

The Problem of Giles of Viterbo

A historiographical survey

(Continuation *)

IV

HOEFLER (1846) TO PASTOR (1906): ORIGINAL SOURCES SPEAK

Almost a half of the nineteenth century passed before any serious contribution was made to Egidian studies ¹⁾. Even then it was a mistake, but a *felix culpa*, which re-awakened interest in Giles. Konstantin Hoefler, a member of the Munich historical school, edited the *Promemoria ad Hadrianum Papam VI, de depravato statu Romanae Ecclesiae et quomodo reformari possit atque debeat* in 1846, and attributed it to Giles ²⁾. This hard-hitting criticism dealt with the evils of the Roman curia and of ecclesiastical administration. In truth the author was Cardinal Campeggio, but this was not known until Friedensburg published an article on the

*) Cf. *Augustiniana*, IX (1959) 357-379.

¹⁾ Until the publication of original Egidian sources was resumed in the mid-nineteenth century the typical biographical notice on Giles was that by Baur in J. S. ERSCH and J. G. GRUBER, *Allgemeine Encyclopaedie der Wissenschaften und Künste*, II (Leipzig 1819) 7. Yet, Baur's skimpy account, based on Martène and Durand, Fabricius and the *Fortgesetzte Sammlung*, 1748, was superior to several of the accounts of Giles which appeared eighty years later, e. g. those by Potthast and Chevalier. For these two latter cf. *infra*, pp. 50-51.

²⁾ In *Analekten zur Geschichte Deutschlands und Italiens in Abhandlungen der historischen Classe der könig. Bayer. Akd. der Wissenschaft*, IV, Bd. III, Abthl. (B.) (Munich 1846) 62-89. Hoefler had already published an extract concerning Ludwig of Bavaria from Giles's 'Hist. XX Saec.', in *Oberbayerisches Archiv für Vaterland*, I (Munich 1839) 109. For Hoefler (1811-97) cf. L. T. K., V (1933) 96.

subject fifty years later ³⁾. Meantime interest was aroused in Giles the reformer. In 1854 Hoefler published that part of Giles's 'Historia XX Saeculorum' in which he treated of the pontificates of Popes Alexander VI and Julius II ⁴⁾. There Giles showed his distaste for the worldly commitments of these popes. Another German scholar, Hugo Laemner, having investigated various libraries and archives in Italy as sources for church history, stressed the fact that the Angelica Library in Rome had a rich collection of documents dealing with Giles as a reformer in practice ⁵⁾.

From that time forward four factors in historiography helped towards an understanding of Giles. The animated discussions on Reform, Pre-Reform, and Counter-Reformation turned attention to the Augustinian order. Closely connected with these discussions, yet distinct from them, was the rapidly increasing body of literature about Luther. A hardly less controverted problem, and one of no little importance for an appreciation of Giles, was that of the nature of the Renaissance. Finally, and with some relation to this problem there was the research into Jewish history of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance.

In the year 1879 Theodore Kolde, a fair-minded admirer of Luther, produced a monograph on the Augustinian Congregation of Saxony ⁶⁾. Of necessity he had to consider Giles and his attitude

³⁾ W. FRIEDENSBURG, 'Ueber der Verfasser des « Promemoria ad Hadrianum Papam de depravato statu Romanae ecclesiae »', in *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, N. F., I-II (Vierteljahrshefte, 1896-1897) 71-74. Friedensburg's article has been overlooked by some writers who continue to attribute the 'Promemoria' to Giles, e. g. Palmieri in *D. T. C.*, VI (1915) 1367; W. HUEMPFNER in *L. T. K.*, I (1957) 193-194. For Friedensburg (1855-1938), cf. W. KOEHLER, 'Walter Friedensburg zum Gedächtnis', in *A. R. G.*, 35 (1938) 32-38.

⁴⁾ 'Die Lebensreibungen der Päpste in Zeitalter K. Maximilian's I vom dem Cardinal Aegidius', in *Archiv für Kunde oesterreichischer Geschichts-Quellen*, XII (1854) 378-387. A substantial section of the 'Hist. XX Saec.' was printed as an appendix by M. CREIGHTON, *History of the papacy during the period of the Reformation*, IV (London 1887) 279-287.

⁵⁾ H. LAEMNER, *Zur Kirchengeschichte des sechszehnten und siebenzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Freiburg i. B. 1863), 64-67. For Laemner (1835-1918) cf. *L. T. K.*, VI (1934) 363.

⁶⁾ T. KOLDE, *Die deutsche Augustiner-Congregation und Johann von Staupitz* (Gotha 1879). Cf. also IDEM, 'Innere Bewegungen unter den deutschen Augustinern und Luthers Romreise', in *Z. K. G.*, II (1878) 460-472; IDEM, 'Luther und sein Ordensgeneral in Rom in den Jahren 1518 und 1520', *ibid.*, II, 472-480. For Kolde (1850-1913) cf. *Der Grosse Brockhaus*, X (1931) 311.

towards the vigorous but not always prudent policy of the congregation. In Kolde's work Giles emerged as an ecclesiastic eager to promote reform but equally anxious to preserve unity of spirit and administration. The Catholic viewpoint of events in the Saxon congregation and among the German Augustinians was set out by Nikolaus Paulus in a study of Johann Hoffmeister, an Augustinian opponent of Luther ⁷). Two years later, in 1893, Paulus published a biography of Bartholomaeus Arnoldi von Usingen, an Augustinian who first figured as one of Luther's favourite professors at Erfurt but who later sharply crossed swords with him ⁸). These two works, despite certain limitations, are important as showing Luther in his Augustinian setting. Some attention was paid to Giles but he remained no more than a shadowy figure in the background.

The scenes through which he moved, and the men with whom he mixed became alive once again with the publication, which began in 1879, of the diaries of Marino Sanudo, a Venetian public figure whose diaries cover the years 1496-1533 ⁹). Sanudo's information and comments are invaluable, but they allow no more than occasional glimpses of Giles the popular preacher, the papal diplomat.

An Italian savant, Antonio Magliabecchi (1633-1714), had remarked that Giles's fame diminished after his death because his works lay unpublished ¹⁰). It is obvious that no fair estimate of the man could be formed until his writings and letters were examined. Ever since the sixteenth century he had been judged almost entirely on second-hand evidence. The merit of again going to the sources which showed Giles's own mind belongs to Léon-Gabriel Pélissier, later dean of the Faculty of Letters at Montpellier University ¹¹). In the year 1892 he published an article describing the

⁷) Nikolaus PAULUS, *Der Augustinermönch Johannes Hoffmeister* (Freiburg i. B. 1891). Cf. in particular pp. 120-164, 'Die deutschen Augustiner in der Reformationszeit'. For Paulus (1853-1930) cf. *Der Grosse Brockhaus*, XIV (1933) 260.

⁸) IDEM, *Der Augustiner Bartholomaeus Arnoldi von Usingen, Luthers Lehrer und Gegner* (Strassburg 1893).

⁹) Published in 58 volumes at Venice, 1879-1902. For Sanudo (1466-1536) cf. *Encic. Catt.*, X (1953) 1885.

¹⁰) A. ARPE, *Pantheon Augustinianum* (Genoa 1709), 267, 269, quotes Antonio Magliabecchi.

¹¹) For Pélissier cf. P. GACHON, 'Notice biographique [sur L.-G. Pélissier, 1863-1912]', in *Rev. biblioth.*, XLI (1935-1936) 30-40; H. STEIN, 'Bibliographie des travaux de Léon-Gabriel Pélissier, 1863-1912', *ibid.*, XLI, 41-77.

Egidian Latin manuscripts in the Angelica Library, Rome ¹²). It was a coincidence that at the time when Pélissier was examining Giles's works in Rome the chief librarian of the Angelica, Enrico Narducci, was compiling a catalogue of manuscripts, including all those described by Pélissier. Narducci's catalogue appeared in 1893, and gave in some respects a more detailed, although necessarily a more bloodless, treatment than Pélissier ¹³). A description of Giles's Greek manuscripts in the Angelica Library was edited by Muccio and Franchi de' Cavalieri in 1896 ¹⁴).

Pélissier's interest in Giles bore fruit in a doctoral thesis printed in 1896 ¹⁵). This was a specialized piece of work, a study of Giles's historical composition, 'Historia XX Saeculorum'. Pélissier's investigation was keen and concentrated, but it suffered from the defects not uncommon to certain doctoral theses. He was over-critical, a quality understandable in a man anxious to prove his ability and objectivity. Less excusable from an academic viewpoint was Pélissier's assessment of Giles, based as it was on this one historical composition and a mere external acquaintance with a number of other works.

Six years later Pélissier implicitly passed judgment on his own doctoral thesis. In 1903 he published a manuscript, the original of which was composed during Giles's years as prior general of the Augustinian order ¹⁶). Giles was now revealed as one who had been devoted to the religious life and to ecclesiastical reform. The con-

¹²) L.-G. PÉLISSIER, 'Manuscripts de Gilles de Viterbe à la Bibliothèque Angélique', in *Rev. biblioth.*, II (1892) 228-240.

¹³) H. NARDUCCI, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum praeter graecas et orientales in Bibliotheca Angelica, olim coenobii Sancti Augustini de Urbe*, I (Rome 1893). Giles's MSS are described on pp. 1, 177, 178, 223, 281, 292, 316, 416-418, 487, 489-490, 526-527, 529.

¹⁴) In G. MUCCIO and P. F. DE' CAVALIERI, *Index codicum graecorum Bibliothecae Angelicae*, in *Studi italiani di filologia classica*, IV (1896) 10, 125, 126-127, 131-132, 139, 141.

¹⁵) L.-G. PÉLISSIER, *De opere historico Aegidii Cardinalis Viterbiensis* (Montpellier 1896).

¹⁶) L.-G. PÉLISSIER, 'Pour la biographie du Cardinal Gilles de Viterbe', in *Miscellanea di studi critici edita in onore di Arturo Graf* (Bergamo 1903) 789-815. The MS in question, 'Vita et epistolae Aegidii Cardinalis Viterbiensis', was compiled by another Augustinian cardinal, Enrico Noris (1631-1704), and is now in the Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence, MS 219. Noris's MS is a synopsis of Giles's first Dd register, now missing.

tents of the manuscript came as a revelation to Pélissier. But it was a revelation which he could not comprehend¹⁷). The introduction which he wrote for his edition of the manuscript demonstrated his inability to resolve the historiographical problem of Giles.

Comparison between the Giles of whom he wrote in 1903 and the Giles he described in 1896 leaves the curious impression that Pélissier was dealing with two different persons. The clearest example is where Pélissier in 1896 dismissed Giles as a historian¹⁸), but in 1903 paid tribute to his qualities as a historian¹⁹). In 1896 Pélissier accused Giles of preening himself on his achievements, of being a place-hunter and of flattering the reigning popes so that he might gain a cardinal's hat²⁰). In 1903 he commented on Giles's humility and modesty, his reluctance to accept ecclesiastical office,

¹⁷) How little he appreciated the significance of the MS may be judged from his regret that the first editor, Noris, was interested in Giles as a religious rather than as a humanist and diplomat, cf. *Miscellanea* cit., 794.

¹⁸) Pélissier summed up his investigation in the following words, 'Ut enim opus intus inspiciamus, rem praecipuam haud historiam esse videmus neque ea quae ad mores spectant, aut omnia alia quae recolui; operis vero summam et caput esse in dissertatiunculis, in sententiis quibusdam passim dispersis: illis enim, quae quasi latent sub multis aliis rebus, primum intimumque Aegidii consilium significatur. In mente illi erat ut de ecclesiae historia philosophice dissereret: sive vero defuit ingenium sive aliud aliquid obstitit, destinatum opus infelicitate exsecutus est: summam scilicet ecclesiasticae historiae multis in locis imperfectam scripsit', in *De opere historico*, 54; and sums up his examination, 'Merito quidem *Historia XX Saeculorum*, si ipsa et in se sola consideretur, in tenebris iacet', *ibid.*; adverse criticisms of Giles are found *passim*, and in particular on pp. 26, 29, 34-35.

¹⁹) 'Comme historien, son grand ouvrage, l'*Historia XX Saeculorum*, témoigne de sa patience d'analyse et de sa vigueur de synthèse, et quoique cette œuvre soit encore presque complètement inédite, la dissertation que je lui ai consacrée jadis permet, je crois, de l'apprécier à sa valeur, et, à travers cette rebutante composition, de juger le réel génie historique de l'auteur', in *Miscellanea*, 790. This is the only reference which Pélissier made to his doctoral thesis, and it conveys a wrong impression of his former estimation of Giles as a historian. The unexpected description of the '*Hist. XX Saec.*' as 'rebutante' adds to the confusion.

²⁰) 'Accedebat vero laudationis causa altera non aequè nobilis, ab humano tamen natura haud aliena, scilicet ut suae ipsius honorum cupiditati inserviret. Cardinalem enim se creari volebat; ac re ipsa paulo post perfectum librum purpura ornatus est, prima die Julii A. D. MDXVII... His igitur laudationibus obtinuit, quod cupierat, nec diu mercedem expectavit', in *De opere historico*, 44. Pélissier even suggested, *op. cit.*, 29, that Giles's praise for the building of the new basilica of St Peter's was due to his desire to preach there!

his independent stance in the face of the popes ²¹). In 1896 he described Giles as ineffectual though sincere, a reformer on paper ²²). In 1903 he wrote of Giles's successful efforts for reform ²³).

It would be hard to exaggerate the influence of Pélissier's *De opere historico Aegidii Cardinalis Viterbiensis* on all those who subsequently wrote about Giles. Pélissier's work was the first monograph to deal with the subject, and his conclusions were accepted as those of the authority on the subject. Unfortunately his revisions in *Miscellanea di studi critici edita in onore di Arturo Graf* were generally unknown or as often not available for scholars ²⁴).

One would excuse the mistakes which Pélissier made in 1896 when he assessed Giles on incomplete and misleading evidence. Although it was a tribute to the French scholar that six years later he should have completely changed his opinion he made no attempt to reconcile the two contrary pictures he had presented. All unknowingly he posed in a vivid manner the central problem of Giles's life and character. How reconcile the friar's undoubted reforming zeal with his ease in the classical world and his unaffected friendship with the humanists, some of them of loose morals and suspect orthodoxy?

Some light was thrown on the problem in the year 1847 by a publication which had escaped Pélissier's notice. Francesco Trucchi edited a collection of unpublished poems, among them six madrigals

²¹) 'D'une réelle modestie, on voit ses résistances à accepter le généralat, son empressement à s'en démettre, son humilité en face du succès. D'autres actes mentionnés, quelques mots cités, éclairent la fierté de son cœur, son indépendance à l'égard des papes et des princes, sa bonté et sa charité envers les religieux de ses monastères, sa dignité en présence de certains emportements de Jules II', in *Miscellanea*, 794.

²²) Commenting on Giles's letters and instructions to the Augustinians, 'ambitiosa tamen affectataque dicendi, forma ornatae, nihil novum et proprium habent. Nota iam et trita sunt argumenta, videlicet « Discite iustitiam moniti et non temnere divos — Erudimini qui iudicatis terram », et alia similia. Raro ab incertis vacuisque praeceptis ad solida et firma descendit, id est ad singularia et coaetanea propria aut convenientia', in *De opere historico*, 44-45.

²³) 'Tant de connaissances, ses mérites diplomatiques, l'intégrité de sa doctrine et ses efforts heureux pour la réforme morale de son ordre lui valurent l'estime et l'amitié de Jules II, de Léon X, et de Clément VII', in *Miscellanea*, 790.

²⁴) There is no copy in the Cambridge University Library, the British Museum Library, or the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. There was no copy available for Boehmer, and it was unknown to Palmieri. For these two authors cf. *infra*, pp. 51-53, 55.

attributed to Giles ²⁵). They were addressed to Vittoria Colonna (1490-1547), marchioness of Pesaro, one of the remarkable figures of the reform movement in Italy ²⁶). The madrigals show how Giles sublimated what could have been simply a human affection. The greater test was for Giles to mix and treat as an equal with the men of the Renaissance, yet not compromise his religious ideals. Several of his friends did not set a high standard for private morals, and their interpretation of christian beliefs was hardly orthodox. Giles in such a setting, the Pontanian Academy at Naples, was the subject of a valuable article by Francesco Fiorentino, which appeared in 1884 ²⁷). An equally important contribution, but one overlooked by Pélissier, was contained in Gothein's study of the Renaissance in southern Italy, published in 1886 ²⁸). Both Fiorentino and Gothein used original material, and showed that Giles was a man of moral influence among the humanists in the *mezzogiorno*.

Giles, as we have seen in an earlier part of this study, was renowned during his lifetime as a scriptural and oriental scholar ²⁹). He continued to be remembered under this aspect during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries ³⁰). The Jewish literary revival in the nineteenth century reawakened interest in his rabbinical and cabbalistic erudition. Moritz Steinschneider (1816-1907), who was the first to make a systematic survey of Jewish literature, and who

²⁵) F. TRUCCHI, *Poesie italiane inedite di dugento autori*, III (Prato 1847) 124-129. The madrigals are in a MS of the Magliabecchi collection in the Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence. Trucchi inaccurately described it as Cod. 720; it is Cl. VII. 720. The madrigals are on ff. 99v, 122r (also on f. 278r), 116r, 123r, 122r, 122v (also on f. 278v).

²⁶) For Vittoria Colonna cf. 'Centenario di Vittoria Colonna (1547-1947)', in *Italia Francescana*, 22 (1947) 1-135; P. TACCHI VENTURI, 'Vittoria Colonna e la riforma Cappuccina', in *Collectanea Francescana*, I (1931) 25-58.

²⁷) F. FIORENTINO, 'Egidio da Viterbo ed i Pontaniani di Napoli', in *A. S. P. N.*, IX (1884) 430-452; republished posthumously in IDEM, *Risorgimento filosofico nel Quattrocento* (Naples 1885) 251-274. For an appreciation of Fiorentino's writings cf. *ibid.*, iv-xii.

²⁸) E. GOTHEIN, *Die Kulturentwicklung Süd-italiens in Einzel-Darstellung* (Breslau 1886) 449-459.

²⁹) *Aug.*, IX (1959) 363-366.

³⁰) E. g., PAULUS COLOMESIUS, *Italia et Hispania orientalis, sive Italarum et Hispanorum qui linguam hebraeam vel alias orientales excoluerunt*, ed. J. C. WOLF (Hamburg 1730) 41-46.

remains probably the greatest of Jewish bibliographers³¹), set Giles against the background of sixteenth century Jewish studies. Giles for him was not merely one of the most cultured christian hebraists of his time, but was the patron of Jewish scholars and the defender of the Jews in their hour of need³²).

Steinschneider's praise of Giles was repeated in the specialized works of Ginsburg³³), Geiger³⁴), Perles³⁵), Graetz³⁶), and Reiger³⁷). The catalogues of Hebrew manuscripts at Munich and London, published at the end of the nineteenth and in the early twentieth centuries, gave accurate information on some of Giles's research into Semitic studies³⁸).

However, it takes a long time for the findings of specialized research to percolate into general works of reference. How far Giles had sunk into oblivion may be seen from two works of survey on the literature of the Middle Ages. The first edition of Potthast's bibliography of the Middle Ages, published in 1862, did not mention Giles; the second edition, published in 1896, gave him notice solely due to the Egidian and pseudo-Egidian works edited by Hoeffer³⁹). Chevalier's comprehensive bio-bibliography of the Middle Ages summed up Giles's importance in one bare line — 'an Italian poet

³¹) For Steinschneider cf. *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, XI (1905) 545-547; L. SILBERSTROM in *Jüdisches Lexikon*, IV (1930) 2.

³²) M. STEINSCHNEIDER, *Hebräische Bibliographie*, ed. J. BENZIAN, XXI (Berlin 1882) 80-82; IDEM, 'Christliche Hebräisten', in *Zeitschrift für hebräische Bibliographie*, I (1896-1897) 112 (61).

³³) C. D. GINSBURG, *The Massoreth Ha-Massoreth of Elias Levita* (London 1867), 12, 14-20, 71, 96-97, 130.

³⁴) L. GEIGER, *Das Studium der hebräischen Sprache in Deutschland* (Breslau 1870) 56-64; IDEM, *Johann Reuchlin, sein Leben und seine Werke* (Leipzig 1871), 306, 399, 404, 437, 450.

³⁵) J. PERLES, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der hebräischen und aramäischen Studien* (Munich 1884) 155-158, 163, 179-180, 200-203.

³⁶) H. H. GRAETZ, *Geschichte der Juden*, IX (2nd ed., Leipzig 1877) 44, 90-91, 155, 214, 266.

³⁷) P. REIGER, *Geschichte der Juden in Rom, 1420-1870* (Berlin 1895) 86-92.

³⁸) M. STEINSCHNEIDER, *Die hebräischen Handschriften der K. Hof- und Staatsbibliothek in München*, I, pt I (2nd ed., Munich 1895) 48, 50-53, 60-1, 63, 98-99, 141-147, 243; G. MARGOLIOUTH, *Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan manuscripts in the British Museum*, II (London 1905) 3-5, III (London 1915) 5.

³⁹) A. POTTHAST, *Bibliotheca historica medii aevi: Wegweiser durch die Geschichtswerke des europäischen Mittelalters bis 1500* (2nd ed., Berlin 1896), i. 18.

of the fifteenth century' ⁴⁰). Up to the second decade of the present century encyclopaedias and general works of reference gave Giles short shrift ⁴¹).

Recognition came for Giles in 1906, when Ludwig von Pastor produced the first part of the fourth volume of his history of the papacy ⁴²). Pastor's extensive examination of manuscript and printed sources made him aware that in Giles he had to deal with a seemingly complex character. How explain the man who had hitherto been presented under three different guises — Giles the orator, papal diplomat and humanist, Giles the cabbalist and scriptural scholar, Giles the ecclesiastical reformer? Pastor's difficulty was increased beyond measure by his own interpretation of the Renaissance, the division into pagan and christian Renaissance. Giles was the friend of Pontano and Sannazzaro, of whom Pastor markedly disapproved. Was Giles then to be classed with the sheep or the goats? Pastor did not attempt to reconcile the different aspects of the Augustinian's life and character. He placed him on his right hand, as a reformer at least in theory. He commended Giles warmly, 'If ever a man deserved the red hat it was this distinguished man, who combined a classical education and general learning with a great capacity for business and a profound piety' ⁴³). Pastor expressed a fervent hope that somebody would attempt a biography of the friar.

V

BOEHMER (1914) TO PERINI (1929): THE PICTURE CLARIFIES

The opportunity to assess Giles which Pélissier and Pastor let go by default was taken in 1914 by Heinrich Boehmer, a well-

⁴⁰) U. CHEVALIER, *Répertoire des sources historiques du moyen âge: bibliographie* (Paris 1877-1886) 385. The second edition, Paris 1905, had nothing further about Giles.

⁴¹) E. g., BENRATH in *Realencyclopaedie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, I (1896) 202-203. Joseph HERGENRÖTHER in *Wetzer und Welte's Kirchenlexikon*, I (1882) 255-256, was convinced of Giles's importance but depended mostly on Hoefler's publications. T. J. SHAHAN in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, I (1907) 171, is little more than an acknowledged translation of Cardinal Hergenröther's notice.

⁴²) L. PASTOR, *Geschichte der Päpste*, IV, pt 1 (Freiburg i. B. 1906) 141.

⁴³) *Ibid.*

known historian of the Reformation period ⁴⁴). Boehmer was strongly Lutheran in his sympathies, but in his biography of St Ignatius of Loyola displayed an ability to appreciate the Catholic viewpoint. In his book on Luther's journey to Rome he devoted a chapter to Giles ⁴⁵). Although brief it was no superficial study, but an investigation based on manuscript material and on a wide range of printed sources. Boehmer more than anybody before or since came within an ace of understanding Giles. He realized that the dynamic urge in Giles's life came from his zest for reform, reform in studies, reform in morals, reform in ecclesiastical discipline ⁴⁶). It was thus that the apparently conflicting aspects of his character could be reconciled. Yet, in the last analysis Boehmer failed to evaluate Giles accurately. The failure was due to a double-defect, of interpretation, and of source material.

Boehmer, as might be expected in an admirer of Luther, saw the Renaissance as sharply divided into pagan and christian. In this he was at one with Pastor. Giles's friendship with the classical humanists was interpreted as a sign that he had unconsciously compromised his reform ideals ⁴⁷). Boehmer, under the influence of Pélissier's earlier study, weighed Giles in the balance as an effective reformer, and found him wanting ⁴⁸). Boehmer's defect of interpretation would have been rectified if he had consulted Pélissier's edition of Giles's register, and had been thus aware of the re-assessment it demanded of previous judgments on the friar ⁴⁹). It is Giles's

⁴⁴) For Boehmer (1869-1927) cf. *L. T. K.*, II (1931) 424; *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, II (1953) 393.

⁴⁵) 'Egidio Canisio und der Unionstreit', in H. BOEHMER, *Luthers Romfahrt* (Leipzig 1914) 36-75.

⁴⁶) 'Er [i. e. Giles] ist auch merkwürdig als ein Zeuge für die allgemeine Sehnsucht nach einer Erneuerung der Kirche und der Religion. Diese Sehnsucht hat ihn von der Scholastik von Ficino erst zu Ficino und der Neuplatonikern und dann wieder von Ficino zu der Kabbala geführt, und diese Sehnsucht war auch die verborgene Triebfeder, die seiner Tätigkeit als Ordensleiter Ziel und Richtung gab. Er war aus einer reformierten Kongregation hervorgegangen und lebte daher für seine Person immer streng asketisch.', *ibid.*, 48.

⁴⁷) *Ibid.*, 39-41, 48.

⁴⁸) 'Aber man hat doch nicht den Eindruck, dass er viel erreichte', *ibid.*, 51. He also believed that Giles was boastful and a place-hunter.

⁴⁹) BOEHMER, *ibid.*, 37, n. 2, stated that he did not have the opportunity to consult Noris's MS life of Giles. He does not appear to have even known of Pélissier's edition of the manuscript.

registers, rather than any other source, which show him as the reformer in practice. Boehmer's interest in Giles's reforming activities had been whetted by Kawerau, who in 1911 published the extract of Giles's registers from a manuscript copy in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek ⁵⁰). Boehmer, on a visit to Rome, examined one Egidian register in the Augustinian general archives, but circumstances allowed him no more than a hurried and unsatisfactory investigation ⁵¹).

A year after Boehmer's book appeared, a selection of Giles's letters concerning reform were published by Fovio Pazzaglia at Rome ⁵²). This jejeune work was announced as a sample of the complete collection of Giles's letters which was stated to be then with the printers ⁵³). Pazzaglia's plan was a still-born project. Other documents of no less importance for an understanding of Giles were published during 1921-1922 in the *Analecta Augustiniana*. Eustasio Esteban, the Augustinian archivist general, edited a collection of the unpublished briefs and bulls from Popes Julius II and Leo X to Giles ⁵⁴). Equally important but more illuminating was Esteban's edition of the reform decrees issued by Giles when he was elected prior general of the Augustinian order at Naples in 1507 ⁵⁵).

Has Esteban published these documents a year earlier they could have been used to considerable advantage by Alphons Mueller

⁵⁰) D. G. KAWERAU, 'Aus den Actis Generalatus Aegidii Viterbiensis', in Z. K. G., XXXII (1911) 603-606. Kawerau did not give a precise reference for the MS then newly acquired by the Berlin library, and as yet uncatalogued. It is Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Ital. Fol. 173, cf. *Mitteilungen aus der königlichen Bibliothek*, IV (Berlin 1918) 77. For Kawerau (1847-1918) cf. *Der Grosse Brockhaus*, X (1931) 49.

⁵¹) BOEHMER, *Luthers Romfahrt*, cit., 27 n. 1. Boehmer had only six hours at his disposal, he had to work in an ill-lighted room, on a dark day, and his eyes were tired from reading the Vatican registers. The Egidian register is in a difficult script.

⁵²) F. G. PAZZAGLIA, *Lettere inedite del Card. Egidio Canisio Viterbese* (Rome 1915). Pp. vii-23. Monsignore Pazzaglia is still living, at Rome.

⁵³) On the verso of the back cover it states, 'In corso di stampa Epistolario del Card. Egidio Canisio Viterbese. Raccolta completa delle lettere edite ed inedite del Canisio tratte da vari codici dell'Angelica e della Marciana'. In fact there are no known letters of Giles in the Biblioteca Marciana, Venice.

⁵⁴) In A. A., IX (1921-1922) 17-28.

⁵⁵) *Ibid.*, IX, 64-66. The decrees are known only indirectly, from their repetition in the decrees of the general chapter held at Naples in 1539.

in a valuable study which appeared in 1921⁵⁶). Mueller, an ex-Dominican and an outspoken admirer of Luther, was interested primarily in the theological sources of Luther's theology. In order to understand Luther's attitude to reform Mueller turned his attention to the Augustinian order. He showed penetration in his comments. His judgments would have carried greater weight had he not been led astray, as had Boehmer before him, by a series of mis-dated entries in one of the Egidian registers at Rome. The mistake was corrected seven years later by Hubert Jedin in one of his early probings into Reformation history⁵⁷). Jedin's article, with its minute examination of two registers in the central Augustinian archives is a landmark for those interested in Giles.

Up to this time Giles's theology was a closed book, though he was known as the author of a major theological work, and had been referred to in his lifetime as a *teologo grandissimo*⁵⁸). Alphons Mueller attempted in a number of studies to prove that the un-orthodox ideas which distinguished Lutheranism from the traditional teachings of the Church were to be found in the writings of Augustinian theologians of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries⁵⁹). A French theologian, Jules Paquier, following out this line of thought set himself the task of comparing Luther's theological principles with those of Giles. His conclusions, published in 1923, showed that there was no convergence of ideas between the two Augustinians⁶⁰). Paquier, in the process of his lucid demonstration, ex-

⁵⁶) A. V. MUELLER, 'Der Augustiner-Observantismus und die Kritik und Psychologie Luthers', in *A. R. G.*, XVIII (1921) 1-34.

⁵⁷) H. JEDIN, 'Die römischen Augustiner-Quellen zu Luthers Frühzeit', *ibid.*, XXV (1928) 256-270.

⁵⁸) Cf. Piero Parenti's comment on Giles in April 1502, in J. SCHNITZER, *Savonarola nach den Aufzeichnungen des Piero Parenti* (Leipzig 1910) 299.

⁵⁹) A. V. MUELLER, *Luthers theologische Quellen* (Giessen 1912); IDEM, 'Agostino Favaroni e la teologia di Lutero' in *Bilychnis*, III (1914) 373-387; 'Zur Verteidigung Luthers und meines Buches «Luthers theologische Quellen»', in *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, LXXXVIII (1914) 131-172; 'Giacomo Perez di Valenza, O. S. A., vescovo di Chrysopoli e la teologia di Lutero', in *Bilychnis*, IX (1920) 391-403; *Una fonte ignota del sistema di Lutero: il Beato Fidati da Cassia e la sua teologia* (Rome 1921); 'Il Dr. Paulus di Monaco, il Beato Fidati, e Lutero', in *Bilychnis*, XIX (1922) 247-257; *Lutero e l'Agostinianesimo medioevale* (Rome 1929).

⁶⁰) J. PAQUIER, 'Un essai de théologie platonicienne à la Renaissance: le Commentaire de Gilles de Viterbe sur le premier livre des Sentences', in *Recherches de science religieuse*, XIII (1923) 293-312, 419-436.

pounded how Giles's neo-platonic treatment of the *Sentences* was in the manner of Marsilio Ficino. The study would have gained in value had Paquier been aware of the evolution in Giles's philosophical beliefs. Nobody has taken note of the fact, or the significance of the fact, that in his younger days Giles edited three works by Giles of Rome (c. 1247-1316), a brilliant pupil of St Thomas Aquinas, and founder of the School of the Augustinian friars⁶¹).

General works of reference finally began to show the results of research on Giles. In 1915 Aurelio Palmieri, an Italian Augustinian, contributed an article on Giles to the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*⁶²). It was a remarkable advance on any general account up to that date. It is surprising that Palmieri overlooked the incisive study of Giles which Boehmer had included in his *Luthers Romfahrt*. Fourteen years later David Perini incorporated Palmieri's account, without acknowledgement, in his *Bibliographia Augustiniana*⁶³). In addition to at least two mistakes of Palmieri Perini added some errors of his own. Nevertheless, Perini's compilation on seven hundred years of Italian Augustinian literature is indispensable as a reference work for any study of Giles and his times.

VI

SIGNORELLI (1929) TO THE PRESENT DAY: RECOGNITION FOR GILES

The biography which had been called for by Tiraboschi⁶⁴), Hergenröther⁶⁵), Steinschneider⁶⁶), Pélissier⁶⁷), Pastor⁶⁸), Boehmer⁶⁹), and Paquier⁷⁰), was finally attempted by Giuseppe Signo-

⁶¹) *Egidii Romani commentaria in VIII libros physicorum Aristotelis*, ed. Egidius Viterbiensis (Padua 1493). *Egidii Romani quaestiones de materia coeli et de intellectu possibili*, ed. Egidius Viterbiensis (Padua 1493). For Giles's editions cf. *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, VI (Leipzig 1934) 772-3 (7197), 784-5 (7213).

⁶²) *Op. cit.*, VI (1915) 1365-1371. For Palmieri (1870-1927) cf. *Bibl. Aug.*, III, 45-8.

⁶³) *Op. cit.*, I (Florence 1929) 177-186.

⁶⁴) TIRABOSCHI, *Storia lett. ital.*, VII, pt 4 (Modena 1792) 1591.

⁶⁵) HERGENRÖTHER in *Kirchenlexikon*, I (Freiburg i. B. 1882) 256.

⁶⁶) STEINSCHNEIDER in *Zeitschrift für hebräische Bibliographie*, I (1896-1897) 113.

⁶⁷) PÉLISSIER in *Miscellanea cit.* (Bergamo 1903) 790-792.

⁶⁸) PASTOR, *Geschichte der Päpste*, IV, pt 1 (Freiburg i. B. 1906) 141.

⁶⁹) BOEHMER, *Luthers Romfahrt* (Leipzig 1914), 36 n. 2.

⁷⁰) PAQUIER in *Recherches de science religieuse*, XIII (1923) 294.

relli in 1929⁷¹). This was not a full-scale biography, but a rapid survey of Giles's life and writings. It is here opportune to consider the merits and defects of Signorelli's work.

Signorelli, as chief librarian of the biblioteca comunale at Viterbo, had the time and the opportunity to acquire a thorough knowledge of Italian printed works dealing with Giles and the events of his period. This advantage tended to become a defect. Signorelli had a marked inclination to display a rag-bag collection of information about minor characters and side-issues.

One of the merits of his work is its detailed knowledge of Viterbese history. His thorough grasp of local history enabled him to elucidate problems which are often only fully understood by local historians and antiquarians⁷²). Giles's birthplace, and even his family name, are disputed matters⁷³). For an understanding of Italian figures of the Renaissance such local knowledge is almost an essential. Each city cultivated an independence and self-consciousness all its own. This mentality persists to the present day, though to a diminished degree: Signorelli's approach to his subject is a demonstration of the fact. His interest in Viterbese history has been allowed to dominate the book. The preface opens with the ringing reminder that Viterbo should recognize its own heroes — *heroes agnoscite vestros* — and the last chapter pulsates to a close on the proud note of 'illustre concittadino'⁷⁴).

Signorelli, methodic and painstaking, has written an attractive biography. Though it would be scathing, and even unjust, to label his work as superficial it is manifest that it displays no profound

⁷¹) G. SIGNORELLI, *Il Cardinale Egidio da Viterbo, agostiniano, umanista e riformatore, 1469-1532* (Florence 1929). Pp. 270.

⁷²) Signorelli was also author of a substantial three volume *Viterbo nella storia della Chiesa* (Viterbo 1908, 1938, 1940). This is a model local history, amply documented, critical and lucidly written. It is a work now almost impossible to procure. The stock of books was destroyed during the Allied bombing of Viterbo in May-June 1944. Giovanni Signorelli, son of the historian, kindly presented me with a copy of the third volume. This contains, pp. 1-70, a study of Giles. It is mostly a synopsis of SIGNORELLI's *Egidio da Viterbo*. For a bibliographical notice of Signorelli cf. *Il Corriere del Viterbese*, 13 February 1954.

⁷³) From documents in the Viterbo communal archives Signorelli established such minutiae as the house in which Giles lived in Rome, cf. *op. cit.*, 201, n. 29.

⁷⁴) *Op. cit.*, 116. Cf. also e. g., 'il nostro agostiniano', 6, 7, 9, 19; 'nostra città', 18, 23; 'nostro concittadino', 111; 'nostro convento', 144 n. 131; 'il nostro territorio', 164 n. 32.

analysis of character or of events. Signorelli states the « what » not the « why ». It was unfortunate that he was not abreast of international scholarship. He was unacquainted with the studies by Boehmer, Paquier and Jedin, but one can readily forgive his oversight. It was compensated for when he drew attention to a volume of Giles's letters in the biblioteca comunale at Siena ⁷⁵). This precious collection reveals not Giles the fine phrasing humanist but the ecclesiastical reformer with a whip lash in his words and an almost ruthless power of decision. The letters confirm and illumine what are often only bare entries in his registers. Signorelli made only a very limited use of the letters: his interest was mainly in Giles the humanist and papal diplomat. Despite the shortcomings of his biography Signorelli has cleared the ground in a thorough fashion. All students of Giles are in his debt.

In 1937 Jedin published his magisterial study of the Augustinian, Girolamo Seripando (1492-1563), cardinal legate at the Council of Trent, 1561-1563 ⁷⁶). Though he dealt but briefly and in passing with Giles, he showed that Seripando as a Platonist, scriptural scholar and ecclesiastical reformer was profoundly affected by Giles ⁷⁷). The same question of the relationship between religious reform and the new learning was discussed by Professor Toffanin of Naples in a study of Pontano ⁷⁸). The book contains two chapters on Giles's fusion of classical learning and christian piety ⁷⁹). Toffanin's comments are valuable but he would have been on surer ground had he argued from Giles's writings rather than from Pontano's version of what Giles said ⁸⁰).

In recent years another Italian scholar, Eugenio Massa, has

⁷⁵) MS G. X. 26. The confusing character of Lorenzo da Ilari's catalogue, *La biblioteca pubblica di Siena*, VI (Siena 1847), explains why the MS was overlooked.

⁷⁶) H. JEDIN, *Girolamo Seripando, sein Leben und Denken im Geisteskampf des 16. Jahrhunderts* (2 vols, Würzburg 1937). An English translation by F. C. Eckhoff was published at St Louis, Mo., 1947. It omits many of the footnotes and the valuable appendices.

⁷⁷) *Op. cit.*, I, 80-95, 157-161.

⁷⁸) Giuseppe TOFFANIN, *Giovanni Pontano, fra l'uomo e la natura; in appendice il dialogo « Aegidius » tradotto da Vincenzo Grillo* (Bologna 1938).

⁷⁹) Chap. 3, 'Chi era Frate Egidio da Viterbo?'; chap. 4, 'Il dialogo « Aegidius »'.

⁸⁰) Toffanin argued mostly from the *Dialogus Aegidius* of Pontano, though he also consulted the studies by Fiorentino, Gothein and Signorelli.

made Giles the object of his special study ⁸¹). He has gone direct to original sources, Egidian manuscripts at Rome, Naples and Paris, has edited a representative section of one of Giles's compositions ⁸²) and is preparing Giles's two major works for publication ⁸³). Already, with the exception of Signorelli, Massa has published more than any other author on Giles. However, the quality of the work may be questioned.

Massa owes most of his fundamental ideas about Giles and the Augustinian school of theology to Mueller and Paquier, and gives no sign of knowing that research of the past twenty years has disproved these notions ⁸⁴). His interest is in Giles as a Renaissance thinker, and he pays little attention to him as a reformer of the Augustinian order. When he does discuss him as a reformer he conveys a totally wrong impression. He describes him as dominated by the idea of a Church, spiritual and interior, in contrast with the institutional organization of the Roman Catholic Church ⁸⁵).

Massa's work is not without merit. Apart from the original sources which he is now editing he draws attention to Giles as a Renaissance thinker. He propounds at some length a theory that

⁸¹) E. MASSA, 'Egidio da Viterbo, Machiavelli, Lutero e il pessimismo cristiano', in *Archivio di Filosofia*, 1949, 75-123; IDEM, 'Egidio da Viterbo e la metodologia del sapere nel cinquecento', in *Pensée humaniste et tradition chrétienne aux XV^e et XVI^e siècles*, ed. H. Bédarida (Paris 1950) 185-239; IDEM, 'L'anima e l'uomo in Egidio da Viterbo e nelle fonti classiche e medioevali', in *Archivio di Filosofia*, 1951, 37-138; IDEM, *I fondamenti metafisici della « dignitas hominis »*, e testi inediti di Egidio da Viterbo (Turin 1954). Professor Massa is a member of the Faculty of Letters, University of Pisa.

⁸²) *Ibid.*, 54-110, from 'Sententiae ad mentem Platonis', MS Vat. Lat., 6325, ff. 49v, 2 - 79v, 1.

⁸³) MASSA in *Archiv. Filos.*, 1951, 37, states that he is preparing all of the 'Sententiae ad mentem Platonis' for publication; he has informed me that he has completed an edition of the 'Historia XX Saeculorum' for publication at Zurich.

⁸⁴) H. GRISAR in *Zeit. kat. Theol.*, XL (1920) 591, states of Mueller's notion of an Augustinian School in the 15th century with principles which inspired Luther's theology, that it is 'nur von ihm bekannt'. Particular studies treat of the question, e. g., G. CIOLINI, *Agostino di Roma e la sua Cristologia* (Florence 1944); S. FRIEMEL, *Die theologische Prinzipienlehre des Augustinus Favaroni von Rom*, O. E. S. A. († 1443), (Würzburg 1950); N. TONER, *The doctrine of original sin and justification according to Augustine of Rome* (Louvain 1958).

⁸⁵) 'La famosa « Oratio » da Egidio, per l'apertura del Concilio Lateranense V, è tutta pervasa dalla concezione di una Chiesa spirituale e interiore, in contrasto con la Chiesa esteriore', in *Archiv. Filos.*, 1949, 77-78.

Giles's object in his writings was to defend theology by a new critical and historical method. Massa also contends that Giles was a pioneer in his philological approach to scripture. Provocative comments are made on the development in Giles's thought under the stimulus of Plato, the classics, the cabbala and the Talmud.

There have been some recent contributions on Giles. The biographical notice by Ugo Mariani in the *Enciclopedia Cattolica* carries no weight: it adds nothing new to our knowledge of Giles and repeats a few stock factual errors ⁸⁶). One of the more difficult problems of Giles's life for a biographer is that of the cabbala, which only a specialist can treat adequately. Fortunately Professor François Secret, an acknowledged authority on the christian cabbalists, has now begun such a study of Giles ⁸⁷). A Swiss scriptural scholar, Fr George Schelbert, has completed an examination of a Jerusalem Targum which was copied for Giles in the early sixteenth century ⁸⁸). Lutheran studies continue to excite research on the Saxon Congregation and Giles. Reinhold Weijenborg, a Dutch Franciscan, recently published an important article which brings into relief the efforts made by Giles to strike a golden mean between encouragement of the reform movement among the German Augustinians and the maintenance of unity in the order ⁸⁹).

⁸⁶) U. MARIANI, s. v. 'Egidio da Viterbo' in *op. cit.*, I (1950) 141-143; there is nothing new and at least one notable factual error in the article on Giles by W. HUEMPFNER in *L. T. K.*, I (1957) 193-194.

⁸⁷) Professor Secret has dealt incidentally with Giles in two articles, 'Les Dominicains et la kabbale chrétienne à la Renaissance', in *Archivium Fratrum Praedicatorum*, XXVII (1957) 319-336; 'Pico della Mirandola e gli inizi della cabala cristiana', in *Convivium*, N. S., I (1957) 31-47; and in a specific way in *Le Zôhar chez les kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance* (Paris 1958) 34-42. A major advance towards an understanding of Giles has been made recently by Professor SECRET's *Egidio da Viterbo: Scechina e libellus de litteris hebraicis* (2 vols, Rome 1959: Edizione Nazionale dei Classici del Pensiero Italiano), an attractive edition of two of Giles's cabbalistic works hitherto unpublished.

⁸⁸) Fr. Schelbert is professor of Old Testament at the Bethlehemite Missions-Seminar, Schöneck/NIDW, Switzerland. His study of the Targum, which he kindly allowed me to read, is a dissertation for the doctorate in Scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome. For the MS in question, now Bibl. Vaticana, MS Neofiti I, which is a unique complete copy of the Palestinian Targum on the Pentateuch, cf. A. DIEZ-MACHO, 'Una copia completa del Targum Palestinense al Pentateuco en la Biblioteca Vaticana', in *Sefarad*, XVII (1957) 119-121.

⁸⁹) R. WEIJENBORG, 'Neuentdeckte Dokumente im Zusammenhang mit Luthers Romreise', in *Antonianum*, XXXII (1957) 147-202. This is a study of exceptional value.

This survey of the historiography of our subject is a witness to the truth that first impressions die hard. Any student of Giles's life will find difficulty in ridding himself of the picture drawn by the humanists of the sixteenth century. Giles's registers and letters, written during his years as general of the order, are mostly unedited and convey a different impression from that left by the humanists. He emerges from the unpublished sources as a man dedicated to a spiritual revival. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that he was a Renaissance man, intensely interested in all the developments of the new learning. Two main aspects of his life thus suggest themselves for study, his place and thought as a humanist, his programme and activity as an ecclesiastical reformer. On closer examination it will be seen that these two aspects cannot be separated if he is to be properly understood. There was no separation of « pagan » and « christian » elements in his thought. His ideals found practical expression in reform, reform which he preached for the daily lives of the people in so many Italian cities, reform of discipline which he formulated when prior general of the Augustinians, reform in theology which was to be presented in Platonic terms, and reform in biblical studies so that the living word of God might be heard in all its keenness. But he expressed himself always in classical terms, in the language of the humanists. For Giles reform was not revolution. He was no Renaissance man in revolt against medieval Gothic. He saw reform as identical with revival, and in that he was a true product of the Renaissance. He was an enthusiast for the revival of classical studies, but also fostered the study of scholasticism. Similarly, reform of the Augustinian order meant for him a return to what he conceived had been the primitive fervour of the Augustinian hermits in the fifth century and of the Augustinian friars in the thirteenth.

It is salutary, when reconsidering the impression of Giles created by the humanists, to realize the extent to which scholars, with a misplaced confidence, accept the conclusions of previous writers. However illuminating are the reflections of historians there is no substitute for original sources.

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