

**WERE "HERETICS" EVER BURNED  
ALIVE AT ROME? A REPORT OF  
THE PROCEEDINGS IN THE  
ROMAN INQUISITION AGAINST  
FULGENTIO MANFREDI**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649310623

Were "heretics" Ever Burned Alive at Rome? A report of the proceedings in the Roman  
Inquisition against Fulgentio Manfredi by Richard Gibbings

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**RICHARD GIBBINGS**

**WERE "HERETICS" EVER BURNED  
ALIVE AT ROME? A REPORT OF  
THE PROCEEDINGS IN THE  
ROMAN INQUISITION AGAINST  
FULGENTIO MANFREDI**



WERE "HERETICS" EVER BURNED ALIVE AT ROME?

856d  
6074  
T8  
-547

*Cham*

A REPORT

OF THE PROCEEDINGS IN

*c*

THE ROMAN INQUISITION

AGAINST

FULGENTIO MANFREDI;

TAKEN FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT BROUGHT FROM ITALY

BY A FRENCH OFFICER, AND EDITED,

WITH A

PARALLEL ENGLISH VERSION, AND ILLUSTRATIVE ADDITIONS,

BY THE

REV. RICHARD GIBBINGS, M.A.,

RECTOR OF RAYMUNTERDONKY, IN THE DIOCESE OF RAPHOE.

LONDON:

JOHN PETHERAM, 94, HIGH HOLBORN.

1852.

+

CALLS  
THE  
MAN/

REPORT  
OF THE  
PROCEEDINGS,  
&c.

---

WERE "HERETICS" EVER BURNED ALIVE AT ROME?

IN the *Dublin Review* for June, 1850<sup>1</sup>, in an article attributed to Cardinal Wiseman, it was boldly declared to be a "FACT," that "the Roman Inquisition,—that is to say, the tribunal which was immediately subject to the control and direction of the Popes themselves in their own city,—has never been known to order the execution of capital punishment." Is this *a fact*, or is the assertion *false*?

An opportunity shall now be afforded of determining this question by means of one example of what was nothing extraordinary until the object aimed at—the extinction of light—had been suffi-

<sup>1</sup> p. 457.

ciently accomplished. But, at the outset, it is to be observed, (and the remark may enable us to account for the degree of fearlessness exhibited in the foregoing statement,) that the policy of the papal Court, especially as compared with that of Spain, has always been to guard against needless publicity with respect to the punishment of criminals; and the efforts to prevent intimations of the truth from transpiring have been attended with so much success, that books are nearly altogether silent; and, during three centuries of incessant warfare between the Churches of England and Rome, a single document, similar to those which shall be presently produced, has never hitherto emerged from secrecy. The historian of the suppressed Reformation in Italy<sup>2</sup> "entertained no hope of finding access" to such records; and heartily lamented the difficulty of obtaining the slightest authentic information, "as the archives of the Inquisition are locked up."

The peculiar case of Manfredi is available for two distinct purposes. It furnishes a conclusive answer to the delusions of the *Dublin Review* relative to the infliction of the punishment of death in obedience to the sentence of the Inquisition; and it also presents to our notice an instance of violated faith, more directly chargeable upon the Church of Rome, and less liable to be pal-

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Mc Crie. See his Preface, and p. 271.

liated by her defenders, than the iniquitous dealings of the Council of Constance with Hus and Jerom of Prague two hundred years before. The first and principal division of this subject we shall arrive at an acquaintance with in due time: the consideration of the latter point may be fitly introduced by the citation of the following passage from the Bishop of Exeter's invaluable *Letters to Charles Butler, Esq.*<sup>3</sup>:—

“ Father Fulgentio, the friend of the illustrious Paul Sarpi, was prevailed with to come to Rome under a safe-conduct granted by the Pope. When there, he was treated as a heretic, and, on appealing to his safe-conduct, was answered, that ‘ *the conduct was safe for his coming thither, but not for his going thence.*’ After this, who will deny the strict fidelity of the Church of Rome to all its engagements with heretics ?”

Bearing in mind that the individual here mentioned was not the Servite, the biographer of Sarpi, but Fulgentio Manfredi, a Franciscan Monk and Priest, who, when resident at Venice, had “spared not to rebuke the vices of the Roman Court<sup>4</sup>,” we have to reflect upon the circumstances which demonstrate the treachery of his enemies.

Early in the year 1607, the differences between the papal and Venetian governments were termi-

<sup>3</sup> p. 298. London, 1826.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters of Father Paul*, pp. 38, 39. London, 1693.



nated through the mediation of the King of France. On the 19th of May, Contarini, the Ambassador from Venice, had an audience of his Holiness Pope Paul V., who pledged himself "that he would never after remember any thing that had passed; taking up that word of Scripture, *Recedant vetera, nova sint omnia*,"—"Let old things pass away, and all things become new." The Pontiff, in answer to a special question, added, as a proof of perfect reconciliation, "that he had given his benediction to all."

How far this assurance and the blessing were intended to be effectual, Father Paul Sarpi speedily discovered; for in less than five months afterward he was assaulted and grievously wounded by several assassins, who almost entirely deprived him of his life, *stilo Romanæ Curie*, as he himself humorously said; (that is, "*in the style*," or "*with the dagger*, of the Court of Rome.") These murderers in design fled for refuge to the only house in Venice which would afford them shelter until they could escape at night,—the palace of the papal Nuncio Gessi.

On the 8th of August in the following year, Fulgentio privately left Venice, and commenced his unfortunate journey to Rome. There "he will

<sup>5</sup> *History of the Quarrels of Pope Paul V. with the State of Venice*, pp. 431, 432. London, 1626.

<sup>6</sup> *Sarpi's Life*, by Fulgentio, p. liv. London, 1676; or by Lockman, p. lx. Westminster, 1736.

quickly be," (writes Father Paul in the same month,) having been "at last wheedled;" "and they will soon lay hands on the strayed sheep, and make a beast of him quickly." "He went hence" (says Sarpi<sup>b</sup>) "with the Nuncio's safe-conduct; he went through the Patrimony of the Church, and was met and congratulated by the way." . . . "He has had kind and long audiences from his Holiness; and particularly about a fortnight since he was two full hours with the Pope." . . . "Friar Fulgentio writes word to his friends here that he shall quickly come back to Venice."

But Father Paul judged more wisely; and accordingly, in a letter<sup>c</sup> bearing date August 3, 1610, we read as follows:

"I dare say you have a great mind to know the truth of the miserable end of Friar Fulgentio because you knew him, and that you are the more willing to know it because it has been told divers ways.

"I myself do not as yet know the whole of it certainly; and I am very cautious in believing where I have not good grounds for it. Wherefore, the narrative that I shall give you shall be nothing but truth, though it be not the whole truth.

"Father Fulgentio went away, as you yourself know, in the beginning of August, 1608, with a

<sup>c</sup> *Letters*, p. 39.

<sup>b</sup> *Ibid.* p. 50.

<sup>a</sup> p. 180.

most ample patent of safe-conduct, and a particular clause in it that nothing should be done against his honour. Being got to Rome, they tampered with him to abjure, and do public penance; but he still denied it most resolutely, referring himself to his safe-conduct. At last, persisting in the negative of doing public penance, he was wrought upon to make a very secret Abjuration, before a Notary and two witnesses<sup>10</sup>, by the new declaration of the Cardinals that it should be understood as done without any dishonour, and without any prejudice to him." . . . .

This very interesting extract shall be continued as soon as we shall have seen what were the first formal proceedings in the Inquisition against Fulgentio. An English translation of the documents shall be supplied, and facsimiles given of the signatures.

---

<sup>10</sup> This was no mark of favour shown to Fulgentio; for the general rule is, that "Hæretici sponte comparentes abjurant tantummodo coram Inquis. ordinario, Notario, et duobus testibus, in secreto Auditorio S. Officii." (*Cæsaris Carenæ Tractatus de Offic. sanctiss. Inquisit.*, p. 382. Cremonæ, 1655.)