, Rome wanted *Pascendi* to have high publicity and reach not only the bishops but directly mobilize priests and laity. The little anti-modernists

52 Cf. most recently Busemann, *Katholische Laienemanzipation*.

53 Arnold, "La Guerre Allemande".

54 Unterburger, "Anti-Integralismus"

55 Extract from the 1912 report of Archbishop Fischer in ACDF, *Stanza Storica*, Q 4 cc, ff. 233-6. Fischer could not find any 'modernism' in his archdiocese. He mentions his grave conflicts with the church historian Heinrich Schrörs of Bonn University, but describes them as a merely disciplinary problem. For Fischer the main problem was secular liberalism as present in the *Kölnische Zeitung*. On the conflict with Schrörs see Klapczynski, *Katholischer Historismus?*, 124-30. On the later difficulties of Schrörs which were also dealt with by nuncio Frühwirth and the Curia see Klapczynski, *Katholischer Historismus?*, 131-41.

everywhere in the world were the ones that Pius X could count on. Thus, *Pascendi* was the sword of Damocles of denunciation to the bishops, especially in France and Italy. With the encyclical, one could put the bishops under pressure, and if this did not work, send denunciations directly to the nuncio or to Rome. This is why Pius X promoted the project of publishing *Pascendi* in a catechism-format and he himself gave away 7,000 copies of the *Pascendi*-catechism to the Italian Bishops. Further editions appeared in French, English, German, Spanish and Dutch.<sup>56</sup> The extremely active private secretary of the Pope, but also the Consistorial, gratefully accepted denunciations – in particular those relating to bishops that had been a thorn in their eye for some time. In this sense as *Pascendi* had a broad impact, which can only be partially reflected in the Relations.

Especially for the German bishops, *Pascendi* was also a schooling of ‘how to deal with texts’. Through interpretation and clever tactical behaviour, they figured out how to manoeuvre and water down phrasing. The special German situation and the Roman consideration of the state and public opinion in Germany helped. So in this respect, the execution of *Pascendi* was in many ways paradigmatic of other ecclesiastical developments in the twentieth and perhaps even in the twenty-first century.

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56 See Arnold, “P. Joseph Lemius OMI”, 311-3.

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