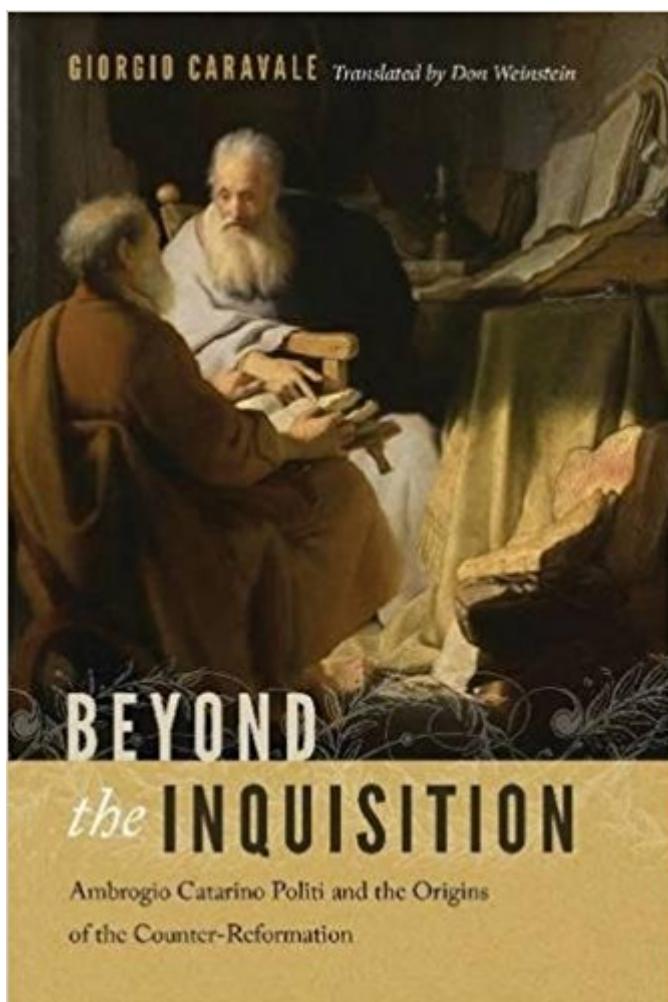


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# Beyond The Inquisition: Ambrogio Catarino Politi And The Origins Of The Counter-Reformation



## Synopsis

In *Beyond the Inquisition*, originally published in an Italian edition in 2007, Giorgio Caravale offers a fresh perspective on sixteenth-century Italian religious history and the religious crisis that swept across Europe during that period. Through an intellectual biography of Ambrogio Catarino Politi (1484–1553), Caravale rethinks the problems resulting from the diffusion of Protestant doctrines in Renaissance Italy and the Catholic opposition to their advance. At the same time, Caravale calls for a new conception of the Counter-Reformation, demonstrating that during the first half of the sixteenth century there were many alternatives to the inquisitorial model that ultimately prevailed. Lancellotto Politi, the jurist from Siena who entered the Dominican order in 1517 under the name of Ambrogio Catarino, started his career as an anti-Lutheran controversialist, shared friendships with the Italian Spirituals, and was frequently in conflict with his own order. The main stages of his career are all illustrated with a rich array of previously published and unpublished documentation. Caravale's thorough analysis of Politi's works, actions, and relationships significantly alters the traditional image of an intransigent heretic hunter and an author of fierce anti-Lutheran tirades. In the same way, the reconstruction of his role as a papal theologian and as a bishop in the first phase of the Council and the reinterpretation of his battle against the Spanish theologian Domingo de Soto and scholasticism reestablish the image of a Counter-Reformation that was different from the one that triumphed in Trent, the image of an alternative that was viable but never came close to being implemented. Giorgio Caravale is professor of early modern European history at the University of Roma Tre. He is the author of a number of books, including *Forbidden Prayer: Church Censorship and Devotional Literature in Renaissance Italy*.

## Book Information

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"Giorgio Caravale's *Beyond the Inquisition: Ambrogio Catarino Politi and the Origins of the Counter-Reformation* gives an extraordinarily good idea of Ambrogio Catarino as a man and as a thinker. Catarino has often been regarded as the voice of orthodoxy, but Caravale presents a man who is infinitely more complex, full of contradictions and apparent inconsistencies that illustrate the various tensions created by the Reformation." — Alastair Hamilton, Arcadian Visiting Research Professor, The Warburg Institute

"It could have been so different. As Giorgio Caravale shows in his elegant study of the pontifical theologian and bishop Ambrogio Catarino Politi, the Inquisition and doctrinal rigidity need not have captured the Counter-Reformation. Caravale lays open the paradoxical career of a highly original thinker who offered a new orthodoxy that was far more open to diversity than the intransigents who won the day. Caravale's engaging book puts paid to the historical categories that have dominated how we have understood the Reformation." — Edward Muir, Clarence L. Ver Steeg Professor in the Arts and Sciences, Northwestern University

"This is now the definitive study, an expansion and revision of the 2007 Italian monograph, of a figure, Lancellotto Politi, known religiously as Ambrogio Catarino, who played an important role in the theological struggles of the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century. Always considered one of the great Roman controversialist writers against Lutheran currents, the present work shows him in the thick of internal debates within his own Dominican Order, the Council of Trent, and over the enduring Savonarolan legacy, among other issues that agitated papal Rome at the time. The deft translation into English is from the hand of Donald Weinstein, one of our great Renaissance scholars, who sadly passed away before he could see appear in print what must be his last major contribution." — John Tedeschi, co-editor of *Dizionario Storico dell'Inquisizione*

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