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The Concept of *Foedus* in the History of Modern Reformed Protestantism

The Case of the Waldensian Church

Preface by
Emanuele Fiume

To my mother and my father,
for their caring and loving teachings

Contents

Preface

It is quite rare, if not unique, that the first document of the general sources of a collection of disciplines of a 21st century Evangelical Church opens with a covenant, not aimed at an association of churches, but at a community of people who have received the pure preaching of the Gospel and the Sacraments. A covenant that establishes mutual aid and the obligation of common consultations, and explicitly forbids any private agreement and negotiation[1].

What is surely unique is the fact that, at the moment of the stipulation of the Covenant, such community of people was made up of less than 20,000 people distributed over three States south of the Alps: the Duchy of Savoy, the Kingdom of France and, to a lesser extent, the Marquisate of Saluzzo. These people, who at first were scattered all over Europe and then settled in the Cottian Alps, were the successors of the medieval pauperistic movement of the Waldensians, who had been in close contact with the Swiss Reformers. They were able to overcome their social invisibility (Nicodemism) and their condition of itinerant–only ministry (Synod of Chanforan, 1532) to create, between 1555–1557 and thanks to the preaching of pastors coming from Geneva, a capillary network of reformed parishes in the Valleys, which catalysed also the catholic part of the population.

After the peace of Cateau–Cambrésis in 1559 and the return of the Valleys under the Savoy sovereignty, the people of the Valleys were socially homogeneous (small farmers) and religiously dissident (Calvinists within a catholic State), yet still unaware of being bound by a covenant in a "perpetua et inviolabile confederatione"[2]. Such awareness was the outcome of various peculiar historical circumstances.

Firstly, a major boost to the stipulation of the Patto del Puy came from the military operations conducted by the "signore della Trinità"

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1. Chiesa evangelica valdese, *"Unione delle Chiese valdesi e metodiste". Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, Claudiana, Turin 2009, pp. 57–58.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

to bring back to the catholic Church the Reformed people of the Valleys. Trinità tried to carry out separate negotiations with the Comuni and the Valleys, in order to put a strain on the Reformed front and to take advantage of the situation for his military operations. The catholic condottiere's bad faith was soon unveiled by the Alpine Protestants who, from that moment of formal unity onwards, called themselves "federally bound people". The Army of the House of Savoy then suffered a string of serious setbacks and the Duke had to accept the stipulation of a series of articles granting religious freedom to the Protestant communities settled in the Valleys. These articles were signed by the representatives of the Duke, two majors and two pastors, on behalf of the Waldensian people (Cavour, 5 June 1561).

Secondly, another major boost came from the decision, made by the Waldensians during a public assembly, to fight against any aggressor. Three–four years before the beginning of wars of religion in France, a bunch of people living in the Alpine Valleys had decided to fight the unlawful violence of a tyrannical king, who was therefore considered a "private citizen". The juridical foundations of their resistance stemmed from the medieval privatistic theory, similarly to what had happened in Switzerland almost three centuries before. The resistance was regarded at first as a private affair, thus excluding the Duke of Savoy because he had tried to expand his authority beyond his territorial jurisdiction[3].

It is not difficult to imagine how unattractive the privatistic theory was within a Reformed Europe based on the precarious stability between the establishment of nation–States and the attempts to create an international front. The Protestant theologians, primarily Theodore Beza, brilliantly shifted the concept of resistance from the private to the public level, that is to people bound together by a covenant and claiming their own rights, thus contributing to the elaboration of the constitutional right of revolution, which marked the political thought in France in the second half of the 16th century. Such a swift change (which, after all, represented one of the key elements of the transition from the Middle Ages to the Modern Age) was not imposed on the farmers of the Valleys by the Genevan Protestants, but it was the outcome not only of a series of private meetings and correspondence, but

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3. Emanuele Fiume, *Scipione Lentolo 1525–1599*, Claudiana, Turin 2003, p, 72.

also of a different mind–set because the Waldensians were forced to identify themselves with a real "popolo", bound by mutual solidarity and the defence of the Reformed religion[4].

A major contribution to the elaboration of the right of revolution and to the understanding of the covenant, at first by the Waldensians of the Valleys and then by International Calvinism, came from Pietro Martire Vermigli (1499–1562). Following his conversion to the Protestant movement, the Florence–born theologian, who lived in the time of the ferments inspired by Savonarola, played a leading role also — but not only — in the elaboration of the political thought, mainly through his commentary on the Book of Judges (which, one century later, will become an integral part of Oliver Cromwell's private library) and through other exegetical works on the historical books of the Old Testament[5]. Hence, the concept of covenant was developed at first in the light of the covenant between God and Israel, and then through the institution of the monarchy. In other words, through the covenant God himself acknowledged the people of Israel as his partner and invested them with a right that was hierarchically superior to monarchical power itself.

The five–year period from the beginning of public preaching in the Valleys (1555) to the Cavour's Articles, witnessed the birth of a self–aware group of people, with whom the king himself had to come to terms at the end of a disastrous military campaign. The churches adopted a Genevan–like structural model[6], and the Waldensians have been the only continuous Protestant presence south of the Alps since the Reformation.

The combination of various effects changed a group of people into a political subject in a matter of very few years. Their political action was carried on and perfected by the infant International Calvinism,

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4. Emanuele Fiume, *"Extrema consilia". La guerra di religione in Piemonte (1559–1561) e i suoi effetti sul calvinismo internazionale* in Pawel Gajewski and Susanna Peyronel Rambaldi (eds.), *Con o senza le armi. Controversistica religiosa e resistenza armata nell'età moderna*, Claudiana, Turin 2008.

5. Torrance Kirby, *Political Theology: The Godly Prince* in W.J. Torrance Kirby, Emidio Campi, Frank A. James (eds.), *A Companion to Peter Martyr Vermigli*, Brill, Leida 2009, pp. 401–421.

6. Giorgio Peyrot, *Influenze franco–ginevrine nella formazione delle discipline ecclesiastiche valdesi alla metà del XVI secolo* in Delio Cantimori (ed. by), *Ginevra e l'Italia*, Sansoni, Florance 1959, pp. 215–285.

the French Huguenots, the Dutch gueux, the English Puritans and the Pilgrim Fathers, while their systematic reflection on the Bible was developed by the eminent theologians of the Reformed orthodoxy[7]. The concept of covenant, seen as a "law of freedom", then became a permanent element in the History of the Western world, where it was developed in support of other civil battles and against the abuses of any political form of tyranny and wickedness. Both spiritual and political freedom, juridically configured as a covenantal relationship between rights and duties in the Church and in the State, stem from the Calvinist Reformation.

Filippo Maria Giordano's accurate, essential and concise work offers a plain and clear contribution to the research and the thorough examination of such a crucial issue.

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Emanuele Fiume
Rome, 19 June 2012

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7. For a general history of the right of revolution in the Calvinist thought, see Quentin Skinner's classic work, *Le origini del pensiero politico moderno*, vol. II, il Mulino, Bologna 1989, pp. 271–498. For some particular *Sketches*, see: Debora Spini, *Diritti di Dio, diritti dei popoli. Pierre Jurieu e il problema della sovranità (1681–1691)*, Claudiana, Turin 1997, Johannes Althusius, *La politica*, ed. by Corrado Malandrino, Claudiana, Turin 2009 and, for a partial theological perspective, see J. Mark Beach, *Christ and the Covenant. Francis Turrettin's Federal Theology as a Defense of the Doctrine of Grace*, Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2007.

Abbrevations

APCCB = Archive of the Protestant Cultural Centre, Bergamo
ASWS = Archive of the Society of Waldensian Studies, Torre Pellice
HAWB = Historical Archive of the Waldensian Board, Torre Pellice
CSF = Centre for Studies on Federalism, Moncalieri

Introduction

In order to explain the reasons underlying this essay, it is necessary to make a digression on the guidelines of this research; the writing of a doctoral thesis very often entails the need to focus on some particular aspects, whose prominence, however, remains at a very superficial level. This essay stems from the above–mentioned need and aims at providing a theoretical introduction to the relationships between the ethical, organizational, social and cultural aptitudes of the Calvinist thought, and the political needs of a federalist ideology. Besides, the field of research of this work, which encompasses the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, aims at highlighting this phenomenon with relation to Italian reformed Protestantism and, particularly, the confessional and ecclesiological nature of the Waldensian Church itself.

The first part revolves around a brief analysis of the internal structure of the Waldensian Church and the integrative model adopted over the last 50 years, with a focus on the "federal" nature of its organizational system. Such an analysis, however, implied a clear understanding of the natural « aptitude » of Waldism towards federalism. The above–mentioned phenomenon is both real and attractive, because the foundations of federalism lie in the cultural and confessional tradition of the Waldensians, and also because this heritage takes us back almost to the very origin of the Waldensian Church.

On the one hand, the reasons behind the psychological « propensity » of the Waldensians towards federalism derive from a cultural and confessional legacy dating back to the adhesion of the Waldensian Church to the Protestant Reformation, when a protomodern — yet politically uninfluential — « federal thought », rooted in the so–called « federal theology » was first elaborated. On the other hand, the influence of the « federal thought » on the historical "creation" of the Church and on the Waldensian people not only oriented the ecclesiastical institutions in a federal way, but also helped to establish a federal–oriented attitude towards political relationships. Obviously, it would be impossible to

speak of federalism in the modern sense of the term; instead, it would be more plausible to speak of an aptitude and openness to the mechanisms underlying religious, social and political federal–like thoughts and behaviours.

In this perspective, the most obvious choice was to analyze the most important experiences focused on such aptitude, as well as to set them in the framework of the events that marked the history of international Protestantism, without neglecting their link with the basic elements of the culture and tradition of the Reformation.

Therefore, we have decided to divide the research into two parts. The first one, of a more general and introductory nature, is focused on the most relevant events in the development of the federal thought within the religious culture of Protestantism, from the genesis of the «federal theology» through Calvinist Reformation, from the «community of saints» up to its enforcement in the life and the institutions of the congregationalist and puritan communities established in North America. We have then highlighted the cruxes where the organization of the religious communities overlapped the life of both political and social communities, thus promoting a deep political consideration, and even the practical application to the government of the *civitas* of the concepts and the theories developed in a confessional environment.

Always in the first part, we have compared some aspects of reformed ecclesiastical constitutionalism to the typical structures of federal statuality. Finally, we have highlighted the differences between the American and European experiences through some practical cases where the idea of a federal organization of the State, partly derived from a political revision of the federal theology, represented a model of reference for European Protestants on the political and religious unity of the Old Continent.

The second part of this essay is devoted to the setting up of a "federal conscience" within the Waldensian culture. Starting from the religious peculiarities and the territorial identity characterizing this «popolo–chiesa», we have tried to reconstruct the covenantal thought within the ecclesiastical organization of the Waldensian Church, following the evolution of their confessional history[8]. This section aims

8. Waldism was born as a pauperistic movement well before Luther's rebellion; it

therefore at detecting and exemplifying the pre–federal aspects of the historical and cultural events of the Waldensians, and at emphasizing the federal elements merged with their own ecclesiology. This section is obviously linked to the evolution of the concepts expressed in the first part of the research and, in general terms, to the experience of international Protestantism between the 16th and 18th centuries.

These preliminary remarks will be then followed by the criteria and the methodological references adopted. The final part of this work deals with the explanation of the main documentary and bibliographical sources used, in order to shed light on the orientation and the purposes of the essay.

As the first part of this research is focused on the concept of Biblical federalism, it is not possible to prescind from the studies on « federal theology » carried out by Daniel J. Elazar, our prime scientific point of reference on the link between theology and *foedus*. We have then

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was part of the many Medieval spontaneous movements declared heretical by the Roman Church. The roots of Waldism can be traced in Burgundy, between the 12th and 13th centuries. Its founder, Peter Waldo (Valdés or Valdesio, 1140–1207), gathered a group of people to live in poverty, just like the first Christians did. His pauperistic and evangelical preaching was initially authorized by the Catholic Church, but it was later stigmatized as heretical by the Third Council of the Lateran in 1179. Valdo's ever–growing number of disciples were known as « the poor of Lyon »; they were spread over Provence, Languedoc and, later, also over Piedmont and Lombardy. They fought against the luxury, the wordliness of the Church and the corruption of the clergy. The movement then adopted a stance considered unacceptable by Rome, including the right of the laics — women included — to preach, the denial of oaths, death penalty and military service, and the subordination of the validity of the sacrament to the the integrity of the pastors. This religious community later became a real movement of protest that the Church tried to suppress, and believers had to flee their cities of origin. Therefore, the Waldensians had to scatter about in the neighbouring regions up to the Alpine Valleys known as the Waldensian Valleys. Following the Protestant Reformation, the Waldensian Church and its people adopted the model of Calvin's Church. From that moment onward, the Waldensians can be generically considered members of the reformed Churches, with which they have always kept very close ties. The historical tradition of the Waldensian people was enriched with the theological and cultural baggage of the European Protestantism, in particular of Calvinism, thus giving origin to a highly particular expression of Evangelism. We will develop this aspect in the chapter dedicated to the protofederal aspects in the culture and the history of the Waldensians, with the analysis of the theological origin of the Waldensian Church and the evolution of its ecclesiastical institutions. On the history and the events of the Waldensian Church and communities, see: GIORGIO TOURN, *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo–chiesa*, Turin 1999; AMEDEO MOLNAR, AUGUSTO ARMAND HUGON, VALDO VINAY, *Storia dei valdesi*, in three volumes, Turin 1980. For a bibliography of the texts published on the hitory of the Waldensians, see also GIOVANNI GONNET and AUGUSTO ARMAND HUGON, *Bibliografia valdese*, Torre Pellice 1953.

referred to Mario Albertini's ideas on federal ideology to explain the presence of a « federal thought » in the confessional and cultural tradition of reformed Protestantism. In light of this ideological reconstruction of federalism within the reformed culture, we will then analyze in detail the historical evolution of the concept of covenant relating to the Church and the Waldensian community, also through the juridical and ecclesiological studies carried out by Giorgio Peyrot.

A major role has been played by the bibliographical sources, even if the close examination of some aspects of the Waldensian ecclesiology has involved a documentary enquiry, notably based on the many documents collected in the Waldensian Archives in Torre Pellice and in the Centro Culturale Protestante of Bergamo. This work features an authoritative bibliography on the historical evolution of the concept of covenant and on the federalist ideology, together with a more specialistic — yet pertinent — bibliography. Therefore, authors like Giorgio Spini, Mario Miegge and Emidio Campi "live" alongside specialists of the « federal theology » and the history of modern federalism such as Daniel J. Elazar, Charles S. McCoy, J. Wayne Baker, Carl J. Friedrich, Corrado Malandrino and Mario Albertini. Our points of reference on the history of the Reformation have obviously been Roland H. Bainton and Alister E. McGrath, while the analysis of the various topics treated in the essay has been carried out through trade magazines.

The main reasons underlying this work can be very effectively summarized in the words of Jacques Delors, who said that « les origines mêmes, le racines de notre réflexion politique sur le fédéralisme, la subsidiarité et la démocratie ont [...] de forts ancrages dans la pensée chrétienne et oecuménique ». These words highlight the strong link between Christian tradition and federalism, considered as a political and institutional philosophy of the modern State. According to Delors, « chaque groupe chrétien » gave « un apport décisif indispensable et spécifique dans l'élaboration de ces concepts fondamentaux à travers la rationalisation du droit naturel, qui a permis de dégager des principes communs métapositifs à la théorie de l'organisation politique contemporaine »[9]. Therefore, this essay aims at detecting the theoretical and

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9.   Jacques Delors, *Message au Congrés*, in Ferdinando Citterio and Luciano Vaccaro (ed. by), *Quale federalismo per qual Europa? Il contributo della tradizione cristiana*, Brescia 1996, p. 34. This volume collects the reports presented at the conference *Quale federalismo per qual*

practical contribution given by one of the many Christian «families» to the development of modern political thought, favouring the point of view of the reformed Church and the Waldensian community.

Europa. Il contributo della tradizione cristiana, that took place at Villa Gagnola di Gazzada (21–23 May 1994).

Chapter I

Protestant Reformation and federal thought

A brief introduction and a historical comparison

> It is necessary to highlight two sides of Protestantism: the first, phenomenical, confessional, which derives directly from the work of the reformers; the second, noumenical and cultural, which comes from the spirit of the Reformation. The first side is represented by the Church, the dogma, the theology; the second side is represented by the critical spirit, the freedom circulating through the world, the same virility and dignity we feel within ourselves; the first aspect may be of limited interest, but the second concerns the whole world.
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> Vittorio Macchioro, *Lo spirito della Riforma*, « Conscientia », (21 January 1922)

The title of this section shows the willingness to compare two terms, or better, two apparently different universes, yet showing an unequivocally close « filial » relationship[1]. On the one hand, we will focus on the

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1. Many scholars often date back to the Reformation many cultural, political and social ideas and principles of the modern age, such as tolerance, liberalism, the idea of progress, democracy, laicism. However, do they really stem from the Protestant revolution? Ernst Troeltsch, a famous German theologian and historian, stated at a famous conference held in 1906 during the 9th Congress of German historians, that some trends of Protestantism had contributed to the establishment of modern culture and conscience through ideas and principles which would have later became an integral part of the social, economical and political heritage of modern secularized societies. Just like Max Weber, who also attended the Congress, the German theologian acknowledges the many and mutual influences between the two fields. See Ernst Troeltsch, Il *protestantesimo nella formazione del mondo moderno*, Venice 1929. See also Ernst Troeltsch, *Le dottrine sociali delle Chiese e dei gruppi cristiani*, in two volumes, Florence 1941. For a general overview, see Giovanni Filoramo (ed. by), *Le religioni e il mondo moderno*, I vol., *Cristianesimo*, ed. by Daniele Menozzi, Turin 2008.

Protestant Reformation, a momentous phase in the process of spiritual and cultural emancipation, with its confessional and theological implications; on the other hand, we will devote our research to federalism, seen as a trend of modern and contemporary political thought[2]

Our research cannot obviously cover all of the above–mentioned subjects in a systematic and comprehensive way, but it aims at comparing some typical aspects of the religious culture of reformed Protes-

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2. Indirectly, reformed Protestantism played a vital role in the development and the definition of the so–called "federal thought" over the centuries, but, as far as federalism is concerned, it is necessary to make some preliminary methodological remarks. First of all, it is important to make a distinction between the root of the term *foedus* and federalism in the broad sense of the word: "federalism" is a modern term entailing a particular idea of the structure of the State, as well as an organizational concept of the social life; all these aspects, howerer, derive from the historical evolution of the etymological meaning of the root of the term "federalism", originally dating back to ancient times. It is therefore necessary to make a clear distinction between the two terms, even if one cannot prescind from the other. *Foedus* indicates a somehow sacred covenant/contract marked by the mutual «individual responsibility» of the contractors; "federalism" indicates a particular trend of the political thought based on a contractualistic vision of power, finding its expression through a well–defined political and institutional system originated in North America at the end of the 18th century. Despite their substantial difference, the above–mentioned terms are both true as to the evolutive process of the historical and cultural meaning of the «covenant», carrying with itself the many contaminations of the ancient secular and religious thought. Such a federal idea could find a religious and political expression within the reformed Protestantism of Calvinistic origin by changing and expanding its ancient ethical and cultural meaning. This was mainly possibile through the Calvinistic–Puritan revision of the Biblical *covenant*, which, in line with the hermeneutical tradition of reformed theologicians – who reinterpreted in an original way the meaning and the value of the ancient covenant between God and mankind –, paved the way for the political revision of the concept of Biblical covenant, and transfered the federal idea to the secular world. On this crucial subject, see CHARLES S. McCOY and J. WAYNE BAKER, *Fountainhead of Federalism. Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenantal Tradition*, Louisville (Kentucky) 1991. For a theoretical analysis, from Bullinger's (1504–1575) Biblical federalism to Jefferson's (1743–1826) political federalism, see: J. WAYNE BAKER, *Faces of Federalism: from Bullinger to Jefferson*, «Publius», vol. 30, n. 4, (Essays in Memory of Daniel J. Elazar), Oxford–London 2000, pp. 25–41. In this work, dedicated to Elazar, the author aims at «expanding our understanding of the connections between covenant theology and later political ideas of federalism by suggesting that there were several layers or faces of federalism in the stream of thought from the early Protestant Reformation to the founding fathers of the United States» (*ibidem*, p. 25). Finally, any close examination of the history and the concept of *covenant* cannot prescind from Daniel Elazar's studies. See DANIEL J. ELAZAR, *The Covenant Tradition in Politics. Covenant and polity in biblical Israel. Biblical foundations and Jewish expressions*, New Brunswick–London 1995, vol. I; ID., *The Covenant Tradition in Politics. Covenant and commonwealth. From Christian separation through the protestant reformation*, New Brunswick–London 1996, vol. II; ID., *The Covenant Tradition in Politics. Covenant and constitutionalism. The great frontier and the matrix of federal democracy*, New Brunswick–London 1998, vol. III.

tantism[3] to other elements belonging to the federal thought and its more mature theorization[4]. This provides us with a very useful sociological and cultural key to the reading of the reasons that moved, at the beginning of the 20th century, some members of international reformed Protestantism towards a Europeanist approach as well as

3. For a better understanding of Protestantism and its many aspects, some preliminary remarks are needed. Aside from the members of the Orthodox Church, the term "Protestant" is habitually — and improperly — used in Italy to make a "Christian distinction" between what is and what is not Catholic; this is also due to the fact that, broadly speaking, Italian Protestantism is influenced by the culture of West–Central Europe and is a contrast to the traditional guidelines of the Catholic Church. This is mainly due to a perspective distortion of the Italian culture "imposed" by the Roman Church. Nevertheless, it is improper to assign a single term to confessional and denominational entities having a different origin and history. Despite their stemming from the Lutheran Reformation in the 16th century, the so–called Protestant Churches are characterized by their own peculiar theological and ecclesiological choices, which gave origin to original developments and results, thanks to the spirit of the Reformation and the libertarian boost of some of its precepts. The adjective « Protestant » is generally associated with the more significant term "Reformation", which refers to the rebellion started by Luther agains Rome when, during the imperial Diet of Speyer (1529), five principalities (Hesse, Electorate of Saxony, Brandenburg–Ansbach, Braunschweig–Lüneburg, Anhalt) and fourteen cities (including Strasbourg, Nuremberg, Ulm and Constance) remonstrated with the Catholic Emperor Charles V, « solemnly declaring » (*protestamur*) their loyalty to the Gospel and their will to protect the principles of the Reformation in their territories, thus giving origin to the term « Protestant ». During the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, the Saxon reformers (Melanchthon and Luther, who was absent at the Diet) showed the emperor their own confession of faith (*Confessio Augustana*), which differed from Zwingli's confession (*Fidei Ratio*) and Bucer's « tetrapolitan » confession, because of the disagreement among the theoreticians of the Reformation on some theological issues. This internal division anticipated the subsequent differentiation between Lutherans and Protestants. The Diet was a failure, and it was followed by a war between the Catholic forces and the Protestant countries federated in the Schmalkaldic League (1531) on the one hand, and the united cities of Zurich and Bern and the Catholic Swiss cantons, on the other hand; this event marked the beginning of the schism. Over the time, the deep theological differences among the Protestants led to the establishment of: the Lutheran trend of the German Churches, led by Luther and Melanchthon; the trend of the reformed (or even Calvinist) Churches, inspired by Zwingli, Calvin and Bucer; and, finally, the Anabaptist trend, declared heretical by both Catholics, and Luteran/reformed Protestants. This brief historical introduction aims at circumscribing the use and the meaning of the term "Protestant" in relationship with what generically stems from the Reformation, without taking into account the differences among the various denominations.

4. For a methodical analysis of the evolution of the concept of covenant, from Calvinism to modern federalism, see Corrado Malandrino and Luca Savarino's (eds.) recent work, *Calvino e il calvinismo politico*, Turin 2012. A very useful instrument is also provided by the essays collection on federal thought edited by Ann and Lee Ward, see Ann Ward and Lee Ward (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Federalism*, Farnham, 2009.

a clear identification with the federalist thought and action; besides, these Protestant thinkers played an active part in the project of a European federation.

Our comparative analysis starts from the explanation of the term "federalism" and the ideological perspective of this study, then followed by a brief overview of Protestantism and the evolution of the political thought stemming from it, starting with the Reformation (16th century) and culminating with the birth of the United States of America; that is to say, the lapse of time and the context where the federal thought developed[5].

As to the historical and scientific criteria adopted in this study, we have, on the one hand, followed the theory of the federalist ideology elaborated by Mario Albertini[6] and, on the other hand, the

5. Spanning the 16th and 18th centuries The theoretical elaborations on federalism were not particularly successful and remained in the background, if compared to the theories on the centralization process of the State, which were more aligned with the political needs of the then–forming great national States all over Europe. This is one of the reasons for the larger circulation of the theories of Jean Bodin, Giovanni Botero and Thomas Hobbes, instead of those of Johannes Althusius, Hugo Grotius, John Locke and Immanuel Kant. The birth of the United States of America opened the doors to modern federalism which, despite its lack of a real politological theorization, was still connected to the theoretical elaborations on the form of federalism known up to that moment. Albertini recalls that « the history of federalism started with the foundation of the United States of America », notwithstanding the gap that still existed between the theoretical and practical aspects of federalism. Institutional federalism, established during the Costitutional Convention of Philadelphia, was still a useful, yet accidental mechanism to overcome a political *impasse*, rather than a real ideology to be largely applied for the achievement of peace. Albertini stressed the accidental nature of that event, pointing out that the « Constitution of the United States of America was not conceived as the project of a new kind of State, but only as the compromise between two apparently incompatible political trends: the one that wanted to leave sovereignty to each of the 13 American States . . . and the other one that aimed at transfering it completely to the Union, in order to avoid its disappearance » (Mario Albertini, *Introduzione a Immanuel Kant. La pace, la ragione e la storia*, Bologna 1985, p. 7). At the moment of the establishment of the American Federation, only Hamilton probably understood that the « federal State was a democratic government tool [. . .] able to expand its sphere of activity from one to more States »; that is to say that he was fully aware of the innovation and the potentialities of this intitutional architecture [Nicoletta Mosconi, *Mario Albertini teorico e militante*, « Il Federalista », XLIX, n. 2 (2007), p. 84].

6. A highly original theorization of the federal thought was developed by Mario Albertini (1919–1997), a famous Italian scholar who devoted most of its researches to the study of the principles of federalism. He was one of the most prominent members of the European Federalist Movement (EFM), together with Altiero Spinelli. He joined the EFM in 1945 and became the president of the Movement in 1966; from 1975 to

biblical and theological theory developed by Daniel J. Elazar[7] and re–worked out by other scholars of the so–called « federal theology »[8]. Before taking an in–depth look at the relationships between reformed

1984, he was president of the Union of European federalists (UEF). In 1959, Albertini founded and edited the political magazine « The Federalist », still published in Italian and English. Albertini was one of the most important Italian promoters of federalism, at that time still considered an ideology. To him, federalism was made of three key elements underlying its political identity: the first is related to « value », that is, peace; the second, of an « istitutional » nature, stems from the organic constituents and the institutions of the federal State; the third, that is the « social–historical » aspect, can be detected in a social and cultural behaviour aiming at overcoming the identity barriers raised with the historical establishment of national States. On Albertini and his thought, see Mario Albertini, *Il federalismo*, Bologna 1993; Mario Albertini, *Lo stato nazionale*, Bologna 1997; Mario Albertini, *Una rivoluzione pacifica. Dalla nazione all'Europa*, Bologna 1999. See also the magazine « The Federalist », where many of his writings on the interpretation of federalism, as well as his ideology and the history of his political thought, are collected. See also the recent collection Mario Albertini, *Tutti gli scritti*, edited by Nicoletta Mosconi (six volumes to date). For a close examination of Albertini's ideology and the criticism towards his « invention », see Corrado Malandrino, *The "invention" of complementarity of the federalist thought of Kant and Hamilton in Italy*, in Roberto Castaldi (ed. by), *Immanuel Kant and Alexander Hamilton, the Founders of Federalism. A political Theory for Our Time*, still being published by Giuffrè. Finally, for a general biography on federalism, see also: Kenneth C. Wheare, *Del governo federale*, Bologna 1997; Carl J. Friedrich, *Trends of Federalism in Theory and Practice*, London 1968; Id., *L'uomo, la comunità, l'ordine politico*, Bologna 2002, pp. 258–307.

7. Daniel Judah Elazar (1934–1999) was a Jewish–American expert of federalism and of Jewish history and culture. He taught in many American universties and held the chair of Political Sciences at the Temple University of Philadelphia from 1967. Elazar then became a major point of reference for the study of federalism and the Jewish political tradition. In his 45 year–long academic activity, Elazar published more than 60 books and 1,300 articles and essays. Given his ever–growing fame, he was offered to work as a consultant for various transnational organizations and the public administrations of several States. In 1967, he founded the Center for the Study of Federalism at the Temple University and started the scientific journal « Publius ». In 1970, he founded, and then chaired, the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs at the Bar–Ilan University of Jerusalem. For an biographical and bibliographical in–depth analysis on Elazar and his work, see Corrado Malandrino, *Covenant e Covenantalism premoderni nell'elaborazione di Daniel Judah Elazar*, in Gabriele Carletti (ed. by), *Prima di Machiavelli. Itinerari e linguaggi della politica tra il XIV e il XVI secolo*, Pescara 2007, notably *pp.* 107–28. Among Elazar's major works, see Daniel J. Elazar and John Kincaid (ed. by), *The Covenant Connection: From Federal Theology to Modern Federalism*, Lanham, (Maryland) 2000; on this theme, see also the tetralogy: D.J. Elazar, *Covenant and polity in biblical Israel. Biblical foundations and Jewish expressions*, op. cit.; Id., *Covenant and commonwealth. From Christian separation through the protestant reformation*, op. cit.; Id., *Covenant and constitutionalism. The great frontier and the matrix of federal democracy*, op. cit.; Id., *Covenant and Civil Society: The Constitutional Matrix of Modern Democracy*, vol. IV, New Brunswick–London 1998.

8. In particular, see John Kincaid, Charles S. McCoy, J. Wayne Baker, Thomas Hueglin and David A. Weir.

theological thought and modern federalism in Elazar's work, we will try hereafter to prefigure propaedeutically, through Albertini's federalist ideology[9], the cultural background allowing us to detect the point of contact between federalism and the cultural tradition of reformed Protestantism.

Albertini's theory is based on three main aspects: *value*, *structure* and *social–historical* context. Alongside these key features, an important role is played by the so–called *cultural* aspect which, together with the *social historical* context, makes it possible to detect the origin of the « federal idea » and the cultural and ideal conditionings to the development of a modern federal society, thus providing an answer to the origin and the reasons behind federal–like social political entities, such as in 18th century America. This way, as Albertini stated, it is possible to outline the historical framework of that particular social federalist behaviour, and to make a contribution to the analysis of the political, social and cultural reasons lying at the bottom of modern federalism, among which a major role is played by traditions and religious culture where, according to Daniel Elazar, « the ancient source of the federal principle and its classic expression »[10] lie.

Albertini's analytical enquiry relies on the three above–mentioned aspects and it applies not only to federalism, but also to all major past ideologies, such as liberalism, democracy and socialism[11]. According

9. The term "ideology" defines the mental process underlying the elaboration of reality according to some "urgent" values in a given historical moment; any ideology provides a scheme to analyze the society and to detect all possible elements of control, so to lead to its change. In Levi's words, an ideology « is a political project highlighting the sense of a historical phase through the setting–up of the institutions and their corresponding values ». Finally, according to Albertini, an ideology is « the shape taken by an active political thought » or, even better, « the conceptual system allowing the convergence of thought necessary to the cohesion of a political group and the consistency of its principles of action » [Lucio Levi, *Il federalismo dalla comunità al mondo*, « Il Federalista », XLIV, n. 3 (2002), p. 226]. The creation of a new ideology often assumes the existence of the social and cultural conditions for a new historical course, which can be achieved only through the « crasis » between an active political thought of a mature *élite* and clear institutional perspectives, as well as concrete opportunities to change the order of things. On Albertini's theory of ideology, see Mario Albertini, *Il federalismo*, *op. cit.*; Lucio Levi, *Il pensiero federalista*, Bari 2002; Nicoletta Mosconi, *Mario Albertini teorico e militante*, *op. cit.*; Lucio Levi, *Il federalismo dalla comunità al mondo*, *op. cit.*; Mario Albertini, *Le radici storiche e culturali del federalismo europeo*, « Il Federalista », XLIX, n. 2 (2007).

10. D.J. Elazar, *Federalism as Grand Design*, « Publius », vol. 9, n. 4 (Autumn 1979), pp. 2.

11. See Mario Albertini, *Il federalismo*, *op. cit.*

to Albertini, though, no ideology can be defined simply by identifying it with a particular political institutional entity. In other words, federalism cannot be reduced to the mere concept of "federal State". Federalism, just like any other ideology, is a more complex and pervasive phenomenon[12] that can be defined in a realistic way, Albertini

12. It is now necessary to make some preliminary methodological remarks on the federalism–related terms used in this essay, whose "extent" is limited to the scope of this research in order to facilitate its comprehension. In the first place, it is necessary to remember that Albertini aimed at systematizing federalism, that is at putting it into a framework enabling its definition. Therefore, Alexandre Marc's «integral» federalism, Denis de Rougemont's «personalistic» federalism or Daniel Elazar's «biblical» federalism, could lead to a generalization of Albertini's well–defined and historically determined views, even if they clearly show a cultural federal–like matrix complementing the theories of the above–mentioned scholars. To this end, federalism needs an ideological systematization and a "timeline" highlighting the key moments of its historical development at the ideal, institutional and social levels; however, the analysis of such a complex phenomenon involves the detection of the fundamental preconditions (cultural and psychological) that it concurred in creating. In other words, a criterion is needed to detect a precise model to set up a comparison and to define the characteristics of «federalism», but it is not possible to prescind from the factors — particularly the religious ones — underlying the establishment of such a model, where the different aspects of the same elements that led to its creation are mixed together. It is therefore possible to agree with Levi, who stated that «The United States of America are the archetype of the federal model» and that all previous political entities, due to the lack of a functional system of federalism, cannot be classified as such (Lucio Levi, *Il federalismo dalla comunità al mondo, op. cit.*, p. 228). Likewise, it is not possible to define as fully federal — but culturally «pre–federal» and «politically (pseudo) federal» — either the first forms of association among ancient tribes, or alliances like the Greek *poleis* or the Italian city–states in the 12th and 13th centuries, or the Swiss city–states or the German principalities in the 16th century because, despite their being based on a *foedus*, they lack the essential features underlying modern federations [see Giuseppe Zecchini (ed. by), *Il federalismo nel mondo antico*, Milan 2005; on primitive federalism, see also D.J. Elazar, *Covenant and Commonwealth, op. cit.*, pp. 19–37]. Besides this clearly defined institutional model, we have to consider the cultural circumstances preluding or contributing to the setting–up of institutions conforming to any given established social behaviour. Such circumstances are related to cultural — and often even religious — factors that contributed to the establishment of a behavioural pattern which then became a shared cultural heritage and influenced the thought and the actions of a whole society. Cultural circumstances are instrumental in the development of a social and political phenomenon, and they manifest themselves well before the formation of the physiognomy of a politically–consolidated society; on the contrary, their presence anticipates their full achievement in a concrete political institutional model. American «federalism» and therefore the American Federation — a consolidated institutional model — resulted from a long and tortuous path followed by the «federal» idea and thought through cultural trends within reformed European and American Protestantism. This way, the cultural "circumstances" triggered by Calvinism led to the development of a secularized «pre–federal»–like *forma mentis*, which then generated political considerations and political institutional projects of a «(pseudo) federal» nature,

said, only through the broadening of the scope of enquiry and by considering it as « an independent social behaviour »; a close examination of the distinctive aspects of any independent social behaviour (*value*, *structure*, *social historical* context) can also lead to the understanding of the practical and theoretical conscience at the basis of its ideology[13]. In order to fully understand the core of this reasoning, it is necessary to analyze briefly this social behaviour in light of this theory.

The term *"value"* indicates the aim of a behaviour where both sensitivity and historically mature human ideals meet; in the case of federalism, this value corresponds to peace[14]. The term *"structure"*

that is, without the tools to fully define a modern federal reality. The only exception was Johannes Althusius's « protofederalism », founded on real federal aspects that anticipated the functional prerequisites of modern federalism. All these aspects of the federal culture paved the way for the necessary conditions for the birth of modern « federalism » with the American political institutional system. Therefore, the aim of this research is not to move the origin of federalism to the centuries before the creation of the United States, but to detect the cultural reasons underlying the establishment of the institutions of the first federation in history. For an overview of the developments of federalism according to the concept of *foedus* (*Covenant*), see D.J. ELAZAR, *Federalism as Grand Design, op. cit.*, pp. 1–8. See also CORRADO MALANDRINO, *Covenant e Covenantalism premoderni nell'elaborazione di Daniel Judah Elazar, op. cit.*, particularly *pp.* 121–2, where the author compares the medieval *foedus* (*Covenant*), intended as a hierarchical and organic principle, with « federalism » (*Covenantal*).

13. Obviously just a little part of society, often made of intellectual avant–gardes, is aware of the historical moment and of the need to materialize a new way of thinking or a new vision of life and the world. There lies a theoretical and practical conscience elaborating an ideology where new and independent social behaviours start to come to light. It is also necessary to remember that an independent social behaviour relies on the stratification of the cultural elements determining its birth, orientation and evolution. For now, however, it is enough to remember that, in the case of federalism, the ideology underlying a federal–like social behaviour was fully elaborated by Ernesto Rossi and Altiero Spinelli in the *Manifesto di Ventotene* in 1942, and later developed by the European Federalist Movement, the real theoretical and practical conscience of contemporary federalism. See ALTIERO SPINELLI and ERNESTO ROSSI, *Il Manifesto di Ventotene*, Turin 2001; ALTIERO SPINELLI, *La rivoluzione federalista: scritti 1944–1947*, Bologna 1996; ALTIERO SPINELLI, *Machiavelli nel 20 secolo: scritti dal confino e dalla clandestinità*, Bologna 1993; PIERO GRAGLIA, *Unità europea e federalismo: da Giustizia e libertà ad Altiero Spinelli*, Bologna 1996.

14. This is particularly true if related to freedom for liberalism, to equality for democracy, to social justice for socialism. Peace, on the other hand, is the peculiar value of federalism. The term "peace" doesn't imply either the interruption of strifes or the momentary absence of conflicts or a truce between two wars, but it is related to the absolute impossibility to declare war. Peace is a genuine value of federalism, as well as a stable and lasting condition, a permanent state established on the entitlement to same where the relationships among the States are ruled and granted by inappellable juridical regulations.

refers to the most appropriate way to achieve a goal and the best organization of power to establish that value in real life. In the case of federalism, such a system corresponds to the federal State[15]. Finally, the *historical social* context defines the « complex of the social and historical conditions for the spread and the consolidation of this behaviour »[16]. As far as federalism is specifically concerned, this means the rise of a pluralist society able to go beyond the division of human beings into classes and rival nations, and aiming at pursuing the principle of unity within diversity. As Albertini explained, every human behaviour characterizes a society and gives rise to a specific organization of political relations, as in the case of 18th century American society, which "produced" the first federal State in history[17]. However, as the spreading and the consolidation of a federal behaviour imply the existence of particular cultural conditions within a society in a given historical moment, it is possible to say, in agreement with Elazar, that « in the final analysis, the preservation [itself] of federalism

Peace, Albertini says, must not be confused « with the pacifism of States (UN), of political parties (internationalism) or of individual consciences (religious, moral or psychological ideas) », but it is « the organization of power turning the relationships of power among States into real juridical relationships » (MARIO ALBERTINI, *Le radici storiche e culturali del federalismo europeo*, op. cit., p. 126). The States are obviously requested to abandon the right to wage war, referring such power to a superior power able to impose internal order simply by means of law. Kant was the first to theorize the concepts of « perpetual peace » and « cosmopolitical right » of people, see *Per la pace perpetua*, in IMMANUEL KANT, *Scritti di storia, politica e diritto*, Bari 2002, *pp.* 163–207. On the concept of peace, see also MARIO ALBERTINI, *Il federalismo*, op. cit.; EMERY REVES, *Anatomia della pace*, Bologna 1990.

15. We must now briefly digress and mention the difference between "confederation" and "federation", especially about the use of these two terms within the scope of this research. A confederation differs from a federation because it is not a State. A federal State has a direct power over its citizens, as well as on federate States; a confederation, instead, is based on the principle of equality of the States rather than their citizens, and it aims to keep the State sovereignty intact. Confederations, Levi writes, are just « a variety of the broader category of alliances among States », differing in that they have a permanent diplomatic body to settle the disputes among States (LUCIO LEVI, *Il pensiero federalista*, op. cit., p. 14). This is meant to clarify that before the creation the United States there were no federal States but only federal visions of entities without any effective social and political organization able to fully accomplish the principles of federalism. Therefore, the use of the term "federalism" in reference to the history of Protestantism dealt with in this research (16th–18th century) is related to the principles of this ideology and not of confederalism, despite its lack of a clear connotation of the organization of power.

16. MARIO ALBERTINI, *Il federalismo*, « Il Federalista », anno XIII, n. 2 (1962), p. 92.

17. See MARIO ALBERTINI, *Il federalismo*, op. cit.

implies a "federal thinking" »[18], that is to say a constant trend towards "federal" ideals such as republicanism, constitutionalism and democratic participation. The establishment and preservation of federalism imply a « federal thought » that, in turn, implies the existence of a « political culture » reflecting the social behaviour of federalism.

Thus, if the *historical social* aspect represents the *conditio sine qua non* for the rise and maintenance of an ideology, through the full development of its ideal postulates and the establishment of a new political stability, culture – through which these new reference values have gradually come out – represents its core and precondition[19]. In fact, a new independent social behaviour postulates the existence of independent cultural characteristics. In this research we will see how some ethical trends, as well as some theological assumptions developed within the Protestant culture, have played a major role in steering some regions in the world towards a federal–like culture and social behaviour, thus suggesting some key political institutional[20] solutions to modern federalism. By asserting this,

18. Daniel J. Elazar, *Idee e forme del federalismo*, Milan 1998, p. 157.

19. Culture permeates the most sensitive part of society to new needs, it directs its thought and actions, and determines the choice of value enhanced by *avant–garde* movements aware of the ongoing historical process; subsequently, it orients its quest towards the most suitable political and institutional system to reach the goal set and then evolves into the fundamental value of an ideology. Once the breaking point with the old order is reached, the new society stands out and leads the inevitable change. On the nature of some cultural aspects of federalism, particularly the *Covenant*, see: Corrado Malandrino, *Covenant e Covenantalism premoderni nell'elaborazione di Daniel Judah Elazar, op. cit.*

20. In an introductory essay on Protestantism, Massimo Rubboli mentions the existence of a « Protestant identity ». Paul Tillich, German theologist and philosopher, states that « the potential energy » characterizing the Protestant identity creates « the Protestant principle », which « progressively manifests itself across the ages and geographical areas, creating a link between the Reformation and contemporary Protestantism » (Massimo Rubboli, *I protestanti. Da Lutero alle chiese, ai movimenti evangelici del nostro tempo*, Bologna 2007, p. 110). The « Protestant principle », together with the values incubated and developed since the Reformation, stimulated the dynamism of the Protestant environments and societies, pushing them to multiply and to foster « critical and reforming urges ». Such a spirit gave rise to an intense activism not only in the religious field, but also in politics, economics and social issues. The « Protestant principle », for instance, favoured the development of the assumptions of the federal principle, enabling its subsequent spread and development in favourable social contexts. It is not unusual to find within Protestantism the roots of ideas and trends which have given origin to real political principles, such as representative democracy and federalism, or to economic orientations, as in the case of the central role of vocation and the strong sense of individual responsibilty which indirectly affected the work ethics of the mercantile and middle classes during the creation of modern capitalism. It is also important to take into account the practical influence of the spirit of Protestantism in political and social disciplines, as in the case of the concept of *welfare*.

however, we are still far from debating federalism on a mature social and political level, that is to say from an ideological point of view; still, this allows us to give an excursus on the cultural roots of federalism underlying its social behaviour. Hereunder, we will go briefly through all of its aspects.

Every ideology comes to the fore when the institutional mechanism enabling it to get "real" becomes apparent, that is to say when such a mechanism is not only « a theory, a consideration on a turning point in history[21], but it becomes a positive, practical fact, as in the case of the birth of the first federal State[22], the United States. However, Albertini said the character of the society where this mechanism may set up and thrive is often ignored: in other words, « the federalist way of thinking and acting » and the traditional cultural influences at the basis of the federalist thought[23] remain unknown.

The « political culture » retrospectively used by the federalist ideology to consolidate its thesis is inevitably connected to the consider-

After the expulsion of religious orders, Protestant States started giving direct assistance to the sick and the destitute: that was the embryonic stage of a social State. The term itself comes from a theological book called *Wolfaria*, written by one of Luther's disciples, Johann Eberlin, who imagined a perfect State where everything "goes well" (*wohl fahren*). For further details on the above–mentioned themes, see: Michael Walzer, *La rivoluzione dei santi. Il puritanesimo all'origine del radicalismo politico*, Turin 1996; Max Weber's capital work, *L'etica protestante e lo spirito del capitalismo*, Milan 1991; Artemio Enzo Baldini, *Gli « Statuti di Wolfaria » di Johann Eberlin (1521)*, Turin 1986; Id., *Riforma luterana e utopia: gli « Statuti del Paese di Wolfaria » di Johann Eberlin*, « Il Pensiero politico », XIX, 1986 (« *Memorie dell'Accademia delle scienze di Torino* », *Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, Serie V, vol. X); Id., *Istanze utopiche e dibattito politico agli inizi della Riforma luterana* (www.misp.it/didattica/documenti_d.htm).

21. Nicoletta Mosconi, *Mario Albertini teorico e militante, op. cit.*, p. 89.

22. It is necessary to remember that at the moment of the creation of the United States of America the federal formula was totally unknown and unthinkable at that time, because of the connection noted by the traditional political thought between independence of the government, absolute sovereignty and the indivisibility of the State. The American constitution was the ripe fruit of a compromise among all forces: on the one hand, the 13 independent ex–colonies, which wanted to keep their full autonomy; on the other hand, those who hoped for the unity of these regions under one sole sovereign government. See Mario Albertini, *Le radici storiche e culturali del federalismo europeo, op. cit.* On the history of the United States of America see the classic work by Timothy Pitkin, *A Political and Civil History of the United States of America* (two volumes), New Haven 1828. As to recent studies on the origin of United States, see Bernard Bailyn and Gordon S. Wood, *The Great Republic: A History of American People*, Lexington–Massachusetts 1985. See also Clinton Rossiter's enthralling book *L'alba della Repubblica. Le origini della tradizione americana di libertà politica*, Pisa 1963.

23. See Mario Albertini, *Le radici storiche e culturali del federalismo europeo, op. cit.*

ations of the cultural events that helped detect and define the three aspects examined by Albertini within his theoretical enquiry on federalism. Such a political culture dates back to the 18th century, when Enlightenment developed a new universalistic vision of Reason and brought law to the state of supreme source of order by « inventing » new and brave institutional structures.

Thus, both necessity and opportunity to arrange peace through law, that is to say the aspect dealing with the absolute *value* of federalism, were theoretically proven for the first time, within the late 18th century political philosophical culture, in Kant's essay *Perpetual peace*[24]. Likewise, the *structural* aspect of federalism and its institutional background date back to the founding act of the United States of America and represent a watershed between this country and any other previous or succeeding confederal organization. As to the main features of a federal society and its relative *historical* and *social* aspects, it is necessary to say that the federalist political culture to this effect still lacks an independent and mature conscience. The face of federal society has greatly changed from its first developments in late 18th century Western America, as a consequence of the irreversible increase of economical, cultural, political and ecological interdependence between people and States which, following technical and scientific innovations as well as the great devastations of modern wars, has gradually become aware of the impossibility to manage a planet without the establishment of a global order to limit the claims of world actors through the action of international law[25].

It is thus plain that the cosmopolitism and rationalism of Enlightenment from a theoretical point of view, as well as the process of world globalization from a practical point of view, are the main areas of the continuous development of the political culture of federalism and its related social behaviour. The paragraph hereunder, instead, will be focused on some « cultural » factors that led to the definition and connotation of the above–mentioned federal society, in the attempt to explain the success of federalism in some contexts instead of others.

24. This text, written after the Peace of Basel in 1795 between Prussia and France, was preceded by a historical consideration written by Kant in 1784 under the title *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*. See Immanuel Kant, *Scritti di storia, politica e diritto*, op. cit.

25. For an in–depth analysis of this subject, see Mario Albertini, *Il federalismo*, op. cit.

As explained by Charles McCoy, however, it is not easy to define the various original guidelines of the development « of a movement as widespread and pervasive in modern society as federalism ». Many questions still remain unanswered and this research has to face many unsolved methodological and interpretational problems, but McCoy traces the origin of federalism back to the cultural environment of the Protestant Reformation, with the revival and the revaluation of the concept of *foedus*, which later had a great importance on American federalism; in particular, McCoy states that Zurich is the place « where diverse influences came to focus and produced a movement and a pattern of thought that can be identified as federal »[26]. If this city was the cultural context where a first attempt of « federal thought » took place, Northern American colonies provided the social and cultural background for a full achievement of modern federalism. On a general level, it is appropriate to reassert that the cultural aspects relating to the origin of both federalist thought and practice before the 18th century cannot be seen as the accomplished expression of a federalist culture, despite the plain presence of federal–like cultural elements. This was due, firstly, to the lack of an organization able to express fully the principles of federalism before the Philadelphia Convention in 1787 – that is to say a political institutional formula able to carry out the ambitions of a federal–like society; secondly, the federal thought prior to the birth of the United States of America was not part of political science, in the strict sense of the word, but of the religious thinking inspired by the reformed Protestantism, particularly within biblical exegesis and theological and ecclesiological investigations[27] that, despite their religious nature, often had political implications.

Since the very beginning of the Reformation, the term « federal » has attracted the attention of exegetics and has pushed Protestant scholars to review the covenant theology in light of a new and free reading of the Holy Scriptures. As stated by Miegge, « the idea of a covenant (*foedus*) between God and his people [...] largely con-

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26. Charles S. McCoy and J. Wayne Baker, *Fountainhead of Federalism. Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenantal Tradition*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

27. The only exception to this rule is represented by Johannes Althusius, whom Elazar ranked as a precursor of federalism and the father of protofederalism.

figures the peculiar identity of the reformed theological tradition »
ranging « from Zwingli to Calvin up to Karl Barth's *Dogmatica eccle-
siale* »[28]. Besides, the federal thought has been the core not only of a
long theological and ecclesiological review by the Calvinists which
showed a particularly strong interest and a remarkable affinity with
its principles, but has also "accompanied" the development and the
organization of Protestant churches over the centuries, thus becoming
the starting point and the main tool of the ecumenical dialogue[29].

The federal thought was not the subject only of an exegetic and
intellectual analysis carried out by some reformed theologists be-

28. Mario Miegge, *Sulla politica riformata: « vocatio » e « foedus »*, in Elena Bein Ricco
(ed. by), *Modernità, politica e protestantesimo*, Turin 1994, p. 152.

29. On the term « ecumenical » and its correct use, see: Willem Vissr't Hooft, *The
Word "Ecumenical" — its History and Use*, in Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill (ed.
by), *History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517–1948*, Geneva 2004, vol. I, Appendix I, p. 735. It
is also necessary to remember that many Protestant associative organizations in charge of
the interecclesiastical communion and dialogue have confederal or federal characteristics,
as in the case of the World Council of Churches (www.oikoumene.org), the Baptist World
Alliance (www.bwanet.org), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (warc.jalb.de), the
Lutheran World Federation (www.lutheranworld.org), the Conference of European Churches
(www.cec–kek.org) and the Federation of Evangelical Churches (www.fedevangelica.it) in Italy.
See Ermanno Genre, Sergio Rostagno, Giorgio Tourn, *Le chiese della Riforma. Storia, teologia,
prassi*, Cinisello Balsamo (Milano) 2001; Giorgio Bouchard, *Chiese e movimenti evangelici del
nostro tempo*, Turin 2003. In the framework of the Protestant historical and ecclesiological
tradition, the federal system is seen as the most appropriate tool to establish unitarian religious
organizations able to promote the cooperation, the rapprochement and the reunion of the
Churches at the local, national and international levels. Protestantism was born as a plurality,
and that is what it still is, and it is a breeeding ground for freedom which does not leave out
the dialogue and unitarian structures on the basis of some shared values and within the limits
of common goals. Moreover, these inter / super–denominational or inter / supra–confessional
organizations carry out general tasks such as doctrinal and ecclesiological research as well
as some activities concerning religious life, social action, evangelization and inter–religious
relationships, leaving each Church in control of the independent development and execution
of ordinary business. It is interesting to see how the federal union — from a religious point of
view — is defined in the first volume of the *History of the Ecumenical Movement* (*op. cit.*, p. 807):
« in ecclesiastical affairs, a federation of Churches is a co–operative organization for limited and
particular objectives, in which each constituent Church retains its full independence and liberty
of action. Such federation involves the setting–up of a special central organization, but does not
involve the fusion of the existing organizations of the separate bodies ». In the same volume,
see also: Stephen Charles Neill, *Intercommunion*, in Appendix II, p. 741; and a synoptic picture
of the history of inter / super–ecclesiastical organizations within Protestantism in the world by
Stephen Charles Neill, *Table of plans of union and reunion 1910–1952*, in Appendix to charter 10,
in Ruth Rouse and Stephen C. Neill (ed. by), *History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517–1948*, *op.
cit.*, p. 496.

tween the 16th and 17th centuries and revolving around the concepts of Covenant and *foedus*[30], but instead it was the result of incidental cultural implications coming from the secularisation of the most advanced claims of the Protestant Reformation[31]. Such claims, once started, had a disruptive effect on the old feudal, medieval society and promoted a modern merchant bourgeois society where pre–federal and pre–national forces helped — quite inaccurately, though — to outline the face of modern Europe. The idea of freedom, stemming from humanism and the theological considerations on predestination that shook the ancient order to its foundations, as well as the fragile balance between *Imperium* and *Sacerdotium*, crushed the old *Respublica christiana* and started the era of national States.

On the one hand, the events related to the Protestant Reformation, the rise of different confessional currents and the need to organize the Churches to stand both internal and external menaces from the religious, political and military actions of the Counter–Reformation,

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30. For an etymological and philological explanation of the term, see Corrado Mandrino, *Foedus (confoederatio)*, and Id., *Symbiosis (symbiotiké, factum, confoederatio)*, in Francesco Ingravalle and Corrado Malandrino (eds.), *Il lessico della Politica* di *Johannes Althusius. L'arte della simbiosi santa, giusta, vantaggiosa e felice*, Florence 2005, *pp.* 187–201. See also: Corrado Malandrino, *Covenant e Covenantalism premoderni nell'elaborazione di Daniel Judah Elazar, op. cit.*; Id., *Teologia federale*, « Il Pensiero Politico », XXXIII, n. 3 (1999), *pp.* 427–46; Id., *Federalismo. Storia, idee, modelli*, Rome 1998, pp. 11–7; Mario Miegge, *Sulla politica riformata: « vocatio » e « foedus »*, in Elena Bein Ricco, *Modernità, politica e protestantesimo, op. cit.*, pp. 137–66.

31. The bibliography on the Protestant Reformation is immense and includes not only many essays on its various distinctive features, but also many monographies and biographies of illustrious reformers. In this research we will obviously refer the reader only to some works of particular importance for the themes developed herein. It is impossible to prescind from Bainton's classic work on the history ot the Reformation. See Roland H. Bainton, *La Riforma protestante*, Turin 2000. The same work features a rich bibliography, updated in 1990 by L. Perini. See also Valdo Vinay, *La riforma protestante*, Paideia 2011. Among the recently published studies, see Wiliam G. Naphy, *La rivoluzione protestante. L'altro Cristianesimo*, Milan 2010; Giorgio Tourn, *I protestanti una rivoluzione. Dalle origini a Calvino*, Turin 1993, vol. I; Id., *I protestanti una società. Da Coligny a Guglielmo d'Orange*, vol. II, Turin 2007; Alister E. McGrath, *Il pensiero della Riforma*, Turin 2000; Elio Guerriero (notes and commentaries), *La chiesa della Riforma. Storia del cristianesimo 1878–2005, op. cit*. See also some short introductory essays to the history of the Reformation: Luise Schorn–Schütte, *La Riforma protestante*, Bologna 1998; Emanuele Fiume, *Il protestantesimo, un'introduzione*, Turin 2006; Massimo Rubboli, *I protestanti, op. cit.*; Rolf Decot, *Breve storia della Riforma protestante*, Brescia 2007. For a useful and fascinating in–depth analysis of the cultural climate of the Reformation, see Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Riforma. La divisione della casa comune europea (1490–1700)*, Rome 2010.

provided the background for the first considerations of the origin, meaning and use of the biblical *foedus*[32]; on the other hand, the merchant and cultural ferment of European society in the 16th and 17th centuries and the irreversible disintegration of Europe's spiritual and political unity, undermined by the political and confessional claims of cities and principalities and by the hegemonic policies of the rising national States, pushed some reformed scholars to relate to the principles of the federal thought in a cosmopolitan and anti–absolutist perspective.

In this light, Althusius's extraordinarily avant–garde *Politica methodice digesta*[33] represents « the most sophisticated and systematic expression of the "monarchomach" trend of continental Calvinism »[34], confuting the principles of absolutism in favour of an *ante litteram*[35] political federalism. Equally impressive is Johannes Amos Comenius's religious irenism, who – in his *Panhortosia*[36] – outlines a global institutional architecture aimed at granting peace between people and Churches by means of three Councils: the *Collegio della luce* (College of Light), the *Corte Mondiale della pace* (World Court of Peace) and the *Consiglio Ecclesiastico* (Ecclesiastical Council)[37]. Finally, the 18th century offered the federal thought more possibilities to experiment, and actually apply – even if in

32. This was the case of Zurich, Geneva and Strasbourg at the time of Zwingli and Bullinger, Calvin and Bucer. These cities were real experimental laboratories, both in the field of theological thinking and in ecclesiastical organization.

33. See Johannes Althusius, *Politica methodice digesta atque exemplis sacris et profanis illustrate*, Herbornae Nassoviorum, s.n.t., 1614. On Althusius's *Politica* see Francesco Ingravalle and Corrado Malandrino (eds.), *Il lessico della* Politica *di Johannes Althusius*, op. cit.

34. Mario Miegge, *Il federalismo di Johannes Althusius*, in Fiorella De Michelis Pintecuda and Gianni Francioni (eds.), *Ideali repubblicani in età moderna*, op. cit., Pisa 2002, p. 53.

35. Althusius developed a political theory based on a federal principle which can be seen as the forerunner of some theoretical and functional aspect of modern federalism, and therefore it can be defined as "protofederal". Suffice it to think of the principle of subsidiarity which — out of the specific meaning given to this term in the last century —, Malandrino explains, bases « the management of power within the State respecting the complexity of the society and the levels of representativeness and government ». In this sense, Althusius differs from the way of thinking of the *respublica* of his contemporaries (Bodin), and he could be seen almost as a « forerunner of what is now called "multilevel governance" » (see Corrado Malandrino, *Calvinismo politico, repubblicanesimo, "sussidiarietà" e lessico politico althusiano*, in Francesco Ingravalle and Corrado Malandrino (eds.), *Il lessico della* Politica *di Johannes Althusius*, op. cit., p. XLII.).

36. See Jan Amos Komensky, *Panorthosia. La riforma universale del mondo*, Verona 2003.

37. See *Ibidem*.

a limited way – its principles, thus steering towards modern federalism. Paradoxically, this did not happen in Europe, home of the federalist thought, but in Northern America, because of its favourable religious, political, economic and territorial conditions, and the positive historical circumstances. The French Revolution, instead, suppressed all federalist ambitions at the expense of an unprecedented strengthening of the model of centralized national State, thus marking irreversibly Europe's destiny; on the other hand, the Philadelphia Convention organized the first federal society in history, following up the cultural conditions at the basis of the behaviour and the « federal way of thinking » of American Europeans, establishing a new and revolutionary idea of power[38]. It is no accident if some founding fathers of the United States were of Protestant origin and of liberal religious orientation, particularly Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and James Madison[39], authors of « The Federalist », who made a crucial contribution to the drafting of the American Constitution[40].

38. In this political event, the traditional cultural aspects of the reformed Protestantism mix and merge with the new social and institutional models which have since become the expression of the new political culture of federalism, before and after the setting–up process of the American Federation.

39. Alexander Hamilton, born from Rachel Faucett Lavine (of Huguenot origin), was Presbyterian, while John Jay, also coming from a traditionally Huguenot family, was a member of the Episcopal Church of the United States of America. Finally, James Madison, who belonged to the Episcopal Church, was one of the authors of the Statute for Religious Freedom in Virginia, together with Thomas Jefferson. He, Rubboli wrote, « was influenced by John Witherspoon, a leading exponent of the Scottish Enlightenment, merging theology and federal political philosophy, whose origins dated back to Bullinger's Zurich passing through the reformed communities of Holland and Germany » (MASSIMO RUBBOLI, *I protestanti. op. cit.*, p. 109). The political thought of many of these scholars was influenced by the Enlightenment rationalism, which was largely spread at that time. On the political thought of the authors of « The Federalist » see: ALEXANDER HAMILTON, JOHN JAY, JAMES MADISON, *Il Federalista*, Turin 1997; ALEXANDER HAMILTON, *Lo Stato federale*, Bologna 1987. On Jefferson's political thought see LUIGI MARCO BASSANI, *Contro lo Stato nazionale. Federalismo e democrazia in Thomas Jefferson*, Bologna 1995. On the influence and the role played by religion on the Founding Fathers of the American Constitution, see DANIEL L. DREISBACH — MARK D. HALL — JEFFRY H. MORRISON, *The Founders on God and Government*, New York 2004. Finally, for the biographical notes on the authors of « The Federalist » see: WILLARD STERNE RANDALL, *Alexander Hamilton. A life*, New York 2003 and GARRY WILLS, *James Madison*, New York 2002.

40. On the origin, meaning and history of American Constitutionalism, see GUIDO ABBATTISTA, *La Rivoluzione americana*, Rome–Bari 1998; NICOLA MATTEUCCI, *La Rivoluzione americana: una rivoluzione costituzionale*, Bologna 1987; CHARLES H. MCILWAIN, *La Rivoluzione americana. Una interpretazione costituzionale*, Bologna 1965; B. BAILY and G. S. WOOD, *The Great Republic: A History of American People*, *op. cit.*; TIZIANO BONAZZI, *La Rivoluzione americana*,

Therefore, the first part of this research will be focused on the definition of the cultural profile of federalism within the bounds of the Protestant tradition. As already stated, culture is a social and personal heritage from which the deepest level of conscience draws to substantiate its thought and to build up its will, so to justify a socially independent behaviour. Hence, we are now going to track down the thread of this mental process in light of the historical and cultural events of the Protestant Reformation.

In the following pages, we will then try to explain the cultural relationships between federalism and Protestantism, together with an analysis of the values of Protestant tradition that fostered federal thought and behaviour, the relationships between the theological and political nature of federalism, the organizational patterns of life within the reformed communities that had an influence on the establishment of new political institutions, including the federal ones, and the contexts and the ultimate reasons for the success and the spreading of federalism, well before it became the full expression of a modern political culture, and finally the type of Europe the Protestants were aiming at.

1.1. The Protestant « revolution »

After a brief explanation of the concept of federalism and the theory underlying this research, it is now necessary to look at how its principles started appearing within the religious tradition of Protestantism, particularly within reformed Protestantism, thus giving rise to the cultural conditions necessary to form its idea.

Before getting into a specific analysis of both the confessional and theological aspects of the Reformation having a direct influence on the development of modern ethics and the creation of ideas and political practices, including the federal ones, it is necessary to introduce the phenomenon of Protestantism and to fit it into a wider historical process.

The tumultuous period characterized by the rise of the Protestant Reformation in Europe represented an extremely complex and diffi-

Bologna 1986; HANNAH ARENDT, *Sulla Rivoluzione*, Milan 1983; On the Calvinism influences in American political thought see DAVID W. HALL, *Genevan Reformation And The American Founding*, Lanham 2005.

cult phase in modern history, marked not only by economic, political, cultural and religious changes, but also by the irreparable rift with the medieval order, based on the political and confessional unit of Western Christianity. Such an order was imposed and granted by the authority of the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire[41], whose powers had diminished due to the mutual competition on their spheres of influence, thus giving rise to a social and political instability that let national monarchies affirm their desire for power. These kingdoms cast their ambitions on Europe and strengthened state structures through the ramification and the centralization of power. This process led to the creation of the structure of modern sovereign States (the future national States) and the international system based on the principle of « balance » between continental powers, despite its weakness and its constant subjugation to the hegemonic designs of the greatest power of the moment[42]. A new order was therefore taking form in Europe.

The establishment of new rising forces led to a redistribution of the balance of powers and to the beginning of a period of fluctuation where the Western world was torn between the two principles of unity and plurality. According to Dehio, « for more than a millennium there comes to pass an oscillation between the tendency towards unification, that nonetheless never leads to full unity, and the tendency towards fragmentation, that however never reaches full

41. Many events concurred in creating a situation of chaos and instability. Firstly, the centre of the European economy shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, thus putting an end to a medieval–like economy, focused on trade relations among the Italian maritime republics, Constantinople and the Arab world, with the establishment of new trading centres in America, Africa and Asia, respectively, by the Portuguese, the Spanish and the Flemish. Secondly, the political structure of Europe was changing, mainly following the rise and the establishment of the national States and their inclination to centralization. Moreover, starting from the second half of the 16th century, European society was facing a serious cultural crisis: the Renaissance, the rediscovery of mankind's central role and of the classical world deteriorated definitively the traditional values of late medieval society. Finally, the religious reformation carried out by Protestant movements was instrumental in promoting and developing the new values of modern society. For an in–depth historical analysis of this period, see Giorgio Spini, *Storia dell'età moderna*, Turin 1971; Fernand Braudel, *Il Mediterraneo. Lo spazio, la storia, gli uomini e le tradizioni*, Rome 2002; Giovanni Tabacco and Grado G. Merlo, *Medioevo*, vol. I, *La civiltà europea nella storia mondiale*, Bologna 1989; Alberto Tenenti, *L'età moderna*, vol. II, *La civiltà europea nella storia mondiale*, Bologna 1989.

42. For a fascinating picture of the development and the decline of national States within the framework of a universal political order, see Ludwig Dehio, *Equilibrio o egemonia. Considerazioni sopra un problema fondamentale della storia politica moderna*, Bologna 1995.

dissolution »[43]. The Königsberg–born historian ended his analysis by stating that, afterwards, these two trends came in with « diverse forces and circumstances ».

This is the case of 16th century Europe, where the two orders granted by unity were subjected to tearing centrifugal thrusts, followed by the inevitable fragmentation of power. The evolution of this historical period, aimed at that moment at supporting the latent impulse towards the disgregation of the existing reality, links up with two seemingly unrelated « forces » and « circumstances ». The first circumstance, strictly military and political, is provided by the hegemonic ambitions cast by the great powers on the dying system of Italian principalities, as clearly stated by the war between Charles V and Francis I. The rise of national monarchies in Europe, and their steady transformation into rigidly–centralized bodies, is the driving force behind the disintegration of the political order. The conflict stemming from this situation marked, on the one hand, the final decline of the ambitions of the Holy Roman Empire in Europe and, on the other hand, the rise of new European powers such as Spain and most of all France, as well as of England's extra–European power; this rise led also to the success of a power system based on the absolute sovereignty of the States.

Europe had to face not only a political division, but also the intimate tragedy of its spiritual disgregation, to which the two other factors of change refer. The second circumstance, of a social and religious origin, consists of a widespread "awakening" of spirituality and Christian pity that led to the second element of force: Luther's reforming activity and his battle against the ecclesiastic authorities[44]. The consequences

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43. Ludwig Dehio, *Equilibrio o egemonia*, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

44. Luther did not mean to break with Rome. Instead, he wanted to start a reawakening within the Church itself; despite his good initial designs, Luther's crusade against simony and corruption got out of hand and the Reformation turned into a schismatical movement. The Pope tried in vain to restrain Luther's rebellion through a public recantation of his theological position and submission to the ecclesiastical authority. Luther, instead, declared that religion is based on the individuality of faith, enlightened by all believers through the Bible. Finally, the public burning of the papal bull of excommunication sanctioned his final break with Rome. The consequences of this insubordination against the Pope affected political events and dismembered the unity of European society. At a certain moment, despite the desire and the will of the believers and the Lutheran subjects of the Empire to « declare themselves » (*publice protestamur*) in favour of a reconcilement

of his actions were unstoppable and the Protestant Reformation set in motion by the Wittenberg–born monk was, in Bainton's words, « the great disruptive force of medieval Catholicism »[45]. The struggle of Protestants for independence had the same shattering effect as the claiming of the principle of liberty in the 18th and 19th centuries[46].

Despite the apparent lack of correlation between the two above–mentioned contexts — although they both aim at the disgregation of an order — the relationship between secularity and spirituality becomes evident in the case of religious wars[47]. At the very heart of the old Empire, the convergence of the religious requests presented by reformators and aiming at obtaining confessional freedom, as well as the requests from imperial cities and the German principalities, pointing at getting a good level of independence, and national monarchies trying to assert themselves internationally, caused the disintegration of Europe's social and political body.

Therefore, the scenery at the beginning of modern times is greatly unstable and Europe is torn by strong internal struggles, fostered by old ambitions to unity, and with new forces trying to conquer their own space and identity. In such a context, the principle of pluralism

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with Rome, the « riot » of the reformers clearly expressed the intolerance against the ecclesiastical hierarchies. On the one hand, the corruption of the Curia weakened the devotion of the believers; on the other hand, the Church was completely absorbed by the exercise of temporal power and neglected the spiritual needs of the Christian community, which was oppressed by taxes and the rigid despotism of the Church. The « revolutionary » action of the Lutherans and the other evangelical reformers, who aimed at a more direct relationship between God and the individual conscience, took place in this political and religious context.

45. Roland H. Bainton, *La Riforma protestante*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

46. Despite the freedom in the renewal of the Bible and the variety of researches and religious projects of the Protestant trends, the Reformation never aimed at institutionalizing a new Church, but it preserved for a long time the perception that Christianity should keep its unity, even if it needed a profound reformation. In actual fact, the Reformation originated a multiform variety of Churches and trends; moreover, a certain exegetical freedom, as well as a marked sense of the individual spiritual space and a widespread, yet limited, confessional tolerance (as in the case of Michael Servetus in Geneva and the persecutions of the Anabaptists) contributed to the rise of the ecumenical dimension of the Christian unity. On one side, there was the unitarian tension strained by the centrality of Christ (Christology); on the other side there was the unavoidable diversity of the interpretations and the various possibilites of the sole vocation. It is no accident that Protestantism is defined as a « unity within diversity ».

47. See Corrado Vivanti, *Le guerre di religione nel Cinquecento*, Bari 2007; see also Henri Lapeyre, *Le monarchie europee del XVI secolo. Le relazioni internazionali*, Milan 1994.

prevails on unity, that is to say that both in religious and political life – with obvious consequences on the social fabric – a certain tendency towards self–determination prevails, thus determining a greater fragmentation at the expense of unity. The resulting minor bodies aim at an internal unity to preserve them in the long term. This process, however, is achieved through two different ways of organizing the power: one is focused on its centralization and the other on its distribution. This is the background within which it is possible to detect the antecedents and ideological premises to the rising model of centralized national State, as well as the first federal or semi–federal political and religious experiences[48]. Beside that, both proto–nationalism and proto–federalism fall within the reorganization of political and religious pluralism in the Renaissance. Proto–federalism, however, is based on various confederal or consociative systems[49] and is clearly

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48.   Within the Holy Roman Empire, temporal and spiritual powers were shared between the imperial court and the Roman Curia, and both had a deep influence on each other. The Empire, based on feudal–like hierarchical structures, progressively adopted a fragile confederal structure including reigns, dukedoms, counties, episcopates and imperial cities. During the Holy Roman Empire many experiences of confederal and semifederative nature took place, in conjunction with the formation of the national States. Even the alliances, just like the national monarchies, were established to protect themselves and to get a wider independence from the Empire at first, and then with the Roman Church through the Reformation and the creation of national Churches. The first alliances among commercial cities in central Europe were made to provide mutual aid or assistence, as in the case of the « Lombard League » (1167–1250), the « Hanseatic League » (1158–1669), the « Eternal League of the Three Forest Cantons » in Switzerland (1291), the « Schmalkaldic League », created by German Protestant princes with political and religious aims (1531) and, finally, the confederation of the « United Provinces of The Netherlands » (1579–1795), founded on « ideological and religious "pillars" » (DANIEL J. ELAZAR, *Idee e forme del federalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 41). In Europe, the first, real federation was Switzerland, established in 1848. Germany became a federal State in 1871, but only formally because this date marked the beginning of a nationalistic–like centralization process around Prussia, cleverly carried out by Bismarck. It is interesting to note that, within the unity of the Holy Roman Empire, a wide religious and political pluralism developed from the 16th century. This gave origin to two different types of political practice and thought which contributed to shape the structure of the modern State; on the one hand, there was the confederal or semifederal State, typical of independent political realities such as cities, provinces and cantons, and its contract theory of power; on the other hand, there was the absolutist State of national monarchies, where the power given to the king by divine will was strongly centred on the monarch and his court, and later on his bureaucratic apparatus and central administration. For an analysis of the condition of Switzerland, Germany and Holland relative to the difference between federal and confederal structure, see: ALEXANDER HAMILTON, *Lo Stato federale*, *op. cit.*, pp. 85–98.

49.   The most interesting and important example of consociation in modern protofeder-

distinct from actual federalism, born at the end of the 18th century in the American continent following the creation of the United States of America. In any event, there is a tight bond — and even a direct cultural and ideological descendance — between the first forms of federalism experienced in some reformed communities spanning the 16th and 17th centuries and the more mature modern federalism.

Ultimately, it is arguable that the medieval heritage represents « an element of great importance » to understand modern federalism, reasserting once again the discrepancy between the medieval « political pluralism », partially carried out until the French Revolution, and « modern federalism », born with the establishment of the United States of America[50]. Pluralism, however, is undoubtedly a necessary achievement and an unavoidable aspect of federalism. Daniel Elazar himself emphasized this connection and stated that « pluralism is [. . .] intimately related to federal democracy »[51], whereas it may not be strictly necessary for the operation of any other type of democracy. However, it is undeniable that Protestantism made a very important cultural contribution to the genesis of modern federalism, whose assumptions can be found in late medieval pluralism. As a matter of fact, Reformation contributed to « shatter the structure of the previous communities », thus causing a political and religious chaos[52], and making the « creation of new forms of local self–government and identificaton » unavoidable. At the same time, the principles of the Calvinist Reformation brought with them those needs for modernity that led to the « collapse of the old aristo-

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alism was described by Althusius in his *Politica methodice digesta*. See: Francesco Ingravalle and Corrado Malandrino (eds.), *Il lessico della* Politica *di Johannes Althusius. L'arte della simbiosi santa, giusta, vantaggiosa e felice, op. cit.*; Giuseppe Duso, *Althusius e l'idea federalista*, « Quaderni Fiorentini », n. 21 (1992), pp. 611–22; Giuseppe Duso, *Sulla genesi del moderno concetto di società: la « consociatio » di Althusius e la « socialitas » di Pufendorf*, « Filosofia Politica », n. 1 (1996), pp. 5–31; Mario Miegge, *Il federalismo di Johannes Althusius, op. cit.*; Corrado Malandrino, *Federalismo. Storia, idee, modelli, op. cit.* For further analysis on the the subject, see the bibliographic list of the most important works in Corrado Malandrino, *Calvinismo politico, repubblicanesimo, "sussidiarietà" e lessico politico althusiano, op. cit.*, p. XIX, nota 6. Finally, see the Corrado Malandrino and Luca Savarino's (eds.) capital work *Calvino e il calvinismo politico, op. cit..*

50. See Carl J. Friedrich, *L'uomo, la comunità, l'ordine politico*, Bologna 2002, pp. 257–307.

51. Daniel J. Elazar, *Idee e forme del federalismo, op. cit.*, p. 77.

52. See: Thomas O. Hueglin, *The Idea of Empire: Conditions for Integration and Disintegration in Europe*, « Publius », XII, n. 3 (1982), pp. 11–42.

cratic principles »[53], by replacing them with the republican ones and by adopting a new contractual theory of power, based on the concept of *foedus*. Thus, an alternative type of political organization of the State gradually started to take shape from the 16th century, in contrast with the then–developing unitary sovereign State (then, national), and whose most meaningful example was Althusius's proto–federalism. Therefore, the emancipation process of the individual conscience triggered by the Reformation and bringing with it a new concept of freedom, led to the establishment of a multitude of « independent » communities and social and political entities that carried to the creation of modern federalist, democratic and republican systems[54].

Leaving out the events related to the history of States, their conflicts and religious wars, we will therefore try to describe more accurately the implications and the connections between pre–modern federalism and Protestantism. In particular, we will focus on the social and cultural consequences of the first Protestantism and the fragmentation process that involved the Christian world; we will then highlight the political implications of some key precepts of the Reformation that point to the basis of a *forma mentis* preluding the federal thought, developed afterwards by the Calvinist religious experience. In a sense, the protestant Reformation was a « revolution »[55] because it caused,

53. *Ibidem*, p. 91.

54. « Christianity changed from hierarchical and monarchical — Paolo Ricca writes — to corporate and assembly, at least within Protestantism, even if not in a uniform and generalized way. This largely contributed to the overtaking of feudal–like relationships and paved the way to democracy. Protestantism and democracy are intimately congenial » (Paolo Ricca, *Il cristianesimo e l'Europa, un rapporto complesso*, interview by Giuseppe Platone, in FCEI and UICCA (eds.), *I protestanti e l'Europa*, Rome 2003, pp. 125–6).

55. Even if the Reformation was not a revolution in the modern sense of the term, it was surely a momentous event followed by a deep spiritual, social and political renewal. During one of his famous lectures (XII) on the *Histoire de la Civilisation en Europe*, Guizot used these words to describe the rise of the Reformation: « A mon avis, la Réforme n'a été ni un accident, le résultat de quelque grand hasard, de quelque intérêt personnel, ni une simple vue d'amélioration religieuse, le fruit d'une Utopie d'humanité et de vérité. Elle a eu une cause plus puissante que tout cela, et qui domine toutes les causes particulières. Elle a été un grand élan de liberté de l'esprit humain, un besoin nouveau de penser, de juger librement, pour son compte, avec ses seules forces, des faits et des idées que jusque–là l'Europe recevait ou était tenue de recevoir des mains de l'autorité. C'est une grande tentative d'affranchissement de la pensée humaine; et pour appeler les choses par leur nom, une insurrection de l'esprit humain contre le pouvoir absolu dans l'ordre spirituel. Tel est, selon moi, le véritable caractère, le caractère général et dominant de la Réforme »

within Christianity and, as a consequence, in social relationships, the same reaction provoked by the constitution of sovereign States (well before they were « national ») on the political relationships within the European continent and then on the Western political culture. The Protestant schism represented a crucial moment in the quest of an individual — yet somehow universal — independence underlying today's modern federal and democratic systems.

« In the history of modern Europe there is — Chabod wrote — a peculiar parallelism between religious and civil societies in their fortunes and revolutions »[56]. Such a parallelism can be traced also in the thought of François Guizot, the French Calvinist historian, who confirmed the similarities between these two societies: « quelle frappante similitude de destinée — Guizot exclaimed — se rencontre, dans l'histoire de l'Europe moderne, entre la société religieuse et la société civile, dans les révolutions qu'elles ont eu à subir »[57]. However, he stressed the primacy of the religious society over the civil one, which, in his opinion, has always paved the way through the spiritual emancipation of mankind well before the prefiguration of the spiritual emancipation of citizens. According to Guizot, the Reformation represented the starting point of modern Europe because of the predominance of « le libre examen, la liberté de l'esprit humain »[58] at that time. It is crucial to understand the nature of the historical events linked to the passage from the Middle Ages to the modern age and its political implications.

The Protestant Reformation had a major impact on society, because it prejudiced the ancient political stability and clearly expressed its opposition to authority and the centralization of power[59]. On the one

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(François Guizot, *Histoire de la Civilisation en Europe depuis la chute de l'empire romain jusqu'a la revolutiom française*, Sixième édition, Paris 1959, p. 336.

  56. Federico Chabod, *Storia dell'idea d'Europa*, Bari 1998, p. 155.

  57. François Guizot, *Histoire de la Civilisation en Europe*, *op. cit.*, p. 349.

  58. *Ibidem*, p. 351.

  59. Guizot describes the Reformation as a « revolution against the system of pure monarchy, against absolute power within the spiritual order »; the Protestant Revolution gave Christian society an overpowering yearning for freedom and autonomy which, once secularized, became an effective power able to contrast the « "sole" supremacy of a group or trend », the only antidote to the « absolute, total predominance of just one principle, of just one class », carrier of « political tyranny » and social immobility. (Federico Chabod, *Storia dell'idea d'Europa*, *op. cit.*, p. 154). Guizot attached religious society to the primacy of

hand, the absolutist character of the Catholic Church had become an obstacle to the free expression of belief and the management of the ecclesiastical communities located far from Rome[60]; on the other hand, the Emperor's interference in local matters clashed with the political and economic interest of the emerging classes and with the hegemonic aims of the German princes. Bainton believed that the rising system of the national States, seen as the great revolution in Europe's political structure in the 16th century, had benefited from a chequered policy implemented by the Catholic Church, which in turn supported and thwarted feudal conflicts according to its interests, thus damaging the stability of the Empire[61]. According to Bainton, Protestant movements were also not exempt from responsibilities because, in their clashes with Rome, they were in a symmetrical position in relation to the anti–imperial policy carried out by the German principalities. This fact explains why Lutheranism is generally linked to the development of German nationalism[62].

This hypothesis seems to be partially plausible because German Protestantism made use of the help of the German princes and played on their patriotic spirit to establish itself against Roman Catholicism. In order to avoid any misunderstanding, however, it is necessary to stress that Protestants supported all « national » States fighting against Rome, but not because they cultivated real « national » feelings[63]. In fact, Bainton himself stated that Protes-

having promoted and deeply renewed the universal values, in sharp contrast to the ancient powers, ahead of their time and showing the way to civil society.

60. According to Bainton, « the more the status and power of the Church diminished, the more its organization centralized and its demands became more marked ». The great historian of the Reformation explains how the papacy, after the schism, was halfway between an Italian seigniory and a European power, « without forgetting its claim to represent Christ on earth » (Roland H. Bainton, *La Riforma protestante, op. cit.*, p. 27).

61. See Roland H. Bainton, *La Riforma protestante, op. cit.*, p. 210.

62. Giuseppe Gangale, one of the most important intellectuals of Italian Protestantism in the 20th century, described the accidental connection between the Reformation and the birth of nationalism: « The Reformation was able to dismantle, through national States, the Roman unity that proto–Christianity could not destroy, and that was its positive value. However, as its universalistic function transcended national particularisms, this was both its first step and it first damage. The Reformation, in order to foster the consolidation of nationalities against Catholicism, became a pawn in the princes' hands and had to wait for a long time before its self–denial gave origin to its new rise » (Giuseppe Gangale, *Itinerario del cristianesimo*, « Conscientia », 28 March 1925).

63. Luther, in his pamphlet *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, where he

tantism never wanted to « favour a particular state structure, but to promote the freedom to practise »[64] true religion[65]. As a matter of fact, after the burning of the papal bull in Wittenberg, during the Diet of Worms in 1521 Luther faced and defied the Emperor with his unappelable words: « I cannot go against my conscience ». Therefore, he contested both Catholic and Roman–German authorities, with the intention to contrast to Catholic authority not a « nation » but the freedom of conscience[66].

denied the Pope the right to deal with political and earthly issues, did not mean to praise the German « national » virtues, but rather to support the rebellion of the German princes against Rome and the Empire. In this booklet, Luther reported the betrayal of the real gospel by the Roman Curia and encouraged lay people (prince and city magistrates) to take care of Christianity. Luther and his collaborators were essentially conservative and did not yearn for upsetting the established order, but only wanted to reform the Church; this is one of the reasons for the support of German princes and imperial cities. The second edition of the pamphlet included an accusation against the Roman idea of *translatio imperii*, inspired by the work of Lorenzo Valla who showed that the « Donation of Constantine » — the juridical justification of the exercise of temporal power by the Pope — was false. See also, MARTIN LUTERO, *Scritti politici*, (ed. by) G. Panzieri Saija, Turin 1960.

64.   ROLAND H. BAINTON, *La Riforma protestante*, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

65.   This statement highlights the deep contradictions within Protestantism which do not deny its radical nature. As Bainton writes, the political consequences of Protestantism have been different and opposed. In fact, Lutheranism was a victim of nationalism and became the State Church, favouring Bismarck's imperialist policy and colluding with National Socialism. Calvinism, instead, was a revolutionary party in many countries and favoured, in the long term, the democratc process, stimulating the establishment of wide–ranging political institutions, such as federal ones. However, the trend of the Protestant Churches do not fall within overly–narrow cathegories and this implies, Bainton explains, that religious denominations « were influenced by contingent political events rather than by their respective theologies » (ROLAND H. BAINTON, *La Riforma protestante*, *op. cit.*, p. 213). It is therefore possible to state that the commonplace nature of German nationalism deriving from the Protestant Reformation because of its adhesion to the cause of modern nationalism, is as persistent as it is groundless. Luther is often identified with the German spirit rebelling against the Latin and Catholic civilizations. See ROLAND H. BAINTON, *La Riforma protestante*, *op. cit.*; see also GIORGIO BOUCHARD, *Una voce delle chiese evangeliche, in Cantiere Europa. Passaggio verso il futuro*, Quaderni de « Il Ponte », LV, supl. n. 5 (May 1999), p. 74. It is, however, clear how powerful the mutual influence of politics and religion was.

66.   Elazar highlighted that fact that the idea of covenant, together with the aptitude of the German culture to accept the federal thought, was already part of the German Protestant tradition, but he also stated that such an idea had been subjected for centuries to a continuous struggle between opposing powers, which aimed at asserting the principle of authority: « the history of Germany partially reflects a struggle between liberal and illiberal forces in which covenant–related ideas were often pitted against authoritarian

It is true, however, that reformed Protestants granted their freedom of conscience, hence their religious freedom, by promoting the creation assembly–like of autonomous political and institutional bodies, where popular sovereignty and the contractual theory of government could prevail[67]. Whilst Lutheranism remained circumscribed to the Germanic–Scandinavian area and kept its links with the feudal system, Calvinism spread all over Europe and was able to adapt itself to the system and the institutions typical of free cities. At the same time Lutheranism stayed close to the policy of the German princes, thus indirectly fuelling the rising national feelings, the dynamism and the extraordinary creativity of Calvinism, helping the promotion and the circulation of basically democratic political and ecclesiastical models[68]. Finally, Lutheranism acted within a feudal system and had to deal with the German princes, its only supporters and counterparts, and that made the movement politically rigid and kept it away from social matters.

Calvinists, on the contrary, were citizens and not subjects, had an active participation in community issues and were asked to take part in the city government through its institutions[69]. That allowed a deeper

conceptions of "state" » (see Daniel J. Elazar, *Introduction*, in Id. and John Kincaid, *The Covenant Connection: From Federal Theology to Modern Federalism*, op. cit., p. 8).

67.   Bainton himself agrees on the outstanding contribution of religious trends in the 16th century to the development of the principles and the mechanisms of modern democracy, even if the connection is not immediately obvious. See Roland H. Bainton, *La Riforma protestante*, op. cit., pp. 208–21. On the above–mentioned subject, see also: Walzer Michael, *La rivoluzione dei santi*, op. cit.; Fiorella De Michelis Pintecuda and Gianni Francioni (eds.), *Ideali repubblicani in età moderna*, Pisa 2002; Elena Bein Ricco (ed. by), *Modernità, politica e protestantesimo*, op. cit.; Pierre Mesnard, *Il pensiero politico rinascimentale*, ed. by Luigi Firpo, Bari 1964, vol. II.

68.   The Reformation immediately had a European scale and, even if it is « true that only in Northern and Central Germany and in Scandinavia Protestantism became a mass (and State) church », it is also true that Calvin, the second great reformer, was able to spread Protestantism in most of the European countries, including Scotland, Holland, Hungary, Bohemia and Piedmont, despite their many differences. The Counter–Reformation stemmed the ideas of Protestantism, which then moved farther north and took root in the Anglo–Saxon world, where they favoured the development of modern democratic ideas. About Calvin's influence on political reformed thought see Corrado Malandrino and Luca Savarino (eds.), *Calvino e il calvinismo politico*, op. cit.

69.   The historian and theologian Alister McGrath, one of the most important British specialists on the subject, in the introduction to the type of government in Geneva in his book *Giovanni Calvino. Il Riformatore e la sua influenza sulla cultura occidentale*, compares the political organization of Geneva to the structure of Greek city–states because of some

penetration of the reformed movement and its ideas in the fabric of society, and Calvinism proved to be more sensitive to the calls for renewal coming from the society itself. As stated by Decot, in city–states « the identity between political and ecclesiastical communities is emphasized by its being inoculated [. . .] in the citizens' conscience »[70]. Calvinism was able to enter various and heterogeneous contexts also because of its ability to "permeate" people, and it gave a strong boost to the reform of both political systems and social structures[71]. These are just some of the many political differences between the Episcopal and Presbyterian trends. As explained afterwards, the most relevant convergences with federal thought and practices took place within the reformed movement, particularly within Calvinism and its various ramifications.

On a general level and despite the variety of theological and ecclesiastic differences, however, Protestants were always unanimous in their universalistic vocation, and provided their movement with an international impact[72]. The Reformation mainly aimed at giving back the Church its dignity, and this would have been possible only by overcoming papal theocracy, upwards and downwards. Over the cen-

common elements of a political « democratic nature »: e.g., the electability of public offices, their political responsibility towards the community and the mechanisms of democratic control of power. Therefore, it was not so unusual to see a connection between the Genevan *Petit Conseil* and the Athenian *Ecclesia*. On the governance in Geneva, see ALISTER MCGRATH, *Giovanni Calvino. Il Riformatore e la sua influenza sulla cultura occidentale*, Turin 2002, pp. 143–71.

70. ROLF DECOT, *Breve storia della Riforma protestante, op. cit.*, p. 69.

71. The ability of Protestants to adapt themselves to the various realities within which they had to live. Sometimes they were of a very different nature: federal in the Netherlands, oligarchical nobiliary in Hungary, monarchical in Scotland and France; they were able to integrate very different and even opposite experiences, such as monarchical loyalty and republican independence, and to combine the Flemish intransigence with the Italian open–minded culture, the British pragmatic creativity with the Scottish rigour. See ELIO GUERRIERO (ed. by), *Le Chiese della Riforma. Storia del Cristianesimo 1878–2005*, Milan 2001 and GIORGIO TOURN, *I protestanti una società, op. cit.*, p. 72).

72. We can therefore speak of a « Protestant International », referring to the call of Protestant Churches to the common solidarity and confessional friendship inspired by the Reformation in contrast with the « papism », and in response to the counter–reformist campaign launched by the Roman Church. Over the centuries, the relationships among the various Protestant trends led to a consolidated sense of belonging to a common Christian family, thus establishing an international link among all Protestant Churches. Such a link was obviously not institutional until the creation of the first irenic and ecumenical organizations.

turies, the separation between the top of the pyramid and Christians had widened so much that Luther himself replaced the word *Kirche* (« Church ») with *Gemeinde* (« community) », in order to separate the idea of Church, seen as the local expression of the universality of God's people, from the religious institution subjected to the authority of the Pope. However, the intention of renewing the Church and producing a new European society through the use of the Bible as a normative doctrinal authority and by organizing the primitive Church as an institutional model generated a wide ecclesiological and theological pluralism that was not part of the original plan of the fathers of the Reformation. The Roman Church, for its part, claimed to be the only real Church and the only authority legitimized to rule Christian people. Protestants, instead, promoted a faith liberated from clerical absolutism and canonical laws, allowing believers to express and profess their faith freely, from Church communities to confessional and ecumenical ones. This way, Protestants could be consistent and could express their faith freely through suitable ecclesiastic institutions. It is then reasonable to say that, in consideration of the times, in the long term the Churches born during the Reformation, that is to say a disruptive process within the Christian world, were guided by the opposite principle of the unity of faith, that is, a reconstructive process of the universal Church[73]. Such a condition had a strong impact on both the ecclesiastical constitution and the organization of ecclesiastic communities, and it helped to promote a type of confessional « unitarity » in the Protestant world based on various « diversities »[74]. Here we can somehow trace what Albertini defined, « in their deep essence » as « the two poles of federalistic social behaviour »: community cos-

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73. It is well known that the ongoing ecumenical process was promoted for the first time in an Orthodox–Protestant environment, just like the many attempts of approach and interconfessional solidarity that the Protestant world tried to develop over the centuries, in an effort to find the elements of a unitarian convergence through the dialogue and the proper respect for differences.

74. As it would be pointless to enter into details, it is enough to remember here the three main ecclesiastical models underlying the Churches born with the Reformation: episcopal, presbyterian and congregationalist. The last two models largely differ from the ecclesiastical structure of the Catholic Church and took on a democratic dimension, well ahead of their time. For an introduction to the differences within the Protestant world, see ELIO GUERRIERO (ed. by), *Le Chiese della Riforma. Storia del Cristianesimo 1878–2005*, op. cit.; GIORGIO BOUCHARD, *Chiese e movimenti evangelici del nostro tempo*, op. cit.

mopolitism[75]. These two pillars are partially referable to Protestant society as well, because they represent the cornerstones of the believers' faith, who can feel, at the same time, as members of their own Church–community, organized around a confession of faith, and as members of Christ's universal Church, where all denominations unite.

It is also possible to observe that the Protestant conception of faith lacks the exclusivism claimed by a Church standing up as the sole depository of the only truth. In fact, the Medieval Church had built itself on the basis of its institutions and not on its own spiritual essence, thus transforming the truth into an instrument of power and preventing the creation of independent Christian communities able to profess their faith and to find their unity on the basis of a common vocation. Of course it is not possible to speak about federalism, let alone ecumenism. Still, we witness the birth of a new and multiform cultural entity, in which diversity started being perceived at first as a distinctive value and then as a constructive confrontation. In fact, the confessional independence and awareness conquered during the 16th and 17th centuries would have triggered, one century later, an opposite process aimed at the quest for a confessional convergence to be obtained not by means of a strict Unitarian system, but on the basis of the principle of independence, more in line with the nature of Protestantism. Therefore, in the Protestant culture the modern idea of « unity within diversity » was steadily gathering pace; such a principle was almost integral to the mentality of Protestants and it was also the necessary condition for a federal society[76]. Likewise, the free theological and intellectual confrontation fostered by the Protestant Reformation helped not only to create a confessional plu-

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75. Mario Albertini, *Le radici storiche e culturali del federalismo europeo*, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

76. This Protestant spirit, born in a particular historical, religious and political context, obviously cannot have a mature self–awareness. Instead, this sense of freedom within the autonomy of their own communities and representing a universal community was, on the one hand — as to the need for a confessional independence —, the result of a reaction to the strict uniformity of the Catholicism and, on the other hand — as to the search for cooperation and interconfessional solidarity —, was the consequence of the contingent need to set aside the counter–reformist measures taken by the Roman Church between the 16th and the 17th centuries. This attitude is likely to have given rise to that sense of interdenominational and interconfessional solidarity among Protestant Churches generally known as « Protestant International ».

ralism, but also to develop some of the necessary conditions for the development of modern democratic societies, including the sense of individual responsibility, transcending every strict institutional setting to settle in a broader constitutional framework, a communitarian and assembly system based on spontaneous participation; and a concept that anticipates the modern notion of laity, that is to say the relationship between Church and State, where politics are independent from religious faith and vice versa. Essentially, divisions are the price to be paid to provide the confessional pluralism of Protestant Churches with a positive connotation; this seemingly negative aspect, however, may represent a distinctive feature of the evangelical world, just like the ecumenical vocation.

From an external point of view, then, the main difference between Protestants and Catholics, before the liturgy, is of an organizational nature: Protestants are more independent than Catholics, as far as confession and liturgy are concerned, and within the Protestant world reformed Churches tend intrinsically more towards a greater differentiation. The Reformation is different from Roman Catholicism because it does not aim at appearing as a homogeneous entity, but is founded on the differences that made it an experimental workshop projected into modernity, where the success of innovations was not due to their "bewitching power" but on the possibility to experience them in practice. What gave this world its unitary nature was not doctrine but dialectics, not preservation but debating[77].

Therefore, free confrontation and intellectual debating, as well as toleration towards religious rivals[78] and a peculiar ecclesiastical prag-

77. It is no accident that McGrath describes Calvinism as one of the pillars of western culture, a melting pot of « modern » ideas or attitudes; McGrath particularly focuses on the economic activism — at the basis of Max Weber's theory —, on the openness to natural sciences, on the development of civil religion in Northern America and of natural human rights. See ALISTER E. McGRATH, *Giovanni Calvino*, op. cit., pp. 315–32.

78. Within the framework of the Reformation, the use of the word « tolerance » seems to be inaccurate, at least in the modern sense of the term. Despite that, Protestantism was quite tolerant faith–wise, compared to Catholicism, which fought heresies by means of systematical persecutions, often having recourse to repressive methods and using its political power. Compared to the Roman Church, which denied for a long time any form of disapproval against the doctrine, the Protestant world immediately introduced itself as a multiconfessional and multiform reality, based on confrontation as a necessary and inborn condition. Therefore, Protestants were prepared to accept all differences and were more open to dialogue. Even the Protestant world, however, was not exempt from intolerance,

matism, became some of the distinctive features of the Protestant society. These characteristics fostered the theological research and let to the ecclesiastical and confessional differentiation still characterizing the universe of the Churches born after the Reformation. Afterwards these religious values became secularized in civil society, and it is likely that the consequences of such conquests within the religious culture started appearing, properly assimilated, in political life as new social behaviours. This process also influenced the organization of civil society and the management of power, with the establishment of important institutional "inventions", strictly connected with religion — as in the case of Geneva in Calvin's time[79]. The relationships between secular and spiritual environments often led to the mutual exchange of patterns and ideas, thus originating new social structures and original systems of government. As in the case of the Protestants, it is not unusual to find in the cities ruled by them some political entities showing the prerequisites for a pre–democratic society and for republican–like institutions.

Following the Reformation, two different religious cultures took shape within Western Christianity, two antithetical ways to conceive their Church and, in consequence, also political and social life. Catholicism and Protestantism showed up as two Christian identities of a « cultural–religious » nature in mutual contrast to their mentality and religious behaviours, as well as to their relationship with the social and political world. These non–static religious identities were perceived and received as alternatives[80] and cast their opposite cultural characteristics over modernity: on the one hand, there was the Roman–Catholic environment with its strict ecclesiastical structure and

as in the case of Michael Servetus, sentenced to death for heresy in Calvin's « tolerant » Geneva. Finally, one of the darkest moments in Protestant history was the persecution of the Anabaptists. On this subject, see Ugo Gastaldi, *Storia dell'anabattismo. Dalle origini a Münster (1525–1535)*, Turin 1981, vol. I; Id., *Storia dell'anabattismo. Da Münster (1535) ai giorni nostri*, Turin 1992, vol. II.

79. See Corrado Malandrino and Luca Savarino (eds.), *Calvino e il calvinismo politico*, *op. cit.*

80. In particular, see Roland H. Bainton, *La Riforma protestante*, *op. cit.*, pp. 47–63, where the scholar compares the deep differences between the two trends, and Hans Küng, *Cristianesimo, essenza e storia*, Milan 2004, where the Catholic theologian offers a wide–ranging overview of the separation and differentiation process between Protestantism and Catholicism.

confessional uniformity; on the other hand, Protestants promoted the idea of the differentiation of the ecclesiastic hierarchy on a denominational basis, and characterized by the presence of many confessions of faith[81].

Both, however, identify themselves in the unity of Christian people, despite some basic differences: the Catholics believed that the Pope was the only possible unifying element, while the Protestants provided the Word with an aggregative and unifying power.

Beside these tangible effects, the importance of the cultural revolution triggered by Protestantism was not limited only to the confessional and ecclesiastical diversification, but it also produced some major changes within European society, with lasting consequences on the development of modern thought, particularly through the secularisation of some of its basic theological obligations. According to Ernst Troeltsch, Protestantism was the «place» of the gestation of modernity[82] and some of its "effects" contributed to the development of modern culture and conscience by raising new questions and introducing new and fruitful values, including popular sovereignty, the separation of Church and State, the freedom of conscience, religious tolerance and finally individual independence, which all of these values derive from[83].

This last value, theologically linked to the concept of «predestination»[84], is not only a crucial element in Protestant theological think-

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81. It has to be stressed that the «denominational» character of the Evangelical Churches is not always the same, because Protestantism encompasses many denominational families, each having different confessions, ecclesiastical institutions and internal organizations. The Lutheran Churches, for example, adopt more hierarchical and stricter criteria than the Calvinist or Baptist Churches, which, besides their reference to different Confessions, have an institutional structure favouring the autonomy of the communities. That is why it is not possible, despite the blatant differences between the Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches, to put on the same level all the Churches born following the Reformation. For an analysis of the subject, see: Elio Guerriero (ed. by), *Le Chiese della Riforma. Storia del Cristianesimo 1878–2005, op. cit.*; Giorgio Bouchard, *Chiese e movimenti evangelici del nostro tempo, op. cit.*

82. See Ernst Troeltsch, *Il significato del protestantesimo per la formazione del mondo moderno*, Florence 1974. These values, widely spread within democratic and, particularly, federal societies, led to a gap with the old order, as Troeltsch stated, whose disappearance allowed the redefinition of the relationship between religion and society, State and Church within a more diversified and pluralist Europe.

83. See *ibidem*.

84. Predestinaton is a crucial, and often misunderstood, element of the Protestant

ing, but it is also a « matter of conscience » that had serious implications on political thought. Predestination put the stress on personal responsibility and lifted mankind's conscience to a higher ethical plan, thus giving new dignity to the individual as a whole. Therefore, the subjective dimension of faith, together with the pivotal importance given to man by the Renaissance and humanistic culture, celebrated individualism[85]. Protestant ethics, however, revalued the individual perspective within the framework of responsibilities, that is to say that Protestantism held the freedom of conscience directly to the law and the Word of God, without the intermediation of any authority. The

theology, which came to give a very negative and strict picture of Protestantism, particularly of its reformed version. Predestination postulates the concept of Grace. Protestants think that Grace is a God–given gift to some chosen people independently of their behaviour and ethics. Grace, and therefore salvation, cannot be reached through actions, but only through God's mysterious will. The idea of predestination inevitably leads to a dilemma on free will, because mankind, being chosen by God, would not be free to choose between good and evil anymore. However, the predestination is not a metaphysical, but existential concept. Divine election takes place before the beginning of history, fulfills it and ends with Judgment Day. The believer, placing himself within this space–time framework, lives free from his condition to establish himself as a responsible person before God's call. What makes the believer an individual is the fact of being interpelled by God; therefore, predestination is not based on the rules of some kind of determinism, but on God's intervention which manifests itself with his call. The concept of freedom without determination forms the basis of a renewed behaviour that overturns the vertical structure of the medieval order. Such structure is overlapped by a horizontal one where the individual, being given a sense of responsibility, is driven to organize himself, socially and politically, on the basis of new associative categories. Among these, the federal category is perfectly functional to the individualistic and universalistic idea of Protestant psychology, particularly of reformed psychology. A particular aspect of this theory is related to the « saints », that is to say the believers who devoted their life to God and are charged with establishing the « republic of the saints », seen as a premise to the Reign of Christ. It is necessary to stress that in the Puritan language the term « saints » does not refer either to a blameless person or to a caste chosen by God for the glory of his Church, but it designates all believers because they have devoted their lives to God. Obviously, this theory had many political implications, in particular in Anglo–Saxon countries (see Michael Walzer, *La rivoluzione dei santi*, *op. cit.*). In any case, predestination is one of the most forceful rules affecting the customs and the culture of modern society.

85. On the religious individualism generated by the Reformation and his political consequences, see Gabriella Cotta, *La nascita dell'individualismo politico. Lutero e la politica della modernità*, Bologna 2002. See also: Giovanni Jervis, *Individualismo e cooperazione. Psicologia della politica*, Bari 2002. It is interesting to see how Armin Adam establishes a connection between individualism and collectivism in terms of interdependence and common significance. Adam states that these two « trends are just two faces of the same coin » (Armin Adam, *Teologia politica*, Turin 2008, p. 149).

consequences of such a process partially affected associated, political and economic life, where — as Jervis stated — the Protestant ethics gave « to lay societies the pattern of an individualist psychology giving a sense of responsibility »[86].

The Protestant Reformation freed the conscience of all believers and showed them the way to their own interiority. Each individual then became a spirtually–independent subject and claimed the right to self–determination. According to Bein Ricco, this event « carries the fundamental right to the freedom of conscience »[87] which, in turn, is the « matrix » of all other rights. In fact, the scholar continues, an individual can become free and start to create and build a political order able to protect individual freedom only through the awareness of his personal responsibility. As such, all moral individuals, independent and holding inborn and inalienable rights within a free political society, created in their own image, become citizens and lose the ancient connotation of subject. According to Ricco, this gave origin, « along the path to modern world, to the great project of transformation » of individuals « from subjects to citizens, as codified in the famous "Declarations of Rights" »[88]. This document represents the founding and unavoidable postulate for the birth of the liberal and democratic State, and particularly the origin of the most important and broader expression of democracy: the "federation".

According to Antonio Monti, « someone may object that the federal idea is a political one » because it refers to the political organization of people and States; but, Monti continues, « all political revolutions have to be followed by a social revolution » and he finally states that

86. Giovanni Jervis, *Individualismo e cooperazione, op. cit.*, p. 116. Jervis also explains that sociality is not « a "given" reality to which individuals have to adapt but is the result of a mutual convergence of initiatives ». The desire to gather in associative structures postulates subjects having assumed their own responsibilities. In this regard Jervis writes that the « subject of modernity [...] is a psychological–independent individual » or, even better, « an individual able to take up his own responsibilities, to understand their meaning and to honour them ». Therefore, Jarvis concludes, « the first examples of organizations [...] based on the idea of individual responsibility » and which gave origin to the first democratic experiments, as in the English and American revolutions, are basically related to the Puritan conception « of the relationship between the individual and the community, upon which the modern idea of democracy has been built » (Giovanni Jervis, *Individualismo e cooperazione, op. cit.*, pp. 119–20).

87. Elena Bein Ricco (ed. by), *Libera chiesa in libero Stato*?, Turin 2005, p. 10.

88. *Ibidem*, p. 11.

a « federative political triumph » is impossible without a previous acknowledgement of the principle of individuality within the social field »[89]. It is no accident that responsible individualism, through which freedom can be obtained by the formulation of a covenant, is a key element of federal societies but its origins date back to the Reformation and its cultural elements. The covenant, together with the « centrality of conscience », is, as stated by Bein Ricco, one of the « capital consequences of the Protestant Reformation » that suggested, directed and shaped the succeeding establishment of political institutional patterns within reformed societies[90].

The Protestant revaluation of the covenant is due to two main reasons: firstly, the need to organize Christian communities as much as possible in line with the biblical teachings; and, secondly, the "flowering" of hermeneutics and theological researches. In the first case, the focus is on the institutional organization of communities within primitive Christianism, while in the second case these disciplines aim at studying in detail the origin and the nature of the Covenant between God and his people. The rediscovery of the covenant is then linked to another crucial aspect of the Reformation, namely the absolute centrality and the sole authority of the Bible (*sola scriptura*).

Catholics and Protestants started colliding on the ground of testamentary exegetics, which paved the way to the free interpretation of the Scriptures and to many different theological and ecclesiological remarks. The Protestants' attitude nullified the authority of the ecclesiastic hier-

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89. Antonio Monti, *L'idea federalistica italiana e i progetti di federazione europea*, Milan 1945, p. 21. Monti was an enthusiastic scholar of the federalist idea, into which he delved mainly through the thought of Giuseppe Ferrari and Carlo Cattaneo between the 1920s and 1930s .

90. According to Franco Becchino, the reformed Protestantism made at least three main contributions to modernity, and particularly to the development of the concept of laity « taken as the construction of a new form of State government ». Firstly, the Calvinist theory according to which magistrates of a lower rank have to disobey magistrates of a higher rank or even to remove them from office in case of non–fulfillment of their duties; secondly, the synod, or assembly of believers, set up for the government of the Church and forerunner of modern democratic paliaments; finally, the covenant « intended as the standard methodology » of the Reformed Churches, « either for the establishment of the Church or the setting–up of the State or, at least, of civil communities ». « The religious, social, political and ecclesiastical history of Calvinism is sprinkled with "covenants" » (Sergio Aquilante (ed. by), *Chiesa e Stato. Il ruolo del protestantesimo nell'Italia che cambia*, Turin 1998, p. 107).

archy by replacing it with the authority of the Word, thus deteriorating once and for all the Roman absolutism and the monopoly of the scriptural interpretation. The hermeneutical research became a theological tool allowing the access to the truth contained in the Word, and through which judging the teachings of the Church. According to Rostagno, using the Bible as a starting point means « denying any other authority », getting rid of any « unreserved obedience to the dictates of a Church or a philosophy ». This position, adds the Waldensian theologist, « will eventually take on a political significance, thus favouring democracy »[91]. The acknowledgement of the Word as the supreme authority encourages a vertical motion of consciences which, freed from any doctrinaire influences, can relate directly to God without invalidating their confessional connotation and the belonging to a community[92]. In fact, the ecclesiology stemming from the Reformation envisages different types of Churches, but they were all based on the notion of the Church, both at the local and universal level, as the consequence of the preaching of the Gospel. While the confession of faith was a sort of *ante litteram* constitution for believers and citizens to comply with, the concept of Biblical covenant spread to the relationships between men and communities, and was first applied to the organization of social life. The next paragraphs will notably deal with the pivotal role of the covenant in the reformed tradition and its systematizations in the Puritan « federal theology ».

In this regards, it is possible to make reference to Elazar, who prefigures the historical and temporal framework of the conceptual evolution — up to its political meaning — of the « covenant » in the reformed world, starting right from its rediscovery in the Holy Scriptures.

Beginning with Zwingli (1543) and Bullinger (1532), the covenant was revived in the lands of the Reformation, particularly where Reformed, Calvinist and free churches emerged (Switzerland, parts of Germany, Puritan England, Presbyterian Scotland, the Dutch provinces and Huguenot France). In seeking a basis for constructing new chur-

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91. Elio Guerriero (ed. by), *Le Chiese della Riforma. Storia del Cristianesimo 1878–2005, op. cit.*, p. 32.

92. The approach to the Holy Scriptures and even their reading were dramatically new in comparison with the past. The Bible is not only a collection of prophecies referring to Christ, but a modern theological document to be taken as a normative reference to the organization of the Church.

ches and communities, the people of those lands turned to their Bibles. Thus, the covenant was revived as a matter of not only religious but also political concern[93].

1.2. From « federal theology » to political federalism

There is a close cultural relationship between the « covenant theology », or « federal theology »[94]. Besides, the spirit guiding Northern

93. Daniel J. Elazar, *Introduction*, in Id. and John Kincaid, *The Covenant Connection: From Federal Theology to Modern Federalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

94. « Federal theology » was an important current within reformed theology in the 16th and 17th centuries, and had a major impact on social and political thought and actions. For a full understanding of federal theology it is necessary to place it in the broader framework of « political theology » which, however, has two different acceptions, with only the second being connected to the concept of « federal theology ». The first acception, developed in Germany in the second half of the 20th century, designates a particular field of research investigating the link between theology and politics, which later became well–known for its use in the Latin American theology of liberation; the second acception, instead, refers to a methodology allowing researchers, as stated by Armin Adam, to clarify « the theological remains in Enlightenment–style political modernity ». According to Carl Schmitt, the core of all the ideas of modern political science is of a theological nature; he claims that the most significant concepts of the doctrine of the State cannot « genealogically » prescind from their theological origin (see Carl Schmitt, *Teologia politica. Quattro capitoli sulla dottrina della sovranità*, in Id., *Le categorie del "politico". Saggi di teoria politica*, Bologna 1972). Therefore, the aim of the political theology, as in its second acception, is to prove — Adam explains — that despite the repeated « attempts to get rid of tradition and to set things up in a new way », modernity is strongly influenced « by what had supposedly been left behind, that is the theological models » (Adam Armin, *Teologia politica*, *op. cit.*, p. 7). The federal idea, in its contemporary political meaning, is rooted in the « federal theology ». The origins of modern federalism go back to the elaboration of the covenant by the reformed exegetical tradition which, in modern times, underwent a gradual secularization process and became a key concepts of political science. On the concept of « federal theology », see: Corrado Malandrino, *Teologia federale*, « Il Pensiero politico », *op. cit.*, pp. 427–46; David A. Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology in Sixteenth–Century Reformation Thought*, New York 1990; Daniel J. Elazar and John Kincaid, *The Covenant Connection: From Federal Theology to Modern Federalism*, *op. cit.*, and the ideal heritage of modern federalism[95]. As mentioned before, the authors of *The Federalist* were of Protestant origin and had an unmistakable reformed–evangelic cultural matrix[96]. Malandrino explains that « Northern American federalism is characterized by a peculiar mixture of two elements »[97]: one of a theological nature and the other of a juridical and constitutional nature. The first element consists of the inspiration coming from the Puritan federal theology of the *covenant*, while the second is « the tendency to consolidate such an inspiration in written records of a constitutional nature » to provide the new colonial communities with stable institutions[98] the developments of the Biblical covenant, from Israel to the USA, according

America colonization was not alien to precise religious features and even to palingenetic purposes[99].

The conscience of many pastors and colonists that headed for the New World to « build, in that wide and wild country, a renewed and fairer human society » was guided by the moral imperative to establish the new communities on the political and religious values that had been banned by absolutism and European monarchies. The establishment and the enforcement of principles such as tolerance and religious community, freedom and virtue were perceived, as Malandrino wrote, « as a mission — inscribed in God's plans — by pastors who were at the same time political leaders », like John Winthrop (1588–1649) and men of faith like William Penn (1644–1718). Finally, Malandrino notes that in the American *Declaration of Independence* (1776) « converged many ideas based on Protestantism, natural law and the principles of the social contract, together with utilitarian and Enlightenment theories »[100].

The link between the genesis of modern Federalism, epitomized in the creation of the United States of America, and the Protestant culture,

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to Daniel J. Elazar's federalist vision, see the following articles: Daniel J. Elazar, *La grande strada della Bibbia. Un intervento inedito del grande teorico del federalismo al "Covenant Workshop" di Filadelfia nel 1977*, « Liberal », I, n. 3; Luigi Marco Bassani, *Daniel J. Elazar, l'anti Robespierre. Il pensiero di un maestro che era fermamente convinto che la tradizione pattista e federale si sarebbe alla lunga rivelata decisiva di fronte ai fallimenti dello Stato moderno*, « Liberal », I, n. 3; Mauro Maldonato, *La Repubblica di Mosè. op. cit.*

99. Corrado Malandrino, *Federalismo. Storia, idee, modelli, op. cit.*, p. 39. Leaving out the works dating back to the first migration of English religious dissenters to the American continent, where the Pilgrim Fathers aimed at reforming the Church of England in a moral sense, it is interesting to note how the first generation born in the New World still had a free spirit, open to the future and rich in palingenetic perspectives. « I describe the wonders of Christian religion fleeing Europe's deprivation to American soil », recalls Boston–born pastor Cotton Mather (1663–1728) in his *Magnalia Christi Americana*. Mather was a highly–educated representative of the second generation of Puritans born in America from immigrant parents. « I report the remarkable events that led to the foundation of the first colonies, which have become well–known for the level of reformation professed and achieved by the Evangelical Churches in that part of the world. [. . .] I do not state that the Churches of New England are more disciplined than all the others, but I say, and I am sure about it, that they are very similar to the Churches that existed at the beginnings of Christianity [. . .]. It was a golden age: coming back to it means becoming a Protestant and, I would add, a Puritan » (Cotton Mather, *Le grandi opere di Cristo in America (1702)*, in Emidio Campi (ed. by), *Protestantesimo nei secoli. Fonti e documenti*, Turin 1991, vol. I, pp. 406–7).

100. Corrado Malandrino, *Federalismo. Storia, idee, modelli, op. cit.*, p. 39.

seen as a precious source of ideas and experiences, is a well–established historical evidence. Moreover, as L. Marco Bassani stated, « the federal pactional tradition that provided the theoretical background for the birth of federal institutions, particularly in America, is entirely Protestant »[101]. In fact, Protestantism made Northern American federalism aware of some constitutional tools to establish a wider human society, gradually shifting the concept of covenant/contract from religion to politics. In Northern American colonies the notion of covenant/contract among individuals deciding to consociate to overcome the pre–political chaos of the state of nature, so to reach the highest rational order of the civil state, spreads for the first time also to communities with a well–defined political and juridical structure, thus triggering a new type of State based on an original distribution of power[102].

Let's now shift back to the biblical nature of the covenant, so to go through the steps of a conceptual evolution that has given political science a highly innovative institutional model, whose potentialities still remain largely unexpressed.

Elazar sets the origins of Federalism in a context defined by the events in the history of Israel[103]. According to him, such a political system, « established more than 3,000 years ago in the basin of the Mediterranean », was the same that had been adopted in the ancient kingdom of Israel, which was conceived as a « federation in the form of the political community of the twelve tribes »[104]. Moses renewed

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101. Luigi Marco Bassani, *Daniel J. Elazar, l'anti Robespierre*, op. cit.

102. See Giorgio Spini, *Autobiografia della giovane America: la storiografia americana dai padri pellegrini all'indipendenza*, Turin 1968; Giorgio Spini, *Il pensiero politico americano dalle origini al federalismo*, typewritten paper, op. 1530, registered at CSF; the text has later been published in Giorgio Spini, *Il pensiero politico americano dalle origini al federalismo*, in Luigi Firpo (ed. by), *Storia delle idee politiche, economiche e sociali*, Turin 1987, vol. III, (the quotations refer to the typewritten text in CSF); Nathaniel Morton, *New England's Memorial*, op. cit.; Elena Bein Ricco, *L'idea del "patto" nell'esperienza puritana*, op. cit. See also Michael Walzer, *La rivoluzione dei santi*, op. cit. and Id., *Esodo e Rivoluzione*, Milan 1986.

103. See Daniel J. Elazar, *The covenant idea and the Jewish Political Tradition*, Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan Israele 1983. Elazar follows the biblical sources, even if it is uncertain whether the story of the Jewish people correspond to the events described in the Bible; on this subject, see Marco Liverani, *Oltre la Bibbia. Storia antica di Israele*, Bari 2007, p. 31.

104. Daniel J. Elazar, *Idee e forme del federalismo*, op. cit., p. XXIII. Genealogy–wise, Elazar attaches crucial importance just to three federal experiences in the history of humanity: the Israelite tribal federation described in the Old Testament, Switzerland and the United States of America. All these experiences are inspired by the Bible and by the principles elaborated

the old covenant between God and his predecessors and set up the first society ruled by the proto–federal principle of *foedus*. This society was organized in a community of twelve different ethnic groups, each divided into families, and all of them recognized a political and religious covenant among equals[105]. These tribes lived together as independent — yet mutually dependent — cells, according to a system of equality based on the covenant and on the legislation deriving from it[106].

According to Elazar « the original form of the federal idea was of a geopolitical nature », which revealed itself in the peculiar relationship between God and mankind, bound together by a « covenant » that made them equally responsible for the « well–being of the world »[107]. This covenant concept is mentioned in the Bible and was picked up by reformed theologists, or « federalist theologists », between the 16th and the 17th centuries[108]. The concomitant revolution of political systems (in a republican sense) in modern times led to a convergence of theology and political thought, and to the practical idea of federalism as a working form of political organization. This way, « the ancient

by the religious culture; moreover, two of them are characterized by the reformed nature of their constitutive societies. The first experience is very important, Elazar states, because it represented the first example of enforcement of the founding principle of federalism, « transforming the treaty of vassalage among unequal people into a pact among partners having equal rights ». This entails the setting–up of a community of free tribes « within the framework of common rights and the Constitution ». The second experience, crucial for the spread of the federal idea, « hosted the main liberation movement of the Reformation and survived to give the world a real haven, self–governed by free people ». The third experience, the first real modern federation, was instrumental in « showing how to mix freedom and federalism within a continental–sized political community » (DANIEL J. ELAZAR, *Idee e forme del federalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. XXVI).

105. Some evidences and the foundations of this covenant can be found in the books of the Bible, particularly in *Joshua*, where it is possible to trace the prophetical concept of the ideal republic; in *The Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*, describing the Israelite tribal political system; finally, in *Samuel*, *The Judges* and *The books of the Kings*, where the issues related to such system are considered. For further details on this subjects, see DANIEL J. ELAZAR, *The covenant idea and the Jewish Political Tradition*, *op. cit.*

106. On the different nature of the pact and the use of the covenant terminology, see: DANIEL J. ELAZAR, *La grande strada della Bibbia*, *op. cit.*, where Elazar, after having highlighted the moral nature of the covenant, describes various types of it according to conceptual and terminological differences. Elzar distinguishes the *covenant* (the real covenant or alliance), the *compact* (considered as an agreement without any ethical nature), the *contract* (within the private domain) and finally the *partnership* (the association).

107. DANIEL J. ELAZAR, *Idee e forme del federalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

108. See *ibidem*, pp. 95–6.

idea of the covenant between God and his people », so largely spread in the Holy Scriptures and picked up again by federal theologists, « unconsciously [sow] the seeds of a new social mentality » and, subsequently, of a political and institutional mentality not based anymore on "nature" but on human voluntarism. In this regard, Charles McCoy clearly explains that « in covenantal relationships, the federal thought exercises pressure to expand the scope of political participation and shifts the locus of sovereignty from the ruler or state to the people. Whenever federal theology is transformed into operative federal policies, a republican order takes shape with increasing pressure toward more democratic participation » [109]. Elazar, however, suggests that even if the federal thought in its theological and « geopolitical » sense had already appeared in the 16th century with the Reformation, this term acquired a fully political significance only in the 18th century with the creation of the United States of America, and it was then used to connote the character of a new constitutional system[110].

Therefore, the origins of the « federal theology » can be set within the Protestant exegetical tradition. The first reformers to deal with this issue in a systematic way were Calvin and Zwingli, but the outcome of their effort was quite different[111]. Calvin, Emerson writes, just like many other theologists, approached the notion of covenant, « but because the covenant is not a basic element for his system, he is not regarded as a covenant theologian »[112]; he wanted to give prominence to the "testamentary" quality as a promise of grace from God, but he refrained from a broader use of this concept. Instead, for the *antístes* of the Church of Zurich, and especially for Heinrich Bullinger[113], his

109. Charles S. McCoy, *The Theology and Ethics of Johannes Cocceius*, in Daniel J. Elazar and John Kincaid, *The Covenant Connection: From Federal Theology to Modern Federalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

110. Daniel J. Elazar, *Federalism and Covenant*, in Id. and John Kincaid, *The Covenant Connection: From Federal Theology to Modern Federalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 244–6.

111. As to Calvin's thought on the covenant, see Everett H. Emerson, *Calvin and Covenant Theology*, « Church History », vol. 25, n. 2 (June 1956), pp. 134–44. On Zwingli, see Kenneth Hagen, *From Testament to Covenant in the Early Sixteenth Century*, « Sixteenth Century Journal », vol. 3, n. 1 (April 1972), pp. 15–24.

112. Everett H. Emerson, *Calvin and Covenant Theology*, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

113. Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575) is one of the most relevant figures of the reformed world. Despite his discretion and his secluded way of living, Bullinger is well–known for his outstanding contribution to the culture of the Reformation. After Zwingli's death, Bullinger was head of the Zurich Church for 44 years and made it one of the cultural and pastoral

successor, the covenant played a key role in theological thought. It was not a promise of grace anymore, but a condition. And, even if Bullinger thought, in line with the principle of predestination, that only God's grace could save mankind, the mutual and conditional bond of the covenant represented the postulate for the elects to mend their ways and to confess their faith as requested by the Lord. Therefore, Bullinger's theology was focused on the history of salvation and the covenant was its guiding principle and corollary[114].

Bullinger is the author of *De testamento seu foedere Dei unico et aeterno* (1534) and can be considered the first theoretician of the « federal theology » (*covenant theologian*[115]). Although his opinions were tied to theological principles and perspectives, in his work it is possible to see the political potentials that would have developed this orientation afterwards. In *De testamento*, Bullinger again picked up the covenant

points of reference of European Protestantism, putting it side by side with Strasbourg and replacing Wittenberg. After Calvin's death (1564), Bullinger became the guiding light of the reformed world. The *Confessio Helvetica posterior*, written in 1566, was extremely successful and was translated into many languages. His confession of faith was well–known all over Europe and became one of the symbols of the unity of the reformed Churches, together with the Heidelberg Catechism (see EMIDIO CAMPI, *Nuovi studi su Heinrich Bullinger*, « Protestantsimo », n. 3–4 (2007), pp. 195–220). Bullinger largely corresponded with the most diverse European personalities of the time (he received more than 10,000 letters and sent more than 2,000). He came into contact with, among others, Luther, Melanchthon, Calvin, Bèze, Lentolo, Sozzini, Zanchi, Margaret of Valois, Renée of France, Edward IV, Elizabeth I, and Gaspard of Coligny. On Bullinger see the already–mentioned works of CHARLES S. MCCOY and J. WAYNE BAKER, *Fountainhead of Federalism. Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenantal Tradition*, *op. cit.*, and BRUCE GORDON and EMIDIO CAMPI, *Architect of Reformation: an introduction to Heinrich Bullinger*, 1504–1575, Grand Rapids 2004; see also: EMIDIO CAMPI, *Nuovi studi su Heinrich Bullinger*, *op. cit.*; J. WAYNE BAKER, *Heinrich Bullinger, the Covenant, and the Reformed Tradition in Retrospect*, « Sixteenth Century Journal », vol. 29, n. 2 (Summer 1998), pp. 359–76. On the relations between Bullinger's and Calvin's thought see also the recently MAURO POVERO, *Il pensiero di Bullinger e Calvino sul Foedus o Testamentum Dei*, in CORRADO MALANDRINO and LUCA SAVARINO (eds.), *Calvino e il calvinismo politico*, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-119.

114. These are the words of Bullinger himself: « the immortal all–knowing God, the creator of the universe [. . .], joined himself in covenant with miserable mortals corrupted by sin. This indisputably is the origin of our religion and its primary point: we are saved solely through the goodness and the mercy of God » (HEINRICH BULLINGER, *A Brief Exposition of One and Covenant of God*, in CHARLES S. MCCOY and J. WAYNE BAKER, *Fountainhead of Federalism. Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenantal Tradition*, *op. cit.*, p. 105).

115. About the evolution of Bullinger's «federal theology» see CHARLES S. MCCOY and J. WAYNE BAKER, *Fountainhead of Federalism. Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenantal Tradition*, *op. cit.*, and MAURO POVERO, *Il pensiero di Bullinger e Calvino sul Foedus o Testamentum Dei*, *op. cit.*

tradition and reformulated the pattern of the Covenant between God and mankind in a theological way, maybe in its perspective — three years after Zwingli's death — to establish theologically the foundations of Zurich's community, of which he had become the political and spiritual guide. According to the spirit of the Reformation, such a theological orientation could also be considered as the attempt to detect in the Holy Scriptures the pattern of the leading ecclesiastic structure to provide the Christian community with an institutional order as relevant as possible to the divine Law.

Despite Bullinger's use of the covenant mainly in a theological way, later interpretations also had political implications and consequences, and generated — in the tradition of the « federal theology » — a political use of the notion of covenant, which became the subject of a political reflection when, during the exegetic process, the biblical covenant gradually lost the univocal dimension of a transcendence denying the individual and gave life to the will of mankind in connection with God. Thus became clear that *mutual agreement* with God which gave origin to mankind's vocation to responsibilities and freedom, and that would have modeled the patterns of social relationships and of federal–like political communities[116].

Therefore, the biblical covenant between God and mankind — a scriptural and strictly religious concept — was later developed and modified by some reformed theologians and thinkers in the 16th and 17th centuries, including Theodore de Bèze (1519–1605), Zacharias Ursinus (1534–1583), Caspar Olevianus (1536–1587), Johannes Cocceius (1603–1669) and Francesco Turretini (1623–1687)[117]. A particularly promi-

116. See Bruce Gordon and Emidio Campi, *Architect of Reformation: an introduction to Heinrich Bullinger*, 1504–1575, *op. cit.*

117. It would be too long to quote and explain here the various theories on the « covenant theology » supported by these intellectuals. Our goal is to outline an ideal path in the development of the « federal theology », from its being a simple theoretical and theological thought of modern federal political thought to its implications in modern federal constitutions. We have decided to give more emphasis to Bullinger and Althusius, who played a crucial role in the development of the federal idea because they took it away from the domain of religious concepts and turned it into a real political principle. Hereunder the reader will find some general indications as well as some bibliographical references. Among the above–mentioned theologians, Zacharias Ursinus developed the idea of a previous Covenant of works, separated from the Covenant of grace, elaborated mainly by Bullinger. Ursinus combined Bullinger's covenant theory with the idea that God had made a covenant with Adam on the basis of a moral code (the Ten Commandments given to the first man

nent part, however, was played by Johannes Althusius[118] who, at the beginning of the 17th century, gave rise to a new political thought based on the biblical doctrine of the *covenant* and aiming at the creation of a constitutional philosophy centered around the modern concept of *foedus*.

well before Moses received them) and the law of nature. « Ursinus — Letham writes — took that step in his *Summa Theologiae* of 1562 when, after a stay in Zurich, he combined the covenant teaching of Bullinger with the natural law idea which his mentor Melanchthon held in common with the consensus of Reformed theologians » [Robert Letham, *The Foedus Operum: Some Factors Accounting for Its Devlopment*, « Sixteenth Century Journal », vol. 16, n. 4 (Winter 1983), pp. 457–68]. This idea fascinated mostly the English Puritans; it is no accident that these two covenants merged into the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1646, a systematic statement of the English Orthodox Calvinism using and referring directly to the *covenant*. Caspar Olevianus promoted a third type of supra–temporal covenant between Christ and God to expiate the sins of mankind. Johannes Cocceius, professor of theology at the University of Leiden, drew on Olevianus's theories and developed his own « federal theology » which had a large impact on the above–mentioned Catechism and Westminster Confession (see Charles S. McCoy, *History, Humanity, and Federalism in the Theology and Ethics of Johannes Cocceius*, in Daniel. J. Elazar and John Kincaid, *The Covenant Connection: From Federal Theology to Modern Federalism, op. cit.*, pp. 52–68). On these theologians, see David A. Weir, *The Origins of the Federal Theology, op. cit.*; Derk Visser, *The Covenant in Zacharias Ursinus*, « Sixteenth Century Journal », vol. 18, n. 4 (Winter 1987), pp. 531–44; Lyle D. Bierma, *German Calvinism in the Confessional Age: The Covenant Theology of Caspar Olevianus*, Grand Rapids (Michigan) 1996; Willem J. van Asselt, *The Federal Theology of Johannes Cocceius (1603–1669)*, Leiden 2001.

118. Johannes Althusius (1557–1638) was a Calvinist jurist, philosopher and theologian. He taught at the reformed University of Herborn and governed the town of Emden, Lower Saxony, from 1604 to his death. He is mainly known for his work, *Politica Methodice Digesta, Atque Exemplis Sacris et Profanis Illustrata* (1603), a second edition of which was published in 1614. Althusius was deeply influenced by Calvinism and the doctrine of natural law, which turned him into an ardent opposer of monarchical absolutism. His theory of the State revolved around the difference between rulers and subjects, linked by a mutual bond of responsibility sanctioned by a covenant (*foedus*). This bond allowed the subjects to resist their king in case his government turned into a tyranny, in violation of the terms of the covenant. All relations within the State and the society were of a contractual and covenant nature. Althusius's personality has recently come to the fore in the fields of politological and juridical research, and now the Calvinist theologian and jurist is considered as one of the fathers of modern public right, as well as the first theoretician of protofederalism. On Althusius, see: Thomas Hueglin, *Covenant and Federalism in the Politics of Althusius*, in Daniel J. Elazar and John Kincaid, *The Covenant Connection: From Federal Theology to Modern Federalism, op. cit.*; Thomas Hueglin, *Early Modern Concepts for a Late Modern World: Althusius on Community and Federalism*, Waterloo (Ontario) 1999; Corrado Malandrino, *Discussioni su Althusius, lo Stato moderno e il federalismo*, « Pensiero Politico », XXXVII, n. 3 (2004), pp. 425–38; Giuseppe Duso, *Althusius. Pensatore per una società postmoderna?*, « Filosofia Politica », IV, n. 1 (1990), pp. 163–75; Giuseppe Duso, *Althusius e l'idea federalista, op. cit.*; Mario Miegge, *Il federalismo di Johannes Althusius, op. cit.*

In his *Politica Methodice Digesta* (1603), Emden's *Syndicus* outlined the passage from « Covenant Theology » to proto–modern political federalism[119]; Althusius removed the category of covenant from the ecclesiastical domain and extended its use to secularized life. Mankind

119. In his *Politica Methodice Digesta*, Althusius « established — in Carl Friedrich's words — his federal union » founded on an underlying hierarchy of smaller unions based on the *foedus*. Therefore the concept of *foedus*, borrowed from the religious culture and adapted to civil life, became the archetypal structure of human sociality. Hence, sociality carries a political gene applicable to both the private and public fields. The Althusian State (*consociatio symbiotica*) relies on a broad network of private (marriage, family, etc.) and public (cities, provinces and reigns) associations intersecting each other (according to the principle of association in *collegia*, where the citizens come to an agreement to establish the rules for the association). Elazar explains how Althusius « saw all proper human relationship as being founded upon covenants, beginning with the family and extending to the creation of free policies » (Daniel J. Elazar, *Introduction*, in Id. and John Kincaid, *The Covenant Connection: From Federal Theology to Modern Federalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 8). Friedrich agrees with Althusius's vision and also adds that the covenant among « symbiotics » (that is to say, those living together) could « be explicit or implicit, of a sharing nature aimed at the pursuing of common interests and utilities. This long chain of associations, ranging from the family to the cities and beyond, was framed around a series of « covenants » where the unity was « made of the previous lower units, so that, once the top reached, the members of the State [. . .][were] neither individuals, nor families, guilds or other lower communities, but only provinces and free cities ». Althusius's protofederalist system, however, lacked a basic concept of modern federalism, that is, the one « considering the federal union as the combination of individuals, as well as of States » (Carl J. Friedrich, *L'uomo, la comunità, l'ordine politico*, *op. cit.*, pp. 292–3); in any case, this concept will be developed only after the creation of the United States of America. It must be remembered that the interpretation of Althusius's *Politica* cannot prescind from a critical analysis of his lexicon. For example, opinion is divided on the use, hence on the real meaning, of the term *foedus* in his work. Malandrino wonders « to what extent it is possible to presume Althusius's proximity to federal theological thought, which largely uses the term *foedus*? ». Some historians of juridical and political thought believe that Althusius is « the most important "translator" of federal theology into a political and juridical doctrine », while others claim that Althusius's use of the *foedus* is referable to « the "federal hierarchical" humanistic tradition, dating back to the Middle Ages » (see Corrado Malandrino, *Foedus (Confoederatio)*, in Francesco Ingravalle and Corrado Malandrino (eds.), *Il lessico della* Politica *di Johannes Althusius*, *op. cit.*, pp. 188–9). For further details and explanations on Althusius's lexicon see the above–mentioned *Il lessico della* Politica *di Johannes Althusius*. For a historical and politological analysis of *Politica Methodice Digesta*, and an introduction to Althusian protofederalism, see Corrado Malandrino, *Calvinismo politico, repubblicanesimo, "sussidiarietà" e lessico politico althusiano*, *op. cit.*, pp. XVII–LI. See also Corrado Malandrino and Luca Savarino (eds.), *Calvino e il calvinismo politico*, *op. cit.*; Luca Calderini, *La "Politica" di Althusius. Tra rappresentanza e diritto di resistenza*, Milan 1995; Thomas O. Hueglin, *Early Modern Concepts for a Late Modern World: Althusius on Federalism and Community*, Waterloo (Ontario) 1999; Mario Miegge, *Il federalismo di Johannes Althusius*, *op. cit.*; Corrado Malandrino, *Federalismo. Storia, idee, modelli*, *op. cit.*, pp. 25–8; Aa.Vv., Johannes *Althusius (1557–1638)*, « Studi di Teologia », n. 38 (2007/2).

entered a new moral dimension, where its relationship with God and the others carried the burden of an unavoidable individual responsibility. As the covenant called the believers back to the laws of the Word and preserved them from mistakes, so the same covenant, in the political and juridical fields, brought individuals back to their responsibilities as citizens. This way, the pactional relationship deriving from the covenant became an essential category of human identity, thus setting up the model for all civil societies.

Althusius was able to develop a theory of natural right by combining a political and social analysis of reality and juridical relationships with the Bible and his own political experiences. Nevertheless, in his *Politica*, Althusius always claimed the independence of politics from religion[120], even if the influence of theology on his thought is undeniable. It is important however to remember, as Malandrino noticed, that Althusius cleverly avoided mixing political, theological and jurisprudential aspects, without denying their mutual bonds[121]. On the contrary, Miegge stressed, Emden's *Syndacus* used the Holy Scriptures to get his *exempla*, in an attempt to find the ideal political order whose nonexistence he was then forced to admit. However, in the Books of Exodus, Joshua, Judges and Samuel, Althusius detected a pre–monarchical political structure based on federal consensus, the only organization able to overcome « human frailty and the constant threat of tyranny »[122]. Miegge then adds that in Althusius the *potestas* was « neither *absoluta* nor *summa* »[123], but it was limited by two « barriers »: on the one hand, the Law of Moses (*Decalogi leges*), on the other hand the federal constitution of *universalis consociatio*. In the Althusian system of symbiotic *consociationes* clearly emerges the influence of the theory of the *covenant*, which is the linchpin of the establishment of « saint » communities.

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120. In the *Prefatio* of his work, Althusius distinguishes politics not only from theology, but also from the science of right. As Miegge explains in his analysis of Althusius's work, « politics cannot leave the definition of *jus maiestatis* to jurists only […] ». Likewise, « politics cannot ignore the *praecepta Decalogi*, which "spiritum vitalem infundunt" to consociative and symbiotic life » (Mario Miegge, *Il federalismo di Johannes Althusius*, op. cit., p. 62).

121. See Corrado Malandrino, *Calvinismo politico, repubblicanesimo, "sussidiarietà" e lessico politico althusiano*, op. cit., p. XXVIII; and also Corrado Malandrino, *Foedus (confederatio)*, op. cit., pp. 187–201.

122. See Mario Miegge, *Il federalismo di Johannes Althusius*, op. cit., p. 64.

123. *Ibidem*, p. 60.

Althusius's protofederalism is « especially visible », Malandrino says, in the concept of *symbiosis*, « considered as the core of *pactum* », and then of *foedus* and the « mediate relationship with the federal and theological traditions »[124].

Althusius's theory marks the crucial passage from Bullinger's *Covenant Theology* or « federal theology » to the first theorization of modern political federalism; to put it in Wayne Baker's words, Althusius was « the bridge between the religious covenant and political federalism »[125], even though the latter had not yet been systematized in a purely political theory.

The biblical archetype of the covenant between God and mankind, between God and his people, was shifted in the world of human relationship with the same ethical power, and the main actors were the people and their magistrate. Such an archetype, Malandrino says, « is the figure behind the Calvinist covenant among the "saints", in Althusius and in Puritans », both English and American; and it is the same principle « underlying the establishment of the republics of "saints" »[126] as in the England of Cromwell and in the Puritans of Massachusetts.

Thanks to Bullinger and Althusius, federalism established itself in reformed Europe at first as a theological principle with pre–political connotations and then as a political category with theological assumptions. As everybody knows, in the Old World federalism was not able to find a suitable way to be used in any constitutional structure and it was even less successful in the science of the organization of the State, where the theory of the centralization of power and of the opposite principle of national sovereign State prevailed. Bullinger and Althusius were put aside in favour of Bodin and Hobbes[127], but their insights,

124. CORRADO MALANDRINO, *Foedus (confederatio)*, in FRANCESCO INGRAVALLE and CORRADO MALANDRINO (eds.), *Il lessico della* Politica *di Johannes Althusius*, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

125. J. WAYNE BAKER, *Faces of Federalism: from Bullinger to Jefferson*, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

126. CORRADO MALANDRINO, *Calvinismo politico, repubblicanesimo, "sussidiarietà" e lessico politico althusiano*, *op. cit.*, p. XXXII and CORRADO MALANDRINO and LUCA SAVARINO (eds.), *Calvino e il calvinismo politico*, *op. cit.*

127. Unfortunately, the importance of Bullinger and Althusius's work has been rediscovered by the historical, theological and politological research only in recent times. As Campi notes, a « systematic scientific work about » Bullinger was carried out only in 1964 (see EMIDIO CAMPI, *Nuovi studi su Heinrich Bullinger*, « Protestantesimo », *op. cit.*, pp. 196–7, note 1). Bullinger threw his lot in with Althusius, whose work, Malandrino explains, has started

which were already known in reformed Europe, crossed the Atlantic « on board of the *Mayflower* » and landed in the New World, where the idea of *covenant*, picked up in a political way by the emigrated English Protestants, was later complemented with the main arguments of the English « Puritan revolution ». These colonists mixed the covenant tradition with the *common law* inherited by the English law, and laid the social and cultural foundations of the new American political communities[128].

Around 1540, Europe witnessed the consolidation and the gradual establishment of the evangelic faith, also as a consequence of a phase of relative tolerance and peace. The barycentre of the reformed world was shifting northward, leaving Switzerland behind. England and the Netherlands were becoming, after various political and religious ups and downs, the central plank of second generation Calvinism.

During this period, European Protestants stopped following Luther's example and drew their inspiration from Calvin and, at Zwingli's death, notably from Bullinger, who became an unescapable point of reference within the reformed world also thanks to the authoritativeness and the originality of his thought, which contained the dynamic element of the reformed thought that would have characterized Calvinism in its gradual shifting northward. Bullinger's theories were particularly well received in Scotland, Holland and England, passing through the Rhine Valley, where the social context was more

being studied « in a consistent way from the last two decades ». This scientific « neglect » of Althusius was probably due to the particular nature of his thought and his differences with the general trend of some historical and political research, which were more focused on an analysis of the State from the national point of view. Today, Malandrino notes, in light of the « clear crisis of the modern State », Althusius's *Politica* has become a classic in political thought (See CORRADO MALANDRINO, *Calvinismo politico, repubblicanesimo, "sussidiarietà" e lessico politico althusiano, op. cit.*, pp. XIX–XX). See also CORRADO MALANDRINO and LUCA SAVARINO (eds.), *Calvino e il calvinismo politico, op. cit.*

128. Although this theory is yet to be clearly verified, this statement seems to rest on solid logical ground; Miegge agrees that « the argument that the English *Pilgrims* [. . .] and Emden's *Syndacus* speak the same language is neither anachronistic nor ideologically forced » (MARIO MIEGGE, *Il federalismo di Johannes Althusius, op. cit.*, p. 68). During that turbulent period of persecutions, Althusius was at the height of his political activity and his main goal was to protect the independence of the Frisian town by forming an alliance with the United Provinces, which at that time (1620) were the favourite refuge of the dissident Pilgrims fleeing England. This is one of the crucial elements that marked the transfer of protofederal experiences and ideas from Europe to America. See also CORRADO MALANDRINO, *Federalismo. Storia, idee, modelli, op. cit.*, pp. 39–40.

suitable to understanding its political consequences and implications than stifling feudal Germany and Swiss conservative oligarchies[129].

In the second half of the 16th century, the Reformation was so widespread that it led to the creation of new cultural spaces where theologists and scholars from Protestant countries could meet and share their theological views. Besides the University of Heidelberg — where Girolamo Zanchi (1516–1590), a well–known Italian Protestant, had worked as a professor — a major role, particularly as far as « federal theology » is concerned, was played by the Hessian city of Herborn where John VI, Count of Nassau–Dillenburg and brother of William I of Orange, founded in 1584 a high school (*Johanneum*), which soon became one of the most important cultural centres of European reformed Protestantism[130].

Caspar Olevianus, one of the founders of the German reformed Church and co–author with Zacharias Ursinus of the famous *Heidelberg Catechism*[131], moved to Herborn in 1584 and taught Dogmatics there. The high school of Herborn cultivated theological as well as juridical studies, both perfectly summed up by Olevianus's investigations on the Kingdom of God and the covenant. Olevianus and Calvin were both jurists, but the former was also one of Bullinger's disciples. Just like his master, he had directed his studies towards the covenant theology and, inspired by *De testamento seu foedere Dei unico et aeterno*, wrote his *De substantia foederis gratuiti inter Deum et electos* (1585) which was basically related to Bullinger's considerations on *Foedus Gratiae*. The doctrine of the covenant was then bound to become one of the cornerstones of theology in Herborn and would have then evolved in Puritanism, thus becoming the guiding light of its thought[132].

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129. The above–mentioned regions witnessed the development of a very active urban middle class from a professional / commercial, as well as a cultural point of view, showing an ever–growing interest in the management of local politics and business. The Reformation was particularly successful among the members of this social category, and its religious postulates matched the principles of budding capitalism. Also the theological and ecclesiological ideas implied in the reformed cultural debate caused quite a stir among the converted people of these regions, carrying with them many republican and democratic implications.

130. See Charles S. McCoy and J. Wayne Baker, *Fountainhead of Federalism. Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenantal Tradition*, *op. cit.*, pp. 64–9).

131. See Il *Catechismo di Heidelberg (1563)*, with a foreword by Karl Barth, translation and notes by Francesco Lo Bue, Torre Pellice 1939.

132. See Charles S. McCoy and J. Wayne Baker, *Fountainhead of Federalism. Heinrich*

Many important personalities within the reformed world moved to Herborn; among them, the Italian Calvinist Giovanni Diodati (1576–1649), who played an important role in the development of the Reformation in Italy, and the Moravian theologist Johannes Amos Comenius (1592–1670), author of the above–mentioned *Panhortosia* where he foresaw, at least in the Christian spirit, the idea of a « perpetual peace », but lacked the clear–headedness and rationality of Kant's thought. Much more meaningful, however, is the link between Althusius and the University of Herborn. In this regard, McCoy and Baker wrote that within the « galaxy of federal thinkers who taught at Herborn, who made it into one of the most important centres of federalism in Europe, and who were colleagues of Althusius's, none stands out more clearly than Matthias Martini ». Martini (1572–1630) moved from Herborn to Emden in 1607, where Althusius had been Syndic since 1604[133]. It is therefore possible to detect a "path" through which the latest analysis on « federal theology » carried out in Herborn « transmigrated » to Althusius's city to be finally re–elaborated by Martini within the covenant–oriented scheme of his *Politica*[134]. Thanks to Althusius, the small semi–independent republic of Emden accomplished — for the first time — the passage from « federal theology » to political protofederalism, through the transformation of the religious *foedus* into a political *foedus*[135]. Althusius challenged authoritarism and claimed the freedom and independence from the Prince's absolutism, on the basis of his political « federal » model. Therefore, the system created by Althusius with the *consociatio simbiotica*, based on the principle of the covenant, was antithetical to Bodin's *summa potestas*.

Bullinger and the Covenantal Tradition, *op. cit.*

133. Martini met Althusius before he moved to Herborn; as the two American scholars explain, Martini « would have been in close association, not only with the federal theologians there, but also with the professor of jurisprudence, Johannes Althusius. Indeed, while teaching there, he became involved in a dispute with Althusius concerning whether theologians or magistrates had the authority to distinguish between what was temporal and what was eternal in the Bible » (Charles S. McCoy and J. Wayne Baker, *Fountainhead of Federalism. Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenantal Tradition*, *op. cit.*, p. 64)

134. *Ibidem*, pp. 64–5.

135. See Corrado Mandrino, *Foedus (confoederatio)*, and Id., *Symbiosis (symbiotiké, factum, confoederatio)*, in Francesco Ingravalle and Corrado Malandrino (eds.), *Il lessico della Politica di Johannes* Althusius, *op. cit.* See also Corrado Malandrino, *Teologia federale*, *op. cit.*

The Reformation spread from Herborn and Emden to the Netherlands, where the fragile line between the religious nature of Calvinist postulates and the political interpretation of its principles became thinner and thinner. Also in the Netherlands, Bullinger established himself as the point of reference from the 1540s, at the expense of Luther.

The fight for the independence of the United Provinces and their republican organization was strongly affected by the democratizing elements within the thought and culture of the Reformation established in the Northern provinces[136]. The « golden age » of the Netherlands rests on a complex political reality: on the one hand, the commercial interests of Amsterdam's mercantile middle class mixed with Erasmus's cultural heritage; on the other hand, the uncompromising Calvinism of a large part of the population overlapped the Orange's political strategy; let alone the continuous osmosis of political, religious and cultural elements between Holland and England. This area was one of the cultural crossroads of the Reformation, which fostered the thought of English Protestants, whose absolute intransigence earned them the tag of « puritans ».

In the seven United Provinces independence is an ongoing process that tries to define the organizational structures for its achievement. The most suitable model for both Calvinist cities and regions on the Channel was a con–federation of republics, each with its own organizations: secretary, grand pensioner, *stadhouder*[137], led by the General States — in George Edmundson's words, « a gathering of deputations from the seven sovereign provinces »[138]. The Treaty of Utrecht (1579) assigned the General States the « control of the foreign affairs of the Union »; they had « the supreme control of military and naval matters. The Captain–General and the Admiral–General of the Union were appointed by them ». Besides, this « super–regional » body exercised « a strong supervision of finance, and sovereign authority over the entire administration of the "Generality" lands »[139]. Actually, notwithstand-

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136. See Vittorio Conti, *Ideali repubblicani nel Seicento olandese*, in Fiorella De Michelis Pintecuda and Gianni Francioni (eds.), *Ideali repubblicani in età moderna, op. cit.*, pp. 161–76.

137. *Ibidem*, p. 99.

138. George Edmundson, *History of Holland*, Cambridge 1922, p. 112

139. *Ibidem*. See also Peter J.A.N.Rietbergen, *Una confederazione come repubblica e principato. I Paesi Bassi nel periodo di Guglielmo III (1672–1702) e la questione dei valdesi*, in Albert De

ing their extensive powers, the General States could be defined more as a confederation rather than a federal reality, because — as Kenneth Wheare explains — « the basic principle of this association was patently the subordination of the central government to the regional ones »[140]. Even here, however, the ecclesiological model of reformed Churches with their system based on a representative assembly (from local consistory to synod), undoubtedly represented a major source of inspiration in the feudal United Provinces, subject to the Holy Roman Empire and surrounded by monarchical States[141]. Even Calvinist theologian Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) criticized the confederal structure of the General States because he, just like Althusius, « considered the political community as a perpetual union of smaller communities united by the *consociatio*, or union »[142], and not as an assembly of delegations, each representing the interests of an independent province. As reminded by Elazar, the famous Dutch jurist and philosopher put forward « the theoretical conceptualization of Federalism in the state perspective ». Grotius considered « federalism » as a state system in its own right, and believed that « tightly bound leagues » could be

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Lange (ed. by), *Dall'Europa alle Valli Valdesi*, Turin 1990, pp. 49–56.

140. Kenneth C. Wheare, *Del governo federale, op. cit.*, p. 78.

141. The United Provinces are not a federation in the modern sense of the term, because they lacked a super–regional political organization with real governing powers. As a matter of fact, the General States, while representing regions and cities of the Union, were a mediation « tool » rather than a place for political decisions. However, these regions differed from the surrounding Catholic (and feudal–oriented) regions because of the *covenant* idea of the assembly institutions. The act of the Union of Utrecht (1579), which led to the birth of the United Provinces, shows very modern elements reflecting the particular religious condition of the country. Hereunder is the first article of the treaty: « Firstly, the above–mentioned provices will form an alliance, confederate and commit themselves in order to form a sempiternal union, in any way and form, and acting as a single province, without separating or being separated by any will, codicil, donation, conveyance, change, selling, marriage or peace treaty whatsoever, for any reason or fact, without prejudice for any particular province and city and their inhabitants, but preserving their special and particular freedom, privileges, exemptions, rights, statutes, customs and any other manifestation » [Emidio Campi (ed. by), *Protestantesimo nei secoli. Fonti e documenti*, vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 187]. The article tries to balance the Union's decision–making power and the independence and freedom of the provinces; we are obviously very far from federalism in the modern sense of the term.

142. Carl J. Friedrich, *L'uomo, la comunità, l'ordine politico, op. cit.*, p. 293. The German historian wrote that « although Grotius and Althusius had conflicting positions, Grotius agreed with [. . .] [Althusius's] concept of federal union (*ibidem*). See: Ugo Grozio, *Diritto della guerra e della pace*, Naples 1977.

functional and consistent with the principle of sovereignty[143]. Such a theory did not distance itself too much from reality, as in the case of the United States, where the confederal league of the thirteen colonies was replaced by the federal union with the constitution in 1787. The political and institutional choices that made Holland choose confederal–like forms of government had been strongly influenced by Calvin and Bullinger's theories, which had anticipated and cleared the ground for Althusius's protofederalism [144].

Before focusing on the developments of Calvinism in England, it may be useful to consider the case of Scotland, where the *Covenanters* drew their inspiration directly from the « federal theology » with the intention to establish a new political society.

In 1559, a year after the death of Mary Tudor, John Knox (1513–1572), the father of the Scottish Church, came back to his fatherland to introduce there the principles of the Reformation. During his exile he had known and had relationships with Calvin and Bullinger, who made a lasting impression on him. Once he came back to his country, Knox established and organized the Scottish Church, combining both his experiences in Geneva with Scotland's distinctive features. Besides, he had also introduced the principle of *covenant*, which perfectly fit Scottish spirituality and its strong assembly conscience. About the influence of Bullinger on Knox, Shaun de Freitas and Andries Raath write that the «Knox's theology remained closely aligned to Bullinger's views, and Bullinger' political views remained an integral part of Knox's political theology. The reason for this – they said – is mainly to be found in the major impact that Bullinger's views of the covenant had on Knox's theology and his commitment to the idea of the covenanted Chirstian community»[145]. The idea of *covenant* gradually "slipped" even in the political organization. Scottish Calvinists considered organized

143. Daniel J. Elazar, *Idee e forme del federalismo*, *op. cit.*, pp. 114–5. Grotius's opinions on this subject clashed with Pufendorf's ideas, because the latter « thought that federalism and sovereignty were mutually exclusive, and therefore also permanent leagues violated the concept of sovereignty » (*ibidem*).

144. For an in–depth analysis of the contractual–based history of the political organization of the United Provinces, see Alberto Clerici, *Costituzionalismo, contrattualismo e diritto di resistenza nella rivolta dei Paesi Bassi (1559–1581)*, Milan 2004.

145. Shaun De Freitas and Andries Raath, *The Reformational Legacy of Theologico-political Federalism*, in Ward, Ann and Ward, Lee (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Federalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

life as the secular transcription of the revelation. As the relationship between God and mankind is not based on hierarchies but on the covenant, this implies that even social relationships must be of the same kind. This approach marked the end of an absolutist vision of power, both ecclesiastically and politically, where the theological implications were more and more evident. This new type of community no longer foresaw the presence of the "prince" and the "monarch", but also the Calvinist "republic" and the magistrate–minister of God were perceived as being too rigid.

The most important political consequences of the spread of this covenant culture within the ecclesiastical sphere can be traced in English Calvinism or, more precisely, in Puritanism and its subsequent transmigration across the Atlantic. This was a crucial point in the history of reformed Protantism, which welcomed and elaborated in an original and creative way the ecclesiological and theological considerations of continental Calvinism, including the arguments of « federal theology » and their political implications. Along this path, ideally ranging from Calvinist Europe to Puritan « ideology », to the English Revolution up to the Northern American colonies, all the political knots in the reformed culture gradually untangled, thus enabling the later developments of republicanism as well as modern federalism.

In his Act of Supremacy (1534), King Henry VIII ratified the break with the Catholic Church, on the basis of personal and political reasons, rather than religious beliefs. Henry VIII aimed at establishing a strong national unity and a modern and independent State, because these were the essential prerequisites for England to become a great power in Europe. The ecclesiastical structure of the new national Church basically kept its episcopal nature, but it opened a breach to the reformed ideas that were establishing themselves in the regions of Western Europe from the first half of the 16th century. During young Edward VI's short regency, England gave shelter to Protestant refugees fleeing the Continent after the defeat of the Schmalkaldic League. Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury sheltered Martin Bucer (1491–1551), the author of an advanced ecclesiastical reformation in Strasbourg, while Pietro Martire Vermigli (1499–1562) fled to Oxford. During this first period, England turned its attention to Zurich and Strasbourg and it was not surprising that Bullinger was the

most important theologian in England because of his pre–eminence in the world of reformed Protestantism.

After Mary Tudor's Catholic restoration (1553–1558), during the reign of Elizabeth I the political and religious conflict between the Church of England and the Church of Rome became more marked, leading to a theological and moral change within the Anglican Church.

In the meantime, a small group of Evangelicals was consolidating, putting forward new proposals for a more radical reformation of the English Church in a Calvinist way. The members of this minority often included representatives of the upper middle class and were deeply influenced by European Reformers, whom they had met during the exile on the Continent under Queen Mary's reign. In this period, many English intellectuals came into contact with Bullinger; as Andries Raath and Shaun de Freitas wrote, « many prominent people associated with the English and Scottish Reformation corresponded with Bullinger », whom these *English Reformers* considered « as a highly esteemed Reformed leader »[146].

Once these English « Calvinists » came back to their homeland, they immediately stood out for their absolute moral intransigence, as well as for their loyalty to the principle of the *Sola Scriptura* and the great emphasis placed on predestination and divine election. Therefore, they started being known as « Puritans » and « saints », the latter term mainly having a political and theological connotation[147].

The Puritans adopted a radical stance within the English religious Reformation and immediately criticized the episcopal order ruling the national Church. In fact, they rejected the *lord–bishops* model in favour of the Presbyterian system, already experimented in Holland, and characterized by the traditional assembly system and by the lack of a

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146. ANDRIES RAATH and SHAUN DE FREITAS, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Marian Exiles: The Political Foundations of Puritanism*, « Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae » vol. XXVIII, n. 2 (2001), p. 2. The article includes a very interesting paragraph on the relationship between Bullinger's *De testamento seu foedere Dei unico et aeterno* and the Puritan conception of the State (*Heinrich Bullinger and Puritan Conceptions on Sovereignty of Law*).

147. See MICHEL WALZER, *La rivoluzione dei santi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 146–9. Walzer outlines an evocative picture of the Puritans as the model of a new type of politicians, and their ethical and political radicalism makes it possible to compare these "saints" with Jacobins and Bolsheviks (*ibidem*, p. 55). On Puritanism and some of its related aspects, see: LEONARD J. TRINTERUD, *The Origins of Puritanism*, « Church History », vol 20, n. 1 (March 1951), pp. 37–57; UGO BONANATE, (ed. by), *I puritani. Soldati della Bibbia*, Turin 1975.

strict hierarchy. In addition, the radical wing of Puritans "endorsed" the Congregationalist system, which was destined to have the same success in the Protestant world[148] and stressed the democratic and autonomous characteristics implied in the ecclesiology of reformed Protestantism. Congregationalism was particularly successful in the organization of reformed Churches in the New World, where the pressure of traditional structures and hierarchies was lower[149].

The communities of expatriates and persecuted people scattered all over Europe cultivated their faith in a totally independent way, concerning both local political powers and their country of origin. They had therefore developed a bond of solidarity where each community had organized itself and taken up its own financial responsibilities, choosing its own ministers and liturgies. The congregation is the local community where faith is professed, but most of all it becomes a « place » to organize it: the Puritan contrasts the *congregation* to the Tridentine diocese, centred on the power of its bishop, and to the *parish*, the Anglican diocese.

Both the Presbyterian and the congregational models were too revolutionary for their times, particularly for the Elizabethan *establishment*, whose goal was the consolidation of the hierarchical structure of the Anglican Church, distancing from the extreme moral rigorism and the republican leanings of a part of its reformed subjects. Under the rule of Elizabeth's successors, the situation took a turn for the worse and it led to a clash between Anglicans and Puritans, with the persecution of the Puritans and, eventually, the civil war[150]. England

148. As to the differences between the ecclesiastical system set up by Protestantism, see the next paragraph on reformed ecclesiastical constitutionalism.

149. The Puritan movement was characterized by the presence of two factions: one was moderate and adopted the Presbyterian model, while the other, know as "the Independents", was radical and supported the congregational model. The latter, together with the Puritan contractualism, had a deep influence of the political philosophy of John Locke and was instrumental in developing the concepts of democracy and « responsible government ».

150. This dramatic moment in the history of England represented the mitigating circumstance between two political and religious models, both bound to further developments with very different results within Protestantism. It is possible to describe this period by highlighting the « cultural » and, particularly, the religious profile of the events referable to what was happening on the continent. He explains that the peculiarity of this historical period lies in the fact that the conflict is within the Protestant world, between two hypotheses of Church: the first, traditional and loyal to the sovereign; the second, Calvinist and

then witnessed the accelerated modernization of its political and so-
cial systems, at first through the Puritan Revolution (1640–1660) or, in
Michel Walzer's words, the Revolution of the « Saints » and then, later,
through the better–known *Glorious Revolution* (1688). During the first
Revolution, connoted mainly by political and religious factors, some
republican and monarchomac theories came out, thus transforming
the Stuarts' kingdom into a *Commonwealth* characterized, as Campi
wrote, by « a society aiming for a common point between ethical and
religious ideals and a sense of reality »[151]; the second Revolution wit-
nessed the consolidation of a social and political model substantially
embodied by the constitutional regime established by the English
monarchy.

   Miegge, relating to Walzer's pivotal work on *The revolution of The
Saints*, explains how the generations following the « Calvinist labo-
ratory » were characterized by a radical « ideological paradigm »,
representing the key to the reading of a whole process[152]. The doctrine
of divine election and the consequent vocation of the « saint »[153] (the
duty to act to fulfill God's will), together with the need for reforma-
tion fall, according to Walzer, « within the framework of a theology
of the covenant between God and his people [in which] the renewal of
such a covenant is expressed in a "federal" way », steering « the experi-
ments and the unremitting fight of the "saints" in the world » towards
revolutionary forms[154]. In England, this ideology clashed with the
traditional forms of power and the consolidating political forms, such

transformation–oriented. For an in–depth analysis of the opponents and the outcome of
the struggle, see Giorgio Tourn, *I protestanti una società*, *op. cit.*, pp. 253–60.

   151. Emidio Campi (ed. by), *Protestantesimo nei secoli. Fonti e documenti*, vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
On the period marked by Cromwell's revolution, see Giampiero Carocci, *La rivoluzione
inglese (1640–1660)*, Rome 1998.

   152. The other generations referred to by Miegge are obviously the « Marian exiles » and
the « Huguenot Monarchomachs » in the 16th century, and the « Puritan clergy » in the 17th
century. See Mario Miegge, *Introduzione*, in Michel Walzer, *La rivoluzione dei santi*, *op.
cit.*, pp. 7–28.

   153. Predestination is not the determinism of an anonymous Fortune but God's inter-
vention manifesting itself as a call. From this perspective, the chosen one sees his identity
as an irrevocable element, delivered from the fluctuations and the interferences of his
personality; the election does not turn him into an obedient subject but into a responsible
person.

   154. Mario Miegge, *Introduzione*, in Michel Walzer, *La rivoluzione dei santi*, *op. cit.*, p.
13.

as the national State, establishing a halfway stage that represented for a long time a shining example for European Protestants, but which was not as brave and successful as the experiments carried out across the Atlantic. On the contrary, in America this ideology found a « virgin ground » in which to carry out and fulfill its potentialities by developing new and revolutionary forms of social and political organization.

The reformed English intellectuality, somehow consolidated by this ideology through the studies on the covenant theology, was made of some prelates who had studied on the Continent and made contacts with the *covenant theologians* in Dutch and German universities. Dudley Fenner (1558–1587) and Thomas Cartwright (1535–1603) were particularly interested in the « federal theology » and were also the main individuals responsible for its spread across the Channel[155]. While exiled in Europe, Cartwright met Zacharias Ursinus, at that time professor of theology at Heidelberg University, and Theodore de Bèze, who both introduced him to the principles of « federal theology ». The two scholars, together with other cultural protagonists of English Reformation such as William Perkins, William Ames and John Preston, would have later revised and systematized the ideas related to covenant theology, thus creating some of the necessary conditions for the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1646[156].

155. Some scholars agree that the doctrine of the Covenant of works was first developed in England by Dudley Fenner and Thomas Cartwright. The latter « studied in Heidelberg and Fenner spent some time in the ambience of Dutch Calvinist pastors who were establishing the Reformed church in Zeeland, where the influence of Heidelberg can be demonstrated » (DERK VISSER, *The Covenant in Zacharias Ursinus, op. cit.*, p. 534). In the article Visser follows the demonstration of this thesis, but we will only focus on the link between British and continental federal theologians.

156. This Confession of faith is a systematic presentation of Orthodox Calvinism, influenced by the Puritan theology and the *Covenant Theology* (a reformed theology founded on the concept of Covenant). Among its most controverted features: the double predestination alongside the human capacity to choose, the covenant with Adam, the Puritan doctrine of the certitude of salvation, a minimalist concept of the principle ruling worship and a sabbatical vision of Sunday. An even more controverted element is the identification of the Pope with the Antichrist and the assimilation of the Catholic mass to a form of idolatry. These theories were disowned by the Church of Scotland in 1980, but are still part of the official doctrine of other Presbyterian Churches. The characteristics of the theological *covenant* can be found in the Westminster Confession of Faith (notably, in chapters 7, 8, 19), as well as in the works of the British theologian John Owen (1616–1683), in his biblical studies and in the explanation of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Some the classic theological interpreters of the *covenant* in the 16th century include: Johannes Cocceius and

It may now be useful to highlight a passage that helps to explain the substantial difference determined by the concept of « federal theology » on social behaviour and political thought, respectively in the Anglo–Saxon world and in the rest of continental Europe. Furthermore, this observation allows us to detect the reason for the tight relationship between theology and politics which had a strong impact on Puritan thought and behaviour.

Ursinus and Olevianus, the American scholar explains, after careful consideration on the various aspects of covenant theology, stated a theory proposing a pattern of *covenant* focused on the « Covenant of works » between God and Adam. The concept of « *Foedus Operum* », widespread in Europe, was placed beside the concept of Grace as previously elaborated by Bullinger, thus determining the theological prerequisites for the rise of a binding moral, civil and religious code for all mankind: « elect or non–elect, regenerate or unregenerate, professedly Christian or pagan ». Federal theologists simply focused on and integrated the whole contractual theory of the State on the *covenant*. Therefore, Trinterud writes, « the natural law of the contract of the state was also the natural law of the covenant of works ». On the Continent « the practical applications of this new covenant scheme were never fully exploited »[157]. In England, instead, the Puritans inherited the unexpressed potentialities of the « federal theology » and applied its principles, going one step further towards the practical and political use of the concept of *covenant*.

Giorgio Spini explains this concept in his work *Il pensiero politico americano*, where he outlines the differences between Calvinism and Puritanism. Spini detects the common aspects of the two trends and asserts that their substantial difference relies on the concept of covenant. For the Puritans, Spini writes, « the covenant of salvation was logically followed by the covenant among the elects themselves, in the presence of God », which committed mankind to live like brothers. Such a covenant « originated both the Church and the Christian *Res*

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the doctrine of the Ancient Covenant (*Summa doctrinae de foedere et testamento dei*, 1648), Francesco Turretini and Hermann Witsius (1636–1708) and the Covenant between God and mankind. Some remarkable comments can also be found in the work of Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), particularly in his *Collected Writings*, New York 1953, vol. 2.

157. Leonard J. Trinterud, *The Origins of Puritanism*, « Church History », vol 20, n. 1 (March 1951), p. 48.

Publica », thus giving origin to « a voluntaristic and contractualistic concept of the State »; the Christian *Res Publica* « arises from the will of the elects, freed by the Grace, and therefore from the covenant they make among themselves »[158].

In Puritan thought, such a vision of associated life goes together with the monarchomac concept of power, developed for the first time by the French Calvinist Philippe de Mornay, the probable author of the treatise *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* published in Basilea in 1579[159]. Mornay based the right to resistance on a series of political and religious *covenants* which, Wayne Baker explains, « made the civil ruler responsible not only to God, but also to the people, who held ultimate political sovereignty ». It is highly probable that the French Calvinist knew well Bullinger's *covenantal thought*, but the political implications in his thought, Baker ends, « were more radical, because he structured his political thought around the concept of popular sovereignty »[160]. In substance, Mornay not only theorized the princi-

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158.   Giorgio Spini, *Il pensiero politico americano dalle origini al federalismo*, op. cit., pp. 3–4.

159.   See Stephanus Junius Brutus (ps.), *Vindiciae contra Tyrannos, sive De Principis in Populum et Populi in Principem, legitima potestate*, Edimburgh (d.i. Basel) 1579. The monarchomach theory is based on the right of the subjects to resist their king's power; the foundations of such principle lie in the reduction–return of the power from the divine to its human nature. Therefore, the subjects are allowed to rebel against the cruelty of their king, up to regicide. Puritans think that all powers are limited because of the Covenant, and the magistrates « have a limited power, because God himself limited their power though the Covenant; those who claim to exercise an illimited power give offence to God. Therefore, the citizens are entitled to rebel against the tyrannical prince and to reprimand the magistrates who abuse their authority » (Giorgio Spini, *Il pensiero politico americano dalle origini al federalismo*, op. cit., pp. 4–5). The monarchomach theory could be found also in Althusius who, in his *Politica*, entrusted the ephors, the guardians and the defenders of the consociation, with the task of keeping everything under control. The powers within the *consociatio* were always limited, from a natural and juridical point of view. This establishes a crucial difference between the juridical thought deriving from Lutheran Protestantism and the thought of reformed Protestant origin. Whereas in the Lutheran doctrine the rule of obedience to the power is limitless (as deduced from Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, 13: « Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained by God »), Mornay's *Vindiciae contra tiranno* provided Calvinism with a vital and revolutionary tool to limit the power. See J. Wayne Baker, *Faces of Federalism: from Bullinger to Jefferson*, op. cit., pp. 27–30.

160.   J. Wayne Baker, *Faces of Federalism: from Bullinger to Jefferson*, op. cit., p. 28. The treaty states that « the covenant is twofold: on the one hand, there are God and the king; on the other hand, there are God and his people. Both have to warrant the safety of the Church. If Israel forgets about God, and so does the king, he is deservedly guilty of the sin of Israel. Likewise, if the king follows some strangers and Israel does not try make him give up his

ple of the destruction of power, but he also connoted such principle ethically by putting it within the federal theology, and transformed it into a natural mechanism of the political systems based on a *foedus*[161].

Undoubtedly, modern political culture has to credit Puritanism with having laid and consolidated, at least culturally, the foundations of one of the key moments in modern history, and it was instrumental in developing the republican and democratic principles in Europe, and the federal principles in America. While Puritanism in England was able — through revolutions — to give the nature of the country's political tradition a radical twist in a republican way, but without establishing itself completely, across the Atlantic the spirit of Puritanism established itself as a crucial factor and it introduced the patterns on which to build the new society with more freedom than anywhere else.

Let's now analyze the outcomes of this European experience on the American continent.

The Puritan migration to Northern America involved the transfer not only of people, but also and especially of ideas[162]. The community of the exiles, characterized by a strong eschatological tension, was led by an unfaltering faith in God and by the hope of achieving in the « promised land » the religious living conditions that were precluded in their homeland. The founders of the colonies of New England had a palingenetic vision of their mission, confirmed by their firm feeling of being the chosen ones, and wanted to establish the new Israel in America[163].

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rebellion, they turn their king's sin into their own offence. But who can punish the king, if not the entire community of the people to whom the king swears and commits himself just as his subjects do? » (Roland H. Bainton, *La Riforma protestante*, *op. cit.*, p. 218).

161. A typical example is the American system where the executive power (president–tyrant) is limited by some « controllers » (the Constitution, Supreme Court, Congress and finally the voters), which are invested with the « sacred morality » underlying the covenant between those who rule and those who are ruled. Another important tool is represented by the *impeachment*, that is to say the modern version of the right of the citizens–subjects to remove the tyrant who violated the covenant at the basis of the relationship between the community and God. It is interesting to note how the public aspect of power in America is still invested with some religious spirituality, as in the oath upon the Bible or the terminology used by the most relevant politicians.

162. On the American history, see Alexis de Tocqueville, *La democrazia in America*, Milan 1996, vol. I and II, whose fascinating insights and subtle touches make this work a capital contribution to the knowledge and the understanding of the American spirit and its system.

163. A full comprehension of the thought of these pioneers would be impossible without

These men fled England to leave behind the miseries and the iniquities of the Old World, Spini explains, to « remain faithful to the principles of the "federal theology" »[164]; in fact, these pioneers gave immediately concreteness to all the institutions of federal theology and Congregationalism[165]. Puritans played a crucial role in the birth of the United States of America and left a big cultural and religious heritage to that great federal society. Tocqueville was one of the first scholars to detect in the Puritans of New England « the first, authentic germ of [American] national identity, democracy and federalism[166]; as the great French historian wrote:

> The emigrants or, as they called themselves, the *pilgrims*, belonged to that English sect called Puritan, for the austerity of its principles. Puritanism was not just a religious doctrine, but on many issues it merges also with the most absolute democratic and republican theories[167].

The first wave of emigration dates back to the early 17th century, under the reign of James I of England, when the persecuted Puritans, who initially took refuge in Holland, later decided to sail to the New World in search of greater religious freedom. This event is epitomized by the myth of the *Mayflower*, which sailed from the port of Southampton in September 1620 to land in November on the coasts of Northern America; there, the Pilgrim Fathers founded the

taking into account the adversities these men had to endure in that wild and desolate continent. Only this approach can explain their strong religious spirit and the apparent fanaticism and intransigence in their leaders' sermons and speeches. Within the first Puritan communities, religious and political thought formed a cohesive unity and these immigrants believed that they had been led to the new Promised Land by God, to whom each of them was bound by the theological *covenant*. They hoped to establish in that faraway land a real Christian community structured in free Churches founded on the « free ecclesiastical *Covenant*. In other words, the Puritans thought of themselves as the new Israel and came to America just as Ancient Israel, guided by the Lord, reached the Promised Land in Palestine. See also Giorgio Spini, *Il pensiero politico americano dalle origini al federalismo, op. cit.*).

164.   Giorgio Spini, *Il pensiero politico americano dalle origini al federalismo, op. cit.*, p. 5.

165.   See *ibidem*.

166.   *Ibidem*, p. 199.

167.   Alexis de Tocqueville, *La democrazia in America, op. cit.*, p. 44, vol. I. The second chapter of the first volume on the origin of Anglo–Americans and its influence of their future, it is important to understand the influence of the Puritan contractualism on the genesis of the social and political American system.

first colonies in Plymouth, New England, and set up a political and religious organization based on the covenantal principle implied in the Puritan contractualism[168]. *The Mayflower Compact* (11 November 1620)[169] was followed by several *covenants* of various origin among the communities born on the Northern American coast[170].

The voyage of the *Mayflower* marked the beginning of the "real" Puritan emigration, started in 1630 and led to America by John Winthrop,

168. On the first New England colonies, see Nathaniel Morton, *New England's Memorial*, Boston, 1855.

169. The *covenant* made by the Pilgrim Fathers implied that the religious community should have been followed by a political community with its own structure and rules. The covenant already contained the spirit inspiring the foundation of the United States as well as their political model. Here is a passage from the covenant: « In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are under–written [. . .] do by these Presents, solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation and Furtherance of the ends of aforesaid: And by Virtue hereof do enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions, and Officers, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general Good of the Colony; unto which we promise al due Submission and Obedience » (Donald S. Lutz, *The Evolution of Covenant from and Content as the Basis for Early American Political Culture*, in Daniel J. Elazar (ed. by), *Covenant in the 19th Century. The Decline of an American Political Tradition*, Boston 1994, pp. 35–6). See also William Bradford, *History of the Plymouth Plantation*, in Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson (ed. by), *The Puritans*, New York 1963.

170. Among the other covenants: The Cambridge agreement (26 August 1629), Covenant of Portsmouth (7 January 1638), The New England Confederation (19 May 1643), Fundamental Orders of Connecticut (14 January 1649) and The Cambridge Platform (1648). See Henry Steele Commager and Milton Cantor, *Documents of American History*, Hardcover 1988, vol. I. In the first decades of the 17th century many other commitments were signed: « all point — Lutz writes — to the earlier covenants, and the Bible that underlies them, rather than to Magna Carta of English common law tradition » (Donald S. Lutz, *The Evolution of Covenant from and Content as the Basis for Early American Political Culture*, op. cit., p. 43). Lutz, whose Popular Consent and Popular Control was instrumental in developing the American constitutionalism and federalism, wrote about the many covenants and commitments in the colonies that « between 1584 and 1789, at least 36 constitutive charters, 41 documents of colonial origin equal to constitutions, 18 state constitutions and 23 projects for the unification of the colonies or states were signed. Setting aside the last category, at least 95 important documents can be related to the Constitution of the United States. The popular government was not a sudden an unexpected event, but it was the consequence of a long historical evolution of political institutions, invariably based on some consensus theory. Hence, consensus is the key element of republican government in America » (Donald S. Lutz, *Popular Consent and Popular Control: Whig Political Theory in the Early State Cotitutions*, Baton Rouge 1980, pp. 31–2). For a critical list of the commitments, see D.J. Elazar, *Covenant and Cotitutionalism*, op. cit., pp. 33–7.

the charismatic political and religious guide of his community[171]. The *Massachusetts Bay Company* was then established, and it became the initial ground on which to develop the first forms of representative democracy, turning these colonies (trade companies owned by the colonists, who were also their shareholders) into religious communities at first, and then into political ones, structured and organized around a covenant[172]. Spini notices that these colonies witnessed the shift « from "federal theology" [...] to democracy, both religious and political »[173], also because of the lack of strong historical conditioning. New England then became an ideal « laboratory » for the « saints » to prove the soundness of the political and theological prerequisites of their « ideology »[174].

The guidelines of New England's culture are the traditional foundations of Purtanism: on the one hand, there is the covenantal doctrine; on the other hand, the congregationalist–like organizational system[175].

Let's now analyze the covenantal theory and the theological use of the *covenant* between God and his people as the founding principle of a Church whose believers sign a binding public contract before God. The members of this Church are not part of the whole of Christendom, but they are the « chosen ones », the « saints » or the « elects », that is to say those who « already proved on earth that they have re-

171. The expedition numbered 700 people (400 of whom had already left to prepare the ground for their arrival). On the differences between the first expedition of exiles (separatist congregationalists) and the second one, made up of volunteers (non–separatist congregationalists) see Giorgio Spini, *Il pensiero politico americano dalle origini al federalismo*, op. cit.

172. The legislation in force at that time set the rules for the settlement and the government of the New England colonies, according to some specific directives. First of all, the King assigned a territory to a Company provided that it swore an oath of allegiance to the English Crown and did not issue any law against those in force in England. Moreover, the colonial Company — a real public company — held the executive, legislative and judiciary power that it exercised on the King's authority through his Governor.

173. Giorgio Spini, *Il pensiero politico americano dalle origini al federalismo*, op. cit., p. 6.

174. The Waldensian historian explains how « the combination of the two lines of thought (theocratic and existential–organisational) » originated the eagerly–pursued « community of saints », [which was] instrumental in the first stages of the history of New England » (Giorgio Tourn, *I protestanti, una società*, op. cit., p. 303).

175. See Nathaniel Morton, *New England's Memorial*, op. cit. For a political and religious overview of the Puritan society in America in the time of the first colonies, see Gabriel Fragnière's interesting remarks in the chapter *Gli Stati Uniti: la fine della cristianità* of his book Gabriel Fragnière, *La religione e il potere. La cristianità, l'Occidente e la democrazia*, Bologna 2008, pp. 127–64.

ceived the divine Grace ». These people could consider themselves the only authentic Christians and therefore create a free Church based on a double *covenant*: one made with God and the other with their brothers. Puritan Churches were born in the American colonies through the reunification of the « saints » in a freely signed *covenant*. This led to the establishment of a growing number of related, yet independent and autonomous, Puritan Churches, each having its own characteristics. Such a background was very different from that in England, where Anglicanism claimed the uniqueness and a certain uniformity of the Church in the whole Kingdom.

However, this parcelling out of the Churches had gradually led to a state of anarchy menacing the independence and the survival of all Churches; therefore, it was necessary to set up an organizational concord able to coordinate these various entities. A system was then set up where — always with some appropriate distinctions — it is possible to detect a religious–like anticipation of 1787's federal system. In fact, around the 1630–40s, these Church–communities, while still fully independent and free, set up a *super partes* « special Synod with few and specific functions »[176] made of ministers representing each community[177].

« The saints are bound in a *Covenant* with God and with one another »; the concept of covenant, however, was not limited only to the world of the saints, but it spread over the whole society. Puritan theologists used the covenant to renovate the human world by reading it as a network of relationships. According to the Puritan thought, every society was based on the will to undertake a mutual engagement, founded on a free and mutual agreement, which encompassed the whole network of social relationships: from princes–magistrates to subjects–citizens, from masters to slaves, from husband to wife.

Therefore, the ecclesiastical *covenant* was of a social and political nature. The colonists' religious and social point of reference was the organized Church, around which a political community inevitably

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176. *Ibidem*, p. 198.

177. This system was later fixed in the *Cambridge platform* (1648), a sort of constitution of the American congregationalist Churches. This constitutional platform included a declaration of principles, an ecclesiastical organization and a series of disciplines. On this subject, see the website: www.pragmatism.org/american/cambridge_platform.htm (particularly, the chapters XV and XVI).

grew and adopted, almost in spontaneous fashion, some ecclesiastic–like forms. The need for a practical and political organization within the colonies arose from their great territorial fragmentation and the intense decentralization of the system[178]. In the first phases of the colonisation, the central power was usually absent, if not almost nonexistent. Therefore, the only element of cohesion and identity was the *covenant*, both religious with God and moral and political with all the members of the same community.

So the Puritans built their colonies according to structures that did not belong to any traditional form of power organization, but that brought forward once again — from a political and institutional viewpoint — the models of their own confessional tradition. As in the case of many congregations belonging to different Churches that « joined together voluntarily to form broader confessional entities », Filippo Sabetti explains, « the cities themselves joined to form broader entities », thus contributing to the development of the « practical experience » of « making a *"covenant"* », which was a key element « for the American tradition in the drafting of a constitution »[179].

This gave origin to the Puritan contractualism, which is believed to have had a crucial influence on the pattern of development of the communities during the first American immigration and succeeded in moving from a religious to a social and political level the *protofederal behaviours* anticipating customs and mentality. The spread of this culture would have led, about 160 years later, the participants in the Congress of Philadelphia to find out, maybe unconsciously, the key elements of the federal mechanism[180].

178. The first city–communities of New England only had a few hundred inhabitants.

179. Filippo Sabetti, *Teoria e pratica del federalismo nord–americano*, in Ettore Alberoni (ed. by), *Federalismo, regionalismo, autonomismo. Esperienze e proposte a confronto*, Palermo 1989, vol. II, p. 300.

180. Among them, the social and political *covenant* founded on two basic principles, stemming from the Calvinist culture: on the one hand, the free consensus underlying a government's power and *raison d'être* (Geneva); on the other hand, the moral right–duty of the people to rebel against the government in case of betrayal of the terms of the covenant (as stated by Philippe de Mornay in his *Vindiciae contra tyrannos*). These reformed principles merged one century later (1776) in the Declaration of Independence, which stated that « [...] Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, [...] ». A comment about this statement comes from Baker: « such a republican form of

These aspects of the social, political and religious behaviour of the Anglo–American Puritanism represented the living part of the cultural fabric that led to the idea and the creation of the federal system of the United States of America. American federalism, that is modern federalism the way we mean it, is part of a *covenantal* culture spanning from Calvin to Anglo–American Puritans. Puritans firmly believed in the presence of a covenant between God and his people, and of a similar, descending principle that tied a man to another man according to a morally–binding contract[181], so it was almost natural for them to think in a similar way about a process which aimed at joining broader territorial and public entities, such as towns, regions or States.

Some scholars have pointed out that this covenantal and associative spirit, first of a religious then of a social and political nature, developed in the American colonies well before its theorization by Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau. *Covenant* and contractualism were real instruments in Puritan America and not mere theories. As Vincent and Elinor Ostrom and Robert Bish acutely noticed, the federalist experience is based on this everyday covenantal negotiation:

> The principle of making a covenant to fix the terms of government was extended from the original settlements to the associations of settlements. The agreement freely signed by the citizens formed at first the basis of the statal government and then of a new national community that was given the name of United Stases of America[182].

As stated before, New England was the cradle of the first forms of organized political life, which gathered around municipalities. Between 1630 and 1650, Massachusetts witnessed the birth of a dozen little towns, built according to the *township system* pattern, which consisted in gathering a group of colonists by means of a *covenant*, similar

government was far from the minds of Bullinger and Mornay, but it was their federal framework that formed the roots of American federalism and made possible the modern federal republic » (J. Wayne Baker, *Faces of Federalism: from Bullinger to Jefferson*, op. cit., p. 41).

181. The moral power of the *covenant* comes from its divine nature, even if this covenant is made among citizens.

182. Vincent Ostrom, Elinor Ostrom, Robert L. Bish, *Il governo locale negli Stati Uniti*, Milan 1984, p. 40.

to the ecclesiastical one, to create a stable community oriented towards the fulfilment of common interests[183]. The foundation of a town was subjected to the approval of the General Court of Massachusetts, the central government, to which the towns sent one representative. Local governments were ruled by a public officer appointed by the General Court, but who was given full powers over key sectors such as education, transport network, training of local militias, tax collection, etc. In addition, the town organized the life in the surrounding areas according to federal principles, by making *covenants* with the villages scattered all over the territory. Finally, in 1636 the Court of Massachusetts sanctioned the self–government of the towns, investing them with the appointment of officers and submitting further legislative tasks and areas of interest to the local government.

The *town* government enjoyed a strong independence that the colonists had been able to integrate, through the principle of subsidiarity, with the central government of Massachusetts which, given its — quite faint — bond with London, kept the last word on public order and the relationships with the neighbouring colonies.

The migratory flux from Europe came to a temporary halt in conjunction with the civil war in England, and it deprived the colonies of regular supplies of men and resources, as well as of a solid point of reference across the Atlantic. Following this situation, around 1640 Anglo–American settlements started to feel the need of a common defence on the one hand, against the Indians in the internal parts of the territory; and on the other hand, against the nearby Dutch and French settlements. This state of necessity led Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Haven and Plymouth to create the New England Confederation in 1643[184]. By means of their own General Courts, the above–mentioned colonies ratified their association through the stipulation of a solemn *covenant* before God, which was the constitutive act of the *United Colonies of New England*. Following the experience of the *township system*, the four internally–confederated colonies (united *cum foedere*)[185] had a united vertical development (*covenantal relation-*

183. Many city–villages rose on the edge of the great forests, where life was particularly hard and subject to natural difficulties and dangers. Therefore, unity was first and foremost a security–related issue.

184. See Nathaniel Morton, *New England's Memorial*, *op. cit.*

185. Each of the Puritan settlements of New England were founded on a *covenant*.

ship) based on the example–model of Congregationalist Churches, according to the confessional and cultural nature of Puritanism.

This event laid the foundation of the political American system, partially based on the complex Puritan ideology of the *Covenant* and on the heritage of the English tradition that the colonists inevitably carried with them. The complex structure ranging from the *town* to the General Court of the colony, to the New England Confederation, includes all the stages of the first American attempt to get together many complex political realities with a federal–like method. Needless to say, this system had a crucial influence on the later developments of the American federalism, until and beyond the Philadelphia Convention.

The contribution of other colonies, founded as free settlements in the center and south of Northern America, was less relevant. These colonies, based on the *township system*, were created by free colonists who — lacking the example of the Congregationalist Churches —could not develop a protofederal–like political and social reality, based on the use of the *covenant* and showing how deep the influence of the confessional system on the social and political system was.

If the *township system* represented the condition for the birth of the

Connecticut, New Haven and Rhode Island adopted a protofederal system right from the start. Instead, the Plymouth Agreement and its annexed Pilgrim Code of Law written by the settlers of Plymouth in 1636 can be considered the first real American constitution based on the federal ideas of the *covenant* and the first example of a political constitution stemming directly from the covenantal tradition of the reformed Protestantism [see Daniel J. Elazar, *Covenant and Civil Society: The Constitutional Matrix of Modern Democracy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 39–41]. Connecticut was founded upon a solemn *covenant* made in 1638 among the towns of Windsor, Hartford and Wethesfield. Their union originated a new political subject with an independent government — the General Court — representing the three towns. They abandoned some of their prerogatives in favour of the central governing body, while keeping their powers on some specific fields outside the authority of the Court. The preamble to the constituent document (*Foundamental Orders*) made express reference to a confederal unity, that is to say a unity founded on the *covenant* made before God. The same happened with the creation of New Haven in 1643, when the towns of New Haven, Stamforde, Guilforde and Milford made a covenant and set up a federal–like association. They created a General Court, made of *town* representatives, and assigned the areas of expertise of the constituent bodies. Finally, Rhode Island was the result of a series of covenants made by 1643 among the towns of Providence, Warwich, Portsmouth and Newport, all having their own founding covenants. For further details on the colonies of the New England Confederation and for all biographical references, see Donald S. Lutz, *The Evolution of Covenant from and Content as the Basis for Early American Political Culture*, *op. cit.*, pp. 31–47.

American federalism, where the concept of *covenant* was tied to the pragmatism of the first Anglo–American Puritans, the Philadelphia Convention was its perfect epilogue. In fact, modern federalism was based on a *covenant* and the compromises agreed to by various institutional members during their constitutional works. However, these compromises, as Carl Friedrich noted, were not « the consequence of theoretical speculations, but of the right concerns about practical issues »[186]. The participants to the congress got out of the impasse by drawing on the « common sense » developed over the decades that followed the foundation of the first colonies and rooted in the political, social and religious culture of the Puritan pragmatism, spurred on by a strong spirit of association and accustomed to the everyday use of both *covenantal* and contractual practices.

The above–mentioned *covenant* culture had such a major influence on the American history that it is hard to imagine a different historical epilogue if this revolutionary principle had not permeated every aspect of life in the colonies, thus creating the necessary conditions for its future development and having such a great impact on the thoughts and actions of Northern American people.

1.3. Some aspects of reformed ecclesiastical constitutionalism

On the basis of the above–mentioned developments of the *covenant*, at first in the history of reformed Protestantism and then in modern political thought, it is possible to state that there is a link between the juridical and institutional systems established in an ecclesiastical environment and the secularized systems established at a later stage, even if it is not possible to make a direct comparison among ecclesiastical and political/constitutional organizational structures. It is also likely that today's modern States are founded on institutions deriving from ancient ecclesiastical arrangements. As a matter of fact, the elaboration of new institutional structures and forms within a political organization is often the consequence of the secularized transposition of previous similar religious models[187].

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186. CARL J. FRIEDRICH, *Il fondamento europeo della costituzione americana*, in LUCIANO BOLIS (ed. by), *La nascita degli Stati Uniti d'America*, Milan 1957, p. 36.

187. Despite the impossibility of comparing political and ecclesiastical institutions, it is nevertheless possible to detect some distant ties based upon some functional principles

If we agree with Schmitt, who stated that « all the most pregnant concepts of the modern doctrine of State are secularized theological concepts »[188], it is possible not only to accept the theological origin of the federal idea and its relationship with the constitutional law of the federal State, but also to place it within the Protestant culture, particularly within Calvinism. This is thinkable not only in light of the historical development of some of these concepts, which shifted from theology to the doctrine of the State, but also and above all in light of the practical consequences that followed the use of these concepts both in ecclesiastical and political constitutionalism.

If we agree that the meaning of the religious principle of the Covenant between God and his people — once received a political connotation — became a tool used by the then–forming political entities, which can be considered the practical outcome of the transposition of the Covenant in the historical reality. It is necessary to note how the idea of the *covenant* or *foedus* gradually influenced the ecclesiastical structures and disciplines of the reformed communities so as to direct and suggest an array of similar or equivalent political choices. In other words, does the reformed ecclesiastical organization show any tangible evidences of the practical use of the concept of

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and mechanisms; e.g., the similarities between the synodal and parliamentary systems. However, the two levels are separate as for the specific purposes according to which each system shapes its institutional apparatus, using its own tools and models. It would be impossible and improper to overlap *tout court* some institutions, bodies or political systems and concepts of ecclesiological origin. It is however undeniable that there is a « sediment of religious culture », sometimes even a matrix, in the political thought and the root of modern institutions, due to a historical and evolutive consistency where religious institutions anticipate the secularized political ones. As Pietro Rossi wrote, « modern capitalism and the modern state, with its rational right and its bureaucratic administration [. . .] are [. . .] the outcome of a centuries–old freeing process from religion; more precisely, from that particular religion — Christianity — representing its postulate and historical background ». Hence, it is difficult not to assume the existence of some kind of continuity between secularized and religious worlds. (Pietro Rossi, *Max Weber. Un'idea di Occidente*, Rome 2007, p. 179). On the ecclesiastic constitutionalism of the Reformed Churches, see Gianni Long, *Ordinamenti giuridici delle chiese protestanti*, il Mulino, Bologna 2008. From the same author, see also *Le confessioni religiose "Diverse dalla cattolica". Ordinamenti interni e rapporti con lo Stato*, il Mulino, Bologna 1991, where Gianni Long introduces and explains the internal rules of Protestant Churches in Italy, with a particular focus on the Waldensian Church. The author also tackles the problem of the relationship between Church and State.

188. Carl Schmitt, *Le categorie del "politico"*, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

covenant? And, if so, how much and how have these evidences been politically used by the same societies that had previously created them in ecclesiastical terms?

Sometimes this system is criticized for being a copy of the democratic parliamentary system, while historically and chronologically speaking it is quite the opposite, because the forms of parliamentary representation and federal structure are inspired by the government system of the reformed Churches.

Let's now look for the reasons for the above–mentioned arguments within the Protestant experience and the « turning points » in the establishment of the ecclesiastical tradition of reformed Protestantism: from the refusal of the medieval institutional Church to the Church–community, from the ecclesiastical Reformation of Swiss cities to the Presbyterian system, from the Huguenot synod to congregationalism[189], already adopted by the Anglo–American Puritans. This overview of the salient moments of the reformed constitutionalism aims at briefly outlining its influence on modern political institutions.

Protestants gave importance back to the local aspect of the Church and organized the life of believers in small local communities, in contrast with the hierarchical and pyramidal structure of the Roman Church[190]. These communities were structured around the local Church, seen as a part and an accomplished expression of the universality of the Christian people; the Reformation revolutionizes the form and the practice of religious life, from the communities (*Gemeinde*)

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189. On Huguenot political thought see Saffo Testoni Binetti, *Il pensiero politico ugonotto. Dallo studio della storia all'idea di contratto* (1572–1579), Florence 2002. On the history of the Huguenot synod and on its development see Janine Garrisson–Estebe, *Protestants du midi*, 1559–1598, Toulouse 1980.

190. City institutions were at first in charge of reorganizing the Church; at the time of the Reformation, the old clergy had disappeared and the preachers were in charge of spreading the Word and teaching, but they were not involved in the government of the Church anymore. This situation had a disruptive effect on the the old sharing of competencies — the civil power was in charge of keeping order on earth, while the Church had to deal with the issues related to the preaching and the spiritual care of its believers — but the political power of magistrates and princes was, paradoxically, the only power left in Christian society able to manage the Church. Therefore, they had the task of reorganizing the Church, a solution which was as logical and natural to its contemporaries as it is unusual and paradoxical to us. On the basis of this principle, the intervention of the political power for the reformation of the Church looked inevitable, given the absence of a real ecclesiastical power able to deal with this issue.

in German towns and villages to the Swiss *poleis*[191]. According to Zwingli, the Church is no longer the institution, the political theological juridical apparatus that rules, directs and dominates the life of the believers, but it is instead the community of believers itself or, even better, the gathering of the elects[192], in compliance with the principle of predestination. These communities were the forerunners of the « republic of the saints »[193].

Before continuing, however, it is necessary to highlight two important aspects of the reformed psychology that may be useful in the analysis of the characteristics of the Protestant political behaviour in comparison with previous mentalities. These aspects deeply influenced the social and political evolution of the old medieval municipalities that changed over to the Reformation and transformed the communities. These towns, which became a real experimental laboratory in the 16th century, anticipated some key principles of modernity such as the laity of the State or the assembly representative system.

The former comes from the vocational nature of reformed faith, in close connection with the theory of predestination from which the freedom and the consequent responsibility of the Christians towards the world originate. At the social level, the formulation of these terms results in a broader involvement of the Evangelicals in public life. This voluntaristic militancy was the consequence of a different idea of life that can be defined a real conceptual revolution. This new

191. The Reformation was immediately characterized by the diversification between Lutheran and reformed Protestantism in the development of the Church–communities, both at a confessional and organizational level. The *Confessio Augustana* was the "product" of German Protestantism, which gathered the German princes around itself, but it was not the confession of faith of the Swiss and Rhenish cities. Whereas in the area of present–day Germany the Churches were often part of a feudal context and were scattered over a wide territory ruled by a prince, in Switzerland political life was independent and revolved around its time–honoured communal traditions. These geographical differences within Protestantism led to the first confessional schism, occurring in 1549 with the *Consensus Tigurinus*. Thanks to this agreement between Calvin and Bullinger, the Swiss cities acknowledged a mutual theological, cultural, geographical and political affinity, and laid the foundations for the creation of the reformed world, thus distancing themselves from the Lutheran Protestantism.

192. See also EMIDIO CAMPI, *Ideali repubblicani nella Zurigo riformata dell'età protomoderna*, in FIORELLA DE MICHELIS PINTECUDA and GIANNI FRANCIONI (eds.), *Ideali repubblicani in età moderna*, *op. cit.*, pp. 73–96.

193. See MICHAEL WALZER, *La rivoluzione dei santi*, *op. cit.*

structuring of existence led to the shift of "vocation", hence also of its concept, from religious to secular life; every Christian was then called to live the fullness of the Gospel in the world, taking up the responsibilities of their actions towards the society of believers and the political power. The same was true for princes and magistrates with relation to subjects and citizens[194].

The second aspect is based on a biblical concept and stems from the first aspect, because it deals with the nature and use of power. As mentioned before, even those who exercise an authority are subject to these values / principles: in fact, the vocation of the evangelical prince is inspired by Paul's exhortation in his *Letter to the Romans*, the pillar not only of vocationality, but also of the ministeriality of the Statesman[195]. Through this passage, the holder of power is invested not only with the responsibility and the dignity to govern, but also becomes « a "ministry" of God », and all that follows. This is a « keystone of the political doctrine of all reformed communities in the 16th century », and it is instrumental in developing a new idea of the politician and of the independence and responsibility of his actions and, implicitly, of his limits too[196].

Therefore, in Calvinian *polis* the magistrates rule the city according to God's laws, in agreement with the confessional principles set by the ecclesiastical authority and accepted by the citizens with a public oath[197]. The two fields mix and overlap, in a continuous dialectical confrontation[198]. According to Calvin, the magistrates, God's

194. On the nature and the social implications of the Protestant *vocatio*, see MARIO MIEGGE, *Sulla politica riformata: « vocatio » e « foedus », op. cit.* and MARIO MIEGGE, *Vocazione e lavoro. Due trattati puritani,* Bologna 1985. As to the Puritan doctrine of the *calling*, in which « public » and « private » sectors shared the goal of an active reformation of the Church and the State, see: WILLIAM PERKINS, *A Treatise of the Vocations or Callings of Men*, in IAN BREWARD (ed. by), The Work of William Perkins, Appleford 1970, pp. 250–69.

195. See GABRIEL FRAGNIÈRE, *La religione e il potere. La cristianità, l'Occidente e la democrazia, op. cit.*, pp. 109–17.

196. For a commentary on Saint Paul's letter, see also VALDO VINAY, *Il cristiano e lo Stato. Commento a Romani XIII*, « Gioventù Cristiana », V, n. 56 (Sept.–Dec. 1936).

197. This act had a religious meaning, as well as a clear political value. Within the framework of a 16th century city, a confession of faith represents a real Constitution because it identifies the ideological guidelines to be adopted by the reformed republic of Geneva in the construction of its future.

198. In the *polis* the borderline between religion and public power was still very thin and merged into the citizenship identity. The Church, supported and defended by the city in-

ministries, are in charge of "monitoring" the fulfilment of the law and the citizens' obedience to the Christian principles. In Geneva, during the Reformation, the magistrates were given the task of assisting civil society to understand the divine laws and to apply them. As for the Church, it represented the real community of believers at the basis of the town itself. It was, Calvino said, the *compagnie des fidales*, a special association of companions, of free men having equal dignity and responsibilities, of *"fidèles"*, that is of men tied by the *fides*, by the covenant, in a relationship of cooperation and sharing the same intentions. The whole organisation of these towns revolved around the Church, whose aim was the creation of the « republic of the saints », on the understanding that civil and religious orders had to be separated.

Even if this scheme corresponded more or less to the city of Geneva at the time of Calvin, it is possible — taking into account the obvious differences — to transpose it to the other Swiss and Rhenish towns where the Reformation had led to a reorganization of the Church and its institutions[199]. The most advanced reformation dated back to Strasbourg and Bucer, and it was based on the enforcement of the model of community within the New Testament. The Strasbourg–born theologian, referring to Paul's Ephesians, divided the various ministries into four categories: the doctors, responsible for teaching; the pastors, in charge of preaching; the presbyters or « elders », responsible for monitoring discipline, and the deacons, in charge of aiding the poor

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stitutions, expressed its own confessional line around which the citizen–believers could get together and develop a sense of belonging and a well–defined political line. In such a context, the Reformation relies on the dialectics and the confrontation between these two realities: the scene of the tragedy is not the Church, as in Wittenberg, but the Council Hall where public debates take place and the compromise between religious authority and city institutions sets the political line to follow. The Calvinist city goes beyond the "Church–Empire" medieval scheme, where Christianity was seen as a homogeneous and undivided entity. The contrast between these two orders within the Swiss *polis* introduced a dialectic of roles and responsibilities in the Christian unity and helped to establish the principle of the separation between religious and civil domain underlying modern society. This difficult and precarious balance between the Council and the Church is the basis for a very important contest involving modernity. For an in–depth analysis on the subject, see ALISTER E. MCGRATH, *Il pensiero della Riforma, op. cit.*, pp. 243–60 and ID., *Giovanni Calvino, op. cit.*, pp. 95–165.

199. See MARIO TURCHETTI, *Poteri rappresentativi e ideali "repubblicani" nella Ginevra riformata*, in FIORELLA DE MICHELIS PINTECUDA and GIANNI FRANCIONI (eds.), *Ideali repubblicani in età moderna, op. cit.*, pp. 97–126.

and the people in need. In Bucer's thought, a pivotal role was played by the presbyters, who were responsible for discipline and the local Christian community. In Swiss towns, however, the appointment of the « elders » was the prerogative of the town council, thus restricting the independence of the Church. This condition lasted until the birth of the Huguenot consistory[200]. Later, this type of ecclesiastical organization became the point of reference of Dutch, German and Swiss reformed towns, as well as of Calvinism in the English–speaking world[201], and evolved into the Presbyterian system.

Even if this type of organization underlying the reformed *polis* was still limited to the « saints », and even if it did not clearly show the future developments of the trends within this « incubator » of modernity, it is nevertheless possible to clarify some of the potentialities in the model of the Calvinist town: first of all, the birth of a social entity (*compagnie des fidales*) which was the cradle of revolutionary principles in 16th century Europe, such as equality, political freedom, public

200. On Calvin's thought about the government of the cities and the so–called Calvinist « theocracy », the famous *Ordonnances écclésiastiques* and the role of the *Consistoire*, see Alister E. McGrath, *Giovanni Calvino, op. cit.*, pp. 141–8 e 191–220. On some important aspects of the Protestant political thought, see Id., *Il pensiero della Riforma, op. cit.*, pp. 231–6; Corrado Malandrino and Luca Savarino (eds.), *Calvino e il calvinismo politico, op. cit.*

201. In contrast with the reformed *polis* and the Presbyterian system, the episcopal system established itself in England with the Anglican Church, and in Germany and Scandinavia with Lutheranism, also by reason of a more effective symbiosis between the Churches and the historical monarchies. The confessional trends developed in a very different environment from the Swiss and Rhenish cities, where freedom and independence pre–dated the Reformation. The fortunes of the Churches in these regions were often linked to those of the States they were in, and this led to the alignment of the ecclesiastical organization to the political power, thus seconding their needs. As a consequence of this evolution, the Anglican and Lutheran Churches were stricter and more centralized, as in Sweden, Norway and Denmark where Lutheranism had a more traditional character, fostered by local monarchies, and kept many Catholic ecclesiastical structures, including the episcopate. Hereunder we will briefly outline the pattern of both ecclesiastical systems to make their comparison easier. Episcopalism is based on a hierarchical structure ruled by the bishops, almost like in the Catholic Church; at the territorial level, it is divided into dioceses, which are made of parishes; in the Church of England the authority of the bishops is based on the apostolic succession, while the Lutheran world has not kept the historic episcopate. The Presbyterian system, instead, is founded on the independence of the Churches, whose members elect a college of presbyters in charge of the discipline of the local Church. The elected « elders » then assemble in the presbytery, a higher assembly body, charged with the government of all the communities of a particular region. All the posts are elective and time–limited. It is not necessary to linger over the different level of « democraticity » characterizing the patterns described in this research.

responsibility; secondly, the development of important concepts anticipating some ideas of modern political science, such as the social contract and the *covenant*. Finally, the reformed communities are characterized also by the sense of independence and self–government of confederal unions and leagues[202].

When Calvinism came to France, local Protestants (the Huguenots), organized themselves following the example of Protestant towns and created congregations all around local Churches. The origin of the term Huguenot, defining French Protestants, likely comes from Geneva and in all probability comes from the German word *Eidgenossen*, meaning « confederates » or « conspirators »[203]. This term implies an ethical value, because it refers to a union based on an oath and a covenant. The tradition of the *covenant* involves therefore also the French Calvinists, who not only had a very important religious stature in France, but also strongly influenced the culture and the politics of their country[204].

In 1559 French Calvinists called a secret assembly in Paris, which was attended by preachers and representatives of the local reformed communities scattered all over the Kingdom of France. Their main goal was to reach an agreement on the organizational structure, mainly because they had to determine the coordination of the action of reformed Church–communities as well as the position of the Huguenots with respect to other Anabaptist–like currents. Making use of the evangelical traditions, the Huguenots set the theological principles in a Confession of faith and established an ecclesiastic discipline with political–organizational purposes. There was a crucial difference, though: the Parisian assembly was not attended by princes or theologians but by God's people; this « consultation » will give rise to the new structures of the reformed Protestantism: the consistory

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202. See J.WAYNE BAKER, *Church, State, and Dissent: The Crisis of the Swiss Reformation, 1531–1536*, « Church History », vol. 57, n. 2 (June 1988), pp. 135–52 and J. WAYNE BAKER, *The Covenantal Basis for the Development of Swiss Political Federalism: 1291–1848*, « Publius », vol. 23, n. 2 (Spring 1993), pp. 19–41.

203. The term *Eidgenossen* is much older than its French derivative and it is rooted in the history of Switzerland, whose name in German is *Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft*.

204. It is not possible to dwell too much on the history of the Huguenots, even if they were instrumental in spreading not only Calvinism in France, but most of all protodemocratic and protofederal ideas all over Europe. See DEBORA SPINI, *Diritti di Dio, diritti dei popoli. Pierre Jurieu e il problema della sovranità (1681–1691)*, Turin 1997.

and the synod. French Calvinists were then able on the one hand to become fully independent from political power and, on the other hand, to put an end to the clerical monopoly in the administration of the Church[205]. The French *consistoire*[206], college of the laics (presbyters), imitated the one in Geneva and added the electivity of the « elders » by the assembly of the members of the community; the synod, instead, was a real institutional innovation, which was not only largely enforced in the reformed world, but also had a tangible influence on the future development of democratic–like political institutions.

In a little urban republic where the population is circumscribed, the unity of the people is a visible and everyday fact; but how was it possible to create it on a much bigger scale and with a bigger population? The answer was simple, because it was only necessary to give an institutional nature to the spontaneous events that took place in Paris in May 1559. This led to the establishment of a « general assembly » gathering all communities at a higher level, and representing them through their own elected or appointed delegates. This type of synod became a new and revolutionary institution in 16th century Europe, and was characterized by a great religious and civil flexibility. This happened despite the fact that this institution was deeply rooted in the ancient ecclesiastic tradition, where synods and councils were regularly called to solve theological disputes. In conclusion, the transformation of these ancient ecclesiastical institutions in prospective modern entities was due to the dynamic and forward–looking nature of Calvinism, as well as to its values[207].

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205. In the first case, the Huguenots placed the Christian community as an independent reality within the framework of a civil society, where all spiritual decisions would have been made by the Church and no longer by the princes, as in Germany, or by the citizens' councils, as in Switzerland. In the second case, the French reformed Protestantism, unlike Anglicanism and Lutheranism, refused a monarchical episcopal system lacking of scriptural basis. The Huguenot pastor is now fully responsible for leading the believers, who are not a "herd" anymore but a "congregation", a free gathering of men and women in the name of Christ.

206. The Consistory kept watch over the private lives of the believers, intervening in all the spiritual and practical issues of the community. See ALISTER E. MCGRATH, *Il pensiero della Riforma*, *op. cit.*, pp. 231–3.

207. In conclusion, the Huguenot experience was crucial in France for the development of reformed thought and for the organization of the Churches through the synodal system, and it was also very important for the spread of such « improvements » all over Europe, despite a series of dramatic events. In fact, the Huguenots were forced to flee because of the

As in other historical moments, the Huguenots got the right answer on the one hand from the circumstances that led to a compromise, and on the other hand from the Calvinist aptitude for assembly culture. It is therefore no coincidence that the creation of complex institutional systems came almost spontaneously from the traditional constitutionalism of reformed Protestantism in case of an *impasse*[208].

The Presbyterian system was resumed by Protestants in England in contrast with the Anglican episcopalism. However, the English Calvinism witnessed the creation of a highly motivated minority of « independents », alternative to both systems. This intransigent wing enhanced the value of local communities, that is the first level of the ecclesiastical system of the reformed Churches. The above–mentioned movement sets itself as a congregation of believers that is completely independent from civil power and therefore against both the episcopal system and the presbyterian solution.

This situation gave origin to the ecclesiology of the *congregation*, based on the autonomy of local communities, seen as independent and self–sufficient cells. This particular way to organize and manage the Church was very successful within the Puritan colonies of New England. The authority of both presbyters (the government council of a community) and synods was not recognized anymore; as Spini said, « Puritans set the congregationalist system to the Calvinist presbyterian system, and defended the *"independency"* of each congregation »[209]. Within such a system, the individual responsibility of each member grew parallel to the level of independence of the Church, because each local congregation held the fullness of the universal Church and could not be subject to any other authority but the one coming from the congregation itself. Then, an innovative principle

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measures taken by Louis XIV against the Protestants, and the French Calvinists (roughly 200,000) were involved in a great modern diaspora (*grand refuge*), moving to the Protestant countries in Continental Europe and not only: from Germany to Switzerland, from Great Britain to the United Provinces, Denmark, Norway and Sweden up to Saint Petersburg and across the Atlantic, in Southern Africa or in the British colonies in Northern America. Anywhere they went, they carried with them their condition of human misery and an even more important "heritage" of modernity. See Maria–Cristina Pitassi, *Refuge* and *esprit républain*, in Fiorella De Michelis Pintecuda and Gianni Francioni (eds.), *Ideali repubblicani in età moderna, op. cit.*, pp. 177–92.

208. The most direct reference is the Philadelphia Convention (1787).

209. Giorgio Spini, *Il pensiero politico americano dalle origini al federalismo, op. cit.*, p. 4.

arose, bringing with it the prospect of future political institutional developments, and established itself as the foundation of a certain type of society where individuality and independence but also the ethics of power and the principle of subsidiarity coexisted in harmony, thus anticipating the creation of federal systems.

These congregations were jealous of their independence, but they were also scattered over a wide territory and therefore had to reach a compromise with the other communities to cope with common problems and difficulties. That is why congregations started, as Spini wrote, to « take care of common issues through synods or "conventions" »[210]. These assemblies were given some limited general and circumscribed competencies by the communities themselves. This way, the congregations could preserve their independence, particularly on the most important community issues, and could also deal with problems that could not have been resolved locally. Therefore, these congregations were able not only to keep their independence, but also to develop a federal–like functional unity through a high level of mutual solidarity and a subsidiarity–based mechanism.

With the *Cambridge Platform* in 1648, the great family of the *congregations* formally endorsed their « constitution »[211], thus paving the way to political federalism. The declarations including and showing the principles, the government and the disciplines of congregationalist Churches fully retained the tradition of the *covenant* and of the Puritan contractualism, which had a major impact on the culture and the societies of the colonies of New England. As a matter of fact, in the *Constitution of the Congregational churches* it is possible to detect a confessional antecedent of the future American political federalism; the Cambridge covenant includes and anticipates some typical aspects of federalist thought and practice that indirectly inspired the founding Fathers of the American constitution, that is to say through a now–consolidated cultural tradition.

The preliminary declaration, together with the guidelines for every Church, is followed by the various forms to be adopted: « saints by calling must have a visible political union among themselves »

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210. Ibidem.
211. See Nathanael Emmons, *The Cambridge Platform or Church Discipline and the Confession of Faith. A Platform of Ecclesiastical Government*, Boston 1855.

(c. IV, a. 1). The Church is then a « company of people bound to-
gether by covenant for the worship of God » (c. VI, a. 1); such a
covenant must be voluntary and consensual (c. IV, a. 4). In fact, its
very essence lies in a « real agreement and consent of a company
of faithful persons to meet constantly together in one congrega-
tion »; an *agreement* that the members of the community have to
express « by their constant religious practice in coming together
for the public worship of God and by their religious subjection
unto the ordinances of God » (c. IV, a. 4). The charter reasserts the
independence of each individual, the electability of the posts and
their possible removal in case of « manifest unworthiness and delin-
quency » (c. VIII, a. 6–7). Finally, the government of the Church,
subject to Christ and delegated to the elected representatives, must
be invested « with sufficient power for its own preservation and
subsistence » (c. X, a. 2).

It is interesting to note the careful integration between the models
of the classical political tradition and the ones coming from previous
reformed ecclesiastical experiences, from which the members drew
their inspiration to express their idea of a « company of professed
believers, ecclesiastically confederate » (c. X, a. 1). The structure of the
Constitution was framed around the three traditional forms of power:
monarchical, aristocratic and democratic, in accordance with the
Presbyterian system. Christ, head and king of the universal Church,
holds the *sovereign power*, which then goes down to the « body or
brotherhood of the Church » that Christ « granted unto them » by
means of a *covenant*. The community, invested with such a power,
« resembles a democracy », within which the power is aristocratically
exercised by the presbytery (c. X, a. 3).

These key principles were common to all congregations and fol-
lowed the principles relating to the structuring of the union of the
congregations into a confederation of Churches, whose main goal was
the preservation of the principle of independence of each community
and the superstructural unity of the congregations. The following
extract is taken from the chapter on « the communion of churches
one with another ».

Although churches be distinct, and therefore may not be con-
founded one with another, and equal, and therefore have not do-
minion one over another; yet all the churches ought to preserve

church communion one with another, because they are all united unto Christ, not only as a mystical, but as a political head; whence is derived a communion suitable thereunto (c. XV, a. 1)[212].

This *communion of churches* was based on the principle of « mutual care [...] for one another's welfare » (c. XV, a. 2.1) and was enforced by means of two tools: first of all, the establishment of common institutions for the enforcement of the « consultation one with another ». The Synod had an advisory role; the elders gathered « to consider and argue the points in doubt or difference » to find, by mutual consent, « the way of truth and peace ». The unity lay within the Word, whose authoritativeness would have guaranteed the unity itself. There was also a second tool: a pseudo–coactive instrument which could lead either to the formal condemnation of an « impenitent » Church or to its removal from the union[213] (c. XV, a. 2.2). The chapter on the definition of the common ecclesiastical system touches on the rights of participation to the common government by all communities, and of solidarity and subsidiarity (c. XV, a. 2.4,.6).

The successive chapters define once again the prerogatives and the functions of the councils and the general synod (c. XVI), as well as the relationship between ecclesiastical and civil powers (c. XVII).

At first glance, the *communion of churches* looks like a confederal, rather than a real federal, system because there predominates the principle according to which the « churches have no more authority one over another » (c. XV, a. 2.3). However, there are some significant points not to be underestimated.

Firstly, this constitution shows an unprecedented level of modernity in Europe, where at that time both monarchic and confessional absolutism ruled. Secondly, the above–mentioned ecclesiastical system of government adopted by congregationalist Churches in Northern America experimented and started a new type of « political union », which adopted democratic principles and mechanisms to manage the general issues of many small, independent, under–articulated, republican–like structures. Finally, such a constitutional architecture reflected

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212. *Ibidem*, pp. 77–8.

213. Here the principle stating that Paul cannot assert his authority over Peter is applied, even though he can always reprimand him on the basis of the Word (see 1 Cor. 9,14–16; Gal. 1,8).

and complied with the social organization of Northern American puritan colonies, directing the political design of civil institutions. In the New World, on the one hand the separation of Church and State[214] becomes more marked, while on the other hand the extraordinary growth of the colonies and the steady evolution of the secularization process challenged the adaptation and the creative skills of the civil institutions, which continuously borrow models from their reference confessional communities, creating an osmosis between these two fields. Elazar presents an evocative picture of the associative practice in Northern American colonies, where the *covenant* system imbued the whole Northern American society.

Initially, the basic covenants of town and congregation united individuals and families. Parallel to those covenants there developed the network of voluntary associations — commercial, social, church, and civic — which represent the nongovernmental aspects of a civil society founded on the principles of free contract. From the first, networks of communities were united as colonies, then states. Ultimately, the network of states was linked in a federal union. Always paralleled by a similar network of associations[215].

To conclude, let's go back to Europe where some reformed theologians, scholars, explorers and statesmen sketched out some Utopian unitary projects, each spurred on by a peculiar vision of life and the world, despite their being inspired by republican and (pseudo) federal principles.

Notwithstanding this, it is always important to consider that these unitarian projects looked like « a prospective Utopian–like order, described as a simple league rather than a form of government »[216].

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214. This actually happened only from 1636 when Roger Williams (1603–1683), on bad terms with the Bostonian orthodoxy, decided to found the new colony of *Providence Plantations* (Rhode Island) where the magistrates were free from any religious interferences. This marked for the first time the success of the principle of the separation of the religious domain and the civil and political area, which would have led to the establishment of a lay culture and mentality. On this subject, see Edmund S. Morgan, *Roger Williams: The Church and the State*, Harcourt 1967; see also Mario Miegge, *Il federalismo di Johannes Althusius*, *op. cit.*, pp. 67–71.

215. D.J. Elazar, *Covenant and Costitutionalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

216. Carl J. Friedrich, *L'uomo, la comunità, l'ordine politico*, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

1.4. The Protestants and the idea of Europe

In Europe, the federal thought was never as successful as it was in Northern America, nor is it possible to see the positive effect of the idea that the Puritan pragmatism of the American colonists had used for their own practical purposes. Notwithstanding this, the federal thought, even before its spread in America, had led some representatives of the first European Protestantism to study Europe's political order from the perspective of the American experience, raising hopes of a united and peaceful Europe. This statement, however, needs some preliminary remarks to avoid possible misunderstandings; as a matter of fact, the theories briefly explained hereafter are connoted by a hint of federalism, which was theoretically anticipated by Kant and practically implemented only with the birth of the United States of America. Therefore, we will analyze the political projects involving (pseudo) federal[217] or even confederal aspects.

In the century of the Reformation, the idea of Europe still coincided with the *Res Publica Christiana* where the concepts of *imperium* and *sacerdotium* were identical and both concurred in looking for the unity of Christians[218] within the *Res Publica Christiana* itself. The birth of sovereign States from the end of the 15th century led to the disintegration of the common universalistic Utopia of the Holy Roman Empire and of the Roman Church, depriving the idea of Europe of a precise meaning. However, Christian thought was still fostering strong unitarian hopes and wishes for harmony among Christians in Europe. The Catholic idea of Europe was still burdened with Constantine's heritage, which was

217. This term or, alternatively, the term « federal », has to be distinguished from the adjective « protofederal », because it implies the presence of real federal aspects, which are concretely related to the definition and the "functioning" of modern federalism. The most relevant example is, once again, Althusius's *Politica*. On the different use of the terms, see supra note 119.

218. On the idea of Europe, its roots and evolution over time, see FEDERICO CHABOD, *Storia dell'idea d'Europa, op. cit.*; see also: JEAN–BAPTISTE DUROSELLE, *L'idea d'Europa nella storia*, Milan 1964; CARLO CURCIO, *Europa. Storia di un'idea*, Turin 1978; HEIKKI MIKKELI, *Europa: storia di un'idea e di un'identità*, Bologna 2002; ALBERTO CABELLA, *L'idea di Europa dagli antichi a oggi*, Turin 2002. See also the following — and more recent — works: ELISABETH DU RÉAU, *L'idée d'Europe au XXème siècle. Des mythes aux réalités*, Paris 1996; PATRICE ROLLAND, *L'unité politique de l'Europe. Histoire d'une idée*, Brussels 2006; GEORGE CHABERT, *L'idée européenne. Entre guerres et culture:de la confrontation à l'union*, Brussels 2007; PIETRO ROSSI, *L'identità dell'Europa*, Bologna 2007.

the foundation for the mixture of the secular and spiritual power of the Church, and which stated the superiority of the autonomy of the Pope over the Emperor; but the hegemony of Rome and the exclusivism of its universalistic vision of European society had been weakened not only by the ever–growing resistance of the Emperor, the princes and the town councils that asserted their role and a definite power, but also by the coming of the Protestant Reformation, bearing the idea of the separation of Church and State, and of a new idea of Europe.

The first Reformation was marked by the German theologian Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560)[219], the first Protestant with a « [con]-federal » vision of the unity of the « European nations » within the Roman Empire[220]. The German reformer, on the basis of a biblical allegory, thought about the unity of Europe as a *foedus*[221].

219. On Philipp Melanchthon see: Paolo Ricca, *Pietas et eruditio. Melantone a cinquecento anni dalla nascita*, « Protestantesimo », LIII, n. 1 (1998), pp. 3–13; Vv. Aa., *Studi su Melantone*, « Protestantesimo », LIII, n. 1 (1998), pp. 14–25; Heinz Scheible, *L'importanza di Melantone nella storia e nel presente*, « Protestantesimo », LVI, n. 2 (2001), pp. 110–23. On his political thought, see: Filippo Melantone, *Scritti religiosi e politici*, by Attilio Agnoletto, Turin 1981; Mario Miegge, *Il sogno del re di Babilonia. Profezia e storia da Thomas Müntzer a Isaac Newton*, Milan 1995, pp. 49–66.

220. Melanchthon's thought, Miegge explains, shows the convergence of humanistic historical thought, linked to classical tradition, and Protestant biblicism. Melanchthon stated that the knowledge of history is crucial to get a deeper knowledge of the prophetic texts because history is the depositary of the hidden meanings of the biblical message. Moreover, the Lutheran theologian « believes that the prophecy cannot be referred exclusively to a single "time", but that it applies to the whole history of the world ». Hence, he believes in the existence of a « "cosmic–historical" sense » established by prophecies and theology, prefiguring the Augustinian model of the « two histories »: the political history of the Empires with their charges, and the ecclesiastical history of the *historia salutis*, where the former is ruled by the latter. Finally, Melanchthon believes that the ethical and political — hence educational — value of history can find « much more openness in the vocational doctrine of the Reformation than in Augustine, and it also takes on more secular connotations » (Mario Miegge, Il *sogno del re di Babilonia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 52–3).

221. The allegory Melanchthon refers to is the statue dreamed by the Babylonian King Nabucodonosor, described in Daniel's prophetic book and used by the German theologian in his commentary [see Philippo Melanthone (ed. By), *In Danielem prophetam commentarius*, MDXLIII, in *Corpus Reformatorum*, MO, 65, *Scripta exegetica*, V, p. 831]. In his dream, the King sees a big statue made of many different parts and materials: the golden head symbolizes his kingdom; the chest and the silver arms represent the Median and Persian kingdoms; the bronze thighs and pelvis symbolize Alexander The Great's kingdom; the iron legs represent the Roman Empire, while the feet, made of clay and iron, announce a fragile yet strong kingdom, the heir to the Roman–Christian tradition. Luther identified this kingdom with the Roman–German « Reich », the sole kingdom able to preserve the Roman–Christian roots of the Empire from the chaos of its disintegration. According to Melanchthon, the

Melanchthon was Luther's closest collaborator but, unlike him, he had republican sympathies which brought him nearer to Zwingli[222]. Melanchthon also had an irenic spirit, as well as a moderate and conciliatory nature, and was constantly aimed at looking for peaceful and balanced views in the face of the political and religious fights that disrupted Europe at that time. In fact, Melanchthon can be considered « the great conjunction between the Lutheran Reformation and German humanism"[223] because he brings together the political tradition and the aristocratic and republican models of classical antiquity, and the Sinaitic systems of the Ancient Covenant[224]. The German reformer meshed these two traditions and was a forerunner of the « federal theology ». Many of Melanchthon's implicit considerations were perpetuated by German Protestants and later by the Swiss and Dutch Protestants, « whose *Foederaltheologie* adopted the concept of *Covenant* (*Foedus*) to define first of all the relation between God and mankind, then the relation between believers and finally civil relations themselves »[225].

In addition to the importance given to the idea of *foedus* and to his republican preferences, Melanchthon developed an idea of Europe that differed from Luther's vision, because the father of the Protestant reformation considered Europe as the continuation of the Roman–German Empire on the basis of the theory of the *translatio imperii*; as a matter of fact, Luther had a sort of veiled patriotism which

original matrix lay instead in a new idea of Europe, based not on univocal elements but on all its parts together.

222. See Mario Miegge, *Teologia della storia e « storia della libertà »*, in Elena Bein Ricco, *Dio e la storia*, Turin 1990, pp. 53–84.

223. On the influence on Reformeds by Melanchthon, and other humanists see Bruce Gordon and Emidio Campi, Architect of Reformation: an introduction to Heinrich Bullinger, 1504–1575, *op. cit.* See also Karin Maag, Melanchthon in Europe: his work and influence beyond Wittenberg, Grand Rapids 1999 and John Schofield, Philip Melanchthon and the English Reformation, Aldershot 2006.

224. Melanchthon's soul was split; in fact, Miegge explains, the *preceptor Germaniae* was the conjunction between the « two main wings » of the Reformation: « the wing of the Lutheran Princes and the wing of the reformed "republics" ». He devoted all his life to pursuing the rapprochement and the reconcilement of these two trends (Mario Miegge, Il *sogno del re di Babilonia*, *op. cit.*, p. 62).

225. See Charles S. McCoy and J. Wayne Baker, *Fountainhead of Federalism. Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenantal Tradition*, *op. cit.*, pp. 35–36. See also Shaun De Freitas and Andries Raath, The Reformational Legacy of Theologico–political Federalism, op. cit.

made him identify the Germans as the true continuators of the Roman imperial tradition. Melanchthon, instead, placed the Germans on the same level as « national » entities sharing the same Roman Christian heritage. According to Miegge, Melanchthon, by contrasting the Roman Christian heritage to the Turkish menace, introduced a new concept of « Europe » as a religious and geopolitical entity distinct from the Orient. Moreover, Melanchthon urged the German princes « to put an end to their "private strifes" » and suggested « the *corporate* system implemented in the Germanic Empire with the "Senatus" of the Voters » to carry out a « European alliance able to face the Turkish barbarism and the tyrants who wage unjust and dangerous wars against all European people »[226]. As Miegge pointed out, the German theologist substantially suggested to overcome both external and internal menaces through a « federal » system, rather than the restoration of the traditional monarchic and imperial models. Melanchthon claimed that the « nations » of Europe should « endorse a federal tool, based on a corporate government », to ward off the tyranny of the Turkish Islamic Empire as well as of the Papacy, which « perversely mixed [. . .] spiritual and political orders »[227].

Within the Protestant culture, a first and concrete project for the reorganization of the political system in Europe according to (pseudo) federal principles was carried out by Maxmilian de Béthune, Duke of Sully (1560–1641)[228]. He was the ambassador and minister of Henry IV, King of France; as the Head of Finance, the Duke of Sully carried out an intense reforming activity, brought into the public administration a new spirit and made important provisions, particularly in the agricultural field[229]. His crucial role in the transformation of France

226. MARIO MIEGGE, *Il sogno del re di Babilonia, op. cit.*, p. 57.

227. GIORGIO BOUCHARD, *Una voce delle chiese evangeliche, in Cantiere Europa. Passaggio verso il futuro*, Quaderni de «Il Ponte», LV, supl. n. 5 (May 1999), p. 74. See KARIN MAAG, *Melanchthon in Europe: his work and influence beyond Wittenberg, op. cit.*

228. On the Duke of Sully's political thought, see: JEAN–BAPTISTE DUROSELLE, *L'idea d'Europa nella storia, op. cit.*, pp. 138–40; HEIKKI MIKKELI, *Europa: storia di un'idea e di un'identità, op. cit.*, pp. 51–3; ALBERTO CABELLA, *L'idea di Europa dagli antichi a oggi, op. cit.*, pp. 30–31. For an in–depth analysis of the project, see AUGUSTE M. POIRSON, *Histoire du règne de Henri IV*, Paris 1867, pp. 104–14.

229. During the period of peace that followed the Edict of Nantes, the Duke of Sully — together with Barthélemy Laffémas, a French Calvinist nobleman — started to sort out public spending and to reduce the debit, restoring the Treasury and setting up the first

into a modern State was not limited to economic initiatives, but it also covered the project of a « federal » Europe[230].

Maxmilian de Béthune was a Huguenot and he was strongly influenced by the reformed culture, which in France was particularly dynamic and propositional; he also supported the religious pacification among the many Christian trends all over Europe. After Henry IV's death, the Duke was dismissed by Louis XIII and between 1620 and 1635 he wrote down a political project titled *Grand dessein d'Henri IV*, which he attributed to the King.

Sully's « master plan », despite its religious implications and « the incertitude between the ideas of Europe and of Christianity »[231] stressed by Duroselle, represented an original project based on the principle of equality among member States. According to the Duke, there should have been 15 founding States, including six hereditary monarchies (France, Spain, England, Denmark, Sweden and Lombardy)[232], five elective monarchies and an aristocratic government (Empire, Papal State, Poland, Hungary, Bohemia and Republic of Venice) and finally three sovereign republics (Switzerland, Belgium and Italy)[233]. The above–mentioned European nations should have periodically gathered in a « highly Christian council », together with a permanent organ (a senate) having an even number of representative for each member State[234].

Such an assembly, aimed at discussing common issues, most likely also acted as a supreme « court » of arbitration for all member States

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permanent army. Moreover, he turned his attention to public works, from drainages to road construction, and encouraged land investments, lowering the tax on the property of lands; finally, he fostered the creation of a State manufacture. It is possible to say that the two reformed counsellors were instrumental in turning France into a great European power. See Giorgio Basevi, *Enrico IV*, Milan 1932.

230. See Louis Raymond Lefèvre, *Mémoires de Sully*, Paris 1942.

231. Jean–Baptiste Duroselle, *L'idea d'Europa nella storia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 174–75.

232. The latter included the Duchies of Savoy and Milan.

233. Switzerland would later include, besides its traditional cantons, also Tyrol, Franche–Comté and Alsace; Belgium would regroup the United Provinces with the Spanish Basque Countries, while Italy would witness the birth of a confederation of States including the Republics of Genoa and Lucca, the Duchies of Florence, Mantua, Modena, Parma and Piacenza, and the other smaller principates. See Auguste M. Poirson, *Histoire du règne de Henri IV*, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

234. In Sully's projects, the senate was made of 60 representatives, four per State.

to settle their mutual disputes[235]. Moreover, the European « senate », a real unitary organ, would have also been in charge of collecting taxes and keeping a common permanent army[236].

Therefore, the 15 European States, Poirson wrote, « formaient ensemble une grande confédération nommée République chrétienne »[237] which featured some of the necessary conditions for a federal State: from a common army to the direct taxation of the central government; from the upper house, where all States were equally represented, to the prohibition of secession.

Sully's project relied on three basic strategical reasons that he considered necessary to assure peace in Europe. The first reason was of a religious nature, because Sully believed that a pacificated European confederation could hold down any confessional strife, thus warding off all religious internecine wars. Secondly, Sully believed that a redistribution of powers, lands and wealth could have undermined the Empire. He basically wanted to balance and stabilize the European and State systems by means of a political unity and the dislocation of the Hapsburgs' power, which was perceived as a menace[238]. The third reason was the creation of a great Christian alliance or, as Erasmus said, of a « Christian brotherhood » to oppose the external enemy, represented by the Oriental powers.

Therefore, Sully identified the enemies of Europe with the Ottoman Empire and all the States that had not embraced one of the three Christian confessional trends — Catholic, Lutheran or Calvinist — allowed within the confederation[239].

Sully's European project had an ideal and Utopian dimension, as summed up by the historian Heikki Mikkeli:

235. Sully also set the administrative cities of the confederation; the senate would have been based in Metz, Nancy or Cologne. The capital cities change in each of the six different versions of Sully's *Mémoires*.

236. Such an army would have been made up of 270,000 infantrymen, 50,000 cavalrymen, 200 cannons and 120 ships and galleys. See Jean–Baptiste Duroselle, *L'idea d'Europa nella storia*, op. cit.

237. Auguste M. Poirson, *Histoire du règne de Henri IV*, op. cit., p. 889.

238. As Duroselle explained, according to Sully's redefinition of the borders « the House of Austria would have lost Bohemia and Hungary, while the King of Spain would have lost the Netherlands and all possessions in Italy » (Jean–Baptiste Duroselle, *L'idea d'Europa nella storia*, op. cit., p. 140).

239. *Ibidem*, p. 139.

> More expressly than any other plan for peace ever conceived in Europe, it was an attempt to combine the medieval ideals of an Empire and a Christian community involving all Europe with the idea of a policy based on the balance of powers between sovereign States and a monarchical regime[240].

Another important, yet often underestimated, European protagonist of the Protestant world was John Comenius and his work on the universal reformation of the world[241]. This wandering theologian was the father of modern pedagogy and a member of the reformed sect known as Union of the Bohemian Brothers; he personally experienced the tragedy of the Thirty Years' War and religious persecution, and lived as an expatriate in Poland, England, Sweden and Holland, where he finally died. Comenius's pansophical vision, together with his being exiled and persecuted for confessional reasons, made him develop a strong irenic spirit on which he based his idea of life and the world. The Moravian humanist realized the importance of education in social development and based his system on the school, which he believed should have « unified the processes of civil and cultural growth of all nations »[242]; hence, his general reformation of humanity in the fields of education, religion and politics, which anticipated the Enlightenment cosmopolitism and the idea of a universal and perpetual peace preluding the Kingdom of Christ. In the *Panorthosia*[243], his « political » work, Comenius states that the reformation of human institutions

240. Heikki Mikkeli, *Europa: storia di un'idea e di un'identità*, *op. cit.*, pp. 52–3.

241. On Comenius, see the report prepared for the study *Jan Amos Komensky (1592–1670) teologo e pedagogista*, organized by the Centro culturale protestante of Bergamo: Emidio Campi, *Comenio teologo* (6 October 2001) and Rita Gay, *Comenio pedagogista* (13 october 2001), both available in PDF format at www.protestanti.bergamo.it. On Comenius see also the above–mentioned work of Jan Amos Komensky, *Panorthosia* and Jan Amos Komensky, *Didactica Magna*, Vicenza 1947.

242. Davide Monda, *Amore e altri despoti. Figure, temi e problemi nella civiltà letteraria europea dal Rinascimento al Romanticismo*, Naples 2004, p. 243.

243. The *Panorthosia* is just a part of the *Consultatio*, which is the widest collection of cognitive and sapiential tools within Comenius's extraordinary work. The *Consultatio* features also the *Pansophia*, which not only occupies two thirds of the collection, but is also the postulate for the other parts to become true; the *Consultatio* features the following parts: *Autognosia*, the tool for the knowledge of the self, of God and the world; *Panautonomia*, the art of living freely and without constraints; *Panautocrateia*, leading to self–command; *Panautarkeia*, teaching mankind to be happy with itself and with God; *Pampaedia*, facilitating and making the learning process effective; *Panglottia*, to cultivate one's own language and to create a new universal language for all men to communicate as if they lived in a big city; finally, *Panenosia*, a sort of ecumenical council of all nations for mankind to « reorganize the

can be possible only through « pansophia », or Reason. His idea of a universal State transcends Europe itself and sets this continental reality into a broader political institutional framework, following an intense rational thought. Despite the Utopian nature of Comenius's universal State, the *ante litteram* « Enlightenment » and cosmopolitan aspect of his project should not be neglected. That is why we will be focusing on some ideal postulates rather than showing, as in the case of Sully, the institutional structure underlying Comenius's project[244]

First of all, Comenius writes, the world State is « valid *for the whole world* if it takes account of *all people* » and if it commits itself « in keeping peace and order, *always* and in *every place* »[245]. The ultimate goal of such a State is to assure peace and to « remove the "precise"

earth so to make it a single thing of God, a single city, a single kingdom, upon everything and upon all God's kingdoms » (Jan Amos Komensky, *Panorthosia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 14–5).

244.   Notwithstanding that, we will introduce hereunder some characteristics of the universal State. Comenius's reformation revolved around three criteria: the new universal philosophy, the new universal theology or religion and the new universal State, encompassing all. The universal State included the universal Council of Light, in charge of philosophical and sapiential issues to contribute to the intellectual edification of Christians. It had the task of taking care of education, schooling and culture. The second institution in the universal State was the Ecumenical Consistory, dealing with the Church, theology and ethics in general. On top of these bodies and in charge of assuring the civil order and the respect for the laws, there was the *Dicastero della pace* (Ministry of Peace), which Comenius defined as the « universal link among the states ». It was in charge of preserving the human society « with its trades, that is to say to supervise justice and peace » (Jan Amos Komensky, *Panorthosia*, *op. cit.*, p. 201). Comenius also assigns the *Dicastero* many important tasks, some of which are typical of federal governments, such as: supreme justice, universal laws (today, we could call them a "constitution"), the duty to supervise the juridical process « as it is conducted by one and by the others » (Comenius means the minor States) and the « interpreters of the law » (a sort of modern Constitutional Court), to provide for weights, measurements, public roads and even the currency. Within this structure there are some minor entities structured independently according to their traditions and joining the universal State as explained by Comenius: « as the things scattered around the world are collected in various "syntheses" and minor synthesis groups around major syntheses up to a final synthesis [or sum], so the colleges of scholars, the synods of the Churches, the meetings of the provinces and the kingdoms [will do]; even minor meetings may sometimes end up in a *plenum*, that is the synthesis of the synthesis: a congress, a college, a council and some meetings on this earth representing the world » (Jan Amos Komensky, *Panorthosia*, *op. cit.*, p. 298). Following these gatherings, people and nations will be represented in an ecumenical council made of big continental colleges (Europe, Asia, Africa and America), each made of a president and an elective senate bringing together the delegates of all the nations as member–assistents. Finally, it is interesting to note that Comenius suggests to look for a universal language to make the interaction among people easier in vast assemblies. For further details, see Jan Amos Komensky, *Panorthosia*, *op. cit.*.

245.   Jan Amos Komensky, *Panorthosia*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

cause preventing its keeping: *the war* ». To that end, he believes that the use of the reason and the « light of the intellect » is functional to the construction of both the regional States and the universal State, in respect of « the freedom of those who govern and those who are governed », as without freedom « constraint and violence follow, and it is therefore impossible to achieve the aims underlying the existence of the State »[246]. However, the State governing the universal order has to prevent the use of violence and to take « mankind, as a microcosmos, back to laws of order similar to those of the macrocosmos »[247] where the « universal right » rules. To that end, Comenius provides the universal State with its own initiative to carry out against those who menace the established peace, and he also states that all « principles of violence that could not be tamed either with the light of the reason, or with love or the fear of God » will have to be stopped through the « coactive action of a supreme authority »[248].

Comenius strongly believed in Reason because he thought that « it is peculiar to human nature that men *act rationally* »[249] without being overcome by passion, wrath and violence. Such an attitude would belong to animal irrationality rather that to supreme human virtue, but the creator of the world State, despite his refusal of brute force, is also spurred on by a strong pragmatism preventing him from leaving the management of civil relationships to the « natural » human sociability and to the Christian αγάπε[250].

Comenius's universalistic and cosmopolitan vision anticipated some postulates of the Enlightenment culture which Kant would later use to elaborate his project of a « perpetual peace ». The Moravian theologist, despite the lack of a concrete institutional example to relate to, appealed to Protestant experience and culture, which allowed him to think in a (pseudo) federal way about the structure of the civil society

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246. *Ibidem*, p. 16.
247. *Ibidem*, p. 153.
248. *Ibidem*, p. 307.
249. *Ibidem*, p. 202.
250. It would be interesting to read again the concepts expressed by Comenius in light of Kant's theory of man's « unsocial sociability », upon which Kant founded the « fourth thesis » of his *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose* (1784). The two scholars share some similarities, and that makes Comenius's thoughts look particularly modern. See Immanuel Kant, *Scritti di storia, politica e diritto, op. cit.*, pp. 29–44.

and the « nations » included in his world State, structuring its unity around a *continuum* of free minor organizations.

It is possible to conclude this part with the words of Comenius himself, which make him look more like a member of the 18th century *"Società degli spiriti"* described by Chabod[251], rather than one of his contemporaries: not Austrian, Spanish, French, etc., but all equally good politicians, citizens of the free republic in the world; [...] and just as the terrestrial globe is unique and neither mountains, nor rivers, nor the seas themselves can separate it, but bind it instead, so the rulers of the different lands and their inhabitants must form a unique body, brought together to promote peace and harmony, without contending anymore for any part of the earth, as it was subject to them[252].

The consequences of these words and the more concrete project of the *Grand dessein d'Henri IV* influenced the English Quaker William Penn who, in the late 17th century, elaborated a project to establish a durable peace in Europe. His plan, inspired by a federal idea as well as by a philanthropic aim and a strong idealistic drive, was imbued with the principles of peace and tolerance that he had incubated following the persecutions he endured because of his religious beliefs[253]. Moreover, Penn's project, despite its lack of theoretical ground to fully understand the mechanisms of sovereignty and the policy of power, was quite pragmatic because of his direct experience in the government of Northern American colonies, particularly in the province (later known as Pennsylvania) entrusted to him by the English King Charles II Stuart[254].

251. See Federico Chabod, *Storia dell'idea d'Europa, op. cit.*, pp. 116–17. The *"Società degli spiriti"* can be identified with the great universal society of knowledge and literature; its roots date back to 17th century European cosmopolitism and its *raison d'être* can be traced back to the cultural environment fostered by Enlightenment encyclopaedism.

252. Jan Amos Komensky, *Panorthosia, op. cit.*, pp. 145.

253. Penn joined the Quaker movement in 1667 and this had a deep influence on his political thought and his vision of mankind and the world. For the Quakers, whose quest for faith was based upon the inner divine enlightenment, external behaviour and social relationships sprang from a rigorous philanthropic pacifism imposing them to abhor all forms of violence. The members of this movement, because of their Christian faith, were requested to declare peace and to thoroughly reject war. This radical pacifism then led the Quakers to support the conscientious objection to military service.

254. The English Conlony of New England made an essential contribution to the constitutional tradition of the United States of America, bringing in ideas and models borrowed from religion and then successfully applying them to political institutions; but also the

William Penn was the founder of the first predominantly Quaker colonies in America, and was not only instrumental in the drafting of the Pennsylvania Constitution in 1681 as a legislator, but was also one of the first theoreticians of American political thought. As a matter of fact, despite his being a "son of England" and keeping a strong bond with Europe[255], he elaborated some political institutional projects aimed at the government of the American provinces under his control. Penn's struggle with the everyday and practical problems arising from this government allowed him to develop a theoretical political project for Europe, focused on international law and to be achieved through a « federal » system[256].

Quakers took part in the federal destiny of the English provinces in America. As Spini wrote, « the Quaker colonies made a very important contribution to the creation of America, with their systems on religious freedom, and therefore to the separation of Church and State, with their democratic, pacifist and humanitarian inspiration » (Giorgio Spini, *Il pensiero politico americano dalle origini al federalismo*, op. cit., pp. 13–4).

255. Despite some stays on the America coasts, Penn never settled across the Atlantic; he « was always English, even spiritually » (Giorgio Spini, *Il pensiero politico americano dalle origini al federalismo*, op. cit., pp. 13–4).

256. The pacifist radicalism of the Quakers drove Penn to devise a plan to put into practice the principles of his religious movement, first in the Northern American colonies of West Jersey and then in Pennsylvania. Penn's thought was still related to the political tradition of his time and swung between the democratic ideas promoted by the Quaker movement and the conservative trends of the English society he belonged to. After being given by the King the task of governing a part of West Jersey in 1677, Penn gave the new province highly democratic *Grants and Concessions* because these regulations gave, Spini writes, « decision–making powers to a free and sovereign assembly, elected by the people without any confessional bias », reserving the appointment of the governor to the "owner" of the colony. A basic principle of the future American constitutional tradition was then established, that is the custom according to which no subsequent law could contradict the fundamental charter. It anticipated the principle of the supremacy of the written constitution over any other law. Moreover, the regulations stated that the mandate of the assembly members should be renewed every year by means of new elections and, as to justice, that the citizens had the right to a fair trial in front of a jury. Finally, the death penalty and the imprisonment of debtors were abolished. As for Pennsylvania, in the mid 1680s its founder related to the constitutional rules set for the properties in West Jersey, but he introduced an elective council acting as an Upper Chamber. In Penn's mind, Spini writes, « Pennsylvania should have been a "saint experiment" of the pacifist idealities of the Quakers ». However, the presence of the Indians and the external pressure of the French settlements forced Pennsylvania to revise its systems. Presented with the danger of a war and the risk of a conservative regression within the government of the colony, Penn proposed that the British provinces of Northern America should join together to provide a shared defence. His proposal — which was soon rejected — included the establishment of a federal–like Congress where all the colonies, equally represented, would have formulated

From the 17th century, Mikkeli observes, the notion of Europe started being more clearly associated with « the policy of the balance of power, religious tolerance and the commercial expansion of sovereign states »[257]. Penn was obviously sensitive to confessional issues, but he also firmly believed that a peaceful order among European states should have been imposed through the use of laws to stop the havoc caused by a century of bloody religious wars; this way, it would have been possible to establish a supranational order able to guarantee a stable and lasting international balance, and to inhibit the policy of power of continental States. The considerations on the conditions of Europe, his American experiences and the belief in the soundness of the « federal » principle led Penn to write in 1693 his *Essay toward the Present and Future Peace of Europe*[258], where the founder of the city of brotherly love (Philadelphia) elaborated a vaguely federal system for Europe aimed at restoring the political structure of the Old Continent on the basis of a rational and pragmatic pacifism.

The project was based on an agreement among the European sovereigns to constitute an assembly, known as « Imperial Diet, Parliament or State of Europe », that enacted some binding rules for the European States to adopt. This assembly, whose limited prerogatives assured each State the preservation of their own sovereignty over internal issues, would have had the task of settling any international disputes through law and arbitration. The decisions taken by the assembly would have been immediately enforced all over the territory of the « European Confederation or League », as Penn calls it; should a State refuse to submit itself to the common will or to the umpirage, the ruling body would have had the right to order out troops to impose the rules deliberated by the assembly[259].

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a common strategy for defence and the relationships with the colonies of other European States. Penn anticipated successive historical events and became a forerunner of American federalism. See GIORGIO SPINI, *Il pensiero politico americano dalle origini al federalismo*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

257. HEIKKI MIKKELI, *Europa: storia di un'idea e di un'identità*, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

258. See WILLIAM PENN, *Discorso intorno alla pace presente e futura dell'Europa*, « Il Federalista », XXXVII, n. 2 (1995), pp. 123–45.

259. See JEAN–BAPTISTE DUROSELLE, *L'idea d'Europa nella storia*, *op. cit.*; MARIA GRAZIA MELCHIONNI, *Europa Unita sogno dei saggi*, Venice 2001; HEIKKI MIKKELI, *Europa: storia di un'idea e di un'identità*, *op. cit.* Penn, Mikkeli explains, did not mean to redraw the political map of Europe, but he wanted to preserve the international *status quo* through the establish-

The States adhering to the « confederation » would have kept their sovereignty over all internal issues, but — by giving up the power to wage war and, therefore, to the maintenance of their army — they could have concentrated their resources on the development of agriculture, commerce and science, and on the development of sectors such as education and communications. Penn explained to those fearing the loss of power by the European « nations » following their entry into the above–mentioned « alliance for peace », that « the princes in their own country » would have kept their « sovereignty as they always had » and he also added that « if we can call it a decrease in sovereignty, it is only because each country will be protected against any misuse of power and it will be incapable of committing any misuse of power »[260].

Penn also believed that the creation of an « alliance for peace », founded on the right and institutionalized through a « federal–like » structure, could have brought a series of advantages, both concrete and ideal, to Europe. First of all, it would have put an end to the useless and absurd « religious wars » and raised the prestige of the Christian faith; secondly, the member states would have saved considerable sums of money, thus allowing the European States to improve the standard of living of their people. Following a continental peace, the European sovereigns would have formed strong alliances, with huge benefits for travels and commerce[261]. Finally, such a system would

ment of a « European parliament », founded on a balanced voting system with a two–thirds majority for the passage of the initiatives and made of the non–elected representatives of the European princes. In this regard, it is interesting to note that in Penn's project « the number of the members of parliament per State has to be determined according to economic and non–political criteria ». The importance of each State is represented by its domestic product, « deriving from an estimate of its imports and exports, of the charging and the national assets » (Heikki Mikkeli, *Europa: storia di un'idea e di un'identità, op. cit.*, p. 54). This way, the distribution of the seats was the following: 12 delegates for the Empire; 10 for France and Spain; eight for Italy; six for England; four for Sweden, Poland and the United Provinces; three for Portugal, Denark and Venice; two for the 13 Swiss cantons; one for the Duchies of Holstein and Courland. Penn also expected the Ottoman Empire and the Grand Duchy of Moscow to take part in the European assembly, with 10 delegates each. Finally, he chose French and Latin as the official languages of the new Europe.

260. William Penn, *Discorso intorno alla pace presente e futura dell'Europa, op. cit.*, p. 138.

261. This last remark implies a basic liberal–like idea by the federalists, who think that the political unity of a region, a continent and the entire world, together with the abolition of borders, is the necessary condition for the full achievement and the functioning of the free market. See Lionel Robbins, *Il federalismo e l'ordine economico internazionale*, Bologna 1985.

have at first moved close to, and then co–opted Turkey onto the great European assembly, warding off permanently the Ottoman threat at the Oriental borders[262].

In the face of so many advantages, Penn was a partisan and supporter of an original project having the « federal » principle as a key element, and — despite his yet–to–be–refined consideration of federal tools, described by Guglielmetti as « the insufficiency of the coactive mechanism »[263] — the fear to be criticized on a practical level pushed Penn to mention the example of the United Provinces of Holland[264]. He makes reference to a model that was largely influenced by reformed Protestantism, which Penn considered as an antecedent and a prototype for the unification of more States, and effective for the whole of Europe. He probably related to William Temple (1628–1699), English ambassador in The Hague, who in 1672 wrote the essay *Observations upon the United Provinces of Netherlands*, where he analyzed the institutional structure of the United Provinces starting from the principle of the organization of sovereignty on various levels.

In conclusion, as Guglielmetti clearly wrote, « Penn's work shows that at the end of the 17th century a relevant part of European culture and society » — of Protestant origin — « did not accept the war as an ineluctable event, but investigated into the causes and the remedies »[265]; it identified the goal in the European Union and the tool to reach it in the « federal » principle, even if it had not been fully and clearly expressed yet.

262. Also this consideration is invested with spirituality, particularly now that the the the debate on Turkey's admission to the European Union, hence on the advisability of admitting a big Islamic country to a context culturally, socially and politically marked by Christian traditions, is a topical issue. This is further evidence that a federal system, including the one planned by Penn, can merge different identities and social, political and confessional bodies in a functional unity, because it is based on the rationality and the impartiality of a *super partes* right. Penn's open attitude, influenced also by his affiliation to the pacifist movement of the Quakers, shows how deeply cosmopolitan ideas and religious tolerance were rooted in a part of the Protestant culture.

263. See Carlo Guglielmetti, introduction to WILLIAM PENN, *Discorso intorno alla pace presente e futura dell'Europa*, op. cit., pp. 123–5.

264. See WILLIAM PENN, *Discorso intorno alla pace presente e futura dell'Europa*, op. cit., pp. 123–5.

265. *Ibidem*, op. cit., p. 125.

Pre–federal aspects in Waldesian culture and History

> The synodal–presbyterial form evolved in the 16th century into a federal–like organization. It developed in France within the reformed Church, in England and Scotland among the Presbyterians, in Germany in the reformed regions, from England to Holland and then in the New World, in Italy with the Waldensians, etc.
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> Franco Giampiccoli, *Genesi e uso del principio di sussidiarietà*, « Protestantesimo », LII, n. 1 (1997), p. 35.

Having defined the cultural aspect of federalism, having traced back its origin within the theological and ecclesiological tradition of reformed Protestantism, and having described the secularisation process of the federal thought that gave origin to the institutional features of modern federalism, it is now time to investigate into the presence of such political and religious aspects in the history and culture of reformed Waldism.

We have already spoken about the birth of the Waldensian movement — which took place outside the historical context and the intrinsic reasons underlying the Reformation — and about its progressive approach to Calvinism in the first half of the 16th century. In conformity with the subject dealt in this research, we will focus on the transition of the Waldensian movement from heretical community to real Church, rather than on its pauperistic origins and the subsequent evolutions of Waldism in its passage from the South of France to the Po Valley, until its partial settlement in the area of the Cottian Alps[1].

1. See Giovanni Jalla, *Storia della Riforma in Piemonte*, vol. I, Turin 1982.

The creation of a Church was instrumental for Waldism to create its own confessional identity, as well as its own ecclesiastical structure (based on the Genevan model) and a confession of faith; always in this period, the first evidences of a protofederal attitude within the Waldensian ecclesiological culture started to come to the surface[2].

Therefore, this chapter aims at delving into some aspects of the history of the Waldensians and of the setting up of their identity, bringing out clearly the links with the federal thought, together with its development in the history of reformed Protestantism. It will be therefore possible to highlight the genesis of a « federalist conscience » or, even better, of a *forma mentis*, to understand in a positive way a federal–like organization, both at its ecclesiastical and social–political level. This does not mean that Waldensians were plain « federalists », but rather that their culture features some aspects, referable to the reformed theological and ecclesiological tradition, which can be related to the federal thought and action. It is also natural that, over the time, many Waldensians spontaneously seconded or even positively welcomed such news when confronted to a federal–like social and political stimulus; likewise, many Waldensians naturally put up resistance to political situations undermining — sometimes only culturally — the traditional freedom and independence of the Church and its institutions.

On the basis of these assumptions, it is therefore possible to interpret a series of « federal » or protofederal events and behaviours within Waldensian history, from Reformation to modern times, both of religious and socio–cultural nature. In fact, the Waldensians were able to make good use of their natural aptitude to establish the structure of their internal organization, thus developing — just like in some other parts of the reformed world — a real federal–like « behaviour ». Such aptitude settled into the conscience and the culture of the Waldensians, who were spontaneously inclined to use it as a practical « tool » in the creation and establishment of reality, and repeatedly drew part of the Waldensian *intelligentsia* closer to federal–like political projects or having a tighter connection with the federalist ideology. Some

2. On the evolution of the legal and constitutional system of the Waldensian Church from its origins to its emancipation, see: Leopoldo Bertolè, *La costituzione giuridica della Chiesa valdese nella sua formazione storica*, dissertation, 1930–31 (IX) discussed at the Royal University of Turin, Faculty of Law, deposited at ASWS.

Waldensians showed a « natural » inclination towards political visions envisaging the unity of the European continent on the basis of the respect of both identities and differences through a covenantal and associative instrument able to provide for this type of union. The Waldensian point of view was supported by its religious output, in which the Protestant Churches pursued the quest for unity on the basis of « federal » principles.

The long path taken by federal thought through the history of reformed Protestantism up to a fully–achieved political federalism has often prevented this principle from emerging as a cultural product in a clear and autonomous way within the framework of a political reality, thus generating a dyscrasia between what is considered to be « federalism » and the use of this term. It may be therefore possible to lose sight of both its ethical nature and the cultural and sociological meaning closely related to it, releasing federalism from its root and pushing it into the background, without any ideological consistency. It is also possible, however, that in a federal–like society, that is, a society with a federal conscience and culture, the use of its terminology is not explicit and it is implicitly evident only in the social and political thought and behaviour of most of its members. This is the first outcome of a first analysis of the Waldensian history: the term « federalism » is rarely mentioned in a direct way by Waldensian representatives about their history, because it is an integral part of a consolidated practice, despite its objective presence within the Waldensian culture, such as in the practical use of some of its principles in the ecclesiastical organization and in the constitutional tradition of the Church itself, as we will see later.

It is reasonable to say that the cultural assumptions of the Waldensians rely on a federal *forma mentis*, aside from the technical political meaning of the term and from any ideological reasons; this « mentality » — which comes from a consolidated tradition within reformed Protestantism — is a constant presence in the Waldensian culture. In fact, it manifests itself mainly as a practical attitude within confessional and social life. We could even say that the Waldensians, just like the Protestants, are part of a historically determined federal society, where the federal nature is the expression of a particular social and religious condition, rather than of a political reality. Obviously, being the Waldensians a religious minority within a centralizing po-

litical context — at first, the Savoyard State and then the Kingdom of Italy — they could not affect at all the federal development of the Italian institutions and society. In spite of that, the federalist vocation of the Waldensians in the political field was still able to emerge in modern history.

It is now time to focus on the most important protofederal aspects within the history and the cultural identity of the Waldensians, which have contributed over the time to promote the setting up of a conscience and, later, of a culture based on a « federalist » pattern.

Firstly, it is crucial to detect the moment of the establishment of a confessional identity connected to a territory, because it had a major impact on the gradual integration process of the Waldensians into the Italian social and political fabric as a cross–border entity able to provide a link between the culture and the civilization of Mediterranean and Western and Central Europe. Such a condition, linked not only to geographical reasons, but mainly to specific cultural and religious characteristics[3], led on the one hand to the development of an autonomist conscience and on the other hand to cosmopolitism, which are both at the core of the Waldensian identity.

Secondly, we would like to put the emphasis on some important « cruxes » of the establishment of the new reformed Waldensian Church featuring some federal–like elements, such as the use of the covenantal tradition in the ecclesiastical constitution and the synodal–presbyterial element within the institutional structure of the Church itself. The « covenant », as in the rest of the reformed world, is the linchpin of a Church–community, and the adoption of assembly structures shows, in line with the ancient Christian tradition deriving from the Reformation, the means used to express the evangelical unity[4]. We also have to take into account « the germ of congregation-

3. It is important to remember that the Waldensian Valleys are at the crossroad among France, Italy and Switzerland, and played a major role in the historical development, as well as in the political, social, economical and religious events of these three countries which, in turn, influenced various aspects of the life of the Waldensians, including their language.

4. In this connection, Eric Rollier, in an article on the government of the Church, remarked that « "each Church" is the assembly of each community »; such communities are therefore independent, « that is to say, able to have self–government », and « cannot renounce their own personality without betraying the spirit of the Gospel ». Rollier finally states that « the example of the primitive Church (assembly) » is the same one « underlying

alism »[5], which was already an integral part of the first Waldensian « orders »in the 16th century, and tilting the balance in favour of the principle of independence.

Finally, the Waldensian model is a very peculiar one because it has achieved a balance between presbyterial vocation and congregationalist tension, thus creating a wide and well–structured federal constitution with other Evangelical Churches by means of covenants and agreements aiming at integrating or joining independent and pre–established ecclesiastical entities and bodies. As Giorgio Feliciani explains — without getting to radical congregationalism, where the federal form prevails — « there are confessions having a federal structure [...] » where « the local community has all the powers, except those given and / or delegated to the national organization »[6]. Beside this system, the Waldensian ecclesiastical constitution features a series of hybrid and original conventions pursuing an integration respecting both diversities and autonomies.

2.1. Territorial and confessional identity of a « popolo–chiesa »

Following their adhesion to the Reformation and its consequences[7], the Waldensians became a « *popolo–chiesa* » and expanded their confessional and territorial identity. According to Armand–Hugon, « the origin of the "plebs sacra", as Farel called the people of the Valleys »[8] dates back to that period, when the Waldensian Valleys witnessed the overlapping and the identification among the believers of the new Church and the population of the villages scattered all over the

the Evangelical Churches, but not the Roman Church, which separates the "Church" from its members, and established an absolute government, whose power is wielded from top without being the direct expression of the collective life of the believers » (ERIC ROLLIER, *Riflessioni sul governo della Chiesa*, « L'Eco delle Valli Valdesi », n. 22 (5 October 1945).

5. See GIORGIO BOUCHARD, *I valdesi e l'Italia. Prospettive di una vocazione*, Turin 1990, p. 110.

6. GIORGIO FELICIANI (ed. by), *Confessioni Religiose e federalismo*, Bologna 2000, p. 43.

7. Such adhesion was ratified at the Synod of Chanforan in 1532.

8. AUGUSTO ARMAND–HUGON, *Storia dei valdesi, Dal sinodo di Chanforan all'Emancipazione*, Turin 1989, vol. II, p. 14.

surrounding areas[9]. This confessional, territorial and identity–based nature, corroborated by the subsequent historical facts and by the long and terrible persecutions endured by the Waldensians, helped them to develop, on the one hand, a strong sense of independence and, on the other hand, a cosmopolitan open–mindedness.

The struggle of the Waldensians for their religious freedom and their « European vocation », particularly after their adhesion to the Reformation, helped the Waldensians to increase the double nature of their identity, which was so « strongly cohesive and aware of its own role » as well as of its implicit role, that it gave origin to « a strong independent conscience ». It was no accident, Tourn explains, that « at first the Piedmontese public opinion, and later the Italian public opinion », linked the Waldensian minority with « the struggle for freedom »[10]and that such minority was considered a « non–national » reality, because of its many undeniable cultural and confessional links with Central and Northern Europe[11]. In this regards, the historian

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9. In this connection, Armand–Hugon considers to be a peculiar event the fact that, at the beginning of the 16th century, « the people of the Valleys had their own official delegates, pastors and laymen, whose signature was valid and binding », almost representing the entirety of the population living in a region where the ideas of the Reformation had asserted themselves and had therefore circumscribed a particular territory, considered to be a land of heresy. « On the one hand — Armand–Hugon writes — [. . .] a minority entity was finally acknowledged; on the other hand, the same happened to the identity of « popolo–Chiesa » established by the Waldensians ». This fact gave origin to a real equation between a confessionally independent ecclesiastical entity and a population strongly linked to its territory, as stated by a symbolic event that occurred in 1848 when Charles Albert granted religious freedom to the Waldensians, and implicitly acknowledged their belonging « to a Church and to a geographically limited area » (*ibidem*, p. 30).

10. Giorgio Tourn, *I valdesi, identità e storia*, Turin 2003, p. 73.

11. The adhesion to the Reformation enhanced the European character of Waldism, but it is also important to stress that such "European vocation" existed beforehand. According to Tourn, Waldensian reality cannot be reduced to a « limited religious phenomenon within the Savoyard kingdom »; on the contrary, it is very important to consider its real European scope from the 13th century, when the Waldensians living in many European countries became a « major element of Christianity ». Later on, they became an integral part of European reformed Protestantism and investigated their confessional nature, thus establishing a special bond with the reformed countries based on a supranational–like solidarity. Such a bond is tangibly proved by the intervention of the European Protestant countries to protect this strategic political and confessional *enclave* after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 by Louis XIV and the consequent persecution carried out by the French and the Savoyards. On that occasion, international Protestantism became « Waldensian » to protect « the cradle of their Evangelical faith » (Giorgio Tourn, *I valdesi, identità e storia*, op. cit., pp. 7 and 49).

Salvatore Caponetto said that « the adhesion to the movement of the Reformation led the Waldensians out of a sectarian destiny », because it prevented them from being exiled « in the ghetto of the Alpine valleys » and opened them up to « the dynamics of the new European culture »[12]. From that very moment, their destiny got bound on the one hand to Protestant Europe, and on the other hand to the events happening in Italy.

Let's now briefly analyse the second aspect, entailing the establishment of the territorial identity of the Waldensians, before their adhesion to the Reformation and the consequent opening to Europe and the development of a cosmopolitan vocation.

Waldism was, at first, a movement promoting an ideal of poverty and was rooted in the region of Lyon; then it progressively spread to Italy, particularly in Lombardy, where it became a movement whose aptitude and confessional features differed from its original characteristics, due to a difficult political and social situation[13]. After a phase of separation and differentiation from French Waldensians, Lombard and French Waldensians decided to join again the two trends of Waldism during the *Colloquio di Bergamo* (Conference of Bergamo) in 1218 to face the outbreak of Catholic persecution[14]. At that time, despite the religious differences, the two trends were not geographically separated yet, as Papini stated[15]. Such split would have occurred later and in various phases, when the methodical suppression of the heresy carried out by the Inquisition with the support of princes and lords, as well as the large spread of mendicant orders recognized by Rome (Franciscans and Dominicans), gradually reduced the number

12. Salvatore Caponetto, *La Riforma protestante nell'Italia del Cinquecento*, Turin 1997, p. 149.

13. The so–called « friends of Waldo » chose exile following their excommunication and the expulsion from the city of Lyon between the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century, and travelled everywhere, from Burgundy to Lorraine, and the imperial cities of Metz, Toul, Liège and Strasbourg; many of them settled in Provence and Languedoc, and then in the Po Valley in Italy. Later on, they moved to the Alpine Valleys named after them. See Amedeo Molnar, *Storia dei valdesi. Dalle origini all'adesione alla Riforma*, Turin 1989 vol. I; Giorgio Tourn, *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo–chiesa*, *op. cit.*

14. On the role played by Lombard Waldensians in the diffusion of Waldism in Italy, see: Carlo Papini, Il *colloquio di Bergamo (1218) nella storia dei valdesi medievali*, report presented in Bergamo (4th May 2002) available at www.protestanti.bergamo.it/public/pag_61.pdf.

15. See *ibidem*.

of Waldensians in Northern Italy, and forced them to look for shelter outside Lombardy and the Po Valley.

The Waldensians moved, at various times, to the Alpine valleys of Western Piedmont and created what Tourn called « the bastion of the Alps », a solid Calvinist outpost in a Catholic territory. There, the Waldensians established a large community, stood by their French friends in the Dauphiné, and found a suitable ground for the clandestine profession of their faith. Furthermore, such a process was favoured by the previous evangelisation of the area[16] by travelling preachers and conventicles of « friends »[17]. This event marked the beginning of the territorial identification of this Evangelically–reformed minority with the Alpine valleys it lived in, and where its ever–growing presence in the region became a distinctive feature, as well as an identity element. It was a slow and wide–spread process, noticed by the Inquisition at the end of the 13th century, in conjunction with the

16. According to Tourn, three main factors contributed to make this region particularly safe for the Waldensians, and which later became a peculiar, and even identity aspect of the Waldensian reality. The first factor is the geographical position, which helped the small community to resist the attacks of the Savoyards and the Catholic persecution. The mountains have always been an almost inexpugnable stronghold, which many times prevented the Waldensians from being exterminated. The mountains were a base not only for the guerrilla warfare against the Savoyards in the 17th century, but also during the Resistance, to shelter political refugees and to organize the partisan warfare. The second reason is basically of a political nature and deals with the location of the Waldensian Valleys in an area whose borders were often unstable and conflictual. Such position led the House of Savoy to periodical interruptions in the religious persecutions against the Waldensians, because the latter could have played an important role in the defence of the borders against the attacks of France. In fact, the Waldensians were more and more "rooted" on their territory and their headstrong resistance was very hard to overwhelm. Finally, the Waldensians represented a Protestant "wedge" in Catholic lands, thus arousing the political interest of Protestant powers (England and the Netherlands) which considered the Waldensians a highly strategic outpost to fight the French interests in the area. Therefore, the Valleys were able to establish international relationships thanks to the solidarity of Protestant countries, despite their isolated and secluded position. The above–mentioned factors have to be considered an integral part of the identity nature of the Waldensians. See Giorgio Tourn, *I valdesi, identità e storia, op. cit.*, pp. 44–9.

17. The territory inhabited by the Waldensians is approximately divided in two parts, separated by a political frontier. On the western side there was the Dauphiné, an imperial fief later assigned to France, including also present Susa and Chisone valleys, as well as Upper Varaita Valley. On the eastern side, there were the Pinerolese and the lands ruled by the Counts of Luserna; all these regions were under the direct influence of the House of Savoy. Finally, these territories were under the religious authority of the episcopates of Embrun and Turin.

struggle between mountaineers–peasants and local, die hard Catholic rulers, and with the Dulcinian uprising in Waldesia[18]. Therefore, thanks to their struggle to emancipate from feudalism and to the link with their land, the Waldensians, Molnar writes, « gradually became a sedentary population in the Valleys », able to « set up a civic organization » and to form alliances whenever needed[19].

   Alpine passes have always represented a preferential corridor for the passage of people, goods, armies and ideas. The valleys of Western Piedmont are no exception, and from there the ideas of Zwingli, Luther and Melanchthon filtered through to Italy; the same role was played by Northern Lombardy, Trentino and Istria, the commercial passage between the Mediterranean and Central and Western Europe. This situation gave origin to small groups of supporters of the ideas of the Reformation, but the Valleys witnessed the largest and best organized concentration of « heretics »: in fact, as Caponetto wrote, the Catholics feared mostly « the danger of the adhesion to the movement by about 8,000 people living in the Waldensian Valleys »[20]. This created the necessary conditions for a sedentary population with its own specific community and religious characteristics, rooted in a circumscribed and easily recognizable territory[21]: « a small republic »,

18. See Emilio Comba, *Histoire des Vaudois: de Valdo à la Rèforme*, Paris–Lausanne–Florance 1901, p. 357.

19. Amedeo Molnar, *Storia dei valdesi. Dalle origini all'adesione alla Riforma*, op. cit., p. 94. According to Molnar, the split between Waldensians and Catholics « corresponds to the separation among peasants, lords and villagers »; the emancipation of the peasants through the gradual concession of privileges « keeps step with and merges into [. . .] the adhesion of the country to Waldism » (*ibidem*). See also: Augusto Armand–Hugon, *Popolo e chiesa alle Valli dal 1532 al 1561*, « Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi », n. 110 (1961).

20. Salvatore Caponetto, *La Riforma protestante nell'Italia del Cinquecento*, op. cit., p. 145.

21. The borders of the so–called « Waldensian Valleys » were subjected to many changes over the centuries (an example is given by the extermination of the Waldensians living in the Dauphiné). However, it is now possible to identify the territory of the Waldensians with the Pellice, Chisone and Germanasca Valleys. A very effective description of these valleys is provided by Piero Jahier: « A steep and severe land; three narrow valleys, deeply furrowed by raging torrents eroding the flanks of the impending mountains; a land whose lower part is dotted with water–meadows, apple orchards bent by the weight of their sweet–smelling fruits, guarded by a thick series of chestnut trees; but its upper part is dry and rocky, with some miserable steep fields where only violaceous potato plant flowers and scarce buckwheat spikes grow; it is a land which takes more than it gives. A "thankless land" loved by its people, who love it as the land of refuge; because the Fathers [. . .] migrated here and stood for their faith for centuries, passing through the Alps or going as far as the very end of Italy, protected by

as Bouchard defines it, « well structured and decentralized, free in debates and expert at self–governing »[22]. Over the time, these postulates created the necessary condition for an ethical « distinction » between Catholics and Waldensians, and strengthened the territorial identification of these « heretics » with the land they lived in, thus developing the conscience of their independence.

Such a territorial identity is not the most relevant feature of Waldism, despite its importance in comparison with the entities born following the emigration to Latin America and the evangelisation in Central and Southern Italy. However, the centuries–old presence of the Waldensians « in a geographical context marked by territorial continuity » among France, Switzerland and Italy facilitated « the establishment of a "bridgehead of European Protestantism" in Piedmont »[23]. Therefore, the territorial and confessional elements are indissolubly intermingled[24]. For centuries, Spini says, the Waldensians « were forced to relate more to Geneva, Amsterdam or London rather than to Milan, Florence or Rome »; even the use of the Italian language was a relatively recent conquest that took place during the Risorgimento. « Those mountaineers of the Valleys », Spini writes, used « their Occitan *patois*, while French prevailed over Italian as to the written language ». Waldensians were European, rather than « Italian ». According to Spini, « Protestantism represented a global European element in a place where people used to live with both doors and windows firmly closed by the powerful bars of the Counter–Reformation »[25]. Notwithstanding this, the Waldensians

their families like primitive people used to do, comforted by the teachings and the example of their *Barbi* [...].Theirs was a glorious history, but Italy discovered it when it was already well–known all over Europe » (PIERO JAHIER, *I valdesi nelle Valli*, « La Voce », n. 3 (Feb. 1910).

22.   GIORGIO BOUCHARD, *I valdesi e l'Italia. Prospettive di una vocazione*, *op. cit.*, p. 139. These aspects will become more marked after the adhesion to the Reformation, which inspired the Waldensians their models of ecclesiastical organization and led to the establishment of a real and unique « government system » of the Churches.

23.   SALVATORE CAPONETTO, *La Riforma protestante nell'Italia del Cinquecento*, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

24.   Language played a crucial role in the establishment of the Waldensian identity. The French language, spoken on both sides of the Alps and in Geneva, was very important in spreading the ideas of the Reformation and in keeping contacts with the Churches beyond the Alps. Bibles, hymnals and catechisms came from the Dauphiné and Geneva, where the young Waldensians bound to become pastors went to study.

25.   GIORGIO SPINI, *Italia liberale e protestanti*, Turin 2002, p. 10. On bilingualism as an identity element of the Waldensian culture, see GIORGIO PEYROT, *Bilinguità tradizionale*, « L'Appello », IX, n. 1 (Jan–Feb 1944), pp. 25–9.

were not uninvolved in the Italian reality, but they gradually played an active part in it and were present in the most important events of the history of Italy since its unification.

However, the cultural and confessional identity of the Waldensians is so evident, compared to the Italian and Catholic environment, that Bouchard wrote that Waldism is « an acknowledged *element* of the life of Italy, within which it acts as a small *republic of culture and faith*, an "independent region" occupying a "social" and "cultural" territory »[26]. Bouchard added that the peculiarity of Waldism lies in its cultural connotation, rather than in its geographical or ethnical features. Therefore, culture is the distinctive element of Waldism in Italy, and such a connotation is not only the outcome of its centuries–old history, but also the result of a confessional convergence towards the ideas of the Reformation, which made the medieval Waldensian communities scattered in Piedmont the most advanced outpost of reformed Protestantism in the catholic country *par excellence*.

Undoubtedly, the evangelical origin and the affiliation to the Waldo–Ussitan International[27] had a major impact on the cultural background of the Waldensians and on their historical identity; however, the adhesion to the Reformation represented a turning point in Waldensian history, thus making the identity of its « popolo–chiesa » even stronger and more evident.

In Piedmont, the valleys surrounding Pinerolo witnessed the birth and the development of an independent and almost « integralist » religious community, as written by Armand–Hugon; therefore, from a certain moment on, the edicts issued by the Dukes of Savoy did not address to an « ecclesiastical organization, but to the people, the majors and the towns of the Valleys », almost seen as « a foreign body within the "Catholic" State because of their being totally, or almost totally, reformed »[28]. Gradually, the Calvinist influence led to the establishment of the governing bodies of the Church (Synod and Board), which were more and more different when compared to its

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26. Giorgio Bouchard, *I valdesi e l'Italia. Prospettive di una vocazione*, op. cit., p. 139.

27. See Giorgio Tourn, *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo–chiesa*, op. cit., pp. 79–87, and Amedeo Molnar, *Storia dei valdesi. Dalle origini all'adesione alla Riforma*, op. cit., pp. 171–8.

28. Augusto Armand–Hugon, *Storia dei valdesi, Dal sinodo di Chanforan all'Emancipazione*, op. cit., p. 44.

medieval origins. The people of the Valleys identified themselves with the above–mentioned bodies to express the unity of the Waldensian Churches–communities. The single "unity" deriving from it started acting as a real « State »: it signed the treaties of peace « debated by the Pastors », Gustavo Ribet explains, but also « the most important decisions were made by the Synod, even on issues not dealing strictly with religion ». With time, even the authorities of the Savoyard State « identified the people with the Waldensian Church »[29]. Such a process helped to outline a main Waldensian identity which cannot prescind from an organic set of religious, cultural and territorial factors. Ribet defined the Waldensian essence as follows:

> [...] being Waldensians means belonging to a community rising above the people surrounding them, because they belong to the Church; in substance, the *real*, juridically acknowledged Waldensian people coincide with the Waldensian Church and they draw their main features from ethnical and religious elements[30].

The adhesion of the Waldensians to the Reformation, Caponetto wrote, was a « major event », notably because the subsequent development of Italian Protestantism was filtered through this reality, and played an instrumental role in the spread of the scholars and the most revolutionary ideas of the Calvinist Reformation in the rest of Italy. Therefore, the Valleys provided a real link among Europe and the Mediterranean, Protestantism and Catholicism[31].

Among the Waldensians, the most educated and competent « barba »[32], readers of Erasmus and Luther, perceived the great religious innovations and the social changes brought forth by the Reformation in Europe, and felt the need to know its thought as well as its doctrine. This way, the Waldensians came into contact with the ideas of the great reformers living in the Swiss–Rhenish area, from Guillaume

29. Gustavo Ribet, *Dei rapporti fra la Chiesa e il Popolo Valdese*, « L'Eco delle Valli Valdesi », n. 21 (28th October 1945).

30. *Ibidem*.

31. See Salvatore Caponetto, *La Riforma protestante nell'Italia del Cinquecento, op. cit.*, pp. 145–72.

32. This term was used to call the elders; in Northern Italy *barba* means « uncle », that is, the oldest and wisest person in the community. See Giorgio Tourn, *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo–chiesa, op. cit.*, pp. 81–4.

Farel (1489–1565), born in the Dauphiné and close collaborator of Calvin in Geneva, to Johannes Oecolampadius (1482–1531), supporter of the Reformation in Basilea; from Martin Bucer to Pierre Olivétan (1505–1538), author of the first Protestant translation of the Bible into French[33].

The "encounter" between medieval Waldism and the Reformation was not of a disruptive nature: in fact, the Waldensian movement initially preserved some of its peculiarities which made the adhesion to the precepts of the Reformation very easy and almost spontaneous (a one–of–a–kind event in the history of medieval heretical movements). The Waldensians spontaneously adopted the Protestant principles known as *Sola Scriptura*, *Sola Fides* and *Sola Gratia*, and they considered the Scriptures and Christ respectively the only source of truth and the redemption of mankind[34]. As Caponetto explained, « in Piedmont, as well as in the traditionally Waldensian localities » the shift from medieval sect to reformed movement was welcomed quite cautiously, yet with great enthusiasm: « there was no interruption between Waldism and Reformation »[35].

Therefore, the Reformation imbued — theologically and culturally — the whole Waldensian society, which then formulated its own Confession of faith and consolidated its internal ecclesiastical organization, on the one hand under the influence of the Calvinist cities — as in Calvin's *ordonnances ecclésiastiques* — and on the other hand by

33. The Waldensians were almost immediately interested by the Reformation. The first attempt to send a delegation of Piedmontese Churches to Germany dates back to 1526, when a « synod » of 140 « barba » representing local Waldensian communities gathered at the Laus, in the Chisone Valley. Two delegates were sent to Germany to interlace relationships with the German Reformers. As Jalla pointed out, this event boosted « the new congregations in the rest of Piedmont, all united by a common faith to the congregations living in the Valleys and beyond the Alps » (Giovanni Jalla, *Storia della Riforma in Piemonte*, *op. cit.*, p. 25). The contacts made with the German Reformers were re–established during the synod of Mérindol, Provence, in 1530. This synod paved the way to the crucial gathering of Chanforan (1532), were the decision of adhering to the Reformation was made.

34. See Salvatore Caponetto, *La Riforma protestante nell'Italia del Cinquecento*, *op. cit.*, pp. 145–50.

35. *Ibidem*, p. 152. Tourn stressed this concept by writing that the adhesion of the Waldensians to « the Reformation is a breakthrough in the life of Evangelical witnesses, a theological elaboration, the maturation of the intuitions that the Waldensian diaspora in the Middle Ages could not and was not able to develop » (Giorgio Tourn, *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo–chiesa*, *op. cit.*, p. 95).

following the Huguenot example — as in the synodal organization promoted among the Calvinist communities in France[36]. Even the covenant became a common instrument to define the establishment of a Church and its people in relationship with God, and whose theological foundations can be found among the pillars of the Reformation. The Waldensians made large use of the « covenant », which was instrumental in establishing — also for organizational and defensive reasons — a confederal–like free union of Churches.

The continuous exchanges, relationships and movements between the Valleys and Calvinist Switzerland on the one hand, and Huguenot France on the other hand, made the Protestants of the Valleys part of a great international circuit of reformed Protestantism, and literally "plunged" them into the European culture. Therefore, as Tourn stated, the Waldensians became « a little tessera in a Europe–wide mosaic »[37], and this condition allowed them to live their vocation not only in the secluded spaces of their valleys, but also in the vastness of a whole continent. Over the centuries, the relationships with the French reformed Churches breathed fresh life into the small Waldensian community and allowed it to get in contact with new cultural ideas and concepts, and to exceed — or, at least, to integrate — the perspectives of the « national » reality the Waldensian culture was part of.

Therefore, whereas the Reformation prevented the medieval Waldensian movement from atrophying and being absorbed by the Roman Church, the cultural cosmopolitism, filtered through the ideas of the Reformation, helped to establish a European vocation within the conscience of the Waldensians. Such a conscience was very important in preserving the community and the Church from any excessive severity.

The cosmopolitan inclination of Waldism, however, received a major boost in the 18th century with the rising of a mercantile and intellectual middle class. During this period the Waldensians, Bouchard noticed, showed « a peculiar cultural and economical energy »[38] and started moving away from their traditional land–related condition.

36. For more details on the formulation of the Waldensian confession of faith, see Valdo Vinay, *Le confessioni di fede dei valdesi riformati, con documenti del dialogo fra "prima" e "seconda" Riforma*, Turin 1975.

37. Giorgio Tourn, *I valdesi, identità e storia, op. cit.*, p. 60.

38. Giorgio Bouchard, *I valdesi e l'Italia. Prospettive di una vocazione, op. cit.*, p. 14.

The young Waldensians were excluded from Savoyard Academies, so they were forced to open themselves up to what was known as « the Great Europe ». There, they came into contact with the ideas of the new Enlightenment and liberal cultures, and spread them as soon as they got back to Piedmont[39].

In the first half of the 19th century, the Waldensians were "seduced" by the Swiss religious movement called *Revival*[40], whose evangelising tension converged towards the enthusiastic contribution made by the Waldensians to the Risorgimento. It is now necessary to make a digression to look into a seemingly incongruent element: the involvement in the battles of the Risorgimento and the « patriotic afflatus » of the Evangelicals did not compromise at all their cosmopolitism because these two aspects were strictly related. In fact, the involvement of the Waldensians in the Risorgimento relied on three main reasons, related in turns to the cultural and confessional survival of their community. The first reason is inspired by the feeling of gratitude of the Waldensians towards Savoyard kings, from Charls Albert onwards, who granted them religious freedom with the enactment of a Statute in 1848. The second reason deals with the policy implemented by

39. In this connection, Tourn made a very effective description of the 18th century's Waldensian *intellighenzia*. Following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, a new wave of persecution hit again the Waldensians, who then fled to Central and Western Europe to look for shelter, but also to acculturate and to come back to their valleys with a sound education. « Inside a social group like the Waldensians, who were fighting their cultural battle, Tourn writes, the *intelligentsia* plays a major role ». These intellectuals, enrolled in some families « just like in republican Rome » to form the *cadres* of the Church, are « students of the Latin School who moved to Holland or Switzerland to finish their studies, and then became "ministers" in Prali or Bobbio Pellice, with a foreign wife and [...] many acquaintances all over Europe. This was the path followed by pastors, while the others studied arts, law or eventually became preceptors all over Europe ». The people living in this small « ghetto » are imbued with the innovative ideas of the Reformation, which stood for « freedom of research, critical analysis, intellectual curiosity, books, newspapers, debates. Very few of them read Voltaire and the *Encyclopedia* but they all felt the change taking place in modern Europe, and no one would have been shocked at the outbreak of the French Revolution » (GIORGIO TOURN, *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo–chiesa, op. cit.*, pp. 198–99).

40. The *Réveil* (Awakening) is a spiritual movement originated in the French–speaking part of Switzerland and largely spread all over Europe in the 19th century. The Réveil opposed Enlightenment rationalism, and was influenced by Pietism and Methodism. It was open to other religious trends, and was characterized by a subjectivistic idea of faith and a strong spirit of devotion at the basis of their missionary longing, which then enshrined in social engagement. On the spirit of the Réveil and its influence on Italian Protestantism, see GIUSEPPE GANGALE, *Revival*, Rome 1929.

Cavour to hold back the catholic influence in the Kingdom of Sardinia ("a free Church in a free State"), as well as with the subsequent political and military actions against the Papal State after the unification of Italy (the capture of Rome and the Law of Guarantees). The second and the third reasons overlap, because national unity implied the dispossession of vast regions of the States of the Church to the future Kingdom of Italy, thus exposing the central and southern parts of Italy to reformed evangelisation. Because of the last goal, during the Risorgimento the « popolo–chiesa », Bouchard writes, became « a missionary community, marked by a high sense of social responsibility »[41], and which embraced the « patriotic cause », perceived mainly as an opportunity for a moral and civil renewal of Italy rather than a strictly ideological need[42]. Therefore the Waldensians, Bouchard adds, « just like their Piedmontese countrymen, [...] "choose Italy" with a romantic passion and as a real mission »[43]. Besides, this is the historical period where the universal values of Enlightenment gave way to the values of Romanticism, and then got completely lost into late 19th–century nationalism. However, their reformed cultural matrix protected them from the exclusivism of a patriotic perspective, linking « national » and European ambitions. The Waldensians could keep their points of reference steady, all equally European and crucial for their confessional and cultural identity; besides, the main points of reference of the Waldensian thought between the 19th and 20th centuries are still « English liberalism », « German discipline » and « French culture », together with the Swiss influence[44].

The reformed conscience, the international connections and the responsibility of living in a Country towards which the Waldensians hold a link of parenthood, despite its Catholic majority, led them to develop a strong pacifist and « pro–European » feeling. In conclusion, the destiny of the Waldensian Church and its people is written in its

41. See Giorgio Spini, *Italia liberale e protestanti*, op. cit.; Id., *Risorgimento e protestanti*, Turin 2008; Giorgio Bouchard, *I valdesi e l'Italia. Prospettive di una vocazione*, op. cit., p. 23.

42. During this period, other branches of Reformed Protestantism played an important role in Italy, including Methodists and Adventists, Salvation Army and Baptists. They all shared the same passion and evangelical spirit, and they all equally helped the spread of the evangelical culture in Italy.

43. Giorgio Bouchard, *I valdesi e l'Italia. Prospettive di una vocazione*, op. cit., p. 28.

44. See *ibidem*, p. 38.

own identity: on the one hand, the Waldensians showed an unquestionable European vocation, stressed by their ecumenical vocation; on the other hand, they were deeply integrated in the reality of Italy, where they carried out their mission at the religious, cultural and social level[45].

2.2. The use of the « covenant » in the history of the Waldensian Church as the evidence of a « federal conscience » within its ecclesiastical organization

The value and the meaning of the « covenant » are inextricably linked to the nature and the development of the ecclesiological concept implied in the Waldensian Constitution and its juridical system. The Covenant made the Waldensian Church, or better, the « Union of the Waldensian Churches », a real protofederal reality where the federal element not only outlines the face of the unitary body of the Church, but also the very essence governing each « Church–community » deciding to join other Churches to create a superior « entity » through a new Covenant, representing and governing them as to general issues.

The Covenant is the founding element of the whole Waldensian ecclesiological tradition: it ratifies, Peyrot noticed, an « ecclesiastical Union, based on the Word of God, ruled by the living presence of its Lord, but unable to establish a steady centralized institution characterized by solid hierarchies »[46]. In fact, Waldensian ecclesiology is an open and ever–moving entity, yet firm in its key principles. Finally, the Covenant is the original principle of modern Waldensian Church, which helped it — « from far–off times and through countless persecutions »[47] — to preserve itself and to create an unity system made

45. See Giorgio Peyrot, *Vocazione del popolo valdese*, « Gioventù Cristiana », IX, n. 1 (Jan–Feb 1940).

46. Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese* (Report on the genesis of the formula used to define the « Church » included in the first article of the current ecclesiastical constitution arranged by the legal office of the Waldensian Board), Rome 1957, p. 11.

47. Motto resumed from the first article of the Waldensian Constitution, quoted in the general Discipline of the Waldensian Evangelical Churches. See Chiesa evangelica valdese, *"Unione delle Chiese valdesi e metodiste"*. *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, Turin 2003, p. 64.

of many independent Churches, so to call itself, according to the thought of an old Waldensian historian, an « ecclesiastical federation [. . .] characterized by spirit of freedom and sense of independence, to oppose [. . .] to the notion of absorbing unity »[48].

Let's now introduce the most important historical events that made the Covenant a constitutive source of the modern *corpus* of disciplines in force in the Waldensian organization.

The use of the Covenant made by the Waldensian communities partially differs from the use made by English Puritans, particularly for incidental historical circumstances, both to face impending difficulties and dangers, and to renew their internal institutional structure and in relationship to external ecclesiastical entities, and, again, to strengthen and consolidate their relationships with national and international Protestant organizations.

The Covenant was an integral part of the Waldensian tradition well before the movements originated by reformed Protestantism developed the potentialities of the Covenant itself from the theological and political point of view, as shown by the agreement of Bergamo in 1218 and the pacts of union in 1561, 1567, 1571, 1647 and 1658, even if the last ones belong to the evolutionary phase of the Waldensian Church in a reformed way[49].

The agreement of Bergamo ratified the union, for defensive reasons, between the Lombard *societas* and the Waldensian community living north of the Alps[50]; it represented, Molnar wrote, « a turning

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48. Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese*, op. cit., p. 51. The historian in question is Pierre Gilles, whose thought is here resumed and interpreted by the Commission charged by the Synod to carry out a constitutional review, under the supervision of Wolliam Meille, in 1891. See also: *Progetto di costituzione presentato al Venerabile Sinodo del 1894*, Torre Pellice, 1894.

49. These are pacts of union among the Churches of the Valleys, but the Waldensian covenantal custom contains some formulas differing from the idea of « union » or « confederation » reported at that time in documents. In fact, many formulations have been adopted all along the history of the Waldensians to define internal orders and processes following the relationships among the Waldensian Church and all the others Evangelical Churches established afterwards; or, among the Waldensian Church and other Christian denominations. It is therefore possible to speak not only of « unions », but also of agreements, integrations, arrangements and even of real federations, but only at a religious level; the agreements with the State are obviously very different, but this topic is beyond the scope of this essay.

50. The original document, Molnar explains, « makes us think that both groups adopted

point towards an ecclesiastical structure »[51], which aimed at uniting the two branches of Waldism and their communities with « an external organization showing some elements of discipline »[52]. The encounter between Lombard pragmatism and Waldensian missionary vocation gave origin to a new movement, based on the common origin, the brotherly solidarity, the respect of their two different sensitivities and a detectable, yet not fully structured organization. The model of Church originated by the theological research of these Waldensians was antithetical to the catholic one, and it was also a forerunner of the reformed model: on the one hand, there were Rome and the centralizing power of its hierarchies, on the other hand, there was the increased self–governing conscience of the Waldensian Church–communities agreeing on the pre–eminence of the evangelical message, where the bond was based on the Word and the mission, rather than on the Church–institution and the sacrament.

The agreement of Bergamo anticipated a constitutive element of that part of Waldensians who had accepted the principles of the Reformation. In fact, the sudden spread of the use of the Covenant in reformed Waldism goes hand in hand with the presence of a previous « federal conscience » in medieval Waldism, which had established its first organization with the most consentaneous forms to the Biblical tradition and the primitive Church. Waldism can be considered the forerunner of the successive developments of the federal culture elaborated by the Reformation, thus conforming the title *"Mater Reformationis"* always given to the Waldensian movement by Protestant

a by–then traditional assembly procedure », where « decisions of general interests were made, for the entire movement » during "joint" meetings. The real element of novelty of such meeting was that the delegated coming from both sides of the Alps put forward « the possibility of a sort of common synod, "a common assembly of our delegates and theirs" ». This procedure partially originated from the Christian tradition, but was also influenced by the communal world the Lombard Waldensians were already used to. Molnar explains how the terms used by the delegates implied the custom of gathering on a « voluntary » basis to establish a self–government, as in the municipalities of that time (Amedeo Molnar, *Storia dei valdesi. Dalle origini all'adesione alla Riforma*, op. cit., p. 71). On the history, the evolution and the differences between the Lombard and French movements, see: Amedeo Molnar, *Storia dei valdesi. Dalle origini all'adesione alla Riforma*, op. cit., pp. 9–74 and Giorgio Tourn, *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo–chiesa*, op. cit., pp. 11–50.

51. Amedeo Molnar, *Storia dei valdesi. Dalle origini all'adesione alla Riforma*, op. cit., p. 73.

52. *Ibidem*, p. 72.

Churches. Despite the lack of knowledge of the actual doctrinaire, disciplinary and ecclesiastical links among the various Waldensian groups existing before the Reformation, it is well known that a General Council (later known as Synod) existed, where « the common interests of the different groups were examined » and « with regard to the above mentioned common interests, the most appropriate decisions were taken ». According to Peyrot, « there is no evidence of a united ecclesiastical centralization » in the organizational structures of the first Waldensians, while it seems clear that such an organization was based on a protofederal pattern, closer to the organization of the ancient tribes of Israel, founded on « a pluralistic form of coordination of the representatives of each group, which then gather to take common decisions »[53].

However, Waldensians believed that the Covenant was not only a way to set the terms of an alliance and a closer union in the face of the religious persecution, but it was also — Tourn recalls – « an inspiring principle » which found its *raison d'être* in the Holy Scriptures. It was part of the establishment of a Church–community, according to the Covenant of Grace, and stated that the Gospel was the one and only principle of loyalty on which to create a Church able to live its faith as a mission, « within history [and] in an environment of fraternal solidarity ». Therefore the Waldensian Church, Tourn explains, did not become neither « a centralized organization » (the way it was in Geneva) nor « a "political–confessional" movement » (as at the time of the Huguenots), but it was « a free union of Churches and believers, all bound by a mutual engagement of fraternal solidarity »[54].

It is now time to focus on the birth of reformed Waldism, which shows more clearly the protofederal aspects related to the use of the Covenant and which is referable to the connection between, on the one hand, the characteristics of the original Waldensian communities

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53. Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese, op. cit.*, p. 22. The Waldensian historian Gilles explained, in his *Histoire ecclesiastique des églisese reformées*, that the Waldensians « s'assembloyent aussi extraordinairement selon les nécessités survenantes, mais de temps en temps, pour conserver l'union exetr'eux, et maintenir l'uniformité de leurs Eglises, ils s'assembloyent par députez de tous les quartiers de l'Europe, où se trouvoyent des Eglises Vaudoises, qui en pouvoyent avoir le moyen » (Pierre Gilles, *Histoire ecclesiastique des églisese reformées recueillies en quelques Valées de Piedmont, autrefois appelées Vaudoises*, Pinerolo 1881, vol. I, p. 26).

54. Giorgio Tourn, *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo–chiesa, op. cit.*, p. 136.

in Piedmont and, on the other hand, the Waldensian ecclesiastical organization inspired and matured by French–Swiss reformed thought and action. In fact, the pacts that followed the agreement of Bergamo were still characterized, as Peyrot stated, "by the principles, the regulations and the institutions used by the Waldensians to connote the legal system they were starting to use in their ecclesiastical and religious life" between 1550 and 1560[55]. In this crucial period, the Waldensians adhered to the Reformation and were subjected to its marking influence.

First in Merindol (1531) and then in Chanforan (1532), « en pressencia de tuti li ministri et eciandio del populo », the Waldensians scattered in various independent Church–communities gathered to reform their Church and to adhere to the principles of the Reformation[56]. Such gathering was a sort of "constituent assembly", an extraordinary "public" synod open not only to the entire population of local communities, but also to the delegations of the "barba" coming from the far–off regions of Apulia, Calabria, Provence and Dauphiné. The gathering of Chanforan was also attended by Guillaume Farel and Antoine Saulnier, two of the most prominent and competent champions of the Swiss Reformation, who played a pivotal role in "shifting" the Waldensian movement and its bonds with the Catholic pity from medieval religiousness to the more solid theological and ecclesiological Calvinist structure[57]. This allowed the principles of the Reformation

55. Giorgio Peyrot, *Il Patto dell'unione del 1561*, in Aa.Vv., *I Valdesi e l'Europa*, Torre Pellice 1982, p. 205.

56. See Vittorio Subilia, *Chanforan 1532 o la presenza protestante in Italia*, « Protestantesimo », XXXVII, n. 2 (1982); Mario Falchi, *Nel IV centenario del sinodo di Chanforan (12–18 settembre 1532)*, « Il Testimonio », XLIX, n. 8–9 (September 1932); Giovanni Jalla, *Storia della Riforma in Piemonte, op. cit.*, pp. 14–43. On the Declaration, see: Valdo Vinay, *Le confessioni di fede dei valdesi riformati, con documenti del dialogo fra "prima" e "seconda" Riforma, op. cit.*, pp. 139–51 and Emidio Campi (edited by), *Protestantesimo nei secoli. Fonti e documenti, op. cit.*, pp. 230–4.

57. According to Vinay, the Declaration of Chaforan shows how the Waldensians « accepted the teachings of the Reformation », confirming their definitive breaking–off with Rome and accepting a radical renovation of the Church « on a theological basis ». Therefore, Waldism lost the typical features of medieval *pietas*: « oaths are allowed, and the secular authority and the legitimacy of Christians to take part in political life are acknowledged, [...]. The private properties of preachers are not [considered anymore] as being against apostolic communion; the only good deeds are the ones commanded by God himself. Cult forms are simplified and spiritualised » (Valdo Vinay, *Le confessioni di fede dei valdesi riformati, con documenti del dialogo fra "prima" e "seconda" Riforma, op. cit.*,

not only "to take roots firmly in the Valleys", but also to be part of a radical change of both the Waldensian thought and society; this little reformed Alpine community became "the backbone"[58] of a European organization constantly linked to Geneva, whose pastors, masters, Bibles, propaganda tools, ideas and models were resumed and adapted in Italy, as in the case of Calvin's *Institutio Christianae religionis*, which had a direct influence on the establishment of the ecclesiastical system of the Waldensian Church[59]. The Waldensians also "borrowed" their synodal structure, as well as their Confession of faith, directly from the reformed Churches of France. This was the evidence, Armand–Hugon said, "on the one hand, of the supranationalism of the Church; and, on the other hand, of the brotherhood of the believers in the Reformation established on a common faith"[60].

The synod traced the constitutional, doctrinal and religious guidelines for the reformation of the Waldensian Church, in order to face the political and religious threat coming from France, the House of Savoy and the Roman Church. It was therefore necessary, Mario Falchi explains, to transform the heretical circles into "a unique and well–defined body", because "the resistance to a very powerful adversary, who aimed at crushing all Christian religious life" standing outside catholicity, implied the gathering of "isolated units", scattered all over a hostile territory, into an organism where each part completed the others", where the different parts cooperate in harmony,

pp. 27–8). Besides, Waldensians accept, from the theological point of view, the concepts of predestination, «bondage of the will» and election of Grace, and start establishing themselves at the local level, breaking cover and installing a permanent pastor in each community, introducing public cult and building the first temples. From 1532 to 1559 (year of the treaty of Cateau–Cambrésis), Reformation spread fast throughout Piedmont, until the return of the House of Savoy and their Saint Inquisition. During this 30 year–long period, the Waldensian Church was able to structure and organize itself according to the model of the French–Swiss Churches; moreover, they also conformed to the synodal–presbyterial system.

58. Salvatore Caponetto, *La Riforma protestante nell'Italia del Cinquecento*, op. cit., p. 153.

59. Sulle influenze che Ginevra ha esercitato sulla formazione e sulla struttura della Chiesa valdese, si veda Giorgio Peyrot, *Influenze franco–ginevrine nella formazione delle discipline ecclesiastiche valdesi alla metà del XVI secolo*, in Delio Cantimori, Luigi Firpo , Giorgio Spini, Franco Venturi, Valdo Vinay (eds.), *Ginevra e l'Italia, Collection of studies promoted by the Waldensian Faculty of Theology of Rome*, Florence 1959, pp. 217–285.

60. Augusto Armand–Hugon, *Storia dei valdesi, Dal sinodo di Chanforan all'Emancipazione*, op. cit., p. 16.

"functionally divided and coordinated"[61]. Such an organization relied on the synergy among the various parts, but it also prefigured an internal structure dramatically different from the structure of the Roman Church, where the ecclesiastical hierarchy was in contrast with the assembly of the believers, and the principle of the Church–authority with the primacy of the Word as a source of absolute truth–authority.

In Chanforan, the Waldensians developed a new conscience and dropped the idea of keeping themselves within the boundaries of Catholicism to reform the Church from the inside, and adhered to the Calvinist Reformation. Hence, they became an independent group with a new confessional identity, but also with a more and more territorial and political character. The period between 1536 and 1556 was marked by a relative tolerance, favoured by the French occupation and their opposition to the feudal interests of the Piedmontese aristocracy; the people of the Valleys were then able to get out of secrecy to preach the Gospel and organized into independent communities[62].

The French presence in Piedmont, Peyrot says, led to a temporary disgregation of the feudal system and favoured « the success of new unifying forms [. . .] including the establishments of municipalities and new local Waldensian Churches ». The Valleys were peripheral to the French territories and out of the control of the dukes of Savoy, and there — also thanks to the weakening of the central power — new « communal units with a certain decisional independence » were established. The surprising event, however, was the overlapping of the new Waldensian Churches, based on the reformed French–Swiss model, to the first, emergent forms of communal independence. Therefore, this "almost integral alliance between emergent Churches and the innovative structures of civil society at the local level" on the one hand laid the foundations of a stronger territorial empathy of the Waldensians with their Valleys and, on the other hand, it progressively widened "the gap between the new ecclesiastical structures and those of the ruling political society"[63].

61.   Mario Falchi, *Nel IV centenario del sinodo di Chanforan (12–18 settembre 1532)*, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

62.   Francis I's army moved to Piedmont, defeated the troops of the House of Savoy and took over some of its territories, including part of present Waldensian Valleys.

63.   Giorgio Peyrot, *Il Patto dell'unione del 1561*, *op. cit.*, p. 206–7. The development that led to identification among ecclesiastical structures and municipal organization, civil and

Such a process, Peyrot adds, led to the "concurrence of the emergent local Churches [. . .] within their own territory with the communal districts that were then taking shape"; it was therefore common that "religious and civil interests and issues concerning local economic needs and organization" converged in a single assembly. The ordinances and the resolutions made by the Waldensians dealt not only with religious issues, but also with civil life and, over the time, they ended up having an impact, whenever necessary, "on the military defence of territories, goods and people"[64].

This led to the prefiguration of a State within the State or, even better, of a subject having its own political and juridical independence on a territory and a population which, at that time, lived within the borders of many States. The newly established Waldensian Church had its own original right[65] — owing to the history of its institutions — and was starting to get an independent position within its political and territorial environment. As a consequence, Peyrot adds,

religious authorities, is clearly expressed by Peyrot: « The new social and religious climate allowed the development and the gradual establishment of the assemblies of the heads of the families. These gatherings dealt with issues of common interest, both at the religious and civil levels; there, majors and elders [presbyters] are elected, and the management of ecclesiastical affairs is given to the emergent consistories, attended by majors and councillors of the new communal structures. Therefore, the ecclesiastical ruling class, with the exception of pastors, actually coincided with the local ruling class charged with handling civil issues in the new municipalities ». The years between the Synod of Chanforan and the Pact of union (1561), Peyrot writes, « witnessed a more precise connotation of the role of the general assembly, or synod, as to the management of issues of common interests, with laity progressively defining their own role, and taking on or sharing responsibilities. Likewise, this period marked the establishment of a Central Executive, the Board, or, at least, a moderator, supposedly, the eldest pastor » (*ibidem*, p. 207).

64.   Giorgio Peyrot, *Il Patto dell'unione del 1561*, *op. cit.*, pp. 207–8.

65.   In order to provide a more effective definition of the scope of the legal independence of the Waldensian Church, it may be helpful point out the difference between « primary » and « secondary » law relating to its own nature. « Primary » law implies a legal system « whose foundations do not lay on the rule of another legal system, but which justifies itself through its own act, overlapping at the historical level with the institution whose regulations form its juridical structure ». Conversely, « the secondary legal system gets its origins from an act of another legal system, setting the existence itself of the institution whose legal system is the "external appearance" » (see Giorgio Peyrot, *L'ordinamento giuridico della chiesa valdese (Principi generali — le fonti — la costituzione ecclesiastica del 1929, Dispense del Corso tenuto nel XCVII anno accademico 1951–1952*, Facoltà valdese di Teologia, Rome 1952, vol. I, p. 7). This means that the Waldensian Church, established as a religious society since its very beginnings, defined itself as an « institution », and historically placed itself as a self–determining legal system, equal to any other legal system.

the Waldensian Church, despite its "smallness", transcended "the territorial limits of a State and the sphere of its internal right", and asserted itself juridically as an "original and independent institution [...] "bearing" a primary legal system"[66]. Such an event, together with the development of communal self–governments, prefigured an original background, far from any strict and traditional definition[67].

It is also important to remember that the ecclesiastical structure of the reformed Waldensian Church — still in the making, yet clearly inclined to the synodal–presbyterial system — was settling itself democracy–wise, and "relied on the criteria of representation and direct consultation[68]. Besides, the synod was the bond among the various communities, where independent local Churches gathered to decide on public interest issues.

The synod of Chanforan was followed by other important general assemblies in 1557 and 1558. The latter played a crucial role because there was established a unitary ecclesiastical discipline encompassing the Waldensian Churches on both sides of the Alps (stated in the *Articles faits et arrêtés*, later known as *Articles sinodaux*). The above mentioned *Articles* "left an indelible mark on the union of the Waldensian Churches, even when they were separated by different political destinies"[69]. The *Articles* were also "the first example in Europe of a reformed ecclesiastical synodal–presbyterial system"[70].

Chanforan was a turning point in the "reformed history" of the Waldensian Church because it shows the peculiar features of Calvinist theology and ecclesiology, and it represents, as Falchi wrote, "the most relevant event having a Christian–evangelical ecumenical character"[71] in the history of the Waldensians. The year 1532 marked a

66. Giorgio Peyrot, *L'ordinamento giuridico della chiesa valdese*, op. cit., p. 11.

67. The Waldensian Church has always been independent from the legislation of the Countries where it established itself (France, Duchy of Savoy and Marquisate of Saluzzo). Its foundation influenced and determined the organization on the municipalities on the territory, that is the original « parishes ». This was also due to the fact that the many changes in the sovereignty of these lands, from the House of Savoy to France and vice versa, made them hard to control; the regulations of the Waldensian Church were « the only rules to be effectively and fully applied in the Waldensian Valleys, alongside the uncertain state rules continuously subverted by the many military occupations [...] » (see Giorgio Peyrot, *L'ordinamento giuridico della chiesa valdese*, op. cit., p. 34).

68. Giorgio Peyrot, *Il Patto dell'unione del 1561*, op. cit., p. 207.

69. *Ibidem*, p. 211.

70. *Ibidem*, p. 208.

71. Mario Falchi, *Nel IV centenario del sinodo di Chanforan (12–18 settembre 1532)*, op. cit., p. 137.

turning point for the Waldensian community, following a radical and irreversible revolution. Tourn clearly detected this crucial hiatus:

In Chanforan, just like in Bergamo in 1218, the Waldensians closed a chapter in their glorious history to open a new one; they knew what they were leaving behind, but they didn't know what they would have found; still, they wanted their voice to be heard, loud and clear, in the spiritual quest of the Christian Church[72].

After Chanforan, the Waldensians "come out into the open" and abandoned Nicodemism once and for all[73]. They decided to challenge directly the laws of the State to keep their evangelical consistency; such a stance triggered a new wave of persecutions, and even real military campaigns.

In 1556, during the French occupation, the Parliament of Turin issued an edict to stop the Waldensian religion; the Valley dwellers refused to obey and sent a Confession of faith to the Parliament. Henry II issued a new edict against the Waldensians; nevertheless, they withstood the enemy and structured their community according to the synodal–presbyterian system. In 1558, the Waldensians finally embraced an ecclesiastical discipline which was similar to the one adopted by the Swiss Churches[74]. Meanwhile, the treaty of Cateau–Cambrésis assigned Piedmont to the House of Savoy, and the region became once again the "war theatre" for the harsh persecutions unleashed by Emmanuel Philibert against the « heretics », which ended only with the Treaty of Cavour (5th June 1561). For the very first time in Europe after the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, the victory of the Waldensian rebels and their acknowledgement by the Duke of Savoy openly denied the principle of *cuius regio eius religio*. It was therefore acknowledged, Caponetto says, « the right to exist of a Protestant minority, made of Protestants–Waldensians »[75]; according

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72. Giorgio Tourn, *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo–chiesa*, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

73. This "above board" confession of faith triggered harsh retaliations and a new wave of persecutions carried out by the Catholic forces, as in the case of the massacre of the Waldensian communities established in Calabria, (1560), slaughtered by the Viceroy of Naples, pushed by the Great Inquisitor (Michele Ghislieri, who later became Pope under the name of Pius V). San Sisto was the first colony to be exterminated by the Viceroy's army, later followed by the atrocious massacre of Guardia Piemontese.

74. On the establishment of the synodal–presbyterian system of the Waldensian Church and its relationships with the « federal » principle, see the following paragraph.

75. Salvatore Caponetto, *La Riforma protestante nell'Italia del Cinquecento*, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

to Armand–Hugon, it represented « the first act of tolerance in Europe », a sort of « *magna charta* » of the juridical existence of both the Church and the Waldensians[76].

The Waldensians were able not only to stand the military campaign launched by the Duke of Savoy, but also to consolidate their unity, thus strengthening their confessional identity and international solidarity with European Protestantism. This crucial moment in the history of the Waldensians was marked by the presence of the Covenant within the formal act used by the reformed Waldensians to ratify their unity as a "tool" to fight the persecutory will of Emmanuel Philibert and the Jesuit Antonio Possevino, as well as in the formulas used by the Protestants in Chisone and Pragelato — who were still under French control — to bind themselves to the Protestants living in the Marquisate of Saluzzo and in the Luserna Valley, ruled by the Dukes of Savoy[77]. In fact, a popular assembly called on the hills of Bobbio Pellice on 21 January 1561 approved, with the so–called *Patto del Podio* (*Puy*), the highly evocative « pact of union » having, on the one hand, an implicit link with the medieval tradition of the Waldensian movement; on the other hand, it related to the covenant–based tradition of Reformed Protestantism, thoroughly adopted by the Waldensian Church[78]. The above–mentioned pact marked indelibly all the future history of Waldism, oriented its internal reforms, shaped its disciplines, influenced the external developments and relationships with other confessional entities. It is still nowadays the « foundation of the

76. Augusto Armand–Hugon, *Storia dei valdesi, Dal sinodo di Chanforan all'Emancipazione*, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

77. The region in which the Waldensian Church–communities were spread belonged to three different States. The communities of Pragelato, Queyras and the left part of the Chisone Valley were under the French control, while the Waldensians communities of the Po and Varaita Valleys lived in the Marquisate of Saluzzo; finally, the communities of the Pellice and Germanasca Valleys, as well as those populating the right part of the Chisone Valley, lived in the territories ruled by the Dukes of Savoy.

78. The meeting of the representative of the Churches in the hamlet of Podio on 21 January 1561 actually followed two previous close meetings; the Pact of Union was then ratified by all parties during a third meeting, on 2 February 1561 at Comba Villar. The gathering that formally set up the Pact, however, dates back to 21 January, when « some ministers and heads of the above mentioned Churches of the Dauphiné [were invited] to the Lucerna Valleys to check if they agreed on considering the confederation as a given and set entity » (*Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, *op. cit.*, p. 52). For a detailed account of the three phases, see Giorgio Peyrot, *Il Patto dell'unione del 1561*, *op. cit.*

Union of the Waldensian Churches [...]; as well as [...] the linchpin of the articles 1 and 5 of the General Discipline » ratifying « the union of the Waldensian Churches on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as of the other Churches who later joined them »[79].

The *Patto del Podio* was ratified by the representatives of the Waldensian communities located in three different Countries, and it gave origin to an ecclesiastical union in which « the Waldensian Churches established in the Alps became aware of their independence and responsibilities »[80]. For the first time in European history, Tourn explains, « a farming community ruled by a bunch of intellectuals », side by side with their ministries, decided to rebel against the power of the sovereign; such a resistance was not a « medieval *jacquerie*, but a well coordinated juridical and military action »[81]. The union adopted a « confederal » structure, in order to set up a common defence and to claim the right to reform of the Church, thus leading to the birth not only of a new confessional subject, but also of a legal and somehow political entity. The first article of the document reported by Scipione Lentolo states: « The Waldensian people, on both sides of the Alps, will establish a perpetual and inviolable confederation »[82].

79. *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese, op. cit.*, p. 52. The Pact signed in 1561 is formally recalled and united to the *Discipline dell'organizzazione ecclesiastica valdese*, under *Fonti generali*, alongside other basic Acts of Union, such as the « *Unione delle Valli* » (1571) and the « *Patto di integrazione globale tra le Chiese valdesi e metodiste* » (1975).

80. Giorgio Tourn, *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo–chiesa, op. cit.*, p. 122.

81. *Ibidem*.

82.   *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese, op. cit.*, p. 53. This document, reported by many contemporary authors, is never quote directly in its entirety, but always as a part of a story and interpolated with commentaries. Therefore, this has given origin to many non–coinciding formulations. Among the main authors quoted in the collection of Waldensian disciplines: Scipione Lentolo, the reformed historian who wrote the *Historia delle grandi e crudeli persecuzioni fatte ai tempi nostri in Provenza, Calabria e Piemonte contro il popolo che chiamano valdese* (1562); the anonymous author of a *Histoire des persecutions* (1562) and, finally, Pierre Gilles, author of the *Histoire ecclesiastique des églises reformées recueillies en quelques Valées de Piedmont, autrefois appelées Vaudoises* (1643). Hereunder, the other two versions will follow, in order to allow a comparison. The anonymous author of the *Histoire des persecutions* writes: « qu'alliance seroit faite par tout le peuple Vaudois demeurant aux Vallée set montagnes de Piémont et Dauphiné »; while Pierre Gilles introduces the event as follows: « renouvellée et derechef jurée la très ancienne union, qui avoit toujours continué de père en fils entre les Vallées Vaudoises du Dauphiné et du Piedmont ». Gilles's version is very interesting because it seems to put this Pact into the framework of a consolidated custom (renouvellée [...] la très ancienne union) and makes an indirect reference to previous agreements or pacts and other public demonstrations of the common will of the

After the public approval of the unitary ecclesiastical discipline of the *Articles faits et arrêtés*, the Waldensians could have lost their cohesion if they had not appealed again to the unity of their Churches, which were then scattered and persecuted. Therefore, the meeting and the agreement between the people of the Dauphiné and Piedmontese Waldensians outlined more clearly the unity of these evangelical people, as well as their will to affirm their mutual bond to reassert their religious view and overcome all the geographical difficulties caused by the political borders of the States. Indeed, the need for a union of the Churches was so strong and shared that Pierre Gilles, 80 years later, still felt all its fascination and relevance[83].

Besides, through the ratification of the covenant, the Churches approved a series of operative rules on the use of weapons, the directions of defence and the establishment of the so–called « *compagnia volante* » (flying company)[84]. Ultimately, the *Patto del Podio*, together with the

Waldensian communities. See *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese, op. cit.*, pp. 51–4; On Lentolo see also Emanuele Fiume, *Scipione Lentolo, 1525–1599. «Quotidie laborans evangelii causa»*, Turin 2003.

83. See Giorgio Peyrot, *Il Patto dell'unione del 1561, op. cit.*, p. 234

84. Peyrot recalls that the tactical criteria of the troops included the « defensive–only use of weapons; the refusal to exploit a successful condition after having driven back the enemy attack »; and, finally, the custom of praying before a battle. The « *compagnia volante* » was a special unit in charge of intervening whenever needed. This *élite* unit usually skulked on the hills above the battlefield (Giorgio Peyrot, *Il Patto dell'unione del 1561, op. cit.*, p. 234). It is certainly reckless and improper to compare the « *compagnia volante* » to Cromwell's *New Model Army,* because of the many differences as far as experiences, places, structures and organization are concerned; let alone the historical, cultural and confessional conditions. There is, however, a link. As Tourn writes, the *New Model Army* was characterized not only by a peculiar technical and organizational level, but also by an ideological one. The comparison between the Waldensian unit and Cromwell's army of « saints » relies on the « cohesive unity — Tourn explains — deriving from the fact that its soldiers fought for an ideal and no one ever doubted that this ideal was God himself » (Giorgio Tourn, *I protestanti, una società, op. cit.*, p. 271). Therefore, Waldensians fought Emmanuel Philibert not because he was the Duke of Savoy, but because they believed ha was against true faith. In fact, it is well known that « whereas the Waldensians declared themselves loyal subjects of the Duke of Savoy and were ready to obey him on all issues in line with Gospel, they went to war against him without hesitation when the Duke expected absolute religious obedience ». This is a very important event to help us understand « how it was possible to obey the prince [and, therefore, to confirm the principle of obedience to superior civil powers stated by Paul, *Romans*, XIII] and, at the same time, to wage war against him » (Giorgio Peyrot, *Il Patto dell'unione del 1561, op. cit.*, p. 234). Once again, this episode shows that the choices made by the Waldensians expressed *in nuce* an idea typically belonging to the monarchomachs, that is to say, the legitimate opposition and struggle of

Articles faits et arrêtés, ratified the federative will of all the Waldensians and set the principles upon which the Union of the Waldensian Churches would have relied, from then on[85].

It is now important to focus on the articles of the *Patto del Podio* which are more congruent with the federal thought. The first article ratifies an « infringeable » confederation, a popular « alliance » relying on faith, a *foedus*, signed by the representatives of all the Churches, which brought forward a common ecclesiastical structure able to set goals and to carry out programmes of common interest not only in the religious field, but also in social and political life[86]. According to Peyrot, the acquisition of a unitarian conscience led the Waldensians to « establish, on the strong basis of their common faith, a Pact of union » encompassing « in its entirety, the concept of popolo–chiesa »[87] previously developed, even if they were scattered « in different valleys ».

The « confederates » expressly related to mutual aid, and established in the Pact « to help and assist each other »[88]. In the third article, the unitary commitment provided for a joint effort to defend « the faith, the people, the goods » that assured the survival of the Walden-

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a population against the power of an absolute monarch, if necessary. Peyrot himself says that the *Patto del Podio* integrated and fully expressed « the principle of resistance to the prince for religious reasons »; despite this principle being relegated to a spiritual context, the temporal consequences were very important, because they paved the way to later protests and « legitimate rebellions » against the excessive power of sovereigns (*ibidem*, p. 241).

85. The *Articles faits et arrêtés* and the *Patto del Podio* became part of the *Articles sinodaux*, later included in the *Ordonnances ecclésiastiques*, set by the synod in 1563 and ratified by the synod that took place one year later. The *Ordonnances* granted the independence of the Churches until the 19th century when, at the end of the Napoleonic era, the rules approved by the synods that took place in 1833 and 1839 were adopted. These rules, following the emancipation in 1848, led to the approval of the first *Costitution de l'eglise évangélique vaudoise* in 1855, then followed by a new Constitution in 1902 and its subsequent amendment in 1914 and 1929. Finally, after a long preparatory phase started in 1559, the Constitution was definitively replaced by the *Disciplina generale,* in 1974. The Discipline, approved by the Italian and Rioplatense synodal sessions, is still in force and « represents the unity of faith and regulations of the Waldensian Churches located in the European and American continents » (*Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese, op. cit.*, p. 62).

86. According to Peyrot, the covenant made among believers aimed at « ranging beyond religious and ecclesiastical perspectives, extending the notion of engagement to civil and political life » (Giorgio Peyrot, *Il Patto dell'unione del 1561, op. cit.*, p. 236).

87. Giorgio Peyrot, *Il Patto dell'unione del 1561, op. cit.*, p. 236.

88. *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese, op. cit.*, p. 53.

sian people; moreover, Peyrot stressed, the signatories unequivocally promised to provide mutual support « in the military struggle » and « to compensate for their mutual needs with weapons, food supplies and any other means ». This principle, ratifying a military alliance based on mutual aid and properly supported by the « intentions » stated in the other articles, highlights the protofederal character of the Pact. As Peyrot wrote, the concept of mutual aid « state[d] a common will aiming at a common political action »[89]; in other words, it expressed a cohesion which, thanks to their faith, got through the contingencies and promoted the establishment of a superior political and religious entity transcending the historical independence of local Churches, while keeping it intact.

Keeping this assumption in mind, let's now analyse the fifth article, which not only states a « strictly political » principle, as Peyrot recalls[90], but it also confirms the protofederal nature of the document. In fact, the Churches were committed not to elude the unitary bond on a perpetual basis and not only for the duration of the war; in other words, the Pact prevented each community from signing an independent peace treaty or agreement with their enemies[91]. This is a clear federal assumption and it sums up the whole scope of the *Patto del Podio*, which was then reasserted many times and on many different occasions, but always to confirm the union of the Waldensian Churches and their people. The *Patto* was at first resumed by the synod that took place in 1567, and it was then reformulated with the more explicit *Union des Vallées* (1571); this document, just like the Pact of union, became one of the general sources of the current *Waldensian Discipline*. The Union stated that « should there be any rift » among the parties, « all would put themselves out and contribute to help those being molested, according to the common conclusion, as it was written and signed ».

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89. Giorgio Peyrot, *Il Patto dell'unione del 1561, op. cit.*, p. 238.

90. *Ibidem*, p. 239.

91. This article created an "indissoluble" tie among the parties, and stated that « no Valley is allowed to promise, reach an agreement or grant anything with relation to religion without the approval of all the other Valleys » (*Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese, op. cit.*, p. 54). Despite there explicit reference to religious issues alone, it is clearly understood that faith itself was considered the pillar of everything and was therefore strictly related to any other political and social issue.

It was therefore reasserted the binding force of the *Patto del Podio*, whose free acceptance pushed all the adherents to swear « to persevere inviolably in the ancient union, handed down from father to son, among all the believers in the reformed religion of the Valleys, [...] and never to part from it ».

Besides, the *Patto* reasserted also the principles of mutual solidarity, mutual aid and common action[92]. This presumed the strengthening of « central powers », which represented the government of the union from a religious point of view, and whose decisions forced each Church to sacrifice its own interests and opinion in favour of the common good[93].

Compared to the *Patto del Podio* of 1561, the sixth article of the *Union des Vallées* introduces a change because it brings out the voluntary nature of the adherence to the Union by the Churches, as well as the possibility of a unanimous condemnation on the basis of a common discipline and of an action concerted against the secessionist behaviour of one or more of its members. In fact, the declaration states that « whenever one of them breaks [...] the declarations of the union », the government of the united Churches will censure and correct those acts « according to the ecclesiastical discipline, until the other members of the union do not consider them to be schismatic and perjurious ».

It is therefore possible to put forward the hypothesis that such covenant–based constitution envisaged the presence of a « coercive

92. The Union reaffirmed the legitimacy of the use of weapons and the right to resistance; in fact, Article 4 states that « all the Churches will adopt all legitimate protections and defences they have right to in order to help all Churches, or individuals enduring misery for religious reasons, with advices, goods, and the people that may be needed » (*Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, op. cit., pp. 58–9).

93. Article 5 of the Constitution of the Union states as follows: « Likewise, as to he requests that could be made to all Churches in general, on the strenghth of religion or because of it, all Churches will answer unanimously and unequivocally, and also if a request were made to a particular Church in relation to religion, or because of it, or in relation to concessions, [they state that] no one will answer before having discussed the issue with the other Churches, and the members of such union, to decide on a common behaviour, and to answer and act according to their common opinion, with modesty, purity, sincerity, edification and a clear conscience » (*Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, op. cit., p. 59). As we will see in the next paragraph, decisions were made by the synod as the representative organ of the Union, where the Church and the believers could share their opinion « in a democratic way ».

power » exercised by the unitary government, at least from a religious point of view, to preserve the cohesion of the Union[94].

After the *Union des Vallées* in 1571, the *Patto del Podio* was confirmed afterwards by the synods of Angrogna (1647) and Pinasca (1658). The years between 1558 and 1564 also marked the accomplishment of the set–up process of the *ordonnances ecclésiastiques* stating the concept of ecclesiastical unit ratified by the *Patto*, as well as the synodal–presbyterial model of the Waldensian discipline, which provided the Union with an unitary legal system. The *ordonnances*, Peyrot wrote, « based the cornerstones of the ecclesiastical life on local communities and the synodal system »[95], and provided the Waldensians and their Churches with a common ecclesiastical constitution. The ecclesiastical structure of the Union, that is, the institutional architecture ruling the government of the Church, featured some democratic elements as well as some original aspects suggesting that the Waldensian Church had a protofederal–like ecclesiastical structure, able to guarantee both a large independence and a cohesive union. Let's now analyze some of these aspects, which can all be found in the legal and historical development of the Waldensian ecclesiology.

2.3. Protofederal aspects in the Waldensian ecclesiology

Besides its being characterized by plain democratic aspects, the institutional configuration of the Waldensian Church shows a clear federal vocation in its covenantal origin, in its structure and in its inclusive and

94. It is obviously impossible to make a comparison with a modern federation, whose coercive power is not only granted by the basic legal system, but is also a « tangible » element enforceable in case of internal conflicts on the entire territory of a federation, and which can become explicit through various practical activities, including the use of weapons. Such principle was included *in nuce* in the "constitution" of the Union of the Waldensian Churches, but it lacked a real sanctionative power against all possible secessionist pushes. Instead, the Union has a deterrent power, limited to the « excommunication » and the expulsion from the Union following « repeated » transgressions; however, such actions could prejudice the people that are no more "safeguarded" by the military union with the other members of the « confederation ». Nonetheless, this principle was taken into account by the members of the Union, showing that the "confederates" were willing to encourage a closer union which could be closer than a simple alliance.

95. Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese*, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

subsidiary formula. Let's now analyze — in a « federal » way — the constitutional and institutional structure of the Waldensian Church and the evolution of the concept of « Church » within its legal system. We have already focused on some of the differences among the episcopal, presbyterian and congregationalist systems; let's now analyze the — quite unique — type of organization characterizing the Waldensian Church.

The Waldensian Church — as we have already stated many times — is the union of several independent Churches; institutionally, it can be considered a « hybrid » between the synodal–presbyterial and the congregationalist models. As a matter of fact the Waldensians, who historically created many local independent Churches, established a unitarian organization to deal with all social and political issues; this has been possible also because of the above–mentioned sense of identity of the Waldensian people. However, the evaluation of the factors that led to such a unity cannot prescind from the need for evangelization, which is typical of all Christian Churches (and not only). The evangelization process shapes the Church itself; there, all the components take part responsibly in a common action aimed at the spreading of the Word. In the case of the Waldensians, Peyrot wrote, « the practical engagement » of the evangelization stems from « the clear definition of the concept of Union of Churches », which « can be sensed and is expressed through the renewal » of the institutions of the Church itself « in the conviction of the necessary sharing and the mutual contribution of all the communities to the ecclesiastical action »[96]. The concept of « Union of Churches » is therefore subordinate to and gathered directly from the reasons underlying the establishment of each Church.

This system, based on the union of independent yet mission–oriented Churches, on the one hand warded off the congregationalist split of the *ekklesie*, that is, all the assemblies of believers making up the so–called Waldensian communities; on the other hand, it preserved their independence and mitigated the « centralist » involution of the governing bodies of the Union. According to Peyrot, a refusal of this unitarian concept would have entailed two main consequences for the Waldensian Church: « either a form of congregationalism

96. *Ibidem*, p. 17.

breaking up the solidity of the *Opera*, or a unitarian centralization »
which would have pushed the Church towards a « clerical conception »
and, therefore, would have drained « all active contribution from the
communities »[97] in a very short time, thus leading the Church itself
towards episcopal–like forms.

   The union of the Waldensian Curches has some peculiar features
— as highlighted by Peyrot in his reflections on the nature of the syn-
odal–presbyterial structure — which clearly relate to a federal–like organ-
isation[98]. It is therefore necessary to highlight again some typical pres-
byterian characteristics implied in the concept of "Union of Churches",
where the congregationalist need overestimating the local community is
tempered by the synodal need, which puts the stress on the unity of the
local communities; such characteristics are also implied in the concept
of local or regional autonomy, which is focused on the comprehensive
character given by the presence of the Church in each locality[99].

   Let's now analyze the core of the system. According to the disci-
plines of the Waldensian Church, the « Church is ruled by a hierarchy
of assemblies, each dealing with a specific area of expertise: the assem-
bly of each local Church, the assembly of each regional or territorial
group of Churches, the Synod, both Italian and Rioplatense »[100].

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97. *Ibidem*, p. 17.

98. Franco Giampiccoli explains that « among the various Protestant ecclesiastical organiza-
tions, the reformed ones — relating to Calvin — are the closest to the idea of subsidiarity. In
particular, the synodal–presbyterial form states both the independence of each local Church,
ruled by the council of the eldest (presbyters), and the unifying and superior demand of the
synod, made of miniters (pastors) and representatives of the local Churches in equal measures.
Between the local Church and the general synod there is always a regional organization known
as regional or provincial or district synod. Within Protestantism, this ecclesiastical organization
places itself between congregationalism — equally reformed, but which does not forese the
unifying and superior action of the synod — and episcopalism, mainly the Lutheran one,
which, despite its synodal structure, is more centralized » [Franco Giampiccoli, *Genesi e uso del
principio di sussidiarietà*, « Protestantesimo », LII, n. 1 (1997), p. 35].

99. Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento
giuridico valdese*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

100. DV/1974, chapter I, art. 7, in *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*,
op. cit., p. 65. The reference to the current Discipline is necessary to retrace and reconstruct
the juridical and institutional evolution of the Waldensian Church, in order to highlight
the deep changes occurred over the centuries, and to confirm the historical impact and
the persistence of the protofederal assumptions of Waldism in the 16th and 17th centuries.
Over the centuries, these assumptions laid the foundations of the « method » underlying
the much needed constitutional renewal of the organization of the waldensian Church.

Such a structure is akin to other « federal » political–institutional structures. In the first instance, this is a subsidiary organisation because it highlights a multi–level structure, each level dealing with its own « area of expertise »[101].

Furthermore, the reading of the article clearly shows that the organization of the Waldensian Church relies on an expanded system of assemblies (local communities, Circuit, District, General Assembly or Synod) closely resembling the institutional architecture of federal States, where democracy is most definitely real and its prerogatives are kept intact[102]. The Synod[103] « is the general assembly which expresses the unity of all the Churches. [. . .] It is the supreme human authority of the Church on all doctrinal, legislative, jurisdictional and

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101. See Franco Giampiccoli, *Genesi e uso del principio di sussidiarietà*, *op. cit.*

102. This is part of the evolutionary scale of the democratic system, from direct or assembly democracy of the ancient Greek *poleis*, where people identified themselves with the *ekklesia*, to representative democracy, where the deputees are elected by the citizens, to federal democracy, where representation duplicates in order to govern without betraying the principles of democracy, or to meet the complex needs shared by several States. Federal institutions « allow representative democracy — Levi writes — to express itself on two (potentially, more) levels of government. The federal system allows to apply the principle of self–government to a plurality of centres of power living together within a democratic constitutional framework encompassing them all » (Lucio Levi, *Il pensiero federalista*, *op. cit.*, p. 6). This systems broadly relates to that of the government of the Church, included in the Waldensian discipline. Moreover, just like in all federal systems, the faithfuls and the citizens in the Waldensian Church hold the power–right which stems from the representation at all government levels. Therefore, the members of a community can attend the local assembly, elect their delegate to the district assembly up to the Synod, where the representatives of all Churches gather.

103. The Sybid is the general assembly of the believers, gathering pastors and deputees of each Church in equal numbers: 180 members in total (DV / 1974, art. 30). The Synod, which meets two times a year — in Latin America in spring and in Italy in summer — (Italy (DV / 1974, art. 28), has the task of setting a common direction for the Church as well as its general guidelines on disciplinary and doctrinal issues; finally, it establishes relationships with the State and the other Churches (DV / 1974, art. 29). During the synodal session, the administrative commissions in charge of implementing the decisions made by the Synod and of managing the various fields of activity, are elected. The most important commission is the Waldensian Board, made of 7 members and chaired by a moderator. The Board is the organ invested by the Synod with the official representation of the Waldensian and Methodist Churches in the relationships with the State and the ecumenical organization, between each session (*Patto d'integrazione* / 1975, art. 30–33, in *Disciplina generale delle chiese evangeliche valdesi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 87–8). In order to avoid any concentration of powers or any personalization of the role held, all posts have a maximum duration of 7 years. *See Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, *op. cit.* See also www.chiesavaldese.org.

governmental issues »[104]. The unitary will of the Waldensian Church is therefore expressed through its general assembly, which can be considered « the collective, representative government, responsible for the Head of the Church »[105]: Christ. The foundation of the Waldensian ecclesiastical organization is the « local community », represented by the synod, where each community attends as a member of the union of the Waldensian Churches[106]. As Ribet wrote, « the concept of the unity of the Church relies on the union and the active cooperation of each community »[107]. This « general assembly » of the Reformed Churches anticipates the structure of modern parliaments; as Giorgio Spini effectively stated in his historical work on the Modern Age, the Synod represents the for modern parliaments, where modern democratic institutions are outlined[108]. According to this analogy, we could

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104. DV/1974, *op. cit.* Chapter I, art. 27, in *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, *op. cit.*, p. 70).

105. Giorgio Peyrot, *La Tavola e il governo della Chiesa*, « L'Eco delle Valli Valdesi », (6 December 1945).

106. A local community attends the general synod with its pastors who, in the case of « independent Churches » — communities with more than 150 faithfuls, as defined in the *Disciplines* — is elected by the members of the communities, and with a lay representative, elected to represent local interests. During the Synod, the community is represented by the lay delegate, while the pastor sit on a superior organ pursuing the collective interest, as it represents the unity of all the Waldensian evangelical Churches. See Giorgio Peyrot, *L'Istituto dell'autonomia delle Comunità nel diritto ecclesiastico valdese*, « Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi », LXV, n. 82 (May 1945), pp. 27–8.

107. Alberto Ribet, *L'organizzazione ecclesiastica*, Catania 1938, p. 5.

108. See Giorgio Spini, *Storia dell'età moderna*, *op. cit.* In particular, see chapters II and VI of part two and chapters I and II of part four. « this government of the Church — Tourn polemically writes — also present at the local level, where the eldest and often the pastors are elected by the faithfuls, reminds of the parliament of a modern democracy with its deputees, Chambers, estalishment; it is generally believed that Protestants, to be more modern, derived this idea from the parliamentary system, while Catholics are somehow more rooted to the ancient system, closer to divine right monarchies. In actual fact, it is the exact opposite: the parliamentary system derives from the Protestant synod, of which it is sometimes a pale imitation » (Giorgio Tourn, *I valdesi, identità e storia*, *op. cit.*, p. 26). As Peyrot stated, « the indirect comparison of our ecclesiastical structures with those of a civil society based on democracy, shows a certain degree of affinity [between the two systems]. I would say, however, that such affinity relies on the fact that, as a consequence of the synodal–presbyterian character of our Churches, the Evangelicals are inclined to express, in a civil society, a democratic–like organization » (Giorgio Peyrot, *Deputati al Sinodo e ordini del giorno della Chiesa*, « La Luce », 26 June 1960). This reflection clearly shows the real influence of a certain type of confessional culture on both mentality and thought, and — consequently — on social organizations and political institutions.

assume that an expanded synodal–presbyterial system like that of the Waldensians anticipates a federal–like political–institutional system. Such an assumption could be made only in principle, because of the lack of elements of comparison. However, the profound analogies between the two systems — suffice it to think of the principle of representation at different levels, the repartition of the specific competencies of each body, from "basic" communities up to the top levels (subsidiarity), to the level of internal autonomy of each community and the inclusive potential of the system towards independent external entities — make it possible, at least ideally, to draw a parallel between the synodal–presbyterial and the federal systems. Aside from the many aspects that could lead to a comparison between the two systems, we would like to focus only on the principle presupposing the articulation of the structure at the basis of the synodal–presbyterial organization of the Churches, which is clearly visible within a federal structure.

Tourn stated that the Protestant ecclesiology draws its inspiration from two basic criteria: the « independence of the local Church » and « the unity of the Churches in the general assembly of the Synod »[109]; it is therefore possible to find, within this « ecclesiastic parliament », a key principle belonging to all federal systems[110], whose parliamentary assemblies combine the need for unity of the federal State with the independence of the federate States.

According to their own principles and rules, the Churches elect their deputies — both laics and pastors — to represent them during the votes and the sessions of the Synod[111]. These « members of the Synod », Peyrot writes, formulate a new common will « which embodies the leading authority of the Waldensian Church on legislation, constitution and doctrine »[112]. The deputies of these independent communities are also the agents of the their own Churches' individ-

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109. Giorgio Tourn, *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo–chiesa*, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

110. The natural reference is to pure federal systems, such as the United States of America and Switzerland. On the essential prerogatives do define a federal system as such and on the differences among the various federal systems, see Kenneth C. Wheare, *Del governo federale*, *op. cit.*

111. See *Regolamenti sinodali/1972*, capo I–II, art. 1–19, in *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese*, *op. cit.*, pp. 315–26.

112. Giorgio Peyrot, *L'Istituto dell'autonomia delle Comunità nel diritto ecclesiastico valdese*, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

ual interests, and they are often « called to account for themselves »; therefore, the election of a deputee to the Synod represents « the most important power given to a community, because it allows the community to take part in the judging, constituent and legislative assemblies as a separate unit »[113] expressing, in turns, the union of the Churches. It is no accident, Peyrot recalls, that during the first period of consolidation of reformed Waldism (1564–1686), the Synod (made of the pastors and the deputees of each Church) became « the meeting point of the Churches, the expression of the ecclesiastical union of independent and autarchical communities in the present juridical sense, that is, bodies able to give themselves a norm and a government *ex jure proprio* »[114].

However, are these communities truly independent? How are they connected to the Synod? To answer these question, suffice it to quote some considerations made by Tourn on the prerogatives, the responsibilities and the freedoms of each Church, and which show, in their « spirit » and basic principles, several affinities with those of a democratic and federal system. Tourn wrote that each local community must « aim at reaching its independence (financial, administrative, missionary) », must « make the decisions concerning the community itself through an assembly » and must « be ruled by a council attended as a member by its regular preacher (pastor) »[115], chosen by the members of the community themselves[116]. Between the local Churches and the Synod, there is also a regional organization, spanning from the district to the regional level. In the framework of this organizational chart, each Church remains independent; besides, Giampiccoli notices that according to the subsidiarity principle — « the most ancient phrasing of the reformed ecclesiastical law »[117] — all

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113. *Ibidem*, p. 28.

114. Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese, op. cit.*, p. 24.

115. Giorgio Tourn, *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo–chiesa, op. cit.*, p. 279.

116. The elction of the minister of religion is just one of the symbol of the independence of the local Churches. The community of the faithfuls is ruled by the Consistory; besides, the Church has a full legal status, owns its movables and immovables, is financially independent, exercises its taxing power on its members and attends all assemblies (up to the Synod) with its deputees. See Giorgio Peyrot, *L'Istituto dell'autonomia delle Comunità nel diritto ecclesiastico valdese, op. cit.*

117. Franco Giampiccoli, *Genesi e uso del principio di sussidiarietà, op. cit.*, p. 35.

Churches are voluntarily subject, in some specific areas, to the same ecclesiastical discipline set and exercised by the unitary governing bodies (Synod and Board).

It is therefore possible to say that the Synod represents the unity of the various parts of the ecclesiastical body, and has played a major role in making the covenantal formula consistent. « The "connecting element" — Peyrot writes — is the shared link of the synodal community, which is made possible at the organizational level as a consequence of the profession of faith of the Churches », and on which the Covenant relies. According to the Waldensian jurist, « the doctrinaire aspect of the Church is a unitary one and is focused on the Scriptures »; it acts as a « constitutional adhesive » and represents the foundations of « the pluralitarian structural life » of the communities, which draw their inspiration from the principles of independence and self–government[118]. This type of ecclesiastical union, made of « independent and autarchical, yet not autocephalous, communities », Peyrot recalls, marks the difference among the Waldensian ecclesiological system and all the others, because it sets itself between « the presbyterian system and the congregationalist one »[119]. The similarities between this system and the federal one are therefore more evident, thus highlighting the balance stemming from the dialectics of opposing powers, which are at the basis of both systems. Such balance was instrumental for the Waldensian Church in establishing an ecclesiastical unity without a strong centralization, and in guaranteeing a high level of autonomy for its communities, thus preventing them from disintegrating. The key element is therefore represented by the dialectical confrontation

118. See Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese*, op. cit., p. 25.

119. *Ibidem*, p. 26. In a letter written to Pastor Ribaute, Peyrot outlines some typical aspects of the Waldensian ecclesiastic discipline which can confirm a congruity between the synodal–presbyterian and the federal systems as to their idea of the unitary principle with relation to the principle of independence. Peyrot wrote: « The Synod is the supreme authority of the Church, [...]. According to the ancient *Patto d'Unione* [...], it is made of the quorum of deputees of the independent Churches and pastors. Without the deputations of the independent Churches or without pastors, the Waldensian Synod would be different from what it is and was, that is, the union of the Waldensian Churches which, preserving their independence, agree on a common discipline and management of common issues that assemblies and pastors are equally required to observe and respect » (Letter of Giorgio Peyrot to Emile Ribaute (15 June 1965), Archive Folder "Ufficio Legale 1953–1967", fald. 60, cat. Z, maz. M, fasc. 13, cart. "Ordinamento ecclesiastico in genere", at HAWB).

between the « centre » and the « suburbs » and the elements forming the whole, whose tensions are the expression of « real, systematic, practical solutions [. . .] in the (sometimes difficult) implementation of an unstable, yet effective balance between two opposing principles, each equally dangerous if isolated from its counterpart ». The Waldensian jurist even stated that « the [Waldensian] ecclesiastical system, because of the dialectics among its elements, managed to preserve its efficiency even when the ecclesiological thought lacked of clarity, because the power of the conservative opposition of one part against the opposing trend of the other is sufficient to guarantee enough balance to keep the solidity of the whole »[120]. Such a reflection can easily coexist with that of Kenneth Wheare, one of the most relevant theoreticians of political federalism, who believed that the *conditio sine qua non* for the existence of a federation is the coexhistence of aggregating and disaggregating elements, « arousing both the *desire* for a union and the *desire* for independence from the limits of the union, [. . .] considered one of the preconditions for a federal union »[121].

Let's now focus on the historical evolution of the concept of « Church » during the constitutional revision processes from the 16th century onwards. This analysis allows us to study the changes in the idea of ecclesiological unity over the time, as well as of its meaning according to the historical period, from the « unity » of the Churches to a « one and only » Waldensian Church. Between the 18th and the 19th centuries, in conjunction with the consolidation of the national States and the process of bureaucratic centralization in the European countries, some members of the establishment of the Waldensian Church felt the need of asserting a stronger unitarian identity. Despite the « formal » change of its constitutional charter in the 19th century, the Waldensian Church was able to keep its nature intact and to preserve the original value of the ideals which inspired its birth.

The starting point dates back to 1561 with the *Patto del Podio*, which stated — right before the beginning of the war against the House of Savoy — the ecclesiastical union among the Waldensian communities living on both sides of the Alps, which still characterizes the nature of

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120. Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese, op. cit.*, p. 36.

121. Kenneth C. Wheare, *Del governo federale, op. cit.*, p. 100.

the Waldensian Church itself. The *Patto*, established on a shared and voluntary basis, ratified a union of independent Churches; hence, in the Waldensian ecclesiastical tradition, the use of the plural form to define the *Union des Vallées*, reasserted by the « *Patto d'unione* » (Union Pact) in 1571 to point out the independence of the local Church within the unitarian structure of the Church or, even better, pre–establishing it. The anonymous writer of the *Histoire des persecutions* confirmed this concept and explained that « anciennement il y avait dans les Vallées vaudoises des *Eglises Evangéliques* unies entr'elles par les liens d'une même foi et d'une oeuvre commune, mais indépendantes les unes des autres, et souveraines quant à leur administration intérieure et au choix de leurs pasteurs »[122]. Less than a hundred years later, Pierre Gilles wrote that the Waldensian Churches had been characterized for centuries by a spirit of freedom and independence, and that, unlike the all–absorbing unity embodied by the Roman Church, they could find the most appropriate *trait d'union* through an « ecclesiastical federation »[123].

After the tragical period that followed the harsh persecutions triggered off by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685 and the exile in French–speaking Switzerland, the Waldensians who came back to Piedmont in 1689 after the so–called « Glorious Repatriation », restored their ecclesiastical structure according to the previous covenantal tradition[124]. Therefore, the concept of union of the Walden-

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122. *Ibidem*, p. 30.

123. See *ibidem*, pp. 50–6.

124. The return to Piedmont of the Waldensians exiled in Switzerland is one of the most significant and moving events in the history of this « *popolo–Chiesa* » and in their struggle to regain their ancestral land, thanks to the power of their faith and the solidarity of the international Protestantism. On 27 August 1689, a group of 972 men (including some French Huguenots) gathered in Prangins, on the banks of the Lake Geneva, to start a long and dangerous trek through the Alps and their very high and inaccessible mountain passes. In Salbertrand, in the Susa Valley, they defeated the French–Piedmontese troops sent there to stop the caravan. Once they reached the Valleys, the group gathered in the temple of Prali and celebrated worship; eventually, they got to Bobbio Pellice and swore their famous oath in the nearby village of Sibaoud. About 400 survivors spent the winter near the village of Balsiglia. In spring, the French General Catinat oredered a surprise attack with about 4,000 soldiers and some pieces of artillery; at first, the Waldensians were able to stand the attack and defeated the French army also thanks to terrible weather conditions, but they were later defeated and had to find shelter elsewhere. The change of scenary forced the Duke of Savoy to look for the help of the Waldensians to protect the Alpine borders. Therefore, Victor Amadeus II set the Waldensian prisoners free and helped the Waldensians living in Switzerland to come back.

sian Churches as a « synodal–like plurality »[125] was used again, and the Waldensian Churches were able to maintain their essential prerogatives throughout the 18th century and to overcome the difficulties of the Napoleonic jurisdictionalism (1804–1815). This situation lasted for some more decades in the 19th century, also because of a first disciplinary reorganization which reasserted once again the ancient ecclesiastical Union, founded the principle of the covenant among independent Churches. The first constitutional revision took place in 1828, when the project of a new federal–like general discipline was submitted to the Synod. The project re–established the relationships and the balance between the « centre », represented by Synod and the disciplines, and the « suburbs », which at that time included 13 independent Churches[126]. However, the project was not approved and was later replaced by a new one (1833) which did not modify, substantially and formally, the concept of « Union of Churches » and maintained the plural form in the title of the first article, « *Des Eglises* »[127].

The year 1839, Peyrot wrote, marked « a shift towards centralized unitarism at the denominational level »[128]. In the modified and revisited Waldensian discipline, this entailed the replacement of a kind

Holland, England and Switzerland were among the most important financial supporters of the reconstruction programme. See Giorgio Tourn, *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo–chiesa*, *op. cit.*, pp. 167–87 and Augusto Armand–Hugon, *Storia dei valdesi, Dal sinodo di Chanforan all'Emancipazione*, *op. cit.*, pp. 157–206. On this subject, see Henri Arnaud, *Il glorioso rimpatrio dei valdesi*, Turin 1989.

125. Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese*, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

126. The first chapter of the projects states as follows: «Les Eglises évangeliques des Vallées du Piémont, a nombre de 13, dont quelques–unes sont encore annexe, avec titre d'Eglise, ne forment qu'un seul corp, ayant des intérets communs, professant la même doctrine, uniquement basée sur la Parole de Dieu, contenue dans les Saintes Écritures, aspirant aux même avantages spirituels, se nourissant des mêmes espérances en Christ, se regardent comme soeurs: dès lors aucune n'a de supériorité sur les autres, ni ne doit prendre des mesures particulières au sujet de choses qui les regardent en commun; toutes sont soumises à la meme discipline ecclésiastique établie par le Synode, exercée soit par la Table soit par les concistoires particuliers de chaque Eglise » (See D.E. 1833, 1, in Teofilo Pons, *Actes des Synodes des Eglises Vaudoises 1692–1854*, Torre Pellice 1948, p. 258). See also, Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese*, *op. cit.*, pp. 25–6).

127. See Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese*, *op. cit.*, pp. 25–6.

128. *Ibidem*, p. 26.

of terminology adapting the idea of plurality of the Churches to the concept of unity, with another kind focused on the reduction of the weight of each Church to the benefit of the powers representing the Union. Therefore, in the chapters of the new discipline, the plural form *"les Eglises"* becames *"l'Eglise"*; the first article itself clearly shows the will of some members of the Waldensian establishment to provide the Waldensian Church with a « new unitarian ecclesiological structure »[129], sacrificing the traditional and historical independence and autarchy of the local Churches[130].

It is highly likely, Peyrot explains, that this shift towards centralization occurred in conjunction with the « renewed contacts with the Anglican episcopal world »[131]. As it would take too much time here to analyze the historical period that marked this phase of the Waldensian history[132], it is more useful to focus on the inclination of a part of the Waldensian *intelligentsia*, then ruled by Colonel Beckwith[133], towards an « episcopalist–like » structure of the Waldensian Church[134]. This

129. Ibidem.

130. The first article states: « L'Eglise évangelique des Vallées Vaudoises du Piémont est une. Elle reçoit et professe pour unique règle de foi les doctrines contenues dans l'ancien testament et le nouveau » (*Actes des Synodes, 1839*, 16 at HAWB). See Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese*, op. cit., p. 26).

131. Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese*, op. cit., p. 27.

132. On this period of the Waldensian history, see: Giorgio Tourn, *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo–chiesa*, op. cit., pp. 209–20 and Augusto–Armand Hugon, *Storia dei valdesi, Dal sinodo di Chanforan all'Emancipazione*, op. cit., pp. 277–96.

133. Charles Beckwith (1789–1862) was a British colonel of Canadian origin. He took part in the Waterloo battle, where he lost one leg. He is one of the leading personalities in the Waldensian history. Influenced by the *Awakening*, Beckwith was, as Tourn describes him, « a son of the Anglo–American culture, made of empirism and feelings, respect and haughtiness, [...] he belong to the race of the English governors which were about to start establishing Her Majesty's Empire ». As soon as he discovered the existence of the Waldensians through William S. Gilly's story, Beckwith made his wealth and his energy at the disposal of the populations of the Valleys for more than 30 years, fostered the building of temples and schools and established many assistance and instruction institutions. In 1848, Charles Albert awarded the old colonel the diploma and the diploma and the cross of Knight of The Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus for his extraordinary merits. Around 1830, he moved to Torre Pellice and spent the rest of his life there, turning the Valleys into « a small, independent "nation", with its peculiar characteristics in Europe's great evangelical world » (Giorgio Tourn, *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo–chiesa*, op. cit., p. 215–6).

134. Beckwith aimed at promoting a reformation of the ecclesiastical structure to dis-

ecclesiastical centralization was hindered by a younger generation of intellectuals who defended the original meaning of the federal–like union of the Waldensian Churches[135]. The opposition to this centralizing trend "welded" to the spirited defence of the « principle of the pluralistic agreement among all Churches » and to the « claim of what they believed to be their inviolable rights »[136]. To these young people, the term *"Eglise vaudoise"* mortified the nature of the Church, nullified centuries of history and violated the very idea of Covenant. The Churches were and had to remain « associations religieuses basées sur le principe biblique de la libre autonomie, de la souveraineté », gathered in a « confédération »[137]. However, pro–episcopalists were never able to reach their goals because of the strong opposition of the majority of the Waldensians; yet, despite the resistance of those who would have liked to maintain the plural form (*Eglises Vaudoises*) in the definition of the body of the Church, thus « consecrating the prin-

tance the Waldensians from the influence of the dissident Churches and the revivalistic movement, and to bring them nearer to the Anglican Church and, therefore, to the episcopal system. In a letter sent to Jean–Jacques Bonjour, Beckwith wrote that he wanted to transform the Waldensian Church into « una église épiscopale costituée presbytérien-nement » (Letter sent by Beckwith to Bonjour, 28 August 1844, in "Copialettere moderatore Jean–Jacques Bonjour", at HAWB). It is well–known that the Colonel aimed at becoming a life–long Moderator, thus overcoming the system based on an elective system and on temporary limited posts.

135. Jean–Pierre Meille, one of Beckwith's young opponents, wrote about the colonel's objective to provide the government organs of the Church with more decisional power: « Beckwith ne voulait autre chose que donner à l'église vaudaise par une forme se rapprochant, il est vrai, de l'èpiscopalisme, *plus de cohésion* et d'ensemble, et partant, la mettre à même d'agir plus énergiquement qu'elle ne l'avait fait jusqu'alors » (in Jean–Pierre Meille, *Le Général Beckwith*, Losanna 1872, p. 184). See also Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese*, op. cit, pp. 27–8).

136. Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

137. S.n., *De la libre nomination des pasteurs au sein des églises vaudoises*, Turin 1863, p. 6. The unknown supporter of the ancient ecclesiastical Union explained how this linguistic distortion had distorted the real nature and the reasons behind the historical union of the Waldensian Churches, and hence the meaning itself of « Church ». He also stated that « en lieu et place des *Eglises* nous avons *l'Eglise Vaudoise*, savoir un tout organique et un, dans lequel les associations particuliéres disparaissent en perdant leur individualité; un ensemble qui ne mérite pas le nom de *confédération*, car celle–ci supposerait la liberté intérieure de ses membres, mais qui est une vraie *agglomération* dan laquelle les Eglises particuliéres viennent se fondre et se confondre, comme la goutte d'eau dans l'océan » (*ibidem, op. cit.*, p. 6). See also Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese*, *op. cit.*, pp. 30–1).

ciple of an ecclesiastical federation »[138], the adoption of the singular form (*Eglise Vaudoise*) started being used in the disciplines, in striking contrast with the terminology used and the actual organization.

The apparent incongruity in the use of the expression *"Eglise Vaudoise"* in the Waldensian ecclesiology cleared up at the end of the 19th century, following a 10 year–long constitutional revision (1892–1902). The singular term was still used in the disciplines, but without a real revision of the Waldensian organization. Given the difference between « ecclesiastical federation » and « absorbing unity », the term « Waldensian Church » expressed the unity of the representative body, even if « from the perspective of the principle itself [. . .], the choice of the plural form would have been more appropriate ». According to the drafters of the project, the adoption of the singular form did not mean that « all Churches had to merge into an ecclesiastical unity, thus choking their individualism »[139]; on the contrary, it was aimed at increasing the degree of visible unity of the Churches. The authors of the draft reasserted this concept through an evocative analogy:

[. . .] we believe that [the Churches] have to carry out the motto of the United States of America — where each State has its own particular jurisdiction: *ex pluribus unum*! This *unum*, is nothing but the *totality*, as the ancient Constitution would like it to be, but *a whole,* in front of the Christian world and the civil authority: the *Waldensian Church*, just like the 105 congregations of the free Church of Scotland and the 64 Churches of France constitute *The free Church* and *l'Eglise réformée* respectively[140].

From a historical point of view, the evolutive process of the ecclesiological concept within the Waldensian legal system, with its many constitutional reformations and revisions, is much more complex and articulated, but this last definition of the structure of the Waldensian Church sums up well the idea underlying its organization. Its federal nature is confirmed by the subsequent structures set up after the expansion of the Waldensian Church through the missionary

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138. *Progetto di Costituzione presentato al Venerabile Sinodo del 1894*, Torre Pellice 1894, pp. 6–7 (a copy of this document is kept in the Waldensian Library of Torre Pellice). See also Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese*, op. cit., pp. 50–1.

139. *Progetto di Costituzione presentato al Venerabile Sinodo del 1894*, op. cit., pp. 6–7.

140. *Ibidem*, p. 7.

and the evangelization processes. This led to the birth of new communities, which yearned for independence and representation within the Synod, as well as to an institutional afterthought of the whole Waldensian ecclesiastical system. Even in this case, the principle of the free union of independent and « autarchical », communities, mutually responsible and corporately coordinating the action of the Church in the synodal government, is respected. As Peyrot recalls, « even the Churches of the mission, [. . .] were having the same experience » as that of the Churches of the Valleys in « their institutional start–up, between independence and centralization, unidenominational Church and open ecclesiastical Union »[141]. During this "expansion phase" of the Waldensian Church, the problems arising from the fast evangelization process at the end of the 19th century questioned its institutional structure, which had to be revised and reformulated in consideration of the new conditions. Once again, the ancient federal principles were involved in the shaping and the ordering of the new reality stemming from the evangelization. Therefore, the spur for the revision of the institutional organization came from the Mission, which asked for a juridical arrangement of its position within the Waldensian Church. The many Church–communities established through the missionary action all over Italy, asked for a coherent position within the institutional framework of the Waldensian Church, in conformity with its original principles and appealing to the *Union des Vallées* (1571), which laid the foundations for « une fédération d'églises », considered « une organisation désormais reconnue comme indispensabile »[142]. In 1873,

141. Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese*, *op. cit.*, p. 37. Following the wide expansion of the Waldensian missionary action in Italy, it was necessary to set up an organization in charge of the coordination of the evangelization process and of the integration of the new Churches in the ecclesiastical institutional framework. This organ, known as the evangelization Committee, acted according to the principle of a unique Church, « centralized, direct, divided into hierachically–subject parishes », in contrast with the principle of « independence and autarchy moving them [. . .] towards the Union with the other Churches » (*Ibidem*). For a long period, these Churches were not even represented during the Synods. Therefore, the Church itself had to face a blatant contradiction: on the one hand, there were independence–driven principles (regarding the internal government of the ancient communities of the Valleys); on the other hand, there was the centralization principle, for the management of the Mission Churches.

142. See *Resoconto del Sinodo del 1873*, appendix D., p. 60 at HAWB. See also Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese*, *op. cit.*, pp. 39–40.

the Synod approved the proposal of the General Conference of the Churches of the Mission and charged the Evangelization Commission to work out a project involving the Churches established in many parts of Italy (and all over the world) to gather them in « cette nouvelle Fédération »; this project « après adoption par le Synode, avrait été subséquement proposé à l'acceptation des nouvelles Eglises »[143].

The 1873's Synod reaffirmed the ecclesiological, federal–oriented principles underlying the Waldensian Church in the Valleys and outside the territory of the Mission. During their Conference, the Churches of the evangelization showed their unanimous will « en exprimant le désir sincère d'être une même chose avec l'Eglise Ev. Vaudoise et en adoptant le principe fédératif et presbytérien », in order to establish « une union toujours plus étroite avec les églises vaudoises pour arriver à former des unes et des autres *un seul corps*, ou, si l'on préfère, une *confédération* »[144].

This principle come to the fore many times throughout the history of the Waldensians, particularly in 1934 when the Churches of the Rioplatense District drew up their statute according to the ancient principles of the Waldensian system (that is, the federative criterion)[145], and later with the global Integration Pact with the Italian Methodist Church, ratified in 1975 and accomplished in 1979 with the first com-

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143. *Actes des Synodes* del 1873, XI, at HAWB.

144. See *Resoconto del Sinodo* del 1873, *op. cit.*, p. 28 (loose adaptation). The 1873 project, known as « Organamento », was definitively approved by the Synod in 1875. This document, which placed the Mission Churches within the general juridical–institutional framework of the Waldensian Church, shows once again the natural propensity of the Waldensian spirit to « federalism », even when the ecclesiastical centralization was the prevailing trend: suffice it to remember the adoption, following a constitutional revision in 1855, of the singular form to define the Waldensian Church. The « Organamento » of the Mission Evangelical Churches, Peyrot notices, showed a « clear federalist structure referring to the ancient Union des églises des Vallées » (Giorgio Peyrot, *Sviluppo storico del concetto ecclesiologico insito nell'ordinamento giuridico valdese*, *op. cit.*, p. 42). This clearly showed that, despite the centralizing trends within the ecclesiastical terminology, the ancient principles underlying the Waldensian Church were still given srious consideration.

145. The first article of the statute states: "Las Inglesias evangélicas Valdenses de Colonia Valdense, de Cosmopolita, de Tarariras–Riachuelo–San Pedro, de Ombues de Lavalle, de Miguelete, de San Salvador (Uruguay), de Colonia Iris y Belgrano (Argentina) todas con personaría jurídica y con mismos Estatutos, se costituyen en Federación de Inglesias Evangélicas Valdenses" (See *Atti della Commissione Distrettuale rioplatense 1955*, XXXIII, at HAWB).

mon Synod[146]. The integration, Bouchard clearly wrote, has fulfilled a partial « unity within freedom », that is, a union drawing its inspiration from federal principles[147].

This « federative » process is nothing but the consequence of a wider process in the Protestant world, which started at the end of the 19th century and was boosted by the tragic events of the 20th century, with the birth a the Ecumenical Movement and the *World Council of Churches*.

The influence of this spiritual and cultural heritage — at the end of the 19th century and throughout most of the 20th century — on a generation of Italian Evangelicals, driven by their irenism and their ecumenical ideas towards the cause of the political unity of Europe. No other principle but the federal one could have guided some Waldensians to the fulfillment of such a goal.

146. The Commission for integration charged with the drafting of the Covenant was made of Giorgio Peyrot, Giorgio Bouchard, Franco Becchino and Sergio Aquilante. In 1979, at the signature of the *Intesa*, the members of the Board were: Giorgio Bouchard, Valdo Fornerone, Giulio Vicentini, Valdo Benecchi, Bruno Bellion, Gianni Rostan and Giorgio Spini. As Bouchard explains, « the Covenant provides the methodist Churches, which were clearly in the minority, with a series of guarantees: their name and internal organization cannot be changed "from above"; their economic and ecumencal insterests are looked after by a special commission made of 4% of methidists; the methodist traditions of lay preachers, local pastors, "circuits", are received and enhanced throughout the whole Church; the methodist Works enjoy a considerable independence. The core of the whole system is [. . .] the Synod [. . .], the exponential body of a union of Churches » (GIORGIO BOUCHARD, *I valdesi e l'Italia. Prospettive di una vocazione, op. cit.*, pp. 110–1). As we can see, the integration process of the two Churches features a « federal spirit ». See *Patto d'integrazione globale tra le chiese valdesi e metodiste*, in *Raccolta delle discipline vigenti nell'ordinamento valdese, op. cit.*, p. 77.

147. Giorgio Tourn points out that the *Patto di unione* concluded in 1975 maintained « the face and the organization of the two Churches, and the sense of belonging of each community », binding them together in a single synodal assembly. According to Tourn, « this type of agreement, which foresees neither the union of the two Churches in an organization nor the absorption of one into the other » could « seem new and original. It actually corresponded to an ancient principle of the Waldensian ecclesiology which conciliates the authority of the synodal assembly and the local responsible independence », whose most ancient historical precedent was the *Patto di Unione* signed in 1561 (GIORGIO TOURN, *I Valdesi. La singolare vicenda di un popolo–chiesa, op. cit.*, p. 267).

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ICONOGRAPHIC APPENDIX

Figure 2.1. John Calvin (1509–1564).
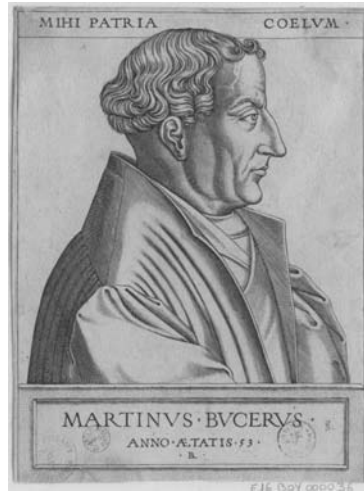
Figure 2.3. Martin Bucer (1491–1551).

Figure 2.2. Guillaume Farel (1489–1565).
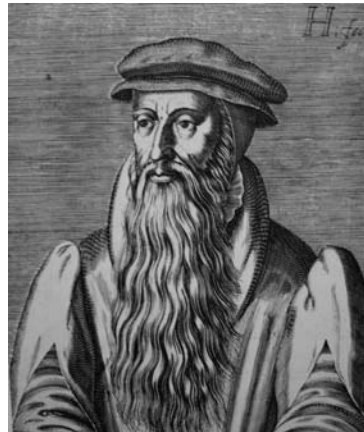
Figure 2.4. John Knox (1513–1572).
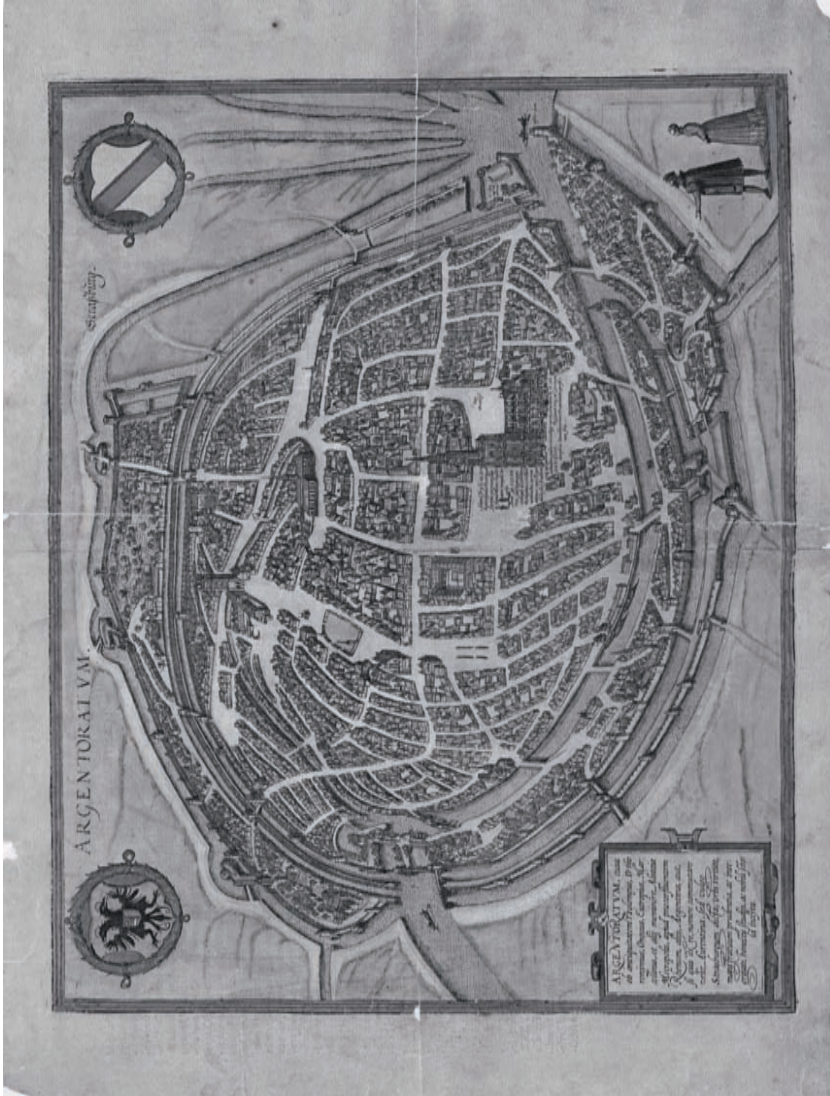
Figure 2.5. Civitates Orbis Terrarum de Braun & Hogenberg (1572) Argentoratum–Strasbourg.

Figure 2.6. Caspar Olevianus (1536–1587).

Figure 2.8. Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531).

Figure 2.7. Theodore de Bèze (1519–1605).
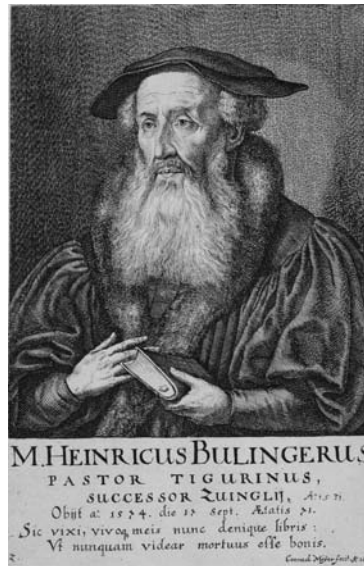
Figure 2.9. Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575).
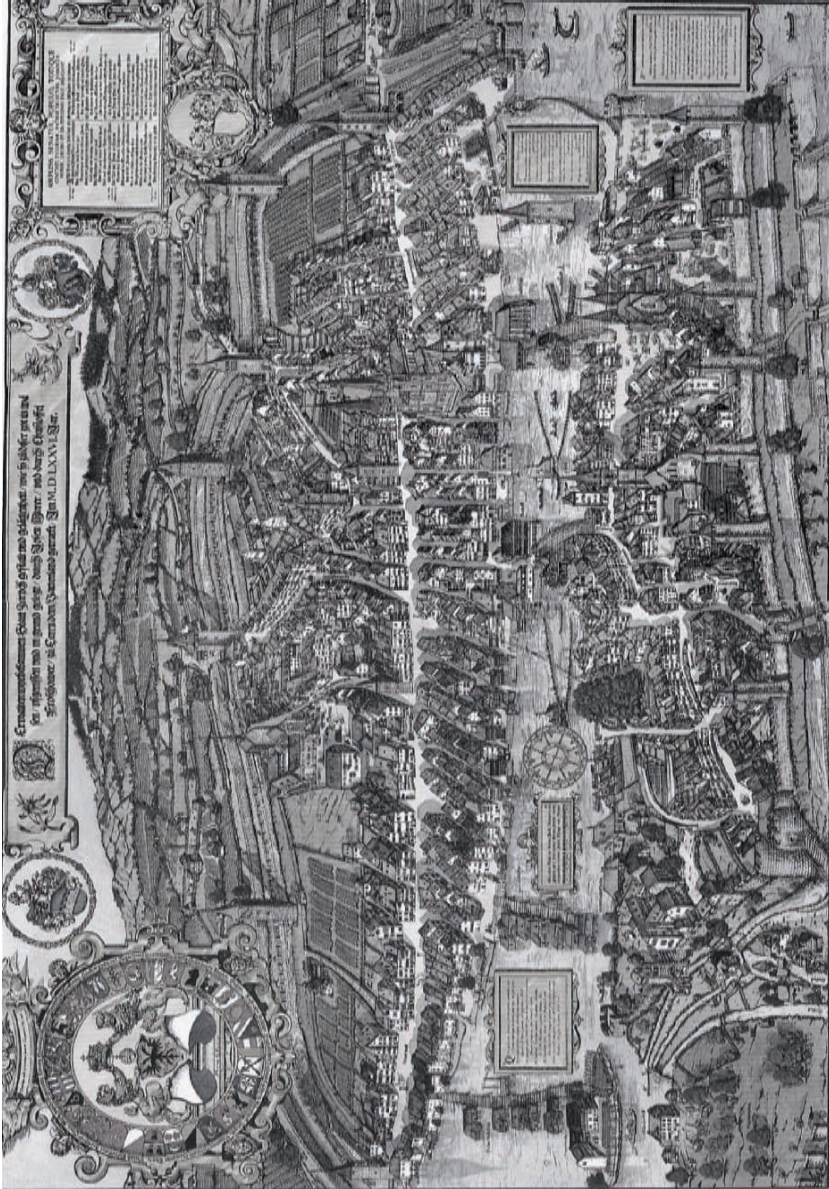
Figure 2.10. View of the city of Zurich on a xylography by Josua Murer, 1576.
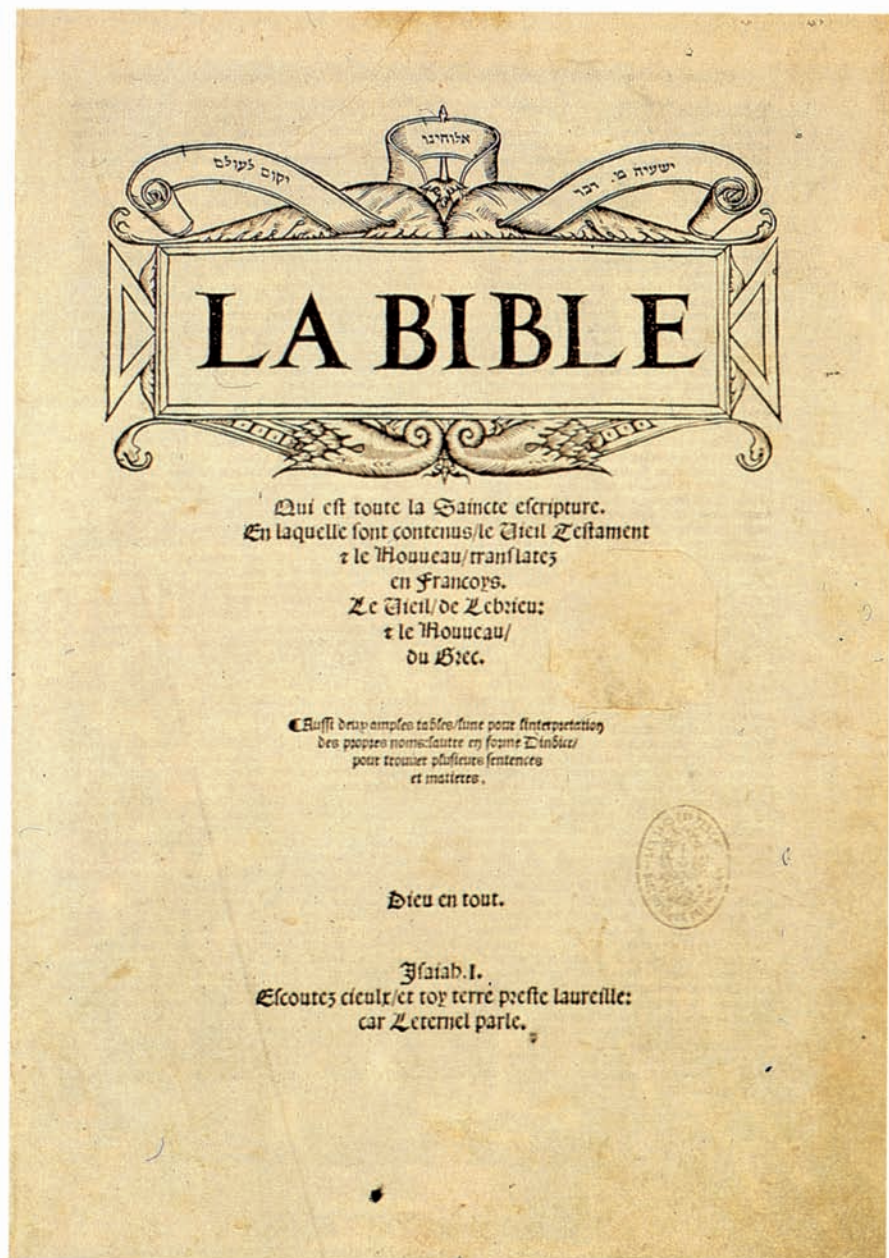
Figure 2.11. The first translation of the Bible into French, Olivétan, Pierre, 1535 (courtesy of the Waldensian Library of Torre Pellice).

Figure 2.14. William Penn (1644–1718).

Figure 2.12. Johannes Althusius (1557–1638).

Figure 2.15. Alexander Hamilton (1755–1804).

Figure 2.13. Hugo Grotius (1583–1645).

Figure 2.16. Emden, 1575.

Figure 2.17. Dutch Republic, 1658.

Figure 2.18. Mayflower Compact in William Bradford's hand (1620).

Figure 2.19. Pilgrim Fathers, Mayflower Compact (1620).
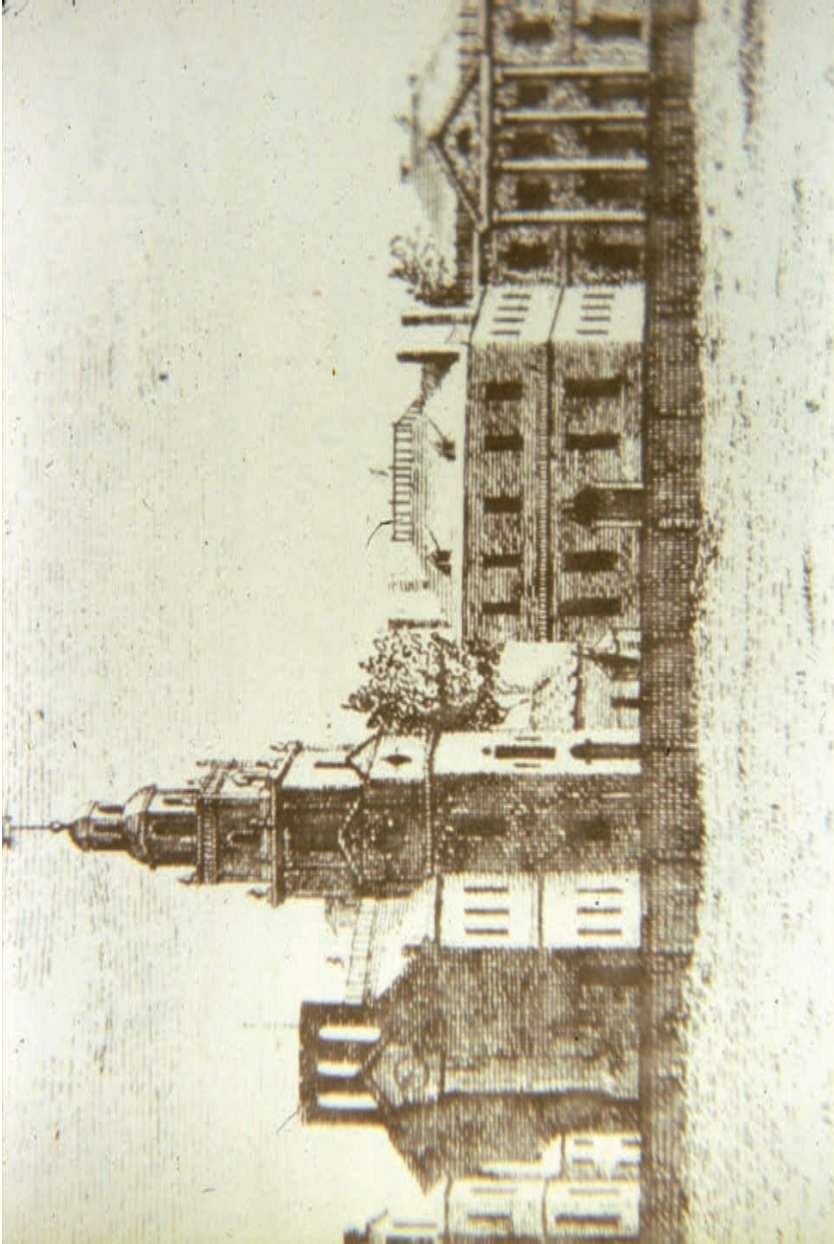
Figure 2.20. Independence Hall 1787, Philadelphia.
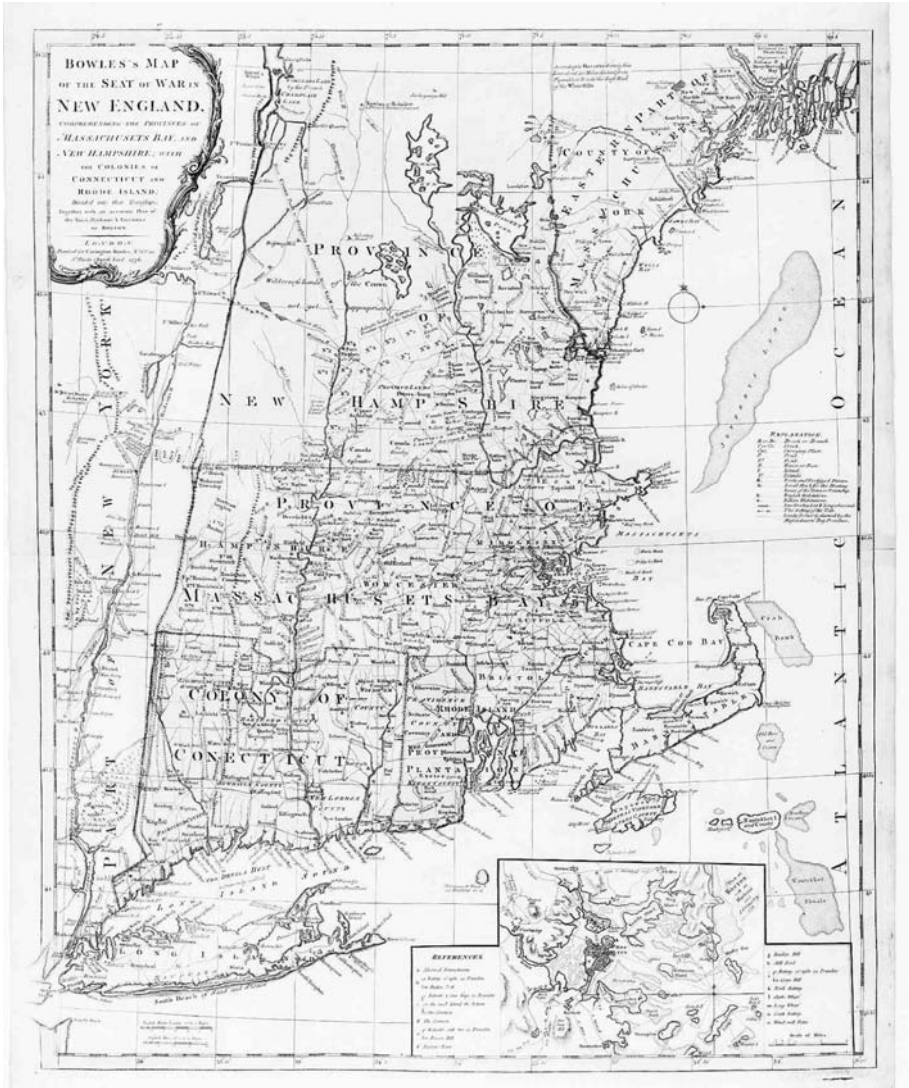
Figure 2.21. New England, 1776.
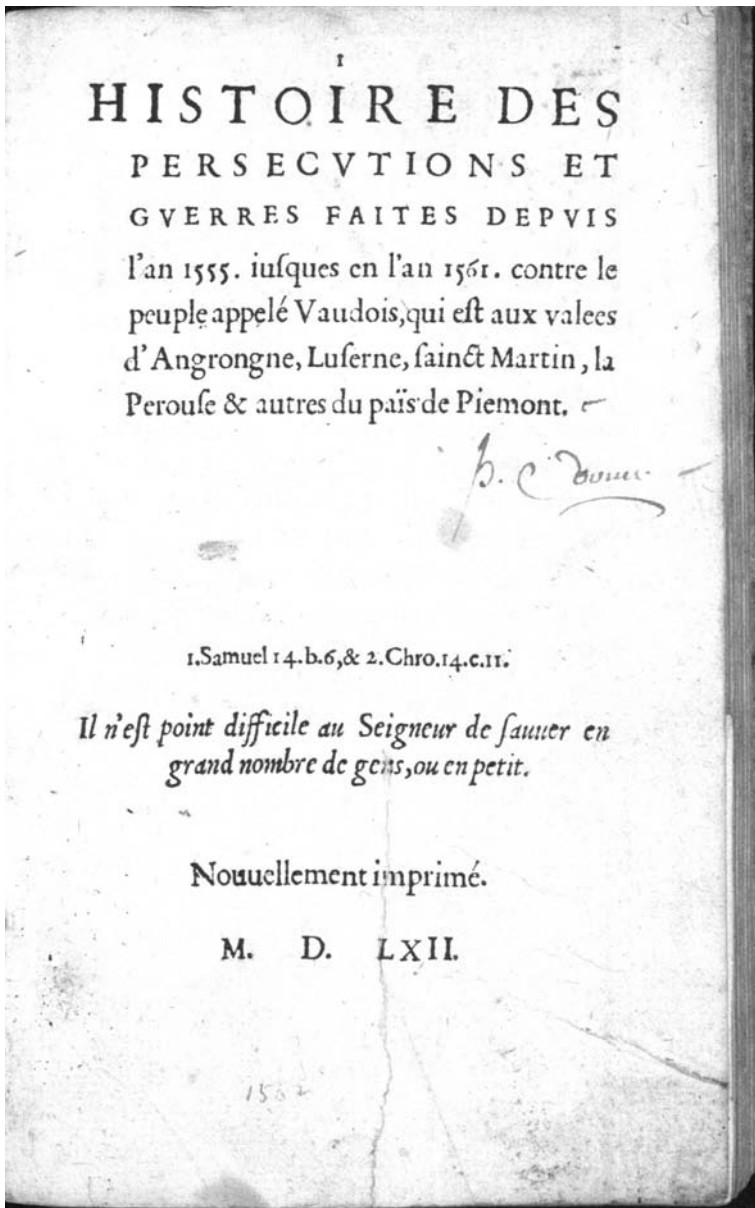
Figure 2.22. *History of persecutions and wars before the year 1555*, Anonymous, 1562.

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Eglises des vallees de Piemont, afin d'adui-
fer quelques moyens pour y remedier, s'il e-
ftoit poffible. Pour ce faire ils fe mirêt tous en
prieres & oraifons: Et apres auoir affez lon-
guement inuoqué Dieu, luy demandant fa
grace, & efprit de difcretion & côfeil, & bien
confideré les affaires vrgentes qui les preffoy
ent, il fut refolu finalement, qu'alliance feroit
faite par tout le peuple Vaudois demeurant
aux vallées & montagnes de Piemôt & Dau-
phiné. Par mefme moyen ils promettoyent
tous, moyennant la grace de Dieu, de mainte
nir la pure predicatiô de l'Euágile,& l'admi-
niftration des faincts Sacremens: de s'aider
& fecourir mutuellemét les vns les autres: &
de rédre toute obeiffance à leurs Superieurs,
felon que la parole de Dieu le commande.
Item qu'il ne feroit loifible à aucune de tou-
tes les vallees de rien promettre, tranfiger,
ni accorder fur le faiét de la Religion, fans le
confentemét des autres vallees. Et pour plus
grande côfirmation de cefte alliance, aucuns
des Miniftres & des principaux defdites Egli
fes du Dauphiné s'en allerent en la vallee de
Luferne, pour entendre s'ils vouloyent accor
der

Figure 2.23. In the page where the text is reported there is a reference to the
Pact of Union (1561), later included in the general source of the Collection of the
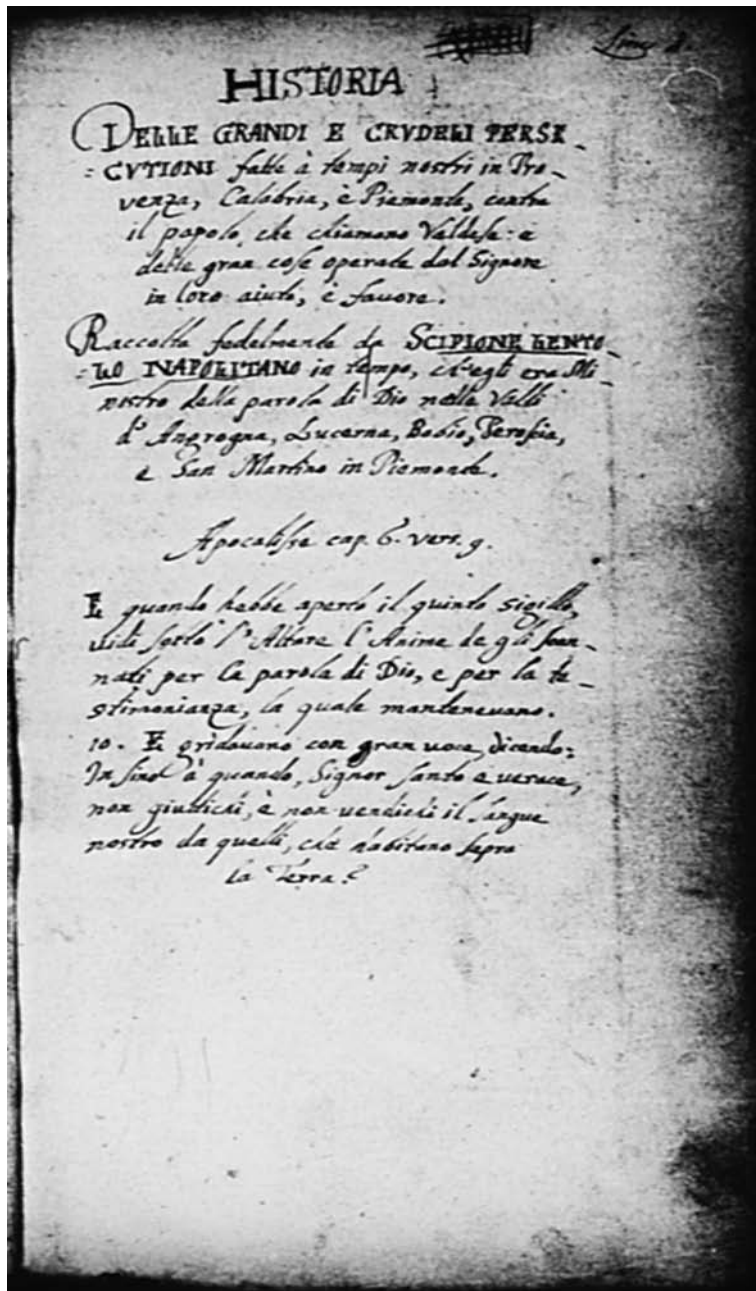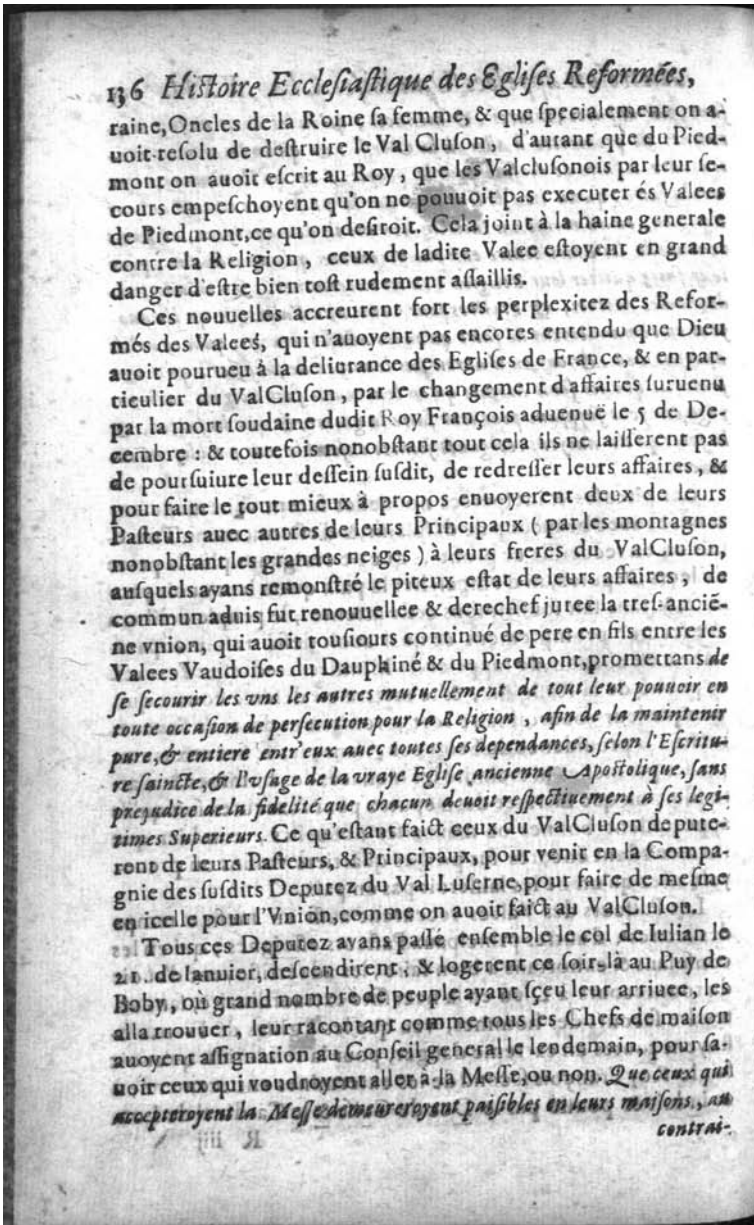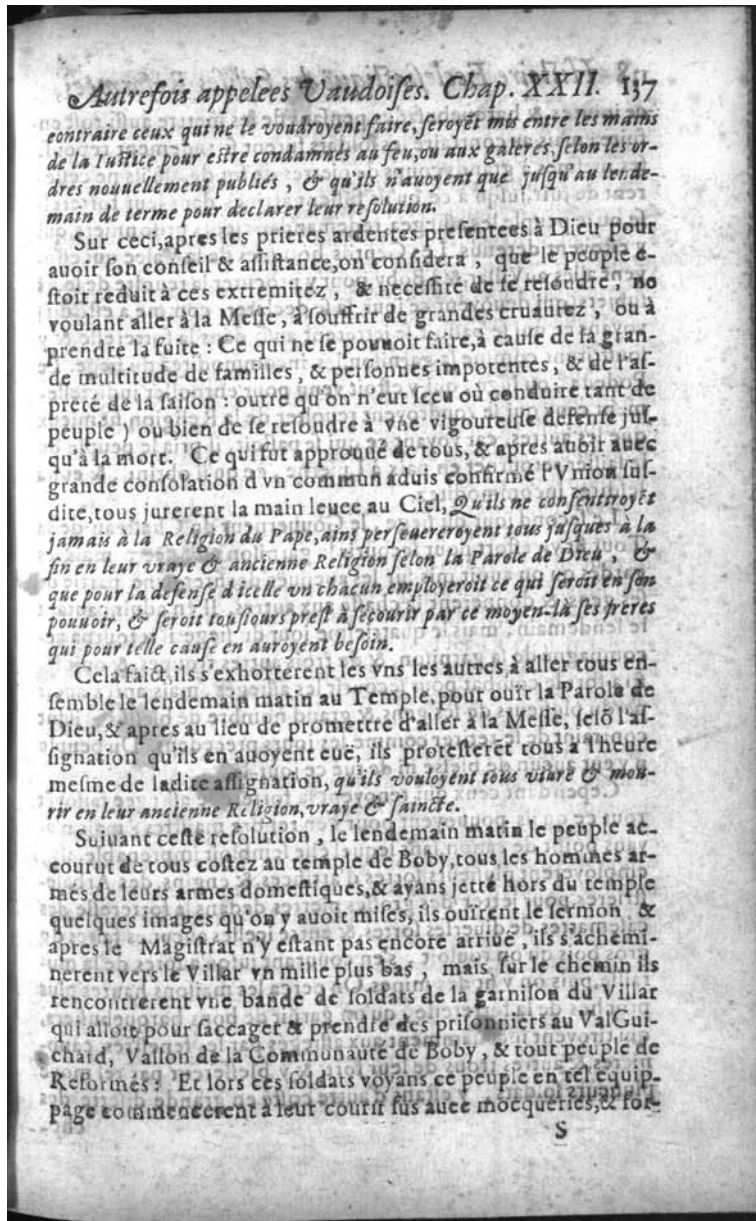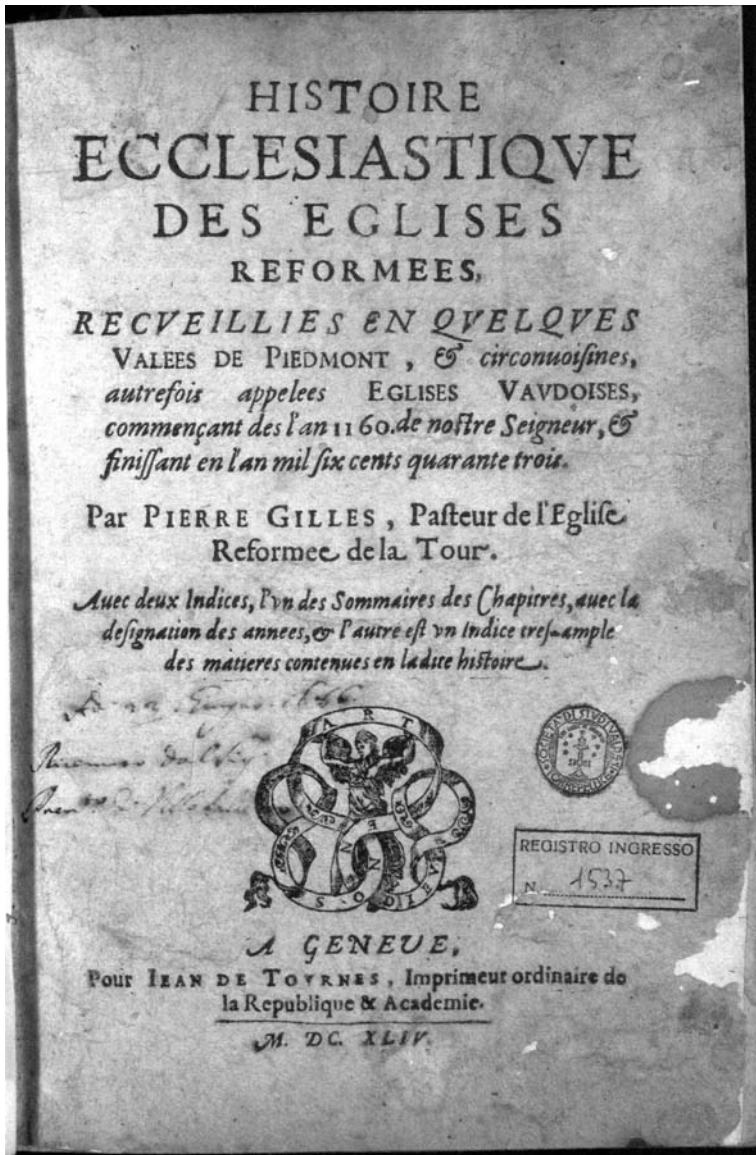disciplines in force in the Waldensian system.

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der & ratifier ce que deſſus: à quoy ils conde
ſcendirent bien volontiers & de bon cœur,
comme il ſera veu cy apres.

Les Miniſtres meſſagers, & autres du Dau-
phiné eſtans arriuez ſur le ſoir au lieu de Bo-
by, le peuple aduerti de cela, y courut incon
tinent, & leur raconta comment tous les
chefs de maiſon auoyent aſſignation au con-
ſeil general le lendemain, pour ſçauoir ceux
qui voudroyent retourner à la meſſe ou non:
& que ceux qui reprendroyent la meſſe, de-
meureroyent paiſibles en leurs maiſons: au
contraire ceux qui ne le voudroyent fai-
re, ſeroyent remis entre les mains des gens
de iuſtice, pour eſtre par eux condamnez
d'eſtre bruſlez, ou enuoyez aux galeres.
Parquoy le peuple eſtoit reduit à ces extre-
mitez, ou de mourir, ou de s'enfuir, ou de
renoncer Dieu. La fuite ſembloit bien eſtre
le moyen plus expedient, ſi les grandes
neiges ne l'euſſent du tout oſté. Le peu-
ple doncques aſſemblé, & ſe voyant en tel-
le extremité s'accorda treſ-volontiers à l'al-
liance. Là deſſus ils s'exhorterent les vns
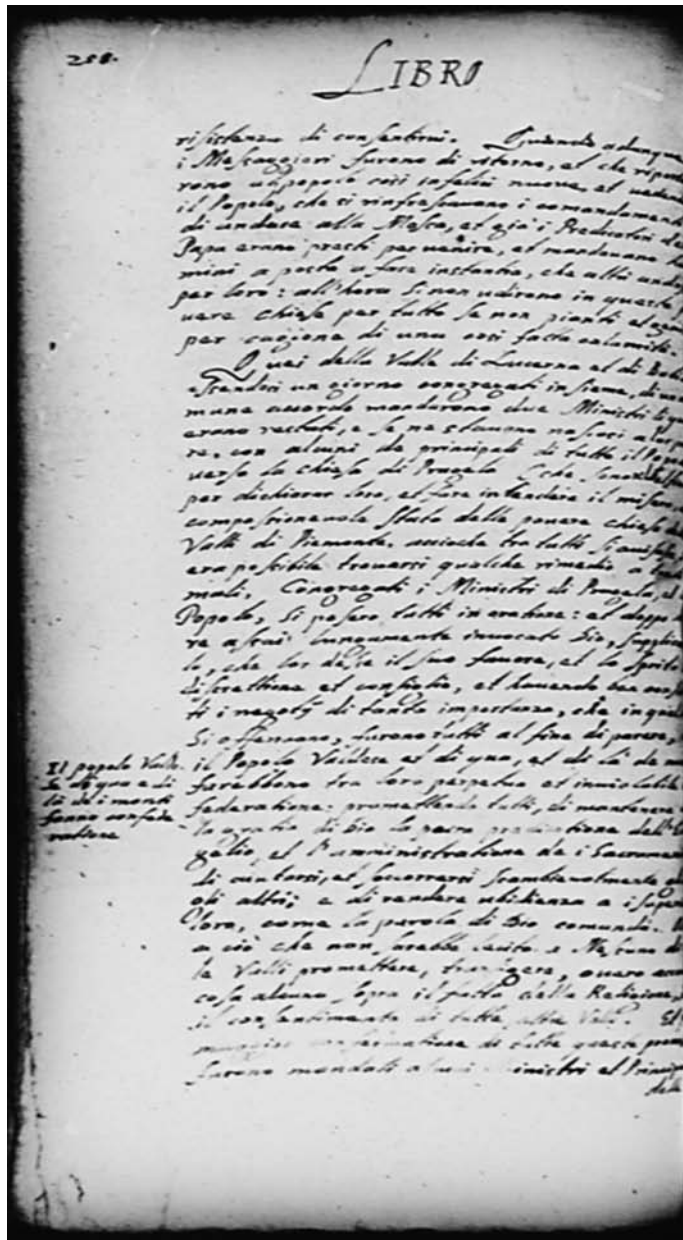les autres, diſans, puis que nous ſommes

Figure 2.24. In the page where the text is reported there is a reference to the Pact of Union (1561), later included in the general source of the Collection of the disciplines in force in the Waldensian system.

Figure 2.25. *History of the great and cruel persecutions against the Waldensian people,*
Scipione Lentolo, 1595.

136 *Histoire Ecclesiastique des Eglises Reformées,*

raine, Oncles de la Roine sa femme, & que specialement on a-
uoit resolu de destruire le Val Cluson, d'autant que du Pied-
mont on auoit escrit au Roy, que les Valclusonois par leur se-
cours empeschoyent qu'on ne pouuoit pas executer és Valees
de Piedmont, ce qu'on desiroit. Cela joint à la haine generale
contre la Religion, ceux de ladite Valee estoyent en grand
danger d'estre bien tost rudement assaillis.

Ces nouuelles accreurent fort les perplexitez des Refor-
més des Valees, qui n'auoyent pas encores entendu que Dieu
auoit pourueu à la deliurance des Eglises de France, & en par-
ticulier du ValCluson, par le changement d'affaires suruenu
par la mort soudaine dudit Roy François aduenuë le 5 de De-
cembre : & toutefois nonobstant tout cela ils ne laisserent pas
de poursuiure leur dessein susdit, de redresser leurs affaires, &
pour faire le tout mieux à propos enuoyerent deux de leurs
Pasteurs auec autres de leurs Principaux (par les montagnes
nonobstant les grandes neiges) à leurs freres du ValCluson,
ausquels ayans remonstré le piteux estat de leurs affaires, de
commun aduis fut renouuellee & derechef juree la tres-ancie-
ne vnion, qui auoit tousiours continué de pere en fils entre les
Valees Vaudoises du Dauphiné & du Piedmont, promettans *de
se secourir les vns les autres mutuellement de tout leur pouuoir en
toute occasion de persecution pour la Religion, afin de la maintenir
pure, & entiere entr'eux auec toutes ses dependances, selon l'Escritu-
re saincte, & l'usage de la vraye Eglise ancienne Apostolique, sans
preiudice de la fidelité que chacun deuoit respectiuement à ses legi-
times Superieurs.* Ce qu'estant faict ceux du ValCluson depute-
rent de leurs Pasteurs, & Principaux, pour venir en la Compa-
gnie des susdits Deputez du Val Luserne, pour faire de mesme
en icelle pour l'Vnion, comme on auoit faict au ValCluson.

Tous ces Deputez ayans passé ensemble le col de Iulian le
21. de Ianuier, descendirent, & logerent ce soir-là au Puy de
Boby, où grand nombre de peuple ayant sçeu leur arriuee, les
alla trouuer, leur racontant comme tous les Chefs de maison
auoyent assignation au Conseil general le lendemain, pour sa-
uoir ceux qui voudroyent aller à la Messe, ou non. *Que ceux qui
acceptoyent la Messe demeureroyent paisibles en leurs maisons, au*

contrai-

Figure 2.26. In the page where the text is reported there is a reference to the Pact of Union (1561), later included in the general source of the Collection of the disciplines in force in the Waldensian system.

Autrefois appelées Vaudoises. Chap. XXII. 137

contraire ceux qui ne le voudroyent faire, seroyẽt mis entre les mains
de la Iustice pour estre condamnés au feu, ou aux galeres, selon les or-
dres nouuellement publiés, & qu'ils n'auoyent que jusqu'au len de-
main de terme pour declarer leur resolution.

Sur ceci, apres les prieres ardentes presentées à Dieu pour
auoir son conseil & assistance, on considera, que le peuple é-
stoit reduit à ces extremitez, & necessité de se resóudre, no
voulant aller à la Messe, à souffrir de grandes cruautez, ou à
prendre la fuite : Ce qui ne se pouuoit faire, à cause de la gran-
de multitude de familles, & personnes importentes, & de l'as-
preté de la saison : outre qu'on n'eut sceu où conduire tant de
peuple) ou bien de se resoudre à vne vigoureuse defense jus-
qu'à la mort. Ce qui fut approuué de tous, & apres auoir auec
grande consolation d'vn commun aduis confirmé l'Vnion sus-
dite, tous jurerent la main leuée au Ciel, *Qu'ils ne consentiroyẽt*
jamais à la Religion du Pape, ains perseuereroyent tous jusques à la
fin en leur vraye & ancienne Religion selon la Parole de Dieu, &
que pour la defense d'icelle vn chacun employeroit ce qui seroit en son
pouuoir, & seroit tousiours prest à secourir par ce moyen-là ses freres
qui pour telle cause en auroyent besoin.

Cela faict, ils s'exhorterent les vns les autres à aller tous en-
semble le lendemain matin au Temple, pour ouïr la Parole de
Dieu, & apres au lieu de promettre d'aller à la Messe, selô l'as-
signation qu'ils en auoyent euë, ils protesterẽt tous à l'heure
mesme de ladite assignation, *qu'ils vouloyent tous viure & mou-*
rir en leur ancienne Religion, vraye & saincte.

Suiuant ceste resolution, le lendemain matin le peuple ac-
courut de tous costez au temple de Boby, tous les hommes ar-
més de leurs armes domestiques, & ayans jetté hors du temple
quelques images qu'on y auoit mises, ils ouïrent le sermon, &
apres le Magistrat n'y estant pas encore arriué, ils s'achemi-
nerent vers le Villar vn mille plus bas, mais sur le chemin ils
rencontrerent vne bande de soldats de la garnison du Villar
qui alloit pour saccager & prendre des prisonniers au ValGui-
chard, Vallon de la Communauté de Boby, & tout peuple de
Reformés : Et lors ces soldats voyans ce peuple en tel equip-
page commencerent à leur courir sus auec mocqueries, & for-

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Figure 2.27. In the page where the text is reported there is a reference to the
Pact of Union (1561), later included in the general source of the Collection of the
disciplines in force in the Waldensian system.

Figure 2.28. *Ecclesiastic history of the reformed Churches, collected in some valleys of Piedmont*, Pierre Gilles, 1644.

Figure 2.29. In the page where the text is reported there is a reference to the Pact of Union (1561), later included in the general source of the Collection of the disciplines in force in the Waldensian system.

Figure 2.30. In the page where the text is reported there is a reference to the Pact of Union (1561), later included in the general source of the Collection of the disciplines in force in the Waldensian system.

Figure 2.31. *Jean Bissau, "Description des Vallées et Comté de Luserne, Marquisat d['']Angrogne et de Pragelas ou Val Cluson situées dans les Alpes", 1655 (Private Collection, Vittorio Diena) (Society of Waldensian Studies, Cartographic Archive).*
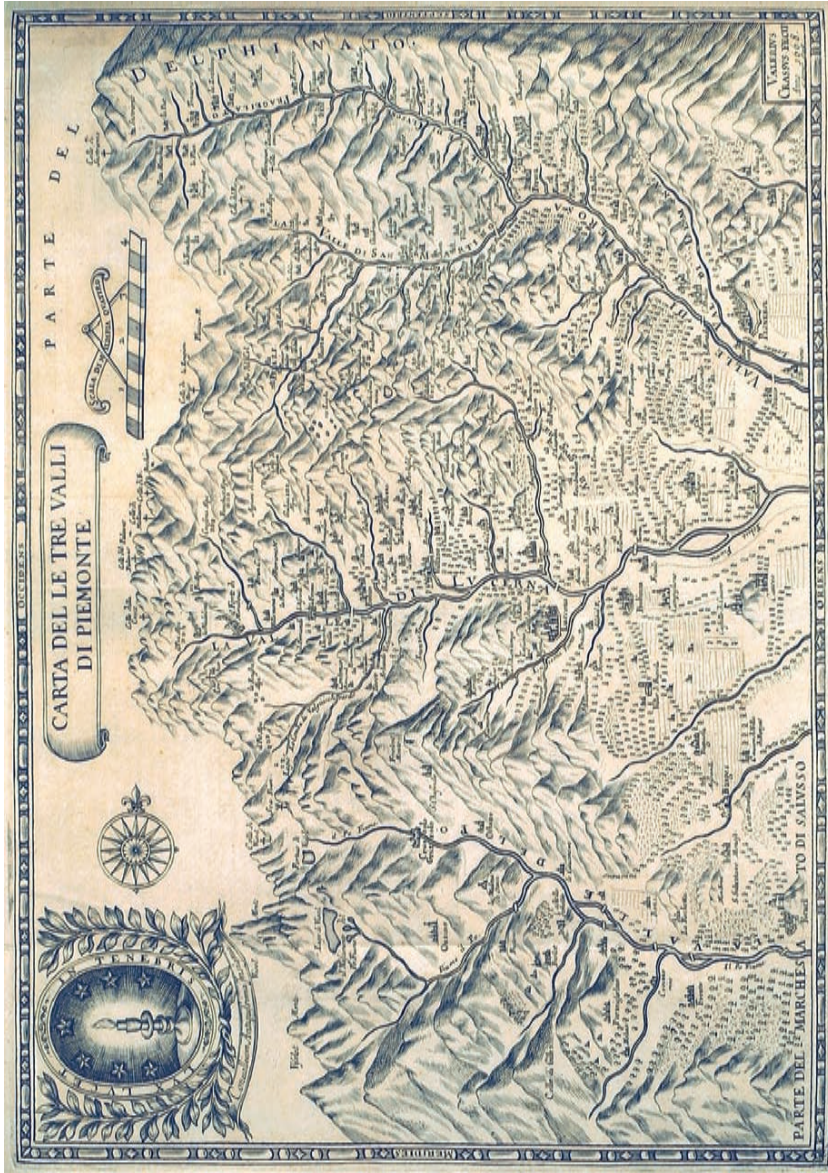
Figure 2.32. Valerius Crassus, "Carta delle tre Valli di Piemonte", 1668 (Society of Waldensian Studies, Cartographic Archive).

Figure 2.33. Giacomo Cantelli da Vignola, "Savoy, Bressa, and Bugey, with part of the Dauphiné divided in its main sections by Giacomo Cantelli Geographer of His Serene Highness The Duke of Mod.a" [1690] (Society of Waldensian Studies, Cartographic Archive).

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