

Luther's representations and interpretations in the early Modern age. The Italian case

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In the present article we shall focus on the early radicalization in Italy of Luther's and the Reformed world's stereotypical image, quite distant from an actual knowledge of the doctrine.

Luther was associated with Niccolò Machiavelli and machiavellism. The Florentine secretary was referred to, and sometimes only hinted at, for the historiographical notion which attributed Italy's backwardness in the process of modernization to the decadence of its religion and coincidentally of its mores and morals. At first Machiavelli and Luther, sons of Satan both of them, were indicated as the main actors of the corruption of customs and, during the 18th century, the analysis was developed with examples supplied by the economic, social and political comparison with the countries where Reformation was adopted.

In the context of the Roman Church, the «Lutheran monster» will occasionally be pointed at as the source and origin of all kinds of disasters, of decadence of customs and doctrine. In different moments and situations therefore, the figure of Luther — and Calvin — became the causes of the doctrinal corruption effected by the Society of Jesus, the origin of Jansenism, of any policy opposing the papal power and hostile to religious institutions, and at last as the germ from which the worst modern doctrines were born: from atheism to libertinism and the Enlightenment.



Key words: [Calvin](#), [Reformation](#), [atheism](#), [Machiavelli](#), [Guicciardini](#), [libertinism](#), [Jansenism](#)

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