

GIROLAMO IMBRUGLIA
Università 'L'Orientale' di Napoli

**'Jansenist jurisdictionalism and Enlightenment:
two ways of conceiving politics in Naples in the mid-eighteenth century'**

Monday 21 November 2011

The author

Girolamo Imbruglia is a leading European historian of the Enlightenment. As an intellectual historian, he is relatively unusual in his native Italy, where the history of thought is still often the preserve of faculties of philosophy and law. He graduated in moral philosophy from the University of Naples in 1974, having written his *tesi di laurea* on Helvétius under the guidance of Pietro Piovani, a philosopher of law in the school of Kelsen, who also founded the Centre for Vichian Studies in Naples. Shortly afterwards he was appointed as a Researcher in the Scuola Normale of Pisa, to work on the history of the Enlightenment under Furio Diaz, a historian close to Franco Venturi, the great Italian exponent of the 'political history of ideas'. There he worked towards his first monograph, on the intellectual history of the Jesuit reductions in Paraguay. In this period he was twice a visitor to Cambridge, at the invitation of Anthony Pagden and John Dunn. In 1992 he was appointed an associate professor, first at Lecce, then at the 'Orientale' University of Naples, where he became a full professor in 2001. In the last decade he has published extensively on the philosophy, political thought and historiography of the Enlightenment: he has particular interests in Diderot and Raynal, and is a member of the projects to publish the complete works of each. Along with Anna Maria Rao, he has also led enquiry into the Neapolitan Enlightenment, editing an important collection of articles on the subject in English. His most recent book is a study of Enlightenment and Historicism in twentieth-century Italian historical writing, a pioneering attempt to place the work of Venturi and his contemporaries in an accurate historiographical perspective.

Selected publications

L'invenzione del Paraguay, (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1987)

Ragione e immaginazione. Edward Gibbon e la storiografia europea del Settecento, edited, (Naples: Liguori, 1996)

Naples in the Eighteenth Century. The Birth and Death of a Nation State, edited, (Cambridge, CUP, 2000, 2007²)

Illuminismo e storicismo nella storiografia italiana, with an appendix containing the correspondence of Franco Venturi and Delio Cantimori between 1945 and 1955, (Naples: Bibliopolis, 2003)

Abstract of the paper

At the centre of this paper is a problem facing Enlightenment thinkers throughout Europe, and particularly in Catholic Italy: the relation between civil and ecclesiastical power. The analysis turns on a key moment in the efforts of the newly-restored Neapolitan monarchy to throw off the claims of the Papacy to temporal as well as ecclesiastical over-lordship of the kingdom. Against expectation, ecclesiastical influence succeeded in preventing the abolition

of the Chair of Canon Law at the University of Naples. In response, the creation in 1768 by the long-serving minister Bernardo Tanucci of the new office of Royal Advocate, charged with defending the rights of the crown against the church, was a forceful expression of a Neapolitan concept of jurisdictionalism, whose historical basis had been set out in Pietro Giannone's great *Civil History* of the kingdom in 1723. As the servant of a court with close ties both to Spain and to Austria, however, Tanucci's interpretation of jurisdictionalism was less radical than that developed by the French *Parlements*, in alliance with Jansenism. The limitations of Tanucci's strategy were sharply criticised in turn by the leading exponent of Enlightenment in Naples, the philosopher and economist Antonio Genovesi. Genovesi appealed to natural law against royal jurisdictionalism, arguing that only a re-ascription of sovereign power to the people, as expressed in public opinion, would provide an adequate foundation from which to subordinate ecclesiastical to civil power, and to combine this with the economic and social reform which the kingdom so desperately needed. The paper thus reflects not only on the conflict between church and state, but also on the relation between legal and political thought, and on their connexion to the wider economic and social goals of Enlightenment.

The paper will be published in C. Cuttica and G. Burgess (eds), *Monarchism and Absolutism in Early Modern Europe* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011).

Further reading:

Girolamo Imbruglia (ed), *Naples in the Eighteenth century: the birth and death of a nation-state* (Cambridge, 2000): esp. Imbruglia on Enlightenment in Naples.