British Embassy
Holy See

Consalvi and the United Kingdom

Papers presented at a symposium to mark the
200th anniversary of the death of
Cardinal Ercole Consalvi (1757–1824)

The Venerable English College,
Via di Monserrato, 45, Rome

24 January 2024

Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830), Cardinal Ercole Consalvi (1757-1824), 1819, RCIN 404940

Contents

Programme

Consalvi and the United Kingdom

Symposium to mark the 200th anniversary of the death of Cardinal Ercole Consalvi

The Venerable English College, Rome, 24 January 2024

14:30 *Welcome*

Reverend Stephen Wang
Rector, The Venerable English College

Opening remarks

His Excellency Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher Holy See Secretary for Relations with States and International Organisations

14:45 *Session 1*

Chair: **Professor Maurice Whitehead**, Director of Heritage Collections & Research Fellow, The Venerable English College

John Martin Robinson: The Young Consalvi

Judith Champ*:* England, Ireland and Rome: Ercole Consalvi and the struggle for Catholic Emancipation

15:45 *Break*

16:15 *Session 2*

Chair: **Dr Richard Smith**, Principal Historian, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Tim Knox: Sir Thomas Lawrence's portrait of Cardinal Consalvi for the Waterloo Chamber at Windsor Castle

Alice Martin: Consalvi and the Devonshires

17:15 *Closing remarks*

Chris Trott, British Ambassador to the Holy See

Speakers

John Martin Robinson is an historian and writer. He is Maltravers Herald of Arms, in which role he took part in the Funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, and has been Librarian to the Duke of Norfolk for 45 years. He has been an architectural writer to *Country Life* for 50 years and was Chairman of the Art and Architecture Committee of Westminster Cathedral for 20 years. He is active in the preservation of historic buildings and landscapes. His 33 books include the first English biography of Cardinal Consalvi.

Judith Champ is recently retired as Professor of Church History at St Mary's College, Oscott and a Dame of the Order of St. Sylvester. Publications include: *The English Pilgrimage to Rome: a Dwelling for the Soul* (2000), *William Bernard Ullathorne: a Different kind of Monk* (2006), *Memorial Inscriptions in the Venerable English College, Rome*, (2012), *The Secular Priesthood in England and Wales: History, Mission and Identity* (2016), and 'Cardinal Consalvi: the Accidental Diplomat' in *Britain and the Holy See*, ed. Nigel Baker (2013).

Tim Knox was appointed Director of the Royal Collection by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 2018. He was the Director and Marlay Curator of the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge 2013-2018, and Director of Sir John Soane's Museum in London, 2005-13. Before that he was Head Curator of the National Trust. Publications include: *Sir John Soane's Museum London* (2010), *The British Ambassador's Residence Paris* (2011), *The Lost House Revisited* (2017), with Ed Kluz and Olivia Horsfall-Turner, and *The Rebirth of an English Country House: St Giles's House* (2018), with the Earl of Shaftesbury.

Alice Martin is Head of the Devonshire Collection at Chatsworth with a remit including Bolton Abbey, Lismore Castle and other associated locations. She leads a team, which oversees collection care, research, programme, display, and collections logistics. Alice is a board member of the Buxton Crescent Heritage Trust and Chairman of its Assets Panel. Her previous roles include Head of Historic Collections at Mount Stuart and House and Collections Manager at Chartwell (the home of Winston Churchill) for the National Trust.

The Young Consalvi

John Martin Robinson

Ercole Consalvi was, partly as a result of his upbringing, strongly anglophile all through his life and this was apparent in his role as one of the leading diplomats and statesmen in early-nineteenth-century Europe, particularly as Secretary of State to Pope Pius VII for over 20 years and Plenipotentiary at the Congress of Vienna which re-ordered Europe after the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars. Consalvi was greatly admired by his contemporaries. Napoleon called him 'a lion in sheep's clothing' and Stendhal 'the greatest Statesman in Europe because the only honest one'. He was responsible for restoring the Papal States and the independence of the Papacy, and reforming to some extent their legal and economic systems, and throwing the weight of the Papacy behind the abolition of the Slave Trade which was adopted as one of the Articles of the Congress of Vienna. He established good relations with England, France, Austria and the Catholic states in its aftermath, and used his meetings with Castlereagh and the Prince Regent in London to further Catholic Emancipation.

Ercole Consalvi was born in Rome on 8 June 1757 and baptised in S. Lorenzo in Damaso (tucked into a corner of the Palazzo Cancelleria). His father the Marchesino Giuseppe Consalvi came from an 'ancient and noble house'. His mother Claudia was the daughter of Count Gian Ludovico of Modena. Her family was notable in the Church and produced two Cardinals, including her brother Cardinal Filipo Carandini an important financial and judicial administrator in the Curia.

Consalvi's ancestors came from Toscanella. His grandfather, Gregorio, was created a Marchese by Pope Benedict XIV in 1755 (two years before Consalvi was born). His male ancestors were called Brunacci and originally came from Pisa. He could trace his ancestors to the sixteenth century—provincial nobility serving as *gonfalonieri* and military officers. Their rise in the eighteenth century was due to marriages to heiresses and lucky inheritances. His great-grandfather, Francesco Felix Brunacci, married Antonia Consalvi and the death of both her brothers left their son, Gregorio, as heir to the Consalvi name and property. Gregorio established himself in Rome after his rise into the titled nobility and bought a burial vault in the fashionable church of S. Marcello in the Corso. Through his wife, Maria Perti, Gregorio Consalvi inherited the Perti estates near Rome. Cardinal Ercole Consalvi was their grandson.

Ercole was the eldest of four brothers. One brother and a sister died as babies, but he and two younger brothers, Gian Domenico and Andrea, survived infancy. Their father, Giuseppe, died in 1763 aged only 25 and was buried in S. Marcello in the Corso. Their mother, as was the custom, returned to live with her father and brother in the Carandini household in Rome. Ercole and his two younger brothers were left in the care of their grandfather, the Marchese Consalvi, but he died in 1766. Under the terms of his will, he left the grandsons in the charge of Cardinal Andrea Negroni (1710–1789). Negroni was the Chancellor of the Holy Roman Church, Auditor to the Pope, Secretary of Briefs, and Cardinal Protector of the *Ospizio di S Michaeli a Ripa*. He was therefore a powerful and influential guardian and did his best to choose a good school for them. Not unnaturally, his choice fell on his own old school, the college at Urbino run by the Scolopi, the

renowned teaching order founded in seventeenth-century Spain: its European-wide alumni have included Pius IX, the Augustinian precursor of Darwin, Fr. Gregor Johann Mendel, and, in the arts, the painter Goya, the composer Schubert, and the writer Victor Hugo.

Unfortunately, the college at Urbino was at that time going through a difficult period, with harsh discipline, and the youngest Consalvi boy became ill. Their mother and uncle took the Consalvi boys away from the school, and Gian Domenico died in Rome of a swollen knee. Much mortified, their guardian looked for another school. Good fortune intervened. Negroni had been auditor to Henry Benedict Stuart (1725–1807), Cardinal York, bishop of Frascati who lived there in great state in the Palace of La Rocca with footmen in English Royal livery and who kept a musical household. Rich, pious, cultivated, and passionate about music, Henry Benedict Stuart avoided politics and devoted himself to running his diocese, to undertaking his Roman duties as Archpriest of St. Peter's and Vice-Chancellor of the Roman Church, and promoting music with his own orchestra and choir.

In 1770, he re-opened at Frascati the college which reverted to him after the suppression of the Jesuits by Clement XIV. He wanted it to be the best. He rebuilt it, giving it a magnificent library of books and printing press, creating a theatre and concert hall for masques and oratorios, and attracting the best teachers. Hearing that Cardinal Negroni was looking for a new school for his two surviving charges, Cardinal York asked that they be placed under his own special protection at Frascati.

This represented a miraculous transformation for Ercole and Andrea. They matriculated at Frascati in1771. They found themselves whisked away from 'Dotheboys Hall' to a semi royal Elysium devoted to learning and music. They spent five years there. Consalvi studied Rhetoric, Philosophy, Logic, Metaphysics, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, and Theology. He wrote poetry, joining the *Arcadia*, the Roman academy of poetry, and developing his musical talents by playing the violin. According to Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman, it was his talent as a violinist that especially endeared him to Cardinal York for whom music was so important both at Frascati and in St. Peter's Basilica. In Consalvi's own words, 'From that moment to the last hour of his life Cardinal York showered favour and friendship on me'. In due course he became an executor and beneficiary of the Cardinal's will.

This good fortune from the *de jure* King of England (the last male Stuart) gave Consalvi his lifelong affection for England. At the age of nineteen, Consalvi went up to the Pontifical Academy for Ecclesiastics in Rome where he studied Law and History, under the direction of the brilliant scholar, Francesco Zaccaria, a strong defender of the rights of the Holy See. This experience coloured Consalvi's life work in defending those rights from the French Revolutionaries and Napoleon. He shone at the Academy and was chosen to give the Ascension Day address before Pope Pius VI in 1782. He graduated and received a doctorate in Canon and Civil Law. His excellent education left him fluent in French, an accomplished musician and poet, a lawyer and historian, and prepared him for a career in the Papal government.

He was independently rich. His estates with property farms and vineyards at Toscanella and in and around Rome provided an income of between 12,000 and 15,000 *scudi* a year. (There were four scudi to the English eighteenth-century pound sterling). Like others of his class, his career was in the Pope's civil household, the *Prelatura*, as a

judge and administrator, not as a priest. He was never ordained. Until the end of the Papal States, half the curia comprised prelates who were non-clergy solely involved in their administration, and not in ecclesiastical matters. Like other clever, educated men in Rome, that is the career that Consalvi pursued after graduation. He began on the lowest rung as *Camerero Segreto*, receiving people in the Papal ante-chamber and then became a Domestic Prelate, entitled to wear violet robes with the title *Monsignor*. When given this title, he relinquished to his brother, Andrea, the title *Marchese*. At first they shared a house in Rome, and Consalvi also kept at Frascati a retreat that he had rented there since his days as a student. In 1785 he received his first legal post as a *Referendum* of the *Signatura*, the Appeal Court, thereby following in the footsteps of his uncle, and his guardian. In 1786 he was appointed secretary to the *Ospizio di S Michele a Ripa*, the principal Roman institution for the destitute. In 1790, he became votant of the *Signatura*, and, in 1792, an auditor or judge of the *Rota*, the ancient court of the church.

Alongside his legal and administrative career in the Papal government, Ercole Consalvi lived an active social life. He liked travel and one of the advantages of a legal career was that the courts only sat for half of the year, allowing him ample free time. He kept boxes in Rome's two theatres and was a patron of music, especially of the composer, Domenico Cimarosa (1749–1801): as well as owning a violin, he had a German piano by Johann Gottlob Wagner (1741–1789) of Dresden. He also rode and hunted and bought a four-in-hand carriage from Prince Doria Pamphili. He broke his arm hunting which was responsible for his cramped writing in later life. He was a great favourite of the great Roman families, the Ruspoli, the Patrizi, the Chigi—and especially the Giustiniani whose two young daughters were especial friends, but who sadly died young.

This fulfilling life of a successful career and happy social round was violently interrupted by the French Revolutionary ruption into north Italy in 1797. The northern, most prosperous part of the Papal States were taken by the French and the Treaty of Tolentino was imposed on the Pope. The following year, the French invaded Rome on the pretext of the shooting of a French soldier, Duphot, and they sent Pope Pius VI into exile. Consalvi as the secretary of the small Papal army was accused of the death of Duphot, and condemned to transportation to Cayenne, but, thanks to the intervention of friends, merely sent into exile in Naples, where he joined Cardinal York and other exiled prelates.

Events suddenly changed again when Austria defeated the French in northern Italy and took Venice. When Pius VI died in 1799, the Cardinals gathered there and the Austrian emperor paid for the conclave to be held in S. Giorgio Maggiore. Consalvi joined the Cardinals there. When the secretary of the Conclave was unable to reach Venice, Consalvi was appointed Secretary of the Conclave. The emperor wanted a pro-Austrian Pope, but the Cardinals elected a holy Benedictine monk, Barnaba Niccolò Maria Luigi Chiaramonti (1742–1823) as Pius VII. The Austrians then tried to get the new Pope to appoint a pro-Austrian Secretary of State. Pius VII informed them that, as he had no State, he did not need one yet; that he was very happy to continue with the secretary of the Conclave, Monsignor Ercole Consalvi; and that he was leaving for Rome where the French had been evicted by the Neapolitans, with the help of the British navy. The Pope's return to Rome led to a triumphal welcome and Consalvi was immediately created a Cardinal and Secretary of State and thereby entered on a completely new phase of his life.

England, Ireland and Rome: Ercole Consalvi and the struggle for Catholic Emancipation

Judith Champ

Ercole Consalvi was directed by Pius VII to use his diplomatic visit to London in 1815 to advance the cause of the Papal States, and to raise the issue of the condition of Catholics in England and Ireland. He gained support from the Foreign Secretary, Viscount Castlereagh, for the restoration of the Papal States at the forthcoming Congress of Vienna, but, in reality, achieved little to advance the cause of Catholics in England or Ireland. Castlereagh was not the key to Catholic Emancipation that the Pope and Consalvi had hoped. Once Pitt's government had achieved the Act of Union in 1800, it was Castlereagh's job, as Chief Secretary for Ireland, to see it through, and 'no Irishman did more to shape its provisions'.[1] Castlereagh was convinced that the Union would only benefit Ireland if it had the goodwill of the people, and it was generally assumed that an Emancipation Act would follow the Union fairly quickly.[2] Despite a series of Bills, this had not happened by 1815.

Neither Pius VII and his Secretary of State, nor Castlereagh and Pitt's cabinet, understood the different priorities and differing approaches of Catholics in England and Ireland to the question of legal emancipation. English Catholicism, although shaped by its history of state persecution in previous centuries, did not bear the scars of colonial oppression and economic hardship felt by Irish Catholics. Since the passage of the Catholic Relief Acts of 1778 and 1791, English Catholics had pressed for further legal relief, led by gentry and clerical campaigners, whose opinions reflected a form of European Gallicanism, known as Cisalpinism. The Cisalpine leaders sought a looser relationship with the Holy See, in ecclesiastical and political affairs, while nurturing friendly and cooperative relations with the British government. In effect, they were still trying to excise the poison of *Regnans in Excelsis*, from 1570.

The idea that the government might require securities in return for political freedoms, struck the English Cisalpine campaigners as perfectly reasonable, and had echoed through English Catholic debates since the time of James I's Oath of Allegiance, imposed after the Gunpowder Plot. In courting political support from the Whigs, the English Cisalpines strove to separate the political question from the religious, and to offer reassurances about Catholic loyalty that would not undermine the Royal Supremacy. They insisted that Catholic Emancipation was consistent with maintenance of the Establishment, and sought to reassure George III, who was adamantly against Catholic Emancipation on any terms, that his Catholic subjects were well disposed towards His Majesty.

Ireland's Catholics were less relaxed than their English confreres about royal or papal authority, particularly after the Act of Union. The Irish bishops were divided about whether a government clergy stipend was worth conceding a veto on episcopal appointments, but the prelates had privately bowed to a veto while negotiating the Act of

[1] John Bew, *Castlereagh: from Enlightenment to Tyranny* (Quercus Publishing, 2011), p. 127.
[2] Patrick Geogehan, *The Irish Act of Union: A Study in High Politics 1798-1801*, (Gill & Macmillan, 2001), p. 119.

Union. They were poised uncomfortably between maintaining a relationship with the British government, and not alienating the Catholic laity, who bore the brunt of the effects of the Protestant ascendancy.

Government became paralysed after the Union. Castlereagh resigned. He supported Henry Grattan, MP for Dublin, who introduced a series of unsuccessful Bills for Catholic Emancipation and in 1812, Castlereagh returned to power as Foreign Secretary. Grattan's 1813 Bill, supported by Castlereagh, was an attempt to enact a moderate government veto, in order to secure Catholic Emancipation. It became a trigger for bitter animosity, especially in Ireland. Castlereagh later admitted in Parliament, 'with respect to Ireland, I know I shall never be forgiven'.[3] This was the man called on, in the summer of 1815, to negotiate with the Papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Consalvi, and discuss the 'Catholic Question'.

The Emancipation campaigns were led by separate Catholic Boards (later Associations) either side of the Irish Sea, divided both from each other, and within themselves. Both Boards were hamstrung by the indecisiveness and procrastination of the Irish hierarchy, by rancorous disputes between the English vicars apostolic, and by complicated relationships with Roman authority. The failure of the 1813 Bill prompted the English Catholic leadership to consult Rome on future policy, through William Poynter, vicar apostolic of the London District. This produced the infamous 'Quarantotti Rescript'.

Rome was in turmoil, and the aged Cardinal Quarantotti, pro-Prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide was under a cloud for having taken an oath of allegiance to Napoleon. He allegedly issued his Rescript, in response to Poynter's request, without full authority, and with a blithe trust in Anglo-Papal relations. Quarantotti conceded that the King had a right to be reassured of the loyalty of those appointed to senior posts, and that 'our prelates should be agreeable and acceptable to the King, and should exercise their ministry with his full consent'. Finally, he acquiesced in the existence of a government committee examining letters entering Britain from the Holy See, 'to enquire whether anything be contained therein which might be obnoxious to the government' if the content dealt with 'matters of civil policy'.[4]

The Rescript was published just as Consalvi set off on his diplomatic mission, but so was the 'Genoese Letter', which Bishop John Milner, vicar apostolic of the Midland District, had obtained from Pius VII, in exile in Genoa, after Napoleon's escape from Elba. The Genoese Letter effectively overturned Quarantotti. By the time Consalvi got to London, the Quarantotti Rescript had been accepted by the English vicars apostolic except Milner, but only by Archbishop Troy of Dublin from the Irish hierarchy. Since 1807, Milner had acted as agent in England for the Irish bishops. He was a divisive figure, notorious for his long-held and vitriolic opposition to the Cisalpine leaders of the English Catholic Board, especially its Secretary, who had drafted the 1813 Bill, Charles Butler.

Castlereagh's discussions with Consalvi in July 1814 suggested that Catholic Emancipation was possible, if the government had some guarantees, along the lines of the Quarantotti Rescript. Consalvi was deeply concerned about its provision for government censorship of Papal correspondence, which was tolerated under protest in

[3] Geogehan, p. 203.
[4] Charles Butler, *Historical Memoirs Respecting the English, Irish and Scottish Catholics*, 1821, vol 4, Appendix.

some countries, but not something the Holy See would ever freely accept. As Secretary of State, he would, naturally, be the author of most of that correspondence. He tried to hold the line, playing for time, but Consalvi did not fully appreciate that it was the veto over episcopal appointments, more than the routine opening of letters under the Papal seal, that raised hackles among the Irish.

Irish opinion was hardening, as Daniel O'Connell's campaign began to work on the Irish public to insist that their bishops refuse any British government interference in the running of the Irish Church, i.e. the appointment of bishops. At the heart of O'Connell's campaign was not ecclesiastical authority but political freedom. The government that would have a veto in Ireland was a colonial one, kept in power by English redcoats, and its tool was the hated Chief Secretary for Ireland, Robert Peel. O'Connell, however, also knew the importance of religion to the Irish people.

Charles Butler, the English lawyer who had drafted the 1813 Bill, and the English Cisalpines saw an opportunity, by using the new-found warmth between the government and the Anglophile Cardinal Secretary of State, to achieve their aim of limiting direct Papal influence over English Catholics, and to make friends in the political and religious establishment. Rome only slowly began to understand the bitterness of the splits within the English Catholics, particularly between William Poynter and John Milner. The opposing factions strove to set the two most powerful Roman Cardinals, Lorenzo Litta, Prefect of the Congregation of *Propaganda Fide*, and Consalvi, against each other, in support of their cause. England, as missionary territory, was still under the authority of *Propaganda Fide*. Butler was convinced that Consalvi and Poynter, in presenting the Quarantotti Rescript, even with reservations, had 'presented two important documents—a vindication of himself, and a representation of the necessity of an arrangement between the pope and the government of this country'.[5] It was a defeat for Irish bishops and Milner, and represented a form of diplomatic resolution between the Holy See and the British Government, but not one that satisfied Ireland.

Consalvi became a target for hostility in Ireland and was lined up as the enemy of the Irish struggle for a form of Emancipation that would lead to independence, not integration. Denis Scully, an Irish lawyer, closely involved in O'Connell's campaign, was an intimate friend of Milner. Milner had little faith in Consalvi, and wrote bitterly to Scully that Consalvi was 'enthralled' to Castlereagh by temporal considerations '[with] which he 'rules all at Rome'.[6] 'While [he] is in power nothing is to be expected from Rome in favour of religion in these islands'.[7] When a further draft Bill was circulated in 1820, Milner warned Scully that elements in Parliament, Consalvi, and Poynter were 'leagued together to deliver your virgin-church gagged and bound to the Ministerial ravishers'.[8]

Milner had allies in Rome, despite Consalvi's power and influence. In August 1815, the Irish Catholic Association sent Richard Hayes, OFM to Rome, to press for Papal agreement to the nomination of Irish bishops by the local Church, as a means of avoiding government intervention in episcopal appointments. Any government veto, Hayes argued,

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[5] Birmingham Archdiocesan Archives (BAA) C2103, Letter from Charles Butler to Rev John Kirk, 3 July 1815.
[6] Ed Brian McDermott, *The Catholic Question in Ireland and England 1798-1822: the papers of Denis Scully* (Irish Academic Press, 1988), letter No. 564, July 1816.
[7] McDermott, letter No. 584, September 1817.
[8] McDermott, letter No. 601, July 1820.

> . . . will certainly cut off Ireland from the see of Rome. The people will never submit to it. They are entirely different from the English Catholics and already threaten to stone every bishop here that will receive it. They will neither go to Mass or confession to any vetoistical or pensioned clergyman. God deliver us—it will end in blood.[9]

Hayes was busy preparing a report for James McCormick, the agent of the regular clergy in Rome, who also acted as go-between, translating and passing on Milner's correspondence for Cardinal Litta, McCormick assured Milner that,

> Litta is for the support of religion in these countries, but he is overawed by the second person in power here [Consalvi}, who seems to flatter himself to be able to preserve orthodoxy here and, at the same time to be able to acquiesce to the proposals and measures of the people in power and authority there.[10]

At three audiences with Pius VII, Hayes berated him about the veto, and complained bitterly about Consalvi, who he alleged was in league with the English, and in favour of the veto.[11] Hayes was convinced that Pius VII was under Consalvi's control, who was regarded by the whole College of Cardinals as 'the best politician and the worst theologian'.[12] He accused Consalvi of 'making a sacrifice to England to obtain her protection against the encroachments of Austria'.[13] In 1817, Consalvi exiled Hayes from the Papal States in disgrace, with a number of accusations around his neck. Hayes' summing up of Consalvi was, not surprisingly, damning:

> He is opposed by the cardinals except three or four, his creatures, but his power is so great he laughs at them all, tho' by all detested. Many do not speak to him, see him, or write to him on any affair he meddles in tho' it concerns them intimately and officially. In many things he deceives the Pope, by himself and his creatures, who are always about him and prevent the truth from reaching him.[14]

It is impossible to gauge how influential Hayes' letters were on Irish opinion. He had powerful friends, including Edward Hay, the Secretary of the Irish Catholic Board and recipient of his Roman letters, who had many contacts, and a reputation for indiscretion. It is very likely that Hayes' views on Consalvi were widely shared.[15] Hayes was also close to William Eusebius Andrews, the London publisher of the rabid anti-Cisalpine *Orthodox Journal*. Milner wrote so frequently and bitterly in it, that Cardinal Fontana, Prefect of Propaganda Fide (1818-22), threatened to deprive him of his jurisdiction unless he stopped.[16] In spring 1819, Hayes went to live in London, at

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[9] Cathaldus Giblin OFM, 'Papers of Richard Joachim Hayes, O.F.M., 1810-24 in Franciscan Library, Killiney: Part 1, 1810-15' *Collectanea Hibernica*, No. 21/22 (1979/1980), pp. 82-148, p. 83.
[10] BAA A857, 7 Jun 1817, Letter from Jas. McCormick to Right Revd and Dear Dr Milner.
[11] Giblin, p. 84.
[12] National Library of Ireland, *Notes and copies by George Noble Plunkett of letters and reports by Fr Joachim Hayes OFM regarding Veto disputes*, https://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000610770 Hayes to Coppinger, Rome 2 March 1816.
[13] Giblin p. 84
[14] Giblin, pp. 111-2
[15] Margaret OhOgartaig, 'Edward Hay: historian of 1798', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an dá chultúr*, 1998, Vol. 13 (1998), pp. 121-34, pp. 128-9
[16] Carter, B. (2004, September 23). Andrews, William Eusebius (1773–1837), writer and publisher. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Retrieved 3 Feb. 2024, from https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-533.

Andrews' invitation, and Consalvi's name and reputation would surely have passed between them, and fueled Andrews' campaign.[17]

In the same year, Poynter complained of Milner's conduct:

> He has for at least nine years been in open opposition to his colleagues—has imprinted and in low periodical publications, misrepresented and inveighed against their conduct—has held me out to the people of my District in a false character and exposed me most unjustly to public odium . . . Can any person do business with him?[18]

Poynter was not alone. Charles Butler sent a lengthy 'memorial' to Cardinal Fontana, seeking redress against Milner, which may have provoked Fontana's threat to deprive Milner. Consalvi read Butler's text, and replied sympathetically; he was 'fully acquainted' with what had passed between Butler and Milner, and commended Butler's 'moderation' and 'the prudent conduct you have observed with regard to the Midland vicar apostolic', signing himself 'very affectionately'. Within a year, Consalvi had succeeded Fontana, and Butler could not resist writing at length to the sympathetic Cardinal. Consalvi himself was dying, and some years later, Butler appended a final note to his own text:

> Mr Butler received no written answer to his letter or memorial to Cardinal Consalvi dated 1st April 1823: the troubles at Rome and other circumstances having long prevented his attention to these concerns—but his eminence finally took Mr Butler's memorial into consideration, was satisfied with it, and expressed his intention of returning a favourable answer to it. From doing this, his death prevented him.

There was, arguably, a shred of truth in Hayes' attacks on Consalvi, in that, as Secretary of State, his main priority, in light of his experience of invasion, occupation and imprisonment since 1800, was to keep the Pope safe in Rome, with the Papal tiara securely on his head, with friends and allies in the capital cities of Europe. Pius VII and Consalvi failed to fully appreciate the interaction of religious faith and political power in Ireland, or the complexities of Irish political relationships with the British government. Neither did they grasp the very different internecine disputes in which English Catholics were involved. Pius VII was probably unwise to direct Consalvi to become involved in negotiations about Catholic Emancipation in England and Ireland. The issues were too complex, too enmeshed with matters of faith, Anglo-Irish politics, Church and state, and ecclesial traditions, and were coloured by long memories.

Had Consalvi and his friend Castlereagh succeeded in getting an Emancipation Act passed, which contained the protections agreed by Cardinal Quarantotti, the future of relations between the Catholic Church and the British monarch and his or her government would have been extremely complicated, including the involvement of 10 Downing Street in the appointment of Catholic bishops. In 1817, however, the English and Scottish Vicars Apostolic formally refused to surrender the nomination of bishops to 'a prince who is, by law, head of a different religious establishment'. They refused to agree to any 'interruption of free intercourse between bishops and the chief bishop', but conceded the

[17] Giblin p. 86.
[18] BAA A1199, Letter from W. Poynter to My Dr Mr Kirk, 11 Aug 1819.

presentation of a list of episcopal candidates to the government.[19] Milner refused to sign it. Catholic Emancipation would wait until 1829, when, not a Whig government friendly to English Catholics, but a Tory government led by the victor of Waterloo in 1814, Lord Wellington, conceded to O'Connell's campaign, in order to preserve peace in Ireland, with no whiff of the veto or any other Quarantotti concession.

Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830), Pope Pius VII (1742-1823), 1819, RCIN 404946

[19] Westminster Archdiocesan Archives, Poynter Papers A67, IX *Resolutions of Vicars Apostolic on the State of Catholic Affairs*, 5 March 1817.

Sir Thomas Lawrence's portrait of Cardinal Consalvi for the Waterloo Chamber at Windsor Castle

Tim Knox

June 1814 the Allied Sovereigns—Alexander I, Emperor of Russia and Frederick III, King of Prussia—together with members of their families, and the statesmen and military leaders who had been in Paris supervising the surrender and exile of Napoleon Bonaparte, came to London as the guests of the Prince Regent. They were royally entertained with balls, dinners and excursions, and Alexander I and Frederick III, together with Metternich, Blűcher, and Count Platov, Hetman of the Cossacks, all sat for their portraits by Thomas Lawrence at the Regent's request—a project 'that might not only commemorate their visit, but transmit the state of British art to future generations'.[20]

Lawrence was then the most sought-after portrait painter in London, charging 400 guineas for a full-length, but had only recently gained Royal favour. Thanks to the insistence of Lord Stewart, Ambassador to Vienna, the Prince Regent had sat for a flattering full-length portrait, which had been exhibited to great acclaim at the Royal Academy.[21] The Prince had hitherto been wary of patronising Lawrence—perhaps because the 1789 full-length portrait he painted of his mother, Queen Charlotte,[22] had not found favour, or because of his link with the Prince Regent's estranged wife, Caroline of Brunswick, the Princess of Wales, who had sat to Lawrence for her portrait no less than three times—an intimacy that had seen Lawrence questioned during the *Delicate Investigation* of 1806.[23]

Now, all that was forgotten, the splendid heroic portraits then in progress of the Emperor and the Prussian King, of the wily Metternich, and the martial Blücher and Platov, made for a splendid group—the Regent was eager to commission more, to create whole gallery of portraits of the victors over the 'Corsican monster'.[24] The project arose, if we are to believe Lawrence's friend, the diarist Joseph Farington, from a suggestion made to the Regent by Lady Anne Barnard, that a large group should be painted of the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia with the Regent, 'to commemorate the great events which had taken place in which these high characters had appeared so conspicuous. Lady Anne had also proposed Lawrence as the painter.[25]

Perhaps thankfully, Lady Anne's ambitious suggestion was not adopted. Instead, an alternative plan was pursued for a series of individual portraits of the principal actors in the recent victory. In early July the Duke of Wellington came to sit for his full-length portrait commissioned by the Prince Regent, 'He came on Horseback', claims Farington, 'attended by an Old Groom, and [dressed] in the plainest manner, wearing a Blue coat and a round Hat'.[26] But the plans for further portraits had to be abandoned in 1815, when Napoleon escaped from Elba, and it was not until three years later, in September 1818—

[20] D.E. Williams *The Life and Correspondence of Sir Thomas Lawrence Kt*, (London, 1831, vol. I, p. 341.
[21] Kenneth Garlick *Sir Thomas Lawrence* (Oxford, 1989), p. 21, cat. 325 c.
[22] Garlick, pp. 15-16, cat. 186.
[23] Garlick, p. 21, cat. 168.
[24] Garlick, cat.17 (Alexander I), cat. 314 (Frederick William III), cat. 558 (Metternich), cat. 115 (Blűcher), cat. 651 (Platov).
[25] J. Farington, *Diary*, 24 April & 4 May 1814.
[26] Farington, 2, 4, 21, 23 July 1814.

after he had finally been defeated at Waterloo and sent into exile on St Helena—that Lawrence (by now knighted) left London for Aix-la-Chapelle, where the victors had once again mustered. Lawrence stayed at Aix for almost two months, putting the finishing touches on his portraits of Alexander I and Frederick III, and embarking upon one of the Emperor of Austria.[27] He had with him his portraits of Blücher and Platov, which were much admired, and began portraits of Prince Hardenberg, Count Nesselrode and the Duc de Richelieu.[28] Many of the sitters also ordered copies of their portraits. In December he moved on to Vienna, where his main task was to paint Prince Schwarzenberg,[29] 'to complete the general plan of the Prince Regent', but he also got the Archduke Charles, General Chernichev, the Baron von Gentz, General Uvarov, and Count Capo d'Istria to sit for him.[30] He also painted other members of Viennese society.

Lawrence arrived in Rome in 1819. The Prince Regent had been especially anxious to include portraits of the Pope, Pius VII, and his Minster of State Cardinal Ercole Consalvi, in his series. He was received by the Pope and Consalvi with appropriate dignity and respect due to an envoy of the Regent of England—a suite of rooms was placed at his disposal in the Palazzo del Quirinale. 'They consist', he wrote to Farington, 'of four sitting-rooms, newly and handsomely furnished, bedrooms, bedrooms for my servants, kitchen with its attendants, another servant; and in addition to these comforts, a carriage ready for me at all hours'.[31] Indeed, for Lawrence, who had never made the Grand Tour, Rome was a revelation, writing on arrival, 'I am at this moment overpowered by its immensity and grandeur'.[32]

Both the Pope and the Cardinal allowed him multiple sittings. Of his first meeting with Consalvi, in a letter to Farington dated 19 May 1819, Lawrence writes 'The Cardinal is one of the finest subjects for a picture that I ever had …. A countenance of powerful intellect and great symmetry … his manners but too gracious ... The consul and myself were with him for full half an hour, sitting on his sofa with him, and at the close he accompanied us through the rooms to the door of the hall'.[33]

As well as frequent sittings with the Pope (Pius VII alone granted nine sittings) of whom he thought 'he is a fine subject for a picture, and though his frame stooping with appearance of decay, has nothing of it in his mind, which is quick, cheerful, and vigorous',[34] Lawrence managed to explore Rome; visiting the Churches and Palaces, singling out Raphael and Michelangelo for particular admiration, viewing the Colosseum by moonlight, and attending ceremonies (with ring-side seats, procured by Cardinal Consalvi) at St Peter's and the Lateran. Polished and courtly, Lawrence was much taken up by Prince Metternich, who was in Rome for part of this time, and the Duchess of Devonshire, a devoted friend of Cardinal Consalvi, whom he had painted years before as Lady Elizabeth Foster. Something of the social whirl can be gained from a letter to a Mr Lysons dated 27 June 1819, 'After dining yesterday at a superb dress public dinner, given by Cardinal Gonsalvi, I went with Prince Metternich to view, by torch-light, Canova's

[27] Garlick, cat. 308 (Francis I).
[28] Garlick, cat. 384 (Hardenberg), cat. 600 (Nesselrode), cat. 677 (Richelieu).
[29] Garlick, cat. 706.
[30] Garlick, cat. 184 (Archduke Charles), cat. 188 (Chernichev), cat. 323 (von Gentz), cat. 782 (Uvarov), cat.164 (Capo d'Istria).
[31] Williams, II, p. 153.
[32] Williams, II, p. 144.
[33] Williams, II, p. 154.
[34] Williams, II, p. 168.

beautiful statue of Venus, for which the Princess Borghese is said to have sat. He [Canova] himself attended, and seemed to have great (and certainly just) pleasure in the exhibition of his finest work'.[35] Indeed, the artistic community of Rome were notably friendly (Lawrence had been made an Honorary member of the Accademia di San Luca in 1816), and expressed an intense curiosity and enthusiasm for the 'English style of painting.'[36]

By the 2 July 1819, Lawrence could write, 'My picture of the Cardinal has so gratified and conciliated all . . . "Ah!" they say, "Our Cardinal is a man or iron—he is not flesh and blood as we are", . . . On the first day, I painted in the whole head, and very like him. He has a penetrating and pursuing eye, and I made him look directly at the spectator. Edward [Lawrence's servant] told me, that when I left it, two domestics came in very softly and quietly, looked at it for a moment, and then *ran* out, and brought in, according to his phrase, 'a dozen' . . . I have sketched in a whole figure: and from his taking precedence before any minister of other powers, I have painted him a small whole length —a sitting figure . . .'.[37]

The completed portraits of Pius VII and Cardinal Consalvi were displayed to the public in the Plazzo del Quirinale, to great acclaim, drawing favourable comparisons with earlier portraits of the Pope by Jacques-Louis David and Vincenzo Camuccini.[38] The inclusion in the background of the Pius VII's portrait of the recently returned Vatican treasures—the *Apollo Belvedere*, the *Laocoon*, and the *Torso Belvedere,* and the as-yet unbuilt *Braccio Nuovo*—was particularly appreciated.[39] It was on the advice of Consalvi that Lawrence did not include a papal tiara in his composition—the diplomatic cardinal felt that this symbol of papal authority might not be welcome in a picture intended for display in the palace of a Protestant ruler! Pius ordered a copy of his portrait, and that of Lawrences' portrait of George IV, who had just succeeded as King. Cardinal Consalvi was depicted holding a bound volume, representing his plans for the reorganisation of the finances and administration of the Papal States, which had just been published, with the facade of San Pietro beyond.[40] Lawrence gave a finished portrait drawing of Cardinal Consalvi, in coloured chalks, to the Duchess of Devonshire before he left Rome.[41] Now at Ickworth, this is not a study for the Windsor portrait, although Lawrence was famed for his delicate draughtsmanship, the Waterloo portraits seem to have been painted directly on the canvas. Lawrence started his portrait of Consalvi in late June 1819, painting 'the whole head' on the first day. In July he wrote of painting the Cardinal's hands 'from life', by late September it was almost complete.[42]

Lawrence wrote to his sister, Anne, of the Pope's portrait, 'I think it now the most interesting and best head I have ever painted, and the general opinion is in unison with this belief; for it is thought the best and happiest resemblance of the Pope that has ever been painted'.[43] He wrote to Farringdon '. . . as an artist I have nowhere been more popular than at Rome. I came here too with very moderate expectations; and with many

[35] Williams, II, p. 160.
[36] Williams, II, p. 159.
[37] Williams, II, p. 201.
[38] Williams, II, p. 194.
[39] RCIN 404946, Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830) - Pope Pius VII (1742-1823) (rct.uk)
[40] RCIN 404940, Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830) - Ercole, Cardinal Consalvi (1757-1824) (rct.uk)
[41] NT 851751, Cardinal Ercole Consalvi (1757-1824) 851751 | National Trust Collections
[42] Williams, II, pp. 200-01.
[43] Williams, II, pp. 188-9.

apprehensions, indeed, of failure, as to impression on the public mind; and this result is therefore the more pleasing'.[44]

Leaving Rome, Lawrence reported that 'I had a gracious audience from the Pope; and from Cardinal Gonsalvi, the same friendly and courteous conduct that he has invariably shown to me'.[45] Lawrence arrived back in England on 30th March 1820, bringing with him eight full-length portraits for the new King. According to Lord Stewart, George had lately 'talked in wild rapture of all the delight he expected from your treasures on your return'.[46] A few days later, Lawrence was also unanimously elected the President of the Royal Academy of Art. George IV's gratification at the success of Lawrence's mission and his admiration for the completed portraits was unbounded. He presented Lawrence—by now appointed 'Principal Painter in Ordinary to His Majesty'—with a gold medal and chain bearing his likeness, which is still worn by Presidents of the Academy to this day.

Little is known of early plans for the accommodation of the portraits, but it seems likely that a gallery for their display was always intended for Windsor Castle, then being extensively and picturesquely remodelled for George IV by his architect Sir Jeffrey Wyattville. Plans to fill in an internal courtyard, Horn Court, in the heart of the Castle, with a giant sculpture gallery, were changed to create a cavernous banqueting room – the Waterloo Chamber. There is an early design, in the 'Troubadour Gothic' taste, by someone called Frederick Mackenzie,[47] but Wyattville's design, which was accomplished between 1827 and 1832, was in an eclectic Elizabethan style, lit by an elaborate lantern, with additional illumination provided by four gigantic chandeliers.[48] Here the portraits of monarchs, warriors and statesmen—Lawrence completed the series after an official visit to Paris in 1825 to paint King Charles X and the Dauphin—were set into the panelling, augmented with carvings by Grinling Gibbons salvaged from the Baroque Royal Chapel, which had just been dismantled. Lawrence's portraits of Pius VII and Cardinal Consalvi are prominently placed on the lower register of the south wall.

Lawrence died in January 1830, loaded with honours but heavily in debt. George IV, increasingly corpulent and dropsical, followed him to the grave in June that year. Their joint project, the Waterloo Chamber, was completed in 1832, and has always been justly celebrated, the splendid setting for State Banquets, balls, and the occasional pantomime, although its present appearance owes much to the polychrome decoration and improved lighting added by John Crace & Co. for the Prince Consort in 1860-61.[49] Certainly, Cardinal Consalvi's portrait—distinctive for its luscious handling of paint and skilful handling of crimson hues—could not be in better company. As Lawrence's biographer, D. E. Williams puts it, 'nothing could be more fortunate to a great artist than his living at a period of such extraordinary events; for the latest posterity to the end of time, will derive their ideas of the persons of these great characters from the pencil of Lawrence'.[50]

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[44] Williams, II, pp. 193-4.
[45] Williams, II, p. 237.
[46] G.S. Layard *Sir Thomas Lawrence's Letter-Bag* (London, 1906), p. 152.
[47] RCIN 927943. Frederick Mackenzie (1788-1854) - Scheme for the Waterloo Chamber (rct.uk)
[48] S. Brindle (ed.), *Windsor Castle: A Thousand Years of a Royal Palace* (London, 2018), pp. 346-7.
[49] Brindle, pp. 370-71.
[50] Williams, I, p. 341.

As an amusing postscript, Lawrence's copy of his full-length portrait of King George IV in coronation robes, commissioned by Pope Pius VII in 1819 arrived in Rome in 1823.[51] In 1837, during building works at the Vatican, it was temporarily removed to the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano, where it was stored in a side chapel. The English artists George Richmond and Joseph Severn stumbled upon it there and were astonished to find pilgrims 'prostrating themselves in devout worship before it, imagining it to be some gorgeously bedizened Roman Catholic saint![52]

Joseph Nash (1809-78), Windsor Castle: The Waterloo Chamber, 5 June 1844, RCIN 919785

[51] Garlick, cat. 325d.
[52] A.M.W. Stirling, *The Richmond Papers* (London, 1926), p. 44.