

Emperor Charles IV and the Origins of the Great Schism, c. 1375–1378

Dušan Coufal

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To my son František

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Introduction

In political terms, the Great Western Schism is often seen primarily as a Franco-Italian conflict or as a phenomenon centered around France. This perception is partly due to the significant influence of Noël Valois's excellent four-volume work, *La France et le Grand Schisme d'Occident*.¹ However, the Holy Roman Empire and its rulers also played a crucial role in the schism and in efforts to resolve it. Notably, the Roman-German king, who received the imperial crown from the pope and thus held a unique position as protector and defender of the Church,² was expected to help overcome the disgraceful division. During the schism, the imperial throne was primarily held by the Luxembourg dynasty.³ King Sigismund's role in convening the Council of Constance and ending the schism is well known and duly documented in the literature.⁴ Far less is

¹ Noël Valois, *La France et le Grand Schisme d'Occident*, 4 vols. (Paris: Picard, 1896–1902).

² Werner Goez, "Imperator advocatus Romanae ecclesiae," in *Aus Kirche und Reich. Studien zu Theologie, Politik und Recht im Mittelalter. Festschrift für Friedrich Kempf zu seinem 75. Geburtstag und fünfzigjährigen Doktorjubiläum*, ed. Hubert Morderk (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1983), 315–328; Gerd Tellenbach, "Der Kaiser als Vogt der römischen Kirche," in *idem, Mittelalter und Gegenwart. Vier Beiträge*, ed. Dieter Mertens, Hubert Mordek, and Thomas Zott (Freiburg–Munich: Alber, 2003), 51–75.

³ Jörg K. Hoensch, *Die Luxemburger. Eine spätmittelalterliche Dynastie gesamteuropäischer Bedeutung 1308–1437* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000); František Šmahel and Lenka Bobková, eds., *Lucemburkové. Česká koruna uprostřed Evropy* [Luxembourg Dynasty. The Czech Crown in the Middle of Europe] (Prague: CMS–NLN, 2012).

⁴ Most recently Ansgar Frenken, "Der König und sein Konzil – Sigismund auf der Konstanzer Kirchenversammlung. Macht und Einfluss des römischen Königs im Spiegel institutioneller Rahmenbedingungen und personeller Konstellationen," *Annuarium Historiae Conciliorum* 36 (2002): 177–242; Walter Brandmüller, "Sigismund – Römischer König, das Schisma und die Konzilien," in *Sigismundus Rex et Imperator. Kunst und Kultur zur Zeit Sigismunds von Luxemburg 1387–1437*, ed. Imre Takács (Mainz am Rhein: Zabern, 2006), 430–432; Martin Kintzinger, "Das Konzil konstruieren. König Sigismund und die internationale Kommunikation," in *Das Konstanzer Konzil als europäisches Ereignis. Begegnungen, Medien und Rituale*, ed. Gabriela Signori and Birgit Studt, *Vorträge und Forschungen* 79 (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2014), 219–254.

known, however, about the involvement of his relatives in the ecclesiastical affair, particularly before 1400.

This book is the first step in addressing this gap in scholarship. It explores the origins of the schism in the context of the reign of the Bohemian king and Roman emperor Charles IV. But is there anything to write about? Let us recall the basic facts and dates: The cardinals elected the Italian Bartolomeo Prignano as Pope Urban VI in Rome on April 8–9, 1378, under tumultuous circumstances. In early August, a majority of them declared that the election had been made under pressure from the Roman people and denied its legitimacy. Following the declaration of revolt, a new election was held in Fondi on September 20, where Cardinal Robert of Geneva, later known as Clement VII, was chosen. However, the great emperor died in Prague on November 29. Considering that the first reports of the rupture between Urban and the cardinals reached him at the end of June, Charles IV had only five months to deal directly with the nascent schism. Could he have influenced its development in such a short time?

Henry of Langenstein's Critical Judgment

The leading German theologian of the late fourteenth century and an influential contemporary observer Henry of Langenstein was convinced that the emperor played a significant role in the outbreak of the schism. The scholar himself felt the consequences of the schism firsthand when he was forced to leave the University of Paris in the early 1380s. Even before that, he had attempted to convince others that a general council was the surest way to resolve the schism. He first published his arguments in May 1379 in the so-called *Epistola pacis*. This work is a dialogue between two imaginary supporters of the feuding popes, who also discuss the position of Charles IV and his son Wenceslas.⁵

Langenstein was highly critical of the emperor's behavior during the crisis. He believed that the ruler, who should have been the guardian of unity and the driving force behind efforts to settle the dispute, was actually the first to stir

⁵ For the extant versions of the dialogue, its edition and content, see Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann, *Lateinische Dialoge 1200–1400. Literaturhistorische Studie und Repertorium*, Mittellateinische Studien und Texte 37 (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2007), 655–660.

up the schism, if not start it. He blamed the emperor for immediately aligning with one of the parties—Urban VI—without giving scholars an opportunity to sufficiently discuss the arguments of the two rival groups, assess their culpability, and consider the possibility of convening a general synod. Langenstein also resented the emperor's decision to bind his son and successor to the party he had chosen, insisting that “those who immediately joined one party or another and supported and defended it were the cause of this schism.”⁶

Charles IV, of course, cared deeply about his reputation as a peace-making, wise, and just king.⁷ Henry of Langenstein, however, refused to grant him the role of ideal ruler in the face of the ecclesiastical crisis. As a university professor, Langenstein felt entitled to criticize the emperor for bypassing scholars. He was defending the indispensability of his intellectual class in resolving social crises. His indignation at the emperor's partisanship also had situational overtones. In May 1379, the majority of the members of the University of Paris sided with Clement VII. Langenstein—a subject of the Empire, which was firmly on Urban's side—remained neutral like many other scholars. However, it was unclear how long they could resist the pressure from Clement VII and the French royal family.⁸

Yet, it would be short-sighted to view Langenstein's criticism solely as a matter of personal grievance. The circumstances under which it was expressed

⁶ See *Henrici de Hassia Epistola Pacis*, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 14644, fols. 142r–161v, at 159r: “Quomodo igitur dominus imperator, qui ecclesiastice concordie et unitatis tutor precipue et conservator esse debuit, dissensione grandi percepta [ms. precepta, D. C.] circa papatum meritis cause utriusque partis per sapientes cleri non sufficienter ventilatis et discussis et an opus esset consilio generali eius incitatore cum aliorum principum adiutorio convocando, statim parti primo electi se coniunxerit et post mortem filio suo, quem sibi successurum procuravit, eandem partem, qua affeccione nescio, iniunxit indeclinabiliter sustinendam? Ecce qui motor esse debebat in tollendo discensionem cleri circa electionem summi pontificis emersam, quasi primus uni parti favens scisma et dissensionem maioravit, nescio si inchoavit [...] Nunquid igitur scismatis illi causa sunt et illud formant et suscitant, qui statim partibus se addentes eas sustinent et defensent?” This passage has already been discussed by Valois, *La France*, 1:266, note 5.

⁷ Cf. Robert Antonín, *The Ideal Ruler in Medieval Bohemia, East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages* 44 (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2017), 288–294; Václav Žurek, *Charles IV. Portrait of a Medieval Ruler*, trans. Ian Finlay Stone (Prague: Karolinum Press, Charles University, 2025), esp. 213–237.

⁸ For the situation at the university, see Robert Norman Swanson, *Universities, Academics and the Great Schism*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought 3/12 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 35–41.

did not diminish its validity. When the conflict between the cardinals and Urban officially became public in August 1378, Charles IV was indeed the first European monarch to explicitly side with one of the contending parties. While the emperor publicly declared his support for Urban at a time when he was still unaware of the election in Fondi, Queen Joanna of Naples and the French monarch Charles V—traditionally seen as the driving forces behind the schism—officially joined the rebels only once they became aware of the election.⁹ It is therefore legitimate to ask how the emperor's swift reaction contributed to the ecclesiastical division.

Yet, another fundamental question arises from Langenstein's criticism. The Parisian professor focused on the consequences of Charles's actions, but these cannot be examined or understood without knowing their causes. If we want to address the emperor's policies, we must also ask about the reasons behind his unprecedentedly rapid inclination toward Urban.

Charles IV's stance on the ecclesiastical crisis drew criticism shortly after his death, and modern scholars have continued to analyze his policies. It even appears that historians have acknowledged that there is some validity in Langenstein's reproach of the emperor's partisanship. Among scholars of the schism, the prevailing belief is that the conflict was perpetuated by the particular interests of the powerful, including the emperor.¹⁰ Biographers of Charles IV and his son Wenceslas have offered a much broader range of interpretations of the emperor's policy. However, these interpretations are often conflicting and contradictory. Presenting and evaluating them serves to further clarify the aim and objectives of this book.

⁹ More on this below.

¹⁰ Walter Ullmann, *The Origins of the Great Schism: A Study in 14th Century Ecclesiastical History* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1948), 62, argues that Charles's efforts to prevent a schism were purely a political maneuver, driven by his interest in forming a coalition with the papacy to help him maintain control of the Empire and counter the influence of emerging national states. Joëlle Rollo-Koster, *The Great Western Schism, 1378–1417: Performing Legitimacy, Performing Unity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 40, on the other hand, views the monarch's selection of obedience through the lens of his dynastic policy. For general discussions on the relationship between secular power and the schism, see Michel de Boüard, *La France et l'Italie au temps du Grand Schisme d'Occident*, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 139 (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1936), 22, and Howard Kaminsky, *Simon de Cramaud and the Great Schism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983), 3.

Charles IV, the Schism, and Historians

This section does not seek to revisit the entire scholarly debate surrounding the emperor and the schism—a subject that will be explored more thoroughly later. Instead, the focus here is on the key dynamics within the scholarship, particularly those arising from historians' interpretations of the emperor's policies during a time of escalating crisis. The main trends in historiographical thought are examined, with emphasis on claims that have sparked controversy and have yet to reach consensus.¹¹

The most influential early explanation for Charles's swift support of Urban emerged as early as the late eighteenth century. It was proposed by Enlightenment scholar Franz Martin Pelzl (1783), the emperor's first modern biographer. Pelzl directly connected Charles's allegiance to the roots of the ecclesiastical split. He argued that the French-born cardinals rebelled against Urban because he had refused to leave Rome and return with them to Avignon. Upon learning of this, Charles, who was intent on keeping the papacy in Rome, defended Urban, admonished the cardinals, and urged secular rulers to support the Roman Pontiff.¹²

¹¹ The personality of Charles IV has, of course, long held the interest of international scholarship. Unfortunately, the authors of older, still highly regarded multi-part works were not able to fully complete their objectives. Emil Werunsky's *Geschichte Kaiser Karls IV. und seiner Zeit*, 4 vols. (Innsbruck: Wagner'sche Universitäts Buchhandlung, 1880–1892), concludes Charles's biography in 1368, while Josef Šusta's *Karel IV.* [Charles IV], 2 vols., České dějiny II/3–4 (Prague: Jan Laichter, 1946–1948), does not go beyond 1355. This makes the biographical syntheses written by their German- or Czech-speaking successors all the more important for us. However, it is notable that many of these authors gave limited attention to Charles IV's involvement in the schism or relied on findings from specialized studies by other historians. See especially Heinz Stoob, *Kaiser Karl IV. und seine Zeit* (Graz–Vienna–Cologne: Styria, 1990), 396–397; Lenka Bobková, *Velké dějiny zemí Koruny české* [The Grand History of the Czech Crown Lands], vol. 4a, 1310–1402 (Prague: Paseka, 2003), 452–455; Žírek, *Charles IV*, 149; Pierre Monnet, *Charles IV: Un empereur en Europe* (Paris: Fayard, 2020), 90–91. Therefore, I do not include the works of these authors in the review. This is also the case with František Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit, 1377–78: Emperor Charles IV and King Charles V of France*, trans. Sean Mark Miller and Kateřina Millerová (Prague: Karolinum, 2014), 253. However, I do consult works in which the emperor is not the central figure but whose involvement in the ecclesiastical schism is given particular attention.

¹² Franz Martin Pelzl, *Geschichte Kaiser Karls des Vierten, Königs in Böhmen*, vol. 2 (Dresden: Waltherische Hofbuchhandlung, 1783), 940–941.

A hundred years later, the German historian Theodor Lindner (1875) offered a similar perspective in his work on the history of the Holy Roman Empire during the reign of the emperor's son, Wenceslas. Benefiting from his pioneering research into the causes of the schism, Lindner presented a more nuanced interpretation. Based on an analysis of the sources, he rejected the cardinals' official narrative that Bartolomeo Prignano's election was conducted under popular pressure. Instead, he attributed the revolt to Urban's violent and reckless treatment of the cardinals when he insisted that Church reform begin with them.¹³ The French, long viewing the papacy as their domain, were outraged by what they saw as Italian arrogance and demanded that Urban return to Avignon. This demand, however, did not sit well with Charles IV, for whom the election of an Italian pope represented a triumph, definitively securing the papacy's return to Rome.¹⁴

Noël Valois (1896) also followed the interpretive path set by Pelzl and Lindner, elevating research on the origins of the schism to a new level.¹⁵ He viewed the emperor as an unlikely but resolute supporter of Urban. Despite his kinship with Cardinal Robert of Geneva—one of the leading instigators of the revolt—and despite Urban's demands, Charles remained committed to the Roman Pontiff. Indeed, he saw his support for Urban as an opportunity to lead the papacy definitively out of its “Babylonian captivity” in Avignon.¹⁶

Authors of subsequent books and studies on Charles IV's policy at the onset of the schism also incorporated the Avignon motive into their arguments. However, they did not regard it as the decisive factor in the emperor's support for Urban.¹⁷ The Avignon threat re-emerged as a central element of Charles's policy only later, in the monographs by Jiří Spěváček (1978, 1979, 1986).

¹³ Theodor Lindner, “Die Wahl Urbans VI. 1378,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 28 (1872): 101–127; idem, *Geschichte des deutschen Reiches vom Ende des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts bis zur Reformation*, vol. 1/1 (Braunschweig: C. A. Schwetschke und Sohn, 1875), 72–89.

¹⁴ Idem, *Geschichte des deutschen Reiches*, 1/1:82–83, 91.

¹⁵ Noël Valois, “L'élection d'Urbain VI et les origines du Grand Schisme d'Occident,” *Revue des questions historiques* 48 (1890): 353–420, see esp. 414.

¹⁶ Valois, *La France*, 1:67.

¹⁷ See Samuel Steinherz, “Das Schisma von 1378 und die Haltung Karls IV.,” in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 21 (1900): 599–639, at 627; Albert Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, vol. 5/2, 8th ed. (Leipzig: Akademie Verlag, 1958) (originally Leipzig, 1920), 686; František Michálek Bartoš, *Čechy v době Husově 1378–1415* [Bohemia in the Time of Jan Hus, 1378–1415], České dějiny II/6 (Prague: Jan Leichter, 1947), 14–15; Heinz Thomas, “Frankreich, Karl IV. und das Große Schisma,” in ‘Bündnissysteme’ und

In his German-language biography of Charles IV, the Czech historian argued that a split between the pope and the majority of the College of Cardinals was already brewing during the reign of Urban's predecessor, Gregory XI, as some cardinals opposed Gregory's departure from Avignon. Thus, when the Romans demanded an Italian pope following Gregory's death, this played into the hands of the Luxembourg monarchs. They believed that an Italian pope would rely on their support to stand against the cardinals and would therefore be indebted to them. However, Charles remained passive at the critical moment when influence over the Roman Curia was at stake, unlike the French king, who, through intrigue, secured the support of the ultramontane faction of the College of Cardinals for his own agenda. Ultimately, Charles, under pressure, had no option but to align with Urban, despite the pope's ruthless disposition and lack of political skill, thus squandering an opportunity to shape the papacy to his advantage. Spěváček attributed this misstep to the fact that the ailing Charles had already lost his political acumen.¹⁸

The emperor's biographer chose to soften the tone of his criticism in the Czech version of his book. He highlighted in a new way that, prior to the election in Fondi, Charles had sought to pursue a supra-partisan policy, respecting the authority of the Roman Pontiff while keeping the door open to both sides. When he ultimately aligned with Urban, his primary concern was ensuring that power in Europe would not pass to the French king and that he would not be blamed for failing to prevent the schism.¹⁹

However, after several years, Spěváček fundamentally reconsidered his interpretation and introduced a new wave of criticism. In a follow-up monograph on King Wenceslas, he continued to argue that the emperor's insistence on the legitimacy of Urban VI stemmed from his efforts to free the papacy from its "captivity" in Avignon. However, Spěváček now regarded this as misguided, as it went against the tradition of cooperation with France. He argued that Charles IV had long maintained a positive relationship with the Avignon Curia and had become convinced of the impossibility of forming a success-

¹⁸ 'Außenpolitik' im späteren Mittelalter, ed. Peter Moraw, *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, Beiheft 5 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1988), 69–104, at 103. Cf. also Olaf B. Rader, *Kaiser Karl der Vierte. Das Beben der Welt. Eine Biographie* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2023), 353.

¹⁹ Jiří Spěváček, *Karl IV. Sein Leben und seine staatsmännische Leistung* (Vienna–Cologne–Graz: Böhlau, 1978), 186 and 190–193.

¹⁹ Idem, *Karel IV. Život a dílo (1316–1378)* [Charles IV. Life and Work, 1316–1378] (Prague: Svoboda, 1979), 477–478.

ful political alliance with the authoritarian Urban. Therefore, Spěváček found it difficult to understand why Charles chose to resolve the resulting crisis not through political means but in accordance with ecclesiastical principles. He once again attributed this decision to the consequences of the emperor's advanced age and poor mental health.²⁰

Although pointing to the Avignon motive as the reasoning behind Charles's quick inclination toward Urban is deeply rooted in scholarship, it has more recently been questioned. The German historian Stephan Weiß found little support in the sources for the claim that the return to Avignon was the main goal of the cardinals' revolt, which concerned the emperor. On the contrary, he argued that the rebellious cardinals and Clement VII initially sought to hold out in Italy and only fled to Avignon in the spring of 1379, after feeling unsafe on the Apennine Peninsula.²¹

The second distinctive explanation for Charles's inclination toward Urban, frequently encountered in historical works, was introduced into research by Theodor Lindner. The German scholar focused on Charles's dynastic policy, arguing that after the aging emperor's son, Wenceslas, was elected Roman king in 1376, his father intended to send him to Rome to accept the imperial crown. For this, the pope's invitation—i.e., Wenceslas's approbation—was necessary. Urban's predecessor, Gregory XI, conditioned its promulgation on Wenceslas's oath not to allow the election of his successor during his lifetime. Since the young king did not take the oath, he did not receive the approbation from Gregory. Urban, too, imposed conditions, but under pressure from the rebellion, he eventually approved Wenceslas and invited him to Italy in July 1378. Therefore, when the pope's envoys later informed Charles IV of the approval, the rebellion of the cardinals, and their plans to return to Avignon, the emperor acted quickly. He urged the cardinals to return to Urban and asked the secular rulers to support the pope.²²

²⁰ Idem, Václav IV. (1361–1419). *K předpokladům husitské revoluce* [Wenceslas IV, 1361–1419. On the Preconditions of the Hussite Revolution] (Prague: Svoboda, 1986), 98–99.

²¹ Stefan Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom: Der Ausbruch des Großen Abendländischen Schismas im Kontext der deutsch-französisch-päpstlichen Beziehungen," in *Zentrum und Netzwerk: kirchliche Kommunikationen und Raumstrukturen im Mittelalter*, ed. Gisela Drossbach and Hans-Joachim Schmidt, *Scrinium Friburgense 22* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 183–246, at 216–217.

²² Lindner, *Geschichte des deutschen Reiches*, 1/1:90–92.

The German historian thus clarified that the emperor was primarily concerned with keeping the supreme pontiff in Rome due to his dynastic policy, rather than out of concern for the fate of the Papal Curia in general.

Neither Theodor Lindner nor Noël Valois, of course, had the space in their works, which have broad chronological or thematic scope, for a focused discussion of Charles IV and the schism. The Austrian scholar Samuel Steinherz (1900) took advantage of this gap and published a separate analysis on the subject, which is still considered fundamental today.²³

When Steinherz turned to the motives behind Charles's quick inclination toward Urban, he followed Lindner in emphasizing the role of the ruler's dynastic policy, but with one crucial qualification. The Austrian historian did not dispute that Urban VI had aligned with the main focus of the emperor's dynastic policy when, at the end of July, he recognized Wenceslas as Roman king and invited him to travel to Italy. However, Steinherz concluded that the papal envoys, who arrived in Prague in mid-September with news, continued to make the delivery of the Bull of Approbation to the Luxembourg monarchs conditional on Wenceslas's oath not to allow the election of a Roman king during his lifetime. As the oath was not taken, the bull was not handed over, and the matter of the approbation remained unresolved.²⁴

According to Steinherz, however, Charles could hope that the pope would eventually waive the condition, and other political considerations also recommended supporting Urban. The liberation of the papacy from dependence on France, the preservation of the authority of the Italian pope vis-à-vis the majority of the French cardinals, and the emperor's duty as defender of the Church—all argued in favor of Urban. Then, when the emperor learned of the election at Fondi, it was both his responsibility as defender of Christendom and the threat of the consequences of a possible schism for the Christian kingdoms that convinced him of the correctness of his decision.²⁵

Samuel Steinherz logically emphasized motives other than dynastic ones to explain why the monarch quickly sided with Urban, despite not having secured the coveted Bull of Approbation for Wenceslas. This also prompted other historians to seek justifications for Charles's decision beyond his efforts to elevate Wenceslas to emperor.

²³ Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378."

²⁴ Ibid., 629.

²⁵ Ibid., 627 and 632.

The contribution of Charles's legal consciousness in his decision to support Urban grew in significance for historians. Theodor Lindner had already noted that the emperor defended Urban's legitimacy before the cardinals by using their own letters regarding the April election, which he had received from them in the spring of 1378.²⁶ Noël Valois further emphasized the influence of similar legitimating evidence on the emperor. Valois was willing to concede Langenstein's criticism—which he was the first to highlight—only to the extent that, although Charles IV had not taken the time to consult his clergy, much less the universal Church, he had nonetheless based his judgment on sound historical and legal reasoning.²⁷ Valois was referring to the emperor's knowledge of the manner of Urban's election and the correspondence from the cardinals that he had received from Rome. Additionally, according to Albert Hauck (1920), the fact that Urban had been elected unanimously and canonically, as the cardinals themselves had declared, was, for the emperor, sufficient proof of the pontiff's legitimacy.²⁸

However, it was not until the work of German historian Ferdinand Seibt (1985) that the full significance of the emperor's legal consciousness was highlighted. Seibt argued that Charles IV chose the contentious Roman pope as a politician of law, rather than as a politician of power. For Charles, the binding authority of law, the unity of Christendom, and the preservation of the legal order held greater importance than the rebels' promises—or those of Clement VII—that Wenceslas's approval would face no obstacles. Seibt suggested that, after months of negotiating with the Roman Pontiff as the legitimate head, Charles likely saw no simple path to withdrawing his recognition.²⁹

Seibt's strong emphasis on the emperor's legal consciousness has not been widely accepted among historians and was soon contested by Heinz Thomas (1988). To understand his argument, it is important to note that, based on anthropological findings about the likely cause of the emperor's death (complications following a serious accident), Thomas dismissed Spěváček's assumption

²⁶ Lindner, *Geschichte des deutschen Reiches*, 1/1:91.

²⁷ Valois, *La France*, 1:266–267.

²⁸ Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, 5/2:686.

²⁹ Ferdinand Seibt, *Karl IV. Ein Kaiser in Europa 1346 bis 1378* (Munich: Süddeutscher Verlag, 1985), 345.

tion that Charles had chosen Urban while in a poor mental state.³⁰ He also cautioned against overestimating the emperor's legal consciousness and sentiments. According to Thomas, the monarch would certainly have made a lawful decision even for the opposing side, and legal considerations never prevented the emperor from making politically expedient choices.³¹ Thomas illustrated this point by examining Charles's French policy in the context of the dawning schism.

He emphasized that the emperor was not choosing between Urban and Clement but between Urban and the cardinals, as he had already taken a clear stance in their dispute by September 1378. Thomas acknowledged, however, that such a quick response carried risks. Urban VI appeared obstinate when, despite being in a difficult situation, he tied the delivery of the bull approving Wenceslas to the requirement of an oath. The cardinals, led by Robert of Geneva, promised to handle the matter smoothly.³² Additionally, the decisive support for Urban dealt a significant blow to the recent dynastic treaties with the Valois family from January 1378.

According to Thomas, this was not the first time the emperor had opposed France. He had stood aside as she bled on the battlefield against England, and Charles himself broke France's monopoly on university studies in 1348. Now, allied with Urban, he could aim to dismantle the third pillar of French power, making it clear that he would neither accept French domination of the papacy nor the return of the cardinals to Avignon. Thomas also suggested that the emperor chose Urban with the understanding that he would have crucial allies. In addition to the King of England, these allies could include King Louis of Hungary and, within the Empire, Count Palatine Ruprecht I.³³

According to the German historian, by quickly aligning with Urban VI, the emperor confronted his French nephew and rival in the struggle for supremacy in Christendom, effectively forcing him to either abandon the cardinals or take responsibility for the outbreak of the schism. In practice, however, he left his nephew with no real choice but to support Clement VII. Charles V needed his own pope, particularly as a general council was anticipated due to the crisis, and it was evident that the emperor would attend in alliance with Urban.

³⁰ Thomas, "Frankreich, Karl IV.," 91.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 102–103.

³² *Ibid.*, 98–101.

³³ *Ibid.*, 101–102.

However, the death of Charles IV shifted the dynamics, leaving the responsibility for resolving the schism to his son, Wenceslas.³⁴

Heinz Thomas also suggested that Charles IV sided with Urban to counter the threat of the curia's return to Avignon. However, unlike Lindner, Thomas did not attribute this struggle to dynastic interests, such as the vision of Wenceslas's Roman coronation; instead, he saw it as an opportunity for the emperor to deliver a significant blow to France. In doing so, Thomas portrayed Charles IV, for the first time, as a hard-nosed pragmatist and political strategist in the Church crisis, even lending some weight to Langenstein's accusation that it was the emperor who exacerbated—if not instigated—the schism.

Heinz Thomas's interpretation, however, has been challenged by another German historian, Stefan Weiß (2008). In his study, Weiß aimed to trace how the French king, influenced by his relations with the emperor, came to renounce Urban VI and recognize Clement VII. As a result, the focus of the debate on Charles IV and the schism remained centered in France.³⁵

Weiß, in particular, disagreed with Thomas's view that the emperor, through his decisive action, had effectively driven his French nephew into the arms of Clement with the prospect of rivalry at the council. He considered this argument unprovable and rejected the idea that the two relatives would be so short-sighted as to allow a Church crisis to unfold with all its consequences simply due to competition for prestige.³⁶ On the contrary, Weiß argued that the two kings were still trying to avoid provoking conflict in September and were instead seeking an agreement between Urban and the cardinals. He also did not rule out efforts to coordinate the actions of the two related monarchs.³⁷

Weiß did not attribute the differing attitudes of the uncle and nephew toward the Church crisis to their rivalry but to other factors. He pointed out that the first to join the cardinals in France was the king's brother, Louis of Anjou, who was well acquainted with the curial situation and saw the rebel-

³⁴ Ibid., 99–100 and 103–104.

³⁵ See two comprehensive, interconnected studies: Stefan Weiß, "Onkel und Neffe. Die Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und Frankreich unter Kaiser Karl IV. und König Karl V. und der Ausbruch des Großen Abendländischen Schisma," in *Regnum und Imperium. Die französisch-deutschen Beziehungen im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert*, ed. idem, Pariser historische Studien 23 (Munich: De Gruyter, 2008), 101–164, and idem, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 183–246. The second study focuses directly on our topic; see especially ibid., 205–217.

³⁶ Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 215–216.

³⁷ Ibid., 207.

lion as an opportunity to advance his ambitions in the Kingdom of Naples. According to Weiß, Louis's ambition pushed French policy onto a path that King Charles V followed only very reluctantly.³⁸ The German historian also noted that in 1378, the eldest daughter of the king of Hungary, who also held the Polish crown in union, died. Her marriage to the French prince was thus broken off, and the long-standing basis of the relationship between the two Charleses—both of whom had promised dynastic gains to the daughters of the Polish-Hungarian king—was unexpectedly called into question.³⁹ Finally, Weiß argued that a conflict between short-term and long-term goals played a role in their divergent partisanship. For Charles IV, Wenceslas's approbation was the immediate priority, so until the schism formally broke out, he depended on the consent of the acting Roman Pontiff in this matter, making the cardinals irrelevant to him. For Charles V, however, the continuation of a successful Italian policy was crucial in the long run.⁴⁰

Stephan Weiß has made a remarkable contribution to the field of research. However, the growing number of interpretations of the emperor's policy, which increasingly diverged or even contradicted one another, inevitably had consequences. Historians, lacking the ambition to analyze the substance of the matter on their own, found themselves facing an ever more apparent dilemma over which interpretation could be considered valid. It is noteworthy that in the past three decades, authors have increasingly expressed their views in sentences often ending with a question mark.

František Kavka (1993) has already reflected on the difficult situation created by the research. He questioned why the pragmatic Charles IV had remained on the side of Urban VI when Wenceslas's approbation remained unresolved, when Urban's promises were unreliable due to his fickleness and authoritarianism, when the cardinals—or rather Clement VII—offered more, and when, in the aftermath, this decision undermined the agreement on cooperation with the Valois family.⁴¹

³⁸ Ibid., 192–193.

³⁹ Ibid., 210–212.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 216.

⁴¹ František Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV. za jeho císařství (1355–1378). Země České koruny, rodová, říšská a evropská politika* [The Reign of Charles IV during his Emperorship, 1355–1378: The Lands of the Bohemian Crown, Family, Imperial, and European Politics], vol. 2 (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1993), 238–239.

Kavka addressed the dilemma by attempting reconciliation where controversy had existed. He argued that the emperor could not be criticized for his quick alignment with Urban, since his decision was not be fully carried out due to his death. Kavka assumed that the idea of a council, which emerged in 1379 in the writings of Henry of Langenstein and Konrad of Gelnhausen, would find a strong advocate in the emperor. However, since Charles immediately prioritized his obligations as the secular head of Christendom and the law over political flexibility and immediate gain, he could neither afford to wait nor adopt a more tactical approach. Yet, this ethos did not prevent him from pursuing his own policies. Support for Urban became both a rallying cry for the Roman papacy and a declaration of opposition to the restoration of the Avignon papacy. At the same time, it solidified the emperor's alliance with Louis of Hungary, which increased the prospects of his son Sigismund participating in the succession of the House of Anjou.⁴²

Although this interpretation has a certain logic, it is too convoluted for Kavka to successfully reconcile the often-contradictory theses drawn from older works. It is also true that the death of Princess Catherine and the emperor's alliance with the king of Hungary had already been considered in reflections on the Charles's policy long before Kavka and Weiß, notably by F. M. Bartoš (1947).⁴³ Therefore, Kavka's synthesis did not offer anything new in this regard.

Andreas G. Kistner (2022) was also aware of the wide range of hypotheses expressed. However, this time he contributed to the discussion in an original way. Supported by prosopographical analysis, he argued that personal ties promised better cooperation between Urban and the emperor than between Charles and Clement, as it could not be taken for granted that he, as a pope, would be "more accommodating" to the emperor. According to Kistner, individuals close to Urban could raise the monarch's expectations of good cooperation.⁴⁴

⁴² Ibid., 239.

⁴³ Bartoš, Čechy v době Husově, 14–15.

⁴⁴ Andreas G. Kistner, "Karl, der Papst und die Kardinäle," in *Carlo IV nell'Italia del Trecento: il "savio signore" e la riformulazione del potere imperiale*, ed. Maria Pia Alberzoni, Miriam Rita Tessera, Daniela Rando, and Eva Schlotheuber, *Nuovi studi storici* 126 (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, 2022), 131–168, at 159–163.

The latest biography of Charles IV was published by Olaf B. Rader (2023), who also commented on our issue. His interpretation was not without a critical edge. The German historian assumed that in the late summer of 1378 Wenceslas received the approbation of the two contending popes. Thus, in September, Charles, by his politically motivated inclination towards Urban, who was for him the legitimate pope, probably sent a “pernicious signal” (*ein verderbliches Signal*) by deciding against the College of Cardinals and against the preferences of his French nephew. What led Charles to make this decision, Rader was unsure. Perhaps he did so in the belief that it would give him control over European politics. Perhaps he sought to demonstrate to Christendom that imperial authority, which was committed to returning the papacy to Rome, would resolve the issue. Or perhaps he was in sympathy with the mystic Catherine of Siena, who supported Urban unconditionally.⁴⁵

The idea that the emperor was influenced by an Italian visionary is both original and deserving of attention. Rader’s assertion that Wenceslas received the approval of both popes in late summer is similarly intriguing,⁴⁶ as no other historian has mentioned this possibility. While the charter issued by Clement VII did exist, it could not have been drafted before September 20, the date of his election in Fondi. The exact date of the bull remains unknown and is a subject of ongoing debate. This highlights that the emperor’s policy presents a historiographical challenge, not least because of the unclear chronology of the events.

Looking back, it is clear that the emperor’s behavior not only challenged Henry of Langenstein but continues to puzzle scholars to this day. With the exception of Jiří Spěváček, who criticized Charles IV for his passivity, historians generally agree with the Parisian master that the monarch chose Urban quickly and without consultation. The reasons for this choice, however, remain disputed. Scholars also differ in their assessments of whether the emperor’s actions consciously or unconsciously escalated or tempered the conflict.

None of the proposed hypotheses has been accepted as conclusively proven. Even the most frequently repeated thesis—that Charles IV was responding to the threat of the Curia’s return to Avignon—has recently been challenged

45 Rader, *Kaiser Karl der Vierte*, 353.

46 Ibid.: “Bald nach Ausbruch der Kirchenspaltung 1378 hatte sich zumindest für König Wenzel eine Lösung abgezeichnet, denn im Spätsommer dieses Jahres erhielt er gleich doppelte Approbation durch die beiden sich befehdenden Päpste.”

on the grounds that this threat cannot be substantiated. Scholarship has also lost ground in another area. When Samuel Steinherz argued that the issue of Wenceslas's approbation remained unresolved during Charles's lifetime, he undermined Lindner's thesis that the emperor supported Urban due to his dynastic policy, which had been his main concern. Since then, scholars have sought to explain Charles's motives either in terms of a static legal consciousness and commitment to defending the Church, or in the context of dynamic French or Polish-Hungarian policies.

The story of Charles IV and the outbreak of the Great Schism presents a compelling challenge for ongoing research. Historians are continually proposing new interpretations, but as these multiply, there is also growing indecision among scholars. To gain a firmer understanding of Charles's actions, it is crucial to explore new sources or adopt fresh methodological perspectives. In doing so, we must move beyond the misleading notion that this is merely a micro-historical issue spanning a few months. Charles's papal and dynastic policies, with their intersections in Italy, France, and Hungary, did not suddenly emerge in 1378, nor did the personal connections and networks among the principal figures.

Sources, Perspectives, Structures

In France and England, the outbreak of the Western Schism and the attitudes of the royal court were recorded in prominent royal, provincial, and universal chronicles.⁴⁷ We lack such valuable sources of knowledge. Following the example of Western monarchs, Charles IV took care to document his Bohemian and Roman-German rule in writing and initiated the creation of several chronicles, but only one extends into the 1370s. Since its author, the Prague canon Beneš Krabice of Weitmile, died in 1375, his work cannot be used for

⁴⁷ For the English chronicles in this context, see Édouard Perroy, *L'Angleterre et le Grand Schisme d'Occident. Étude sur la politique religieuse de l'Angleterre sous Richard II* (1378–1399) (Paris: Librairie J. Monnier, 1933), 67–68, and Margaret M. Harvey, "The Case for Urban VI in England to 1390," in *Genèse et débuts du Grand Schisme d'Occident*, ed. Jean Favier, *Colloques internationaux du CNRS* 586 (Paris: CNRS, 1980), 541–560, at 543–545.

our purposes.⁴⁸ Perhaps even more significant is the absence of contemporary correspondence. Research has yet to uncover any letters exchanged between Urban VI and the emperor, which would be an invaluable source for interpreting Charles's actions.

The fortunate discovery of a chronicle today is highly unlikely, but new letters and other pragmatic writings can still be uncovered, as the editorial appendix to this work attests. Among the nine previously unpublished documents, the letters found in a fifteenth-century form collection in Bern, Switzerland—containing texts dating from the end of Charles IV's reign and the beginning of his son Wenceslas's reign—hold particular importance.⁴⁹ Especially valuable are two copies of letters from Urban VI to the emperor regarding the conflict with the cardinals. Also noteworthy is a letter from King Wenceslas to an unknown recipient, in which he announces his approbation by Urban VI.⁵⁰

Also of exceptional value is the official material from the first year of the schism, collected in the early fifteenth century by Johannes Ambundii, vicar general of the bishopric of Würzburg. Included below are two bulls from Urban VI, dated August and October 1378, which shed further light on his actions during the intensifying crisis.⁵¹

The little-known Würzburg collection will remind historians of the famous Spanish *Libri de schismate*—codices preserved in the Vatican archives containing a vast array of writings on the outbreak and course of the ecclesiastical

⁴⁸ On historiography at Charles's court, see Marie Bláhová, "Offizielle Geschichtsschreibung in den mittelalterlichen böhmischen Ländern," in *Die Geschichtsschreibung in Mitteleuropa. Projekte und Forschungsprobleme*, Subsidia historiographica 1 (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1999), 21–40, at 25–40.

⁴⁹ Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 220, fol. 93r–126r; Hermann Hagen, *Catalogus codicum Bernensium (Bibliotheca Bongarsiana)* (Bern: B. F. Haller, 1875), 272–273. It is not a completely unknown source. It has already been consulted by Helmut Weigel, "Männer um König Wenzel. Das Problem der Reichspolitik 1379–1384," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 5 (1942): 112–177, at 116, note 5.

⁵⁰ See nos. 2, 3 and 5 in the Appendix below.

⁵¹ Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.ch.f.84, fols. 135r–143v. The codex and its description are available online, see <https://www.franconica.online/o/s/de/item/26191> (accessed Dec. 7, 2024). On Johannes Ambundii, see Nikolaus Reiningier, "Die Archidiacone, Offiziale und Generalvicare des Bistums Würzburg. Ein Beitrag zur Diözesangeschichte," *Archiv des Historischen Vereins für Unterfranken und Aschaffenburg* 28 (1885): 1–265, at 146–153. Even the Würzburg codex is not entirely unknown, but has not yet been fully exploited, see Thomas, "Frankreich, Karel IV," 100, note 158.

crisis.⁵² However, Anette Löffler has shown that manuscript collections of this type are not limited to the Vatican archives and can also be found in the National Library in Paris.⁵³

Miscellanea containing texts from the early years of the schism have also been preserved in German-speaking countries and Bohemia, some of which were already described by Franz Bliemetzrieder.⁵⁴ Three codices will be used in the present study: A Basel manuscript from the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, originally from Trier, preserves, among other things, thirteen letters sent from Rome and Tivoli by cardinals and other dignitaries to the emperor in the spring and summer of 1378 regarding Urban's election and Wenceslas's approbation. The correspondence provides valuable details on the actions of several individuals, including the pope, making it surprising that the potential of these long-available letters has largely remained untapped, though they are occasionally referenced.⁵⁵

The codex held in Prague is also notable for its composition. It was likely created in the environment of King Wenceslas's chancery at the end of the fourteenth century and almost exclusively contains writings from 1378. What is particularly remarkable is that a similar corpus, though not as extensive, has been preserved in the Vatican Library.⁵⁶ Although these codices mainly contain familiar texts, it is significant for us that the Transalpine copies demonstrate the dissemination and reception of this written material within the Luxembourg court.

⁵² Vatican, Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Armarium LIV, vols. 14–48. It is the fruit of the collecting activities of the bishop of Pamplona, Martín de Zalba. See Michael Seidlmayer, "Die spanischen 'Libri de schismate' des Vatikanischen Archivs," *Spanische Forschungen* 8 (1940): 199–262.

⁵³ Anette Löffler, "Wessen Hände schreiben das Große Abendländische Schisma? Entstehung und Kontextualisierung der 'Libri de scismate,'" in *Der Papst und das Buch im Spätmittelalter (1350–1500): Bildungsvoraussetzung, Handschriftenherstellung, Bibliotheksgebrauch*, ed. Rainer Berndt (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2018), 135–150, esp. at 136–138.

⁵⁴ Cf. Franz Placidus Bliemetzrieder, ed., *Literarische Polemik zu Beginn des Großen abendländischen Schisma*, Publikationen des ehemaligen Österreichischen historischen Instituts in Rom 1 (Vienna–Leipzig: F. Tempsky, G. Freytag, 1910), 16*–25*.

⁵⁵ See Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, A IX 8, fols. 79r–84v. The letters were published by Franz Placidus Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel der Kardinäle mit Kaiser Karl IV. betreffend die Approbation Wenzels als Römischen Königs (Sommer 1378)," *Studien und Mitteilungen aus dem Benediktiner- und Cistercienser-Orden* 29 (1908): 120–140.

⁵⁶ See Prague, National Library, XIV D 19, and Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 4924.

However, the *Libri de schismate* deposited in the Vatican and Paris are quite unique. They contain eyewitness accounts from individuals who were directly involved in or witnessed the tumultuous events of 1378 in Italy. There was great interest in such testimonies, as the rulers of the Iberian Peninsula sought to make a careful decision regarding their stance in the ongoing schism. To that end, they initiated the collection of depositions about Urban's election and his coexistence with the cardinals. A total of five collections of investigations survives, which were conducted successively in Rome, Barcelona, Avignon, Medina del Campo, and again in Avignon between 1379 and 1386. Altogether, we now know of over 170 depositions from more than 150 eyewitnesses.⁵⁷

No historian of the origins of the schism can proceed without consulting these sources, which are often brimming with information. However, these sources are frequently problematic, as the vast majority of witnesses belonged to one or the other of the obediences and had the interests of their respective parties in mind. It is therefore necessary to approach the depositions with caution and verify them when possible, especially since many were taken at

⁵⁷ On the whole topic in detail with references to editions, see Michael Seidlmaier, ed., *Die Anfänge des großen abendländischen Schismas. Studien zur Kirchenpolitik insbesondere der spanischen Staaten und zu den geistigen Kämpfen der Zeit* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1940), 197–228; Oldericó Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano VI e l'insorgere dello Scisma d'Occidente*, Miscellanea della Società Romana di Storia Patria 20 (Rome: La Società alla biblioteca Vallicelliana, 1960), XI–XII and 40, who, however, writes about 224 depositions from 164 witnesses; Armand Jamme, "Renverser le pape. Droits, complots et conceptions politiques aux origines du Grand Schisme d'Occident," in *Coups d'État à la fin du Moyen Âge? Aux fondements du pouvoir politique en Europe occidentale*, ed. François Foronda, Jean-Philippe Genet, and José Manuel Nieto Soria, Collection de la Casa de Velázquez 91 (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2005), 433–482, at 433–434; Andreas Rehberg, "Le inchieste dei re d'Aragona e di Castiglia sulla validità dell'elezione di Urbano VI nei primi anni del Grande Scisma — alcune piste di ricerca," in *L'età dei processi: Inchieste e condanne tra politica e ideologi nel '300* (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, 2009), 247–304; idem, "Ein 'Gegenpapst' wird kreiert. Fakten und Fiktionen in den Zeugenaussagen zur umstrittenen Wahl Urbans VI. (1378)," in *Gegenpäpste: ein unerwünschtes mittelalterliches Phänomen*, ed. Harald Müller and Brigitte Hotz, Papsttum im mittelalterlichen Europa 1 (Cologne: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 231–260, and Patrick N. R. Zutshi, "Adam Easton and the Great Schism," in *Cardinal Adam Easton (c. 1330–1397). Monk, Scholar, Theologian, Diplomat*, ed. Miriam Wendling (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 29–64, at 31–32. Cf. also Florian Eßler, *Schisma als Deutungskonflikt. Das Konzil von Pisa und die Lösung des Großen Abendländischen Schismas (1378–1409)*, Papsttum im mittelalterlichen Europa 8 (Vienna: Böhlau, 2019), 49, note 96.

a considerable distance from the events described.⁵⁸ This is also true of the extensive deposition from 1386, made in Avignon before the Aragonese investigators, by Konrad of Veselá, the chapter dean at the royal castle of Vyšehrad near Prague. Eight years earlier, he had served as an imperial envoy in Rome, Anagni, Tivoli, and Fondi, and thus had much to contribute to our subject.⁵⁹ The newly uncovered sources published in the appendix will help us assess the reliability of his deposition.⁶⁰

However, the use of both new and well-known sources must go hand in hand with the choice of appropriate interpretive methods. Heinz Thomas was right in stating that the policy of Charles IV during the growing division between the pope and the cardinals, and his decision in favor of Urban VI, are among the most difficult issues in the political biography of this Luxembourg monarch.⁶¹ Nor was Henry of Langenstein wrong when he made the emperor's policy a major issue in the history of the Great Schism. It was a multilateral cause par excellence.

The Papal Curia was the center of political power within the medieval Church and functioned as the natural hub of integration for Western Christendom. As a result, the schism within its ranks destabilized the political situation across Latin Europe. Some saw the crisis as a unique opportunity for self-assertion and fueled the conflict, while many elites—both clerical and secular—felt compelled to resolve it. Therefore, the quarrel between the cardinals and Urban immediately spurred the development of a highly varied and dense communication network, the likes of which the Middle Ages had never

58 Cf. Walter Brandmüller, ed., "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit der Wahl Urbans VI. Quellen und Quellenkritik," in *idem, Papst und Konzil im Großen Schisma (1378–1431): Studien und Quellen* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1990), 3–41, at 10–12 (first published in *Annuarium Historiae Conciliorum* 6 (1974): 78–120), and Patrick N. R. Zutshi, ed., "Jean de Cros and the Papal Penitentiary on the Eve of the Great Schism," *Francia* 37 (2010): 335–351, at 342–343.

59 See "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," in *Monumenta Vaticana res gestas Bohemicas illustrantia*, vol. 5, *Acta Urbani VI. et Bonifatii IX. 1378–1404*, ed. Kamil Krofta (Prague: Typis Gregerianis, 1903), 3–16, no. 1.

60 The necessity of comparing the depositions with official material has already been emphasized by Zutshi, "Jean de Cros," esp. 348.

61 Thomas, "Frankreich, Karl IV.," 91.

before experienced to such an extent, and which, over time, grew organically into a conciliar movement.⁶²

The cardinals' dispute with Urban became increasingly multifaceted as knowledge of it spread from the epicenter of events to other parts of Europe during 1378. The works of Lindner, Valois, and Steinherz have long been mainstays of scholarship, precisely because they linked the worlds of Italian and Transalpine politics. However, as scholarship became more specialized, the pursuit of multilateral discussion declined considerably. In general, biographers of Charles IV have shown little interest in the causes and progress of the papal division. Scholars of the schism, in turn, have given only superficial, if any, attention to the emperor's involvement. More attention has traditionally been paid to the behavior of the French king or Queen Joanna of Naples. This book, and the composition of its chapters, is based on the premise that it is worth considering the original breadth of relationships and communication that our subject entails.

It has long been recognized that any account of Charles IV and the Great Schism must necessarily engage with the underlying causes of the ecclesiastical rupture. Accordingly, Chapter 1 examines the election of Urban VI, his fraught relationship with the cardinals, the intensification of mutual tensions, and the eventual breakdown that culminated in the election of Clement VII at Fondi and the decision by both factions to seek a violent resolution. The dramatic events in Rome and its environs are recounted in the form of a continuous narrative, offering an effective means of introducing the principal actors, literary sources, historical contexts, and interpretive themes that recur throughout the volume.

At the same time, the various subsections of the introductory chapter retain a strong analytical dimension. The dominant view in the literature on the emperor's policy holds that the cardinals rebelled against Urban VI because he refused to return to Avignon with them, and that this threat drove Charles IV into Urban's camp. This interpretation is examined through the relevant sources, which suggest that the cardinals' supposed desire to return to Avignon played little, if any, role in their disputes with Urban. Instead, this theme was prominently developed later, particularly in the second half of 1379, as part of

⁶² Most recently Philip H. Stump, *Conciliar Diplomacy at the Council of Constance (1414–1418). Unity and Peacemaking in a World Historical Perspective*, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions 207 (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2024).

Urbanist propaganda promoted by adherents of Birgitta of Sweden's visionary legacy. Since existing research has also explored the emperor's personal ties to the Italian community that supported Urban, attention is given to literary works produced by individuals who likely influenced, or may have influenced, Charles's policy decisions. The possible role of a general council in Charles's intentions has also been considered by historians; accordingly, the efforts to convene such a council in 1378 and the motivations behind them are addressed. Finally, special attention is devoted to Queen Joanna of Naples. Her consultations with experts regarding which side to support appear to have contributed to Clement VII's decision to postpone his coronation—a development that ultimately had far-reaching consequences, including within the imperial court.

Although the reform and administration of the Church were crucial issues on which the cardinals and Urban could not agree, their disagreements also emerged in handling political matters. Charles IV was involved in at least two of these issues. Accordingly, Chapter 2 offers a detailed examination of the emperor's papal policy on the eve of the schism.

The dispute with the Papal Curia over the approbation of King Wenceslas had been at the center of Charles's attention since 1375. This was a remarkable and highly dynamic chapter in the history of the power rivalry between the Empire and the papacy. Papal approbation of the Roman king signified an invitation to the imperial coronation in Rome. The election of a king-son during the monarch-father's lifetime (*vivente rege/imperatore*) was a relatively common means of transferring power within a dynasty in the Empire until the early thirteenth century. However, an imperial coronation conducted by the pope during the lifetime of a reigning emperor was almost unheard of. By that time, only Otto I had achieved a similar dynastic success in Rome for his son, in 967. When another notable emperor, Frederick I Barbarossa, attempted the same by negotiating with four successive popes between 1169 and 1190, he failed. This book argues that Emperor Charles IV sought the same dynastic success in his rivalry with the Papal Curia.

Chapter 2 provides a thorough analysis of the dispute over the papal approval of Wenceslas's royal election. The analysis focuses on the demands imposed by Pope Gregory XI, which posed significant obstacles to the emperor's dynastic ambitions. These demands included not only papal approval of Wenceslas's election, but also Charles's potential resignation should his son receive the imperial crown, as well as the emperor's expected involvement in the so-called War of the Eight Saints, a conflict between the papacy and

Florence. The chapter explores the reasons behind the initial breakdown of the approbation negotiations in 1376 and traces how the crisis was eventually resolved once Wenceslas's election and royal coronation became a *fait accompli* and Gregory XI relocated from Avignon to the volatile political landscape of Italy.

It is argued that the uncertainty over whether the pope would remain in Italy acted as a catalyst for both sides to resolve their differences, with Wenceslas's Roman journey (the so-called *Romzug*) providing common ground for their respective interests. The emperor's preparations for his third Italian campaign—Wenceslas's first—began in earnest in 1377, while Charles also worked toward a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Italy, in line with Gregory XI's wishes. Additionally, the emperor's efforts to secure Wenceslas's Roman coronation during his lifetime offer a new lens through which to reinterpret the famous journey of the Luxembourg monarchs to France, a political event whose significance has been the subject of long-standing scholarly debate.

By March 1378, Charles IV could feel satisfied with his preparations for the Italian campaign. His two envoys had been in Italy for some time, negotiating the journey with local powers. After meeting with the emperor, the French king sent a solemn delegation to Italy to help facilitate peace. Meanwhile, the imperial legation in Rome pressed Gregory XI to finally agree to proclaim Wenceslas's approbation. However, the pope's death prevented the conclusion of a peace agreement and the issuance of the Bull of Approbation. The emperor now had to wait to see how the new Roman Pontiff and his cardinals would approach both matters.

The fate of the emperor's dynastic interests within the Roman Curia—amid the labyrinth of Urban's ambitions and the cardinals' intrigues—is the subject of Chapter 3. It is argued that the issue of Wenceslas's approbation gradually became one of the reasons for, and a driving force behind, the deepening schism at the top of the Church. In early May, contrary to the cardinals' recommendation, Urban VI decided to postpone Wenceslas's approval and send his own envoys to the emperor with new demands. However, he antagonized the cardinals by excluding them from discussions about the delegation's mandate. After the cardinals' revolt in Tivoli became public at the end of July, the issue of Wenceslas's approbation quickly became a hostage to the conflict between the two sides. Urban took advantage of the situation, accusing the cardinals of seeking a schism before the emperor and blaming them for the delays in publishing the approbation, claiming they had hidden the necessary documen-

tation from him. The Italian cardinals benefited from the tense situation and ultimately made the solemn act possible through their participation, despite the fact that, on the same day, they signaled to Urban that his position was questionable and indirectly recommended his resignation. Below, the exploration focuses on what they hoped to achieve with this ambivalent policy.

The argumentative core of the book is Chapter 4, which directly addresses the emperor's policies during a time of escalating crisis. Charles IV knew well from the experience of his own coronation expedition to Rome that not only papal approbation and the pacification of Upper Italy, but also stable conditions in the German lands, were necessary for Wenceslas's campaign to succeed.

Against the backdrop of the political situation in the German part of the Empire, it is argued that Charles IV began stabilizing the turbulent situation in south-western Germany after his return from Paris with the help of the so-called *Landfrieden*. His efforts culminated at the diet (*Hoftag*) in Nuremberg in late August and early September 1378, where he instigated the conclusion of four peace associations. He also promoted reconciliation between the Swabian imperial cities and the coalition led by the count of Württemberg, despite the fact that this proved disadvantageous for the Luxembourg monarchs in the long run.

From all that has been stated so far, the first answer to the question of why the emperor was quick to favor Urban is now evident. In September, when the pontiff's embassy arrived with a Bull of Approbation, a summons for King Wenceslas to travel to the coronation, and news of the cardinals' revolt, the emperor was strongly motivated to accept the bull and stand by Urban. The chances were higher than ever that he would live to see the day when Wenceslas would receive the imperial diadem from the pope's hands in Rome.

Since the young king had sent letters to the emperor's supporters announcing that he had been approved, the question of the oath was no longer negotiable. The pope expected Charles IV, in addition to the recognition of his legitimacy, above all to actively support his pontificate at the sovereign courts. This is evident not only from Urban's newly discovered correspondence with the emperor but also from Charles's reaction. It is argued that, after accepting the bull, the emperor immediately launched a massive diplomatic campaign in favor of the pontiff in Italy, France, and Germany, in cooperation with King Louis of Hungary and the German princes. He sought to persuade the cardinals to reconcile with Urban in order to preserve the legitimacy of the approbation bull.

Historians' rethinking of Charles's policy motives has largely overlooked the subtle nature of his decision-making, particularly the communication between the two warring parties and the imperial court within a broader context. Especially after the official declaration of the cardinals' revolt, a "hunt for the truth" about the papal election and the rebellion began in Italy, which also reached the imperial court. Whatever version of the facts reached Charles IV—whether through envoys, letters, declarations, or agitational literature—depended on the speed and persuasiveness of the messengers, determining which story would prevail.

This dynamic is analyzed in detail in the emperor's memorandum to the electors and German princes, by which he sought to convince them of Urban's legitimacy and win their support for his diplomatic campaign. The sources of the emperor's understanding of Urban's election are examined, alongside the factors he identified as the causes of the cardinals' revolt. It is argued that both the Urbanists and Charles IV were able to spread claims about the rebels that were difficult to prove or outright false because the cardinals themselves were disproportionately dilatory in their own agitation campaign, allowing the Urbanists to agitate undisturbed at the imperial court. The official envoy of the rebels did not arrive in Prague with the key documents, including the Bull of Approbation, until ten days after Charles's death, and the reasons behind this "failure" are of particular interest, as it facilitated the emperor's swift alignment with Urban.

When the emperor firmly sided with the Roman Pontiff at the end of September, he wrote to the rebels that Prignano had been elected by divine intervention. This statement reflects his spiritual interpretation of events. It also prompts a reflection on Charles IV's receptiveness to visionaries, who, through their spiritual insights, sought to foster Church reform and influence political affairs. Among the spiritual charismatics, particular attention is given to Archbishop John of Jenstein, chancellor of King Wenceslas, who engaged with the Italian religious milieu and promoted Marian piety. Notably, his prophetic dream, which foretold the outbreak of the schism in Prague in October 1378, is of particular significance.

The conclusion revisits Henry of Langenstein's criticism and the two questions it raised. It is argued that the emperor's final great political challenge speaks primarily to the power of dynastic ambition, the impact of both successful and neglected agitation, and the allure of spiritual knowledge at the birth of the Great Schism.

1.

The Story of a Divided Papacy

The final undisputed pontiff of Avignon passed away on the morning of March 27, 1378. He had not been able to stabilize the situation in Italy following his return to Rome. The bulk of the cardinals in the Sacred College were French, and a few of them continued to reside in Avignon. The long administration of the ecclesiastical state in Italy by predominantly ultramontane laypersons and prelates led to clashes with both the Visconti of Milan and the Tuscan city communes, with Florence at the head, and it was difficult to find a way to reconciliation. However, the Apostolic See's vacancy presented an opportunity for change. The Romans had high hopes, especially since the Eternal City had not witnessed the election of a supreme pontiff in almost a century.⁶³

The Gold of Rome and the Fleshpots of Avignon

At the time of Gregory's demise, there were sixteen cardinals present in Rome out of the twenty-three still living. They formed three groups or factions. The

⁶³ On Gregory XI, see Paul R. Thibault, *Pope Gregory XI. The Failure of Tradition* (New York: Longman, 1988). On the situation in Italy and the Papal State, see Guillaume Mollat, *The Popes at Avignon, 1305-1378* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 164-173, and Peter D. Partner, *The Lands of St. Peter. The Papal State in the Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1972), 357-367. On the situation in Rome, see Richard C. Trexler, "Rome on the Eve of the Great Schism," *Speculum* 42 (1967): 489-509, and Rollo-Koster, *The Great Western Schism*, 240-251.

largest among them was the Limousine lobby with members including Jean de Cros, Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille, Pierre de Vergne, Guy de Malesset, and Géraud du Puy. Pierre de Sortenac and, in all likelihood, Guillaume Noëllet, who was not from the Limoges area, had also allied with them. Hugues de Montalais, Bertrand Lagier, and Pierre Flandrin were members of the French group, which also included Robert of Geneva and the Aragonese Pedro de Luna. The final lobby comprised Pietro Corsini, Francesco Tébaldeschi, Simone da Borsano, and Giacomo Orsini, all of them Italians. Also present in Italy was Jean de La Grange, who Gregory XI had dispatched to Tuscany for peace negotiations with Florence. The other cardinals, including Anglie Grimoard, Gilles Aycelin de Montaigut, Jean de Blauzac, Pierre de Monteruc, Guillaume de Chanac, and Hugues de Saint Martial, remained in Avignon.⁶⁴

The day after the pope's death, a large crowd of parishioners from one of Rome's districts approached Cardinal Lagier to express their expectations regarding the election. They envisaged the appointment of either a Roman or an Italian, citing France's long-time reception of Roman gold as justification. The meeting with the municipal administration took place with a similar sentiment. The Church of Santa Maria Nuova nel Foro, where the late pope had previously resided as a cardinal, served as Gregory's burial site, and the members of the College of Cardinals gathered there during the novena for the funeral proceedings. This was a chance for city officials to objectively present the reasons that the new pope should be selected from among the Italians and continue to reside in Rome: the exhausted, neglected, looted, and riot-torn Church in Italy would finally find solace and tranquility after years of abandonment. When the cardinals did not display sufficient empathy, the supplicants emphasized that it was essential to appease a hostile *popolo*. It was even

64 "Factum Iacobi de Ceva," in César Egasse Du Boulay, ed., *Historia universitatis Parisiensis*, vol. 4 (Paris: Pierre de Bresche and Jacques de Laize de Bresche, 1668), 485–514, at 485. For more on this key Urbanist source from 1378 see below. The factions (lobbies) were formed around kinship, family and client relationships, and to a lesser extent around regional solidarity, see Joëlle Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter: Empty Sees, Violence, and the Initiation of the Great Western Schism* (1378), Brills Series in Church History 32 (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2008), 173, note 19, and *eadem*, *The Great Western Schism*, 25–26. The cardinals were introduced by Josef Lenzenweger, "Das Kardinalskollegium und die Papstwahlen 1378," *Theologisch-praktische Quartalschrift* 126 (1978): 316–325, at 316–321.

rumored in the street that the ultramontanes would not leave the city alive unless a Roman or Italian was elected.

The city's residents refused to rely on words alone. Instead, they assumed guardianship over the papal palace and the district of St. Peter (Borgo). They released the guards of the deceased pope and fortified the gates of the bridges spanning the Tiber. They immobilized the boats on the river to counteract potential escapes by Church dignitaries and banished Roman nobles under threat of death and seizure of property to prevent their machinations. They allowed armed peasants to enter the city, causing significant disturbance and disrupting the prelates' peace for a time. In their search for an Italian pope, the Florentine commune decided to help the Romans. It resumed the actions of its agents, who were previously working against the French papacy in Rome. However, they were uncovered in December 1377 and disbanded a month later.

The cardinals responded to the escalating tensions by appealing to the city's representatives to provide security measures. In addition to the elites' pledge to provide security, a guard commander was selected, who was accompanied by four assistants. All personnel took an oath to safeguard the College of Cardinals from any form of violence or coercion. The three bishops responsible for protecting the conclave also committed themselves to this pledge. Disturbing public order was already strictly prohibited under threat of the death penalty. In front of the dwelling of Cardinal Hugues de Montalais, there were instruments of torture displayed in the presence of the executioner, including an axe and an execution block, causing unrest among the curial ranks. Anticipating looting, many officials made the decision to safeguard their valuable belongings by relocating them to convents or private residences.

The cardinals themselves recognized only limited threats to their safety before entering the conclave. Some took greater precautions. For instance, Pedro de Luna drafted a will and Bertrand Lagier was accompanied by a confessor. Robert of Geneva, who was young and agile, wore a wire shirt beneath his rochet. Others showed no concern, and it was not solely the Italians. Cardinal Hugues de Montalais forbade anything to be taken from his house. There was a general belief that had their allies in the Roman nobility not intervened, it would have been simple to summon the feared Briton and Gascon mercenaries whose leaders had been spotted in Rome. No one, however, could imagine such an immense threat. The College of Cardinals therefore rejected the arrival

of the armed men, which would have angered the Romans. Similar concerns led to the refusal of a proposal from some cardinals, supported by the head of the Apostolic Chamber, Archbishop Pierre de Cros of Arles, to hold the conclave within the fortified walls of the Castel Sant'Angelo.⁶⁵

Due to the fragmentary nature of the Sacred College, it is comprehensible that the cardinals had started deliberating potential candidates prior to the election. Every faction had one or two preferred choices. The cardinals from the French faction demonstrated a greater inclination towards the Italians rather than the Limousins, from which the previous popes had emerged. It is likely that during the negotiations between the two factions, the Archbishop of Bari, Bartolomeo Prignano, was suggested as a suitable candidate since the negotiators indicated that no one from their respective groups would be acceptable to a two-thirds majority. Some of the Limousins also supported this idea. Prignano, who was sixty years old and originally from Naples, had resided in Avignon for a long time, where he had worked in the Papal Chancery. Upon his return to Rome with Gregory XI, he took charge of the office in place of vice-chancellor Pierre de Monteruc, who remained in Avignon. As a result, the majority of the cardinals were aware of him, or at the very least thought they were. He was perceived as knowledgeable, ethical, and skilled in practical matters. Thus, even before his election, Prignano's reputation, the desire to elect an impartial pope, and perhaps also the arguments in favor of an Italian candidate had won him some affection within the Sacred College.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ See the cardinals' manifesto of August 2, 1378, "Casus cardinalium ultramontanorum," in Marc Dykmans, ed., "La troisième élection du Pape Urbain VI," *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 15 (1977): 227-239, at 227, 229, and 231; further, see "Factum Iacobi de Ceva," 485-490; Valois, *La France*, 1:9-19, and Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 35-36. For Florence, see Gene A. Brucker, *Florentine Politics and Society, 1343-1378* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 355-356; Trexler, "Rome on the Eve," 497-503; Brandmüller, "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 8-9; Jamme, "Renverse le pape," 436-437.

⁶⁶ Valois, *La France*, 1:21-35. "Casus cardinalium ultramontanorum," 231, denies that the cardinals, including the Italian ones, thought of electing anyone outside the College. The Urbanist "Factum Iacobi de Ceva," 489-490, in turn attributes the idea of Prignano's candidacy to the Limousins. On Prignano's origins and ecclesiastical career, see Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 3-31, and more recently Daniel Williman, "Schism within the Curia: The Twin Papal Elections of 1378," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 59 (2008): 29-47, at 32-35. Přerovský has also traced the attitude of individual cardinals towards Prignano's candidacy in the period before and during the conclave, see *L'elezione di Urbano*, 43-62.

On the afternoon of April 7, the cardinals proceeded to enter the conclave one by one. A crowd of thousands congregated outside the papal palace, vociferously expressing their desire for a Roman or, at the very least, an Italian pope. The conclave, located on the first floor, was comprised of two chapels, a hall, and numerous cells designated for cardinals and their clerical-conclavists. The cardinals and their companions entered through the door, which was left open, followed by around seventy armed men and Romans, disregarding regulations. The latter group continued to advocate for the election of a Roman or Italian candidate. While the majority eventually departed, the extraordinary visits did not end there, and later thirteen Roman district leaders accompanied by a handful of citizens appeared. They requested the precise name of the Roman or Italian to be conveyed, stating that the lack of this information put them and the cardinals in peril due to the people's determination to have their demands met. Cardinal-priors Pietro Corsini, Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille, and Giacomo Orsini, representing their peers, stood their ground and did not bow to pressure, vowing only to act in favor of the Church. The debates continued for some time, and it was not until approximately nine or ten o'clock in the evening that the final door was secured. The papal kitchen and cellar had been thoroughly searched and ransacked, creating a cheerful and boisterous atmosphere in and around the palace. The conclave members could not expect to have a peaceful night.⁶⁷

On Thursday, April 8, the cardinals convened to discuss the election after attending morning mass. Cardinal Corsini was unable to complete his opening speech due to the noise coming from the square. The sounding of the alarm from St. Peter's left the cardinals particularly frightened, while the crowd—most of which was armed—continued to grow louder and more agitated. The conclave custodian, Bishop Guillaume de La Voulte, called the three cardinal-priors to the window. Giacomo Orsini, speaking through the barrier, attempted to discourage the people from escalating the riot. However, the

⁶⁷ "Casus cardinalium ultramontanorum," 231 and 233; "Factum Jacobi de Ceva," 490-491; Valois, *La France*, 1:20-21, 35-39. Cf. Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 36. The topography of the election in the palace is described by Marc Dykmans, "La troisième élection du Pape Urbain VI," *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 15 (1977): 217-264, at 218-220. The behavior of the looting crowd is reflected in Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter*, 206-208. The trumpets and tambourines, she argues, reinforce the idea that the cardinals were facing a group of drunk revellers rather than political agitators.

custodian deemed the situation outside the conclave so severe that the cardinals had to hasten the election of an Italian or Roman lest they face a violent fate. The three cardinals considered these words for some time before they approached the window again. Through them, Giacomo Orsini pledged that an Italian or Roman pope would be announced by 3 p.m. the following day. When this proved insufficient, Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille revised the deadline to the end of the current day.

Several suggestions were proposed in the College of Cardinals regarding how to fulfil the enforced commitment. Orsini advised satisfying the Romans by having a mock election of a Roman Minorite. Some argued that a flawed election could be rectified once they were permitted to act without restriction. However, the representatives of each of the factions—Cardinals Pedro de Luna, Jean de Cros, Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille, and Simone da Borsano—reached an agreement on Bartolomeo Prignano and advocated for his election to proceed. The elder Francesco Tebaldeschi received the vote of the Florentine Corsini, albeit only due to a promise made to the Romans. Jean de Cros explained his decision to not vote for an Italian candidate from the College and opted for Prignano, as did Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille and other cardinals. Orsini was the only one to abstain, citing a lack of freedom in his decision. Apparently up to five cardinals confirmed their independent voting for the true pope upon the announcement of Prignano's name. The attempt to conduct a formal election, despite the prevailing pressure, appears to have been successful. After Pietro Corsini changed his stance, Prignano received fifteen votes in the so-called first election. This occurred at around nine o'clock in the morning.

The Sacred College did not immediately disclose the election result. According to the procedure, it was necessary to secure the consent of the elected individual, and the cardinals also shared a desire for the safe removal of their valuable possessions from the conclave. Achieving all of this required time and presented challenges. The Guardian, Guillaume de La Voulte, once more called upon the cardinal-priors to approach the conclave window, stating that the people demanded satisfaction. The cardinals reiterated their pledge that the Italian or Roman pontiff would be announced on the same day. Simultaneously, Corsini gave a letter to the custodian with the names of Prignano and six other Italian prelates, instructing him to bring them to the palace. Then a fresh round of attacks was launched on the doors of the conclave. Those present demanded a Roman pontiff, warning that otherwise the cardinals would face death. The election of an Italian pope now appeared insufficient.

Meanwhile, the Italian prelates summoned to the palace had arrived, with the exception of Tommaso Ammannati, the Bishop-elect of Limassol, Cyprus, who had lost his courage before reaching the finish line amid the rioting crowd. The assurance from the mouths of the conclave's participants brought some calm, and the six guests and isolated cardinals enjoyed a convivial lunch and conversation, as if the danger had passed. Afterwards, the cardinals reconvened in the chapel for a meeting where a proposal was presented to endorse Prignano's election. All cardinals present, with the exception of the three absent, more or less agreed, resulting in the so-called second election.

It was about 3 p.m., and the crowd outside the palace was once again becoming noisy. From the window overlooking the courtyard, Giacomo Orsini exclaimed "You have the Pope!" and directed the crowd towards St. Peter's Basilica. Some people interpreted this to mean that the cardinal of St. Peter's Tebaldeschi had been chosen and hurried to ransack his apartment, while others sought reassurance that a Roman had truly been elected as pope. After Orsini made a dismissive gesture towards the crowd, the irate masses stormed the conclave. After the cardinals' escape failed, they sought assistance from a cleric who proposed presenting a Roman, Tebaldeschi, as a false pope to the public. Although the cardinal initially resisted, citing the archbishop of Bari as the rightful pontiff, his protest proved too weak due to his advanced age and infirmity. The farcical spectacle continued for several hours before finally concluding around five or six in the afternoon. The news that Prignano had been elected had circulated among the public and led to disappointment among those who did not know him. The confused archbishop of Bari chose to stay hidden with Tebaldeschi in the palace, who had assured him of his election.

Eventually, the remaining cardinals successfully departed from the conclave. They split up at dusk. Pietro Corsini, Simone da Borsano, Géraud du Puy, Bertrand Lagier, and Pedro de Luna chose to remain in their residences in the city. The ultramontanes Pierre de Vergne, Pierre de Sortenac, Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille, Guy de Malesset, Jean de Cros, and Hugues de Montalais fled to the Castel Sant'Angelo in various disguises. The remaining four cardinals left Rome under the cover of darkness. Pierre Flandrin and Giacomo Orsini travelled to Vicovaro Castle—a property owned by the latter—which was located around 30 miles away. Meanwhile, Guillaume Noëllet visited the closer Ardea Castle. The leader of the French faction, Robert of Geneva, initially disguised himself and visited the residence of his chaplain, Agapito Colonna, who was a Roman by birth and also the bishop of Lisbon. It was there that he encoun-

tered Cardinal Pedro de Luna and proposed to accompany him on their escape, but the Aragonese vehemently declined. Then, Robert departed armed, as was his custom, for Zagarolo, located around 20 miles away. Prior to his departure, he dispatched Colonna to the Vatican to help the new pontiff. In order to allay Prignano's fears, the bishop stayed near him throughout the night.⁶⁸

On the morning of Friday, April 9, the five cardinals who had previously returned to their Roman homes were the first to come back to the palace. They informed Prignano that it would not be correct to refuse the outcome of the unanimous election, negating any doubts he had about the honesty and significance of the votes. The cardinals residing in the Castel Sant'Angelo were anticipated. Prignano and the city officials had sent a delegation to them requesting their arrival, but the camerlengo Pierre de Cros, brother of Cardinal Jean de Cros, expressed his dissatisfaction with the outcome of the election and the Romans' behavior, urging the cardinals to resist. As it turned out, his efforts were in vain. The six cardinals initially provided one of Prignano's envoys with a signed power of attorney, empowering their colleagues to carry out the installation of the new pope without their physical presence, albeit on their behalf. Finally, after being persistently urged, they departed the Castel and arrived at the papal palace on the same day.

After twelve cardinals, constituting two-thirds of the original number of electors, had convened in the chapel, Corsini declared to Prignano, speaking on behalf of the rest, that he had attained the papacy. The so-called third election took place. Upon the archbishop of Bari's acceptance of the post, he was enthroned, the *Te Deum* was sung, and Cardinal Pierre de Vergne proclaimed the *Gaudium Magnum*, announcing that the new pope had taken the name of Urban VI. Not only did the Italian Corsini take advantage of the situation,

68 "Casus cardinalium ultramontanorum," 233, 235, 237; "Factum Jacobi de Ceva," 491-495; Valois, *La France*, 1:39-55; Seidlmayer, *Die Anfänge*, 5-6; Dykmans, "La troisième élection," 252-254; and Jammer, "Renverser le pape," 437-439. Cf. Rollo-Koster, *The Great Western Schism*, 23-35. Trexler, "Rome on the Eve," 508-509, concluded that the ultramontanes did not feel safe or free in Rome before the election and that this must have had an effect on the conclave. Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter*, esp. 195-206, on the other hand, argues that the violence, manifested in particular by looting, was traditional and could not have fundamentally frightened, let alone surprised, the cardinals. Rehberg, "Ein 'Gegenpapst' wird kreiert," 242-259 goes even further, noting that witnesses perceived and evaluated the coercive actions of the Romans during the conclave through the lens of proto-national stereotypes, historical precedents, and overly generalized perceptions of the Roman population.

but the three Limousin cardinals—Jean de Cros, Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille, and Guy de Malesset—also emphasized their merits in Urban's election and asked for his favor.⁶⁹

The pontiff held his first Mass on Saturday, April 10, at St. Peter's Basilica. It is believed that the four cardinals who had left Rome also came back to honor the new pope on the same day.⁷⁰ The next day, during a sermon, a Franciscan allegedly voiced uncertainties about Prignano's appointment. No further details are known.⁷¹ The witnesses who commenced disseminating information regarding the election from Rome to different recipients did not share such doubts, although they were aware of the pressure from the crowd.

One of the conclave narrated the events of the tumultuous election to a confidant in Avignon, fearing that it might be portrayed inaccurately and unfairly.⁷² Cristoforo da Piacenza, the representative of the Gonzagas of Mantua at the Curia for many years, communicated to his lord that Prignano had been elected by the cardinals due to the kindness and efforts of the Roman people. He opined that the Church had not seen a shepherd as good as Prignano in over a century. He described Prignano's virtues, namely, not favoring his relatives, being kind to the queen of Naples, and being distinguished for his practicality and wisdom.⁷³ Two days later, Cardinal Robert of Geneva informed the Roman emperor that the conclave had only lasted one night because the Romans had refused to agree to any further delay. Nevertheless, he assured Charles IV that Prignano had been unanimously elected and that he himself had enjoyed a friendly relationship with the new pontiff when he was archbishop of Bari.⁷⁴ Cardinal Corsini also relayed the news of the election to the emperor, expressing hopes for the new pope based on his wit, virtue, prac-

⁶⁹ "Casus cardinalium ultramontanorum," 237, 239; "Factum Jacobi de Ceva," 495-498; Valois, *La France*, 1:56-62; Seidlmayer, *Die Anfänge*, 5-6; Dykmans, "La troisième élection," 254-257. Cf. Jammer, "Renverser le pape," 439-440, and Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter*, 218-219.

⁷⁰ The return of the cardinals was mentioned on April 11, 1378, by the conclave Bindo in a letter to Peter Rubei, who was residing in Avignon, see Brandmüller, ed., "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 29-30, no. 12, at 30. See also "Casus cardinalium ultramontanorum," 239, and "Factum Jacobi de Ceva," 498-499.

⁷¹ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 42. Cf. Brandmüller, "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 18.

⁷² See Brandmüller, ed., "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 29-30, no. 12.

⁷³ See *ibid.*, 25, no. 7, and 30-31, no. 13.

⁷⁴ See *ibid.*, 33-34, no. 17. Add ms. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, A IX 8, fol. 1r, and Prague, National Library, XIV D 19, fol. 80v.

ticity, and purity of life.⁷⁵ Similarly, Francesco Casini, a physician in the papal service, informed his hometown of Siena that numerous peculiar events had occurred during the conclave, but ultimately Prignano had secured the election. Casini held him in high esteem, praising his aristocracy, intellect, morality, and fairness. He also lauded Prignano's two decades of service with the Curia, as well as his ideal age and excellent health. Meanwhile, he counselled the Sienese to exercise prudence in their dealings with the Florentines and to seek reconciliation with the pope through repentance and devotion rather than monetary means, which he held in contempt.⁷⁶ Nicola di Giglio Malavolti also corresponded with Siena regarding the election of an erudite and virtuous leader, whom the Christian world hoped would bring about peace.⁷⁷

The correspondence demonstrates that the impact of the general public on the election was considered. However, these witnesses, including cardinals, expressed their views as if the public had no effect on the legitimacy of Urban VI. Rather, their expectations of Prignano were based on his prior outstanding performance in both his professional and personal life.⁷⁸

Actions reflected words. During the week leading up to Urban's coronation, the period during which the letters were written, the cardinals supported the pope in fulfilling the customary Easter practices, including the sanctification of palms, offering indulgences to pilgrims, and announcing anathemas. The last of these ceremonies occurred on Maundy Thursday, April 15. The standard practice of lighting and throwing candles onto the ground was predominantly executed against the "enemies of the Church", the Florentines. The climax was the crowning of Bartolomeo Prignano on Easter Sunday, April 18. Traditionally, the responsibility of putting the tiara on the pope's head was assigned to the cardinal-bishop of Ostia, who had not yet been appointed after Pierre d'Estaing's death the previous year. The young Florentine cardinal, Pietro Corsini, took on this important role. Urban VI proceeded with a procession to the Lateran Basilica, where he received the customary oaths from both secular and clerical individuals.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ See Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 120, no. 1.

⁷⁶ See Brandmüller, ed., "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 34, no. 18, and 32, no. 15.

⁷⁷ See *ibid.*, 25–26, no. 8.

⁷⁸ Cf. also Seidlmaier, *Die Anfänge*, 10.

⁷⁹ "Factum Jacobi de Ceva," 498–499; Valois, *La France*, 1:62–64; Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter*, 218–219; Jamme, "Renverser le pape," 441. Urban himself did not celebrate Easter Mass before the coronation. The cardinals did so on his behalf. See Bernhard Schimmelpfennig,

Urban's coronation served as a reason to update the world on the situation in Rome. On April 19, all sixteen cardinal-electors sent a letter to their colleagues in Avignon, which was consistent with previous correspondence. They clarified that they had elected Prignano freely and unanimously, highlighting his noteworthy skills and virtues, in an effort to curb the spread of rumors. The coronation of the pope was officially announced, with the expressed hope that under his rule, the state of the Church would improve and the true faith would be spread.⁸⁰

It is hard to know what rumors the cardinals had in mind. On April 12 the Florentine leaders thanked the Sienese for the news of the election of Francesco Tebaldeschi without confirmation of its canonical legitimacy.⁸¹ Therefore, the fictitious enthroning of Tebaldeschi was probably denied by the cardinals. Yet, it is possible that they made unspecified references to the tumultuous circumstances surrounding the whole election, as indicated by the usage of the term "freely" mentioned for the first time in the available correspondence. Nevertheless, in Avignon, the report's meaning was evident. The cardinals who stayed on the banks of the Rhône conveyed their congratulations to Urban in a letter that arrived in Rome around June 24.⁸²

After the coronation, the pope and the cardinals maintained their interactions in a traditional manner, at least outwardly.⁸³ They saw each other while celebrating Church services.⁸⁴ The cardinals approached Urban with petitions for themselves as well as for their kin and acquaintances. Some even made requests in July, a period already marked by high tension.⁸⁵ Notably, they sat together at consistories, with private sessions typically held on Mondays and Wednesdays and public sessions on Fridays, during which Church administration and judicial matters were discussed.⁸⁶ During the sessions, it became

⁸⁰ "Die Krönung des Papstes im Mittelalter dargestellt am Beispiel der Krönung Pius' II. (3. 9. 1458)," *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 54 (1974): 192–270, at 254–255.

⁸¹ On the letter and its editions, see Valois, *La France*, 1:64, note 4. The sending of similar letters by the cardinals and their reception at Avignon is mentioned by "Factum Jacobi de Ceva," 506.

⁸² See Brandmüller, ed., "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 31–32, no. 14.

⁸³ See *ibid.*, 41, no. 24. Cf. Valois, *La France*, 1:65–66.

⁸⁴ Cf. Valois, *La France*, 1:63.

⁸⁵ Cf. the list of them in "Factum Jacobi de Ceva," 500–503.

⁸⁶ Seidlsmayer, *Die Anfänge*, 6–7, and Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 73.

⁸⁶ "Factum Jacobi de Ceva," 503–505.

increasingly clear that the College of Cardinals and the pope were going to be unsuccessful in their efforts to achieve mutual understanding and respect. Urban VI proved to be a different person from who the cardinals believed Bartolomeo Prignano, the executive head of the chancery, to be.⁸⁷

The Roman pontiff released an official statement concerning his election on April 19 in the bull *Nuper felicis recordacionis*. In this statement, he declared that the election had occurred on the first day of the conclave, with a rare show of unity amongst the cardinals and the divine intervention of the Holy Spirit. This presented a new interpretation of past events, as the election outcome was deemed to be a miracle for the new pontiff. As he wrote, he was surprised and even appalled by his rise in status, as he had always believed that servitude was preferable to leadership. However, he was convinced to answer God's summons. And since the reward is commensurate with the effort, just as a teacher does not boast about how helpful he is, but rather how much he has worked, he accepted the burden of apostolic duty and asked for prayers to alleviate the difficulties of his ministry.⁸⁸

Urban also did not hide his surprise at receiving the papal dignity a little later in a letter to Orvieto.⁸⁹ Through this letter we witness the amazement of an "ordinary" man, who, through divine favor, became a representative of God on earth and must, therefore, work hard to earn his reward. Although all popes

87 Only Cardinal Hugues de Montalais is said to have warned his brothers about Prignano's negative character traits, i.e., that he was a "melancolicus et furiosus homo", see Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 55–56.

88 The dated exemplar for the archbishop of Canterbury is included in *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae a Synodo Verolamiensi A.D. 446 ad Londinensem A.D. 1717*, vol. 3, ed. David Wilkins (London: R. Gosling, F. Gyles, T. Woodward, and C. Davis, 1737), 127–128, see esp. 128: "Prima die, qua ad hoc invicem convenerant, de ipsorum fratrum concordi voto, parique concordia, eodem afflante Spiritu, processit de nobis [...] canonica, communis et concors electio." The undated and incomplete text (without arenga) can be found in *Annales ecclesiastici*, vol. 7, ed. Odoricus Raynaldus (Lucae: Leonardus Venturinus, 1752), 310–311, see esp. 310: "Prima die, qua ad hoc invicem convenerant, de ipsorum fratrum communi voto raraque concordia eadem afflante Spiritu processit de nobis [...] canonica, communis et concors electio." Earlier papal encyclicals announcing the result of the election were analyzed by Felix Gutmann, *Die Wahlanzeigen der Päpste bis zum Ende der avignonensischen Zeit*, Marburger Studien zur älteren deutschen Geschichte 2/3 (Marburg a. d. Lahn: N. G. Elwertsche Buchhandlung, 1931), see esp. 53–59. Cf also Schimmelpfennig, "Die Krönung des Papstes," 251.

89 *Codice diplomatico della città d'Orvieto*, vol. 1, ed. Luigi Fumi (Florence: G. P. Vieusseux, 1884), 569.

felt they were the chosen ones, we have evidence that Urban's comments about his elevation were particularly lofty and outside conventional language.⁹⁰

How did Prignano plan to repay the Almighty for His unexpected display of trust? On June 24, 1378, Cristoforo da Piacenza wrote to Mantua from Rome that Urban had been particularly severe towards the cardinals at the beginning of his apostolate; nevertheless, he had started to reinstate proper behavior (*incipit mutare mores*).⁹¹ The bishop of Córdoba, Garsias Menéndez, later attested that he had heard Urban, whilst the cardinals were still in Rome, state multiple times: "I aim to cleanse the Church, and I will do so; initially, I plan to reform this See."⁹² Although his electors had likely chosen him in anticipation of reform, it had not occurred to them that they would set an example.⁹³

As previously mentioned, a group of cardinals approached Urban on April 9 to request favors, which was the best way to increase the incomes of their large households.⁹⁴ However, it transpired a day later that the new pontiff had not signed the pertinent documents. When asked for plenary indulgences during Easter confession, the pope urged the cardinals to confess to him first due to their alleged involvement in simony, a vice that Urban would not tolerate in anyone, including cardinals, as discussed in consistories multiple times. Two days following the coronation on April 20, the pope publicly stated that he would punish the simony of the cardinals as an example. When one of them, the lawyer Simone da Borsano, argued on another occasion that the offender must receive three warnings beforehand, the pope allegedly responded with, "I have the power to do anything, and I wish to proceed in this manner."⁹⁵

⁹⁰ The depositions are reproduced by Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 65–69, who stresses that Urban's bull foreshadows the political-religious program of his reform. Cf. also Seidlmayer, *Die Anfänge*, 11–12 and 17.

⁹¹ See Brandmüller, "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit", 41, no. 24.

⁹² Seidlmayer, ed., *Die Anfänge*, 279. Cf. ibid., 12, and Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 68–69.

⁹³ Stefan Weiß, "Luxury and Extravagance at the Papal Court in Avignon and the Outbreak of the Great Western Schism," in *A Companion to the Great Western Schism (1378–1417)*, ed. Joëlle Rollo-Koster and Thomas M. Izbicki, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 17 (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2009), 67–88, at 81. Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 87, suggests that "the expectation of reform was one of the reasons that induced the cardinals to vote for him."

⁹⁴ See Norman Zacour, "Papal Regulation of Cardinals' Households in the Fourteenth Century," *Speculum* 50 (1975): 434–455.

⁹⁵ Seidlmayer, ed., *Die Anfänge*, 279; Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 69–70.

One of the manifestations of simony during this time was the accumulation of ecclesiastical offices. Cardinals gained a large number of benefices, typically between 200 and 500, for the benefit of their households. However, to do so, they required the pope's dispensation. Urban deemed that there were too many non-resident beneficiaries, and the day after the coronation on April 19, he reprimanded a group of bishops for remaining with the Curia instead of residing in their dioceses.⁹⁶ The cardinals, however, also made requests for benefices for persons in their proximity. As a result, Urban allegedly prohibited them from acting as intercessors (*promotores*) for kings and princes, and from requesting benefices for others, if the elimination of simony from the Church was to be achieved. A contemporary historian of the schism, Dietrich of Niem, recorded that Urban was not involved in simony throughout his pontificate, selflessly granted all benefices without any expectation of reward, and carefully considered the recipients to avoid any conflict.⁹⁷ However, it will become apparent that Urban did acknowledge the worth of his favor when it proved beneficial to him.

Benefices were one of the two primary sources of income for the cardinals. The other was a portion of the Apostolic Camera's revenue, with the most lucrative being the *servitia communia*. During the consistory on May 3, when Urban addressed the cardinals to encourage them to change their lifestyle, a bull appeared on the doors of the Roman basilicas, depriving the cardinals of their *servitia* income until they had repaired their titular churches, which were in a bad state after their long absence.⁹⁸ And Urban anticipated that the cardinals would make a financial sacrifice in yet another way. Traditionally, a newly elected pope gave a substantial monetary gift to his electors, which could have been as much as 100,000 florins. This sum was then divided equally among the cardinals. This amount was equivalent to a quarter or a third of the average annual papal income. Remarkably, the new pontiff gave nothing to the cardinals and stated that he had discovered an empty treasury.⁹⁹ Urban also applied his reforming zeal in a practical direction to bring the College closer to the

⁹⁶ Seidlmayer, *Die Anfänge*, 14; Weiß, "Luxury and Extravagance," 78–79.

⁹⁷ Cf. *Theoderici de Nyem de scismate libri tres*, ed. Georg Erler (Leipzig: Veit & Comp., 1890), 122. See also Seidlmayer, *Die Anfänge*, 10–11; Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 70–71.

⁹⁸ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 73–74, 84–85; Weiß, "Luxury and Extravagance," 77–78.

⁹⁹ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 72, Zacour, "Papal Regulation," 446; Dykmans, "La troisième élection," 257; Weiß, "Luxury and Extravagance," 76.

ideals of the Gospel. The cardinals were instructed to reduce the number of members in their households by approximately half, and emphasis was placed on frugality in their dining experiences.¹⁰⁰

However, tension between the pope and the cardinals was not solely attributed to reform. Cristoforo da Piacenza wrote to Mantua on June 24, reporting that following his coronation, Urban expressed a desire to be advised by Neapolitans, and subsequently ruled and governed with their help.¹⁰¹ Before May 10, the pope appointed Nicola Orsini, the count of Nola, as the marshal of his court, Tommaso di Sanseverino as senator of Rome, the bishop of Salerno as his chamberlain, the abbot of Sant'Andrea in Naples as his treasurer, and included Ugo di Sanseverino and Niccolò Spinelli, chancellor of the queen of Naples, as members of his council.¹⁰²

Indeed, other depositions indicate that Urban did not possess a well-developed notion of efficient co-governance with the cardinals. Since the thirteenth century, the use of the head and body analogy implied a functional administrative connection between the supreme pope and his “brethren,” who acknowledged their responsibility in governing the Church.¹⁰³ They traditionally influenced the appointment of new prelates and cardinals, judged and advised in consistories, and were involved in political affairs. Urban did not alter this practice, but rather began to underline and assert the independence of his will in an unprecedented manner, using various methods.

Cardinal Borsano lodged a complaint that Urban had been independently appointing and reassigning bishops without seeking the opinion of the cardinals.¹⁰⁴ After the election, Prignano reportedly gave a lecture to the cardinals proclaiming the uniqueness of their status, which he asserted was even greater than that of royalty. As a result, he urged them to relinquish their pensions

¹⁰⁰ Zacour, “Papal Regulation,” 446; Gilles-Gérard Meersseman, “Spirituali romani, amici di Caterina da Siena,” in *idem, Ordo fraternitatis. Confraternite e pietà dei laici nel Medioevo*, vol. 1, *Italia sacra* 24 (Roma: Herder, 1977), 534–573, at 551–552; Weiß, “Luxury and Extravagance,” 76–77.

¹⁰¹ See Brandmüller, “Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit,” 41, no. 24.

¹⁰² Émile G. Léonard, *Les Angevins de Naples* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954), 454. See also Paolo Stacul, *Il cardinale Pileo da Prata*, Miscellanea della Società Romana di storia patria 19 (Roma: La Società alla biblioteca Vallicelliana, 1957), 160, note 4; Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 162, note 34.

¹⁰³ Jamme, “Renverser le pape,” 444–445; Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte*, 5/2:679, note 1.

¹⁰⁴ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 82–83, where one can find other similar cases. See also Seidlmayer, *Die Anfänge*, 13–14.

from the secular princes, offering to reimburse them for any financial losses they might incur. He wanted them to act as impartial judges rather than as advocates for friends or royalty. On April 11, two days following the election, Robert of Geneva gifted the pope a valuable ring, to which Urban reacted in his own distinctive manner. With phrasing describing the gift as the present of a noble pauper who receives considerably more from the pope, Urban indiscriminately intimated to the cardinal—related to both the French monarch and emperor—that dependence upon the leader of the Church should be foremost. Urban also indicated a willingness to sever the longstanding ties between the College of Cardinals and the French crown, by contemplating the creation of new cardinals from other nations.¹⁰⁵

The pope's reform program seemingly included the assertion of his own supremacy as a defining element. However, this policy was not sufficiently justified or legally thought out. Rather, it appeared to be an impulsive move that involved publicly rebuking, slandering, and verbally attacking the cardinals.¹⁰⁶ In fact, the first few weeks of Urban's pontificate created an explosive situation, which posed a serious threat of violent conflict. The crisis was aggravated by the cardinals' lack of responsibility, selflessness, and willingness to make sacrifices. Meanwhile, Urban significantly worsened the situation with his attempts to monopolize power and by carrying out his reform work willfully and without scruples. While the pope expressed his intention to begin the reform with himself, he alienated others through his unorthodox behavior and lack of perspective and discretion.¹⁰⁷

In his account of the origins of the schism in 1380, Tommaso di Acerno, a determined Urbanist and bishop of Lucera, described five sources of tension among the Church leaders. The lifestyle of the ultramontanes, simony, Urban's harshness, and the expected appointment of new cardinals have already been discussed. The bishop stated that the cardinals also held a grudge against the pope for disregarding their wish to go back to Avignon.

¹⁰⁵ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 74–76.

¹⁰⁶ See the evidence, reasoning, and conclusions by Valois, *La France*, 1:67–69; Ullmann, *The Origins*, 44–49; Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 76–86, 114; Swanson, *Universities, Academics*, 6–7; and Jamme, “Renverser le pape,” 441–447.

¹⁰⁷ According to Dietrich of Niem, all the cardinals agreed that he was insane, see *Theoderici de Nyem de scismate libri tres*, 19–20: “Eum delirum ipsi cardinales communiter iudicabant. Fuit enim duri cordis.”

This theme, which is familiar to us, formed an essential component of Tommaso's entire statement, which is presented as follows. Upon the death of Gregory XI, a rumor spread in Rome that the pope's return to the city was a divine miracle, since he had left Avignon against the will of all the cardinals, the king of France, and his brother, and despite the persuasion of his family and friends. However, after being unable to bring peace to Italy, Gregory was convinced by the ultramontane cardinals and some of their relatives to return to Avignon. He eventually relented and committed to accompanying them to Anagni during Easter and to Naples in the summer. From there, he would make his way back to the west with the assistance of the queen of Naples. Shortly after the agreement, Gregory fell ill and passed away. The Romans viewed his death as divine intervention, indicating that God had kept the pope in Rome in order for a successor who would remain there to be elected. Indeed, the newly appointed pontiff instructed all the cardinals during the summer to prepare themselves for a winter stay in Rome, as he intended to remain there. The ultramontanes were extremely displeased with this outcome, as they had no desire to remain in the city after Prignano's election. They had intended to bring the new pope with them to Avignon. According to the bishop, their last hope was lost when Urban VI created new cardinals in September 1378. It was then that they acknowledged that it was not within their power to relocate a legitimate pope from Italy. Therefore, having been dissatisfied about departing without a leader, they chose to elect an antipope.¹⁰⁸

The longing to return to Avignon serves as a central storyline and a driving force behind the cardinals' rebellion in the bishop's account. Additionally, it demonstrates the diabolical nature of the ultramontanes, whose plans were contrary to the divine will. This perspective was also shared in July 1380 by Bartolomeo Mezzavacca, the bishop of Rieti, whom Urban had promoted to cardinal. Moreover, Mezzavacca heard that the ill Gregory XI himself admitted that his decision to leave the Roman See and return to Avignon had brought about divine judgment upon him.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ See *Rerum Italicarum scriptores*, vol. 3/2, ed. Ludovico Antonio Muratori (Milan: Societas Palatina, 1734) 715–716, 725, 728.

¹⁰⁹ See Étienne Baluze, ed., *Vitae paparum Avenionensium*, vols. 1–4, ed. Guillaume Mollat (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1914–1928), vol. 2:743 [1224] (excerpt), and Franz Placidus Bliemetzrieder, ed. “Eine Streitschrift des Kardinals Bartholomäus Mezzavacca gegen den Traktat des Kardinals Petrus Flandrin (1379),” *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung. Ergänzungsband* 8 (1911): 674–701, at 682–683. The Austrian historian

To fully grasp the ideological basis of the two Italians' depositions, one must acquaint oneself with a significant figure in the Roman spiritual community: Alfonso Pecha. Born in Segovia to courtiers of the king of Castile, he voluntarily gave up the rank of bishop in Jaén for his ascetic views in the late 1360s. Later, he became a confessor to the mystic and visionary Birgitta of Sweden and was a close associate of Cardinal Pedro de Luna before the schism.¹¹⁰

When Pecha testified in November 1379 regarding the outbreak of the schism, he defended Urban's legitimacy by drawing upon his knowledge of the election's factual details—given his role as the cardinal's confessor—and his understanding of the law that he had previously studied. Interestingly, he also referenced his knowledge of the divine will (*per viam Sancti Spiritus et noticie voluntatis Dei*) to support his assertions.

He recounted in great detail how St. Birgitta, based on revelations she had received, had urged Clement VI, then Urban V, and finally Gregory XI to return from Avignon to Rome to reform the Church. He also described how he himself had been involved in this inspired struggle. At the end of Gregory XI's life, he stated that the pope chose war with Florence over reform, which had proven to be unsuccessful. As a result, the pope gave in to the pressure from the cardinals and their entourages who were eager to return to the "fleshpots" of Avignon and started planning his departure from Italy. However, he became ill and passed away, supposedly as a result of divine judgment (*dei judicio*). According to Pecha, God permitted the appointment of an Italian pontiff after over 30 years of French popes opposing his will and prioritizing earthly desires. This new pope strengthened the See of Peter in Rome and administered severe punishment to the French cardinals for their transgressions.¹¹¹

thought this was a separate *Factum* on Urban's election, in which Mezzavacca responded to the opening part of Pierre Flandrin's treatise. In fact, it is his Roman deposition of July 1380, which has survived in full in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 11745, fols. 81r–87r. See Seidlmayer, *Die Anfänge*, 218, without reference to Blaemertzrieder's edition.

- ii) On his biography in the context of the schism more recently, see Robert Earl Lerner, "Alfonso Pecha on Discriminating Truth about the Great Schism," in *Autorität und Wahrheit: kirchliche Vorstellungen, Normen und Verfahren (13.–15. Jahrhundert)*, ed. Gian Luca Potestà (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2012), 127–146, at 128–130, and Zutshi, "Adam Easton," 33–35.
- iii) See Arne Jönsson, ed., *Alfonso of Jaén. His Life and Works with Critical Editions of the Epistola solitarii, the Informaciones and the Epistola servi Christi* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1989), 185–193. Pecha elaborated the deposition, the so-called *Informaciones domini Alfonsi*, five to six years later in a separate treatise, the so-called *Conscriptio*; on this source, see Lerner, "Alfonso Pecha on Discriminating Truth," esp. 133–136. The same scholar also

After the death of Gregory XI, it was indeed said in Rome that the pope had died there by divine will because he intended to leave the city that year and return to Avignon. These rumors circulating among the Romans were attested to by the Clementist Tommaso Ammannati as well as by the Urbanists.¹¹² Perhaps these rumors reflected Gregory's disillusionment with his stay in Italy and his disputes with the cardinals, the nature of which we know nothing about.¹¹³

What we do know for sure, however, is that in the controversy over the legitimacy of Urban's election, the narrative of the ultramontanes' desire to return to Avignon was spread by people united in their respect for the mystical-reformist legacy of the Swedish visionary who died in Rome in 1373.¹¹⁴ Both Alfonso Pecha and Tommaso di Acerno gave their first brief testimonies on the election of Urban VI and the schism in March 1379 before the envoy of the King of Aragon. Five witnesses were involved in the inquiry, while the other two—Catherine of Sweden and the Englishman Adam Easton—were also staunch supporters of Birgitta.¹¹⁵ The witnesses stood up for Urban, who

prepared a critical edition, see *idem*, ed., "Alfonso Pecha's Treatise on the Origins of the Great Schism: What an Insider 'Saw and Heard'", *Traditio* 72 (2017): 411–451, esp. 428–437.

¹¹² On Tommaso's testimony from 1380 see Louis Gayet, ed., *Le Grand Schisme d'Occident*, vol. 2 (Paris: Welter, 1889), Appendix, 67. He points out that this was the opinion of the Romans. See also Dykmans, ed., "La troisième election," 226, note 3.

¹¹³ Hugues de Montalais attested in May 1380 that Gregory XI had summoned the cardinals before his death and expressed remorse for having brought them to Italy and having put the Church in danger, see Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 2:742 [1223]. Cf. Marc Dykmans, "La bulle de Grégoire XI à la veille du Grand Schisme," *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome. Moyen-Âge* 89 (1977): 485–495, at 488. According to Bertrand Lagier, Gregory, under the weight of failure, even thought of returning to Avignon as early as the autumn of 1377, see Seidlmayer, ed., *Die Anfänge*, 329. Cf. Trexler, "Rome on the Eve," 496–497. It is also recorded that the queen of Naples negotiated a reconciliation between Gregory and the cardinals in early September 1377, see note 403 below. And it is also worth noting the words of Jean Gerson from the early 1420s in his work *De examinatione doctrinarum*, in which he recounts that the dying Gregory warned those around him against visionary men and women who had deceived him and led the Church into the danger of schism. See Edmund Colledge, "Epistola solitarii ad reges: Alphonse of Pecha as Organizer of Birgittine and Urbanist Propaganda," *Mediaeval Studies* 18 (1956): 19–49, at 37, note 109.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Maria Husabø Oen, ed., *A Companion to Birgitta of Sweden: And Her Legacy in the Later Middle Ages*, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 89 (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2019).

¹¹⁵ See Ann M. Hutchison, "Adam Easton and St Birgitta of Sweden: A Remarkable Affinity," in *Cardinal Adam Easton (c. 1330–1397): Monk, Scholar, Theologian, Diplomat*, ed. Miriam Wendling (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 139–154.

appreciated their support. At the same time, he renewed Birgitta's canonization process by appointing a second canonization commission.¹¹⁶ Since Bartolomeo Mezzavacca, who, like Pecha, also referenced the time of Urban V in his testimony, spoke of prophecies, signs in the stars, revelations, and divine will in connection with Urban VI's election,¹¹⁷ it is very likely that he too was influenced by the former confessor of the Swedish visionary.

Alfonso Pecha first compiled Birgitta's visions in Rome for the initial canonization commission in 1377. In the early version of the *Revelationes*, the divine desire for the return of the popes to Rome was expressed only through allusions.¹¹⁸ Birgitta's political revelations, addressed to the supreme pontiffs and openly pleading for the return of the papacy to Italy, were collected by Pecha in a separate text, the *Tractatus de summis pontificibus*. Since the visions in this work closely align with Pecha's deposition from November 1379 (the so-called *Informationes*), the editor of the work, Arne Jönsson, dated the *Tractatus* to around the same period or slightly earlier.¹¹⁹

By the autumn of 1379, the groundwork was indeed well laid to discredit the ultramontanes as being in opposition to the divine will. After the cardinals and Clement VII had involuntarily fled Italy for Avignon in the spring of that year, it became easier to interpret the real or seeming nostalgia of Gregory XI and the cardinals for Avignon as a diabolical scheme to return, defying divine will and ultimately culminating in the schism.¹²⁰

The exalted rhetoric of Birgitta's admirers combined deep religious conviction with pragmatism. In line with the visions of their icon, they saw the election of a reformist Italian pope as a godsend and did not want to be deprived of it by "godless" cardinals, whom they claimed craved the luxury of Avignon. At the same time, they had a vested interest in legitimizing the pope based

¹¹⁶ See Seidlmayer, *Die Anfänge*, 208, and Colledge, "Epistola solitarii ad reges," 22. On the appointment of a second commission, see *Acta et processus canonizacionis Beate Birgitte. Efter Cod. A 14 Holm.*, Cod. Ottob. Lat. 90 o. Cod. Harl. 612, ed. Isak Collijn, SFSS Ser. 2, Lat. skr. 1 (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1924–1931), 3.

¹¹⁷ See Bliemeetzrieder, ed., "Eine Streitschrift," 683.

¹¹⁸ Colledge, "Epistola solitarii ad reges," 37–38.

¹¹⁹ See St. Bridget's *Revelations to the Popes: An Edition of the So-called Tractatus de summis pontificibus*, ed. Arne Jönsson (Lund: Lund University Press, 1997), 66. Cf. Pavlína Rychterová, *Die Offenbarungen der heiligen Birgitta von Schweden. Eine Untersuchung zur alttschechischen Übersetzung des Thomas von Štítné (um 1330–um 1409)*, Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 58 (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004), 44–57.

¹²⁰ For the circumstances of Clement VII's flight to Avignon, see Valois, *La France*, 1:169–178.

in Rome, especially in light of Birgitta's canonization, as the Swede had been highly critical of Avignon.¹²¹

As Alfonso Pecha and Tommaso di Acerno's depositions were already published in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is natural that the topic of cardinals returning to Avignon would have arisen in schism-related literature.¹²² However, it has not received as much attention in this context as it has in texts pertaining to Emperor Charles IV. Among the scholars on the schism, Walter Ullmann in particular accepted it without criticism.¹²³ He also emphasized the testimony of Urban's secretary, Tomás de Petra, another Spaniard, who, on the same occasion as Pecha, testified that when the split between Urban and the cardinals occurred, he had approached the pope and asked that he clarify the cause. The pontiff informed him that the cardinals had requested that the Curia return to Avignon. However, he firmly declined due to his concern for the destiny of Italy. Subsequently, the cardinals asserted that the Apostolic See would never be able to achieve peace in Italy and recommended that selling all the assets of the Knights Hospitaller could serve as a practical method of providing for the Curia. Urban staunchly rejected the idea of dismantling the order in this way, which greatly offended the cardinals.¹²⁴

Ullman believed that the audacious demand—which, incidentally, evokes again the supposed wickedness of the cardinals—sparked a clash between the pope and the ultramontanes, exacerbating the existing misunderstandings.¹²⁵ However, we have no real proof that the French cardinals attempted to make Gregory XI and Urban VI go back to Avignon. During the spring of 1378, the disagreement between the Italian pope and some of the Sacred College became evident in a different manner.

¹²¹ Lerner, "Alfonso Pecha's Treatise," 414; Zutshi, "Adam Easton," 42.

¹²² Cf. Valois, *La France*, 1:69; Swanson, *Universities, Academics*, 5–6; Dykmans, "La troisième élection," 257; Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter*, 179.

¹²³ See Ullmann, *The Origins*, 9, 50–52, and 173.

¹²⁴ See *Annales ecclesiastici*, 7:315.

¹²⁵ Ullmann, *The Origins*, 50.

The Castel Sant'Angelo and Papal Liveries

The stronghold of papal authority in Rome was the formidable Castel of Sant'Angelo, and Urban naturally sought to gain control of it as swiftly as he could. Consequently, on April 22, he dispatched his trusted aides to the castellan, Pierre Gandelin, instructing him to deliver the fortress to his Neapolitan nephew. However, the Frenchman declined the request for two reasons. Initially, Pierre requested the repayment of the outstanding sums. Given the stormy circumstances of the pontifical election, he proceeded to make the handover of the fortress subject to the authorization of the cardinals and his superior, the camerlengo Pierre de Cros. The castellan thus dispatched his uncle, Pierre Rostaing, who was the commander of the garrison, to ascertain their opinion. The camerlengo recommended waiting to hand over the fortress. The cardinals supported surrendering the castle upon payment of the outstanding sums. However, some of them were insincere. Robert of Geneva and Jean de La Grange covertly encouraged Gandelin to retain the castle for an additional two months, assuring him that Urban was not the legitimate pope.

Cardinal de La Grange did not come back to Rome from Tuscany until April 24, implying that the secret instructing of the castellan could not have occurred earlier. Gandelin followed the instructions of the conspirators. He called the garrison, clarified that there were doubts about the election's validity, and referred to the oath that he had sworn to Gregory XI, stating that he would surrender the castle only with the approval of the cardinals who remained in Avignon if there was any rioting. This was also the response given to the deputy papal treasurer who arrived to settle the debt. The countdown began. Although Urban planned to bribe the castellan and even threatened to execute his compatriots, the pontiff was unsuccessful. In fact, Gandelin, under the influence of the conniving cardinals, held out for two months. On July 3, the cardinals residing in Avignon—Anglic Grimoard and Pierre de Monteruc—ordered the castellan to surrender the castle; however, by that point, a revolt by most of their Roman counterparts was already looming.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ The case is discussed in detail by Jamme, “Renverser le pape,” 449–451. Cf. also Philippe Genequand, *Une politique pontificale en temps de crise: Clément VII d'Avignon et les premières années du Grand Schisme d'Occident (1378–1394)*, *Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana* 35 (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2013), 323–324. On the correspondence between Rome and Avignon, see Valois, *La France*, 1:66, note 1.

The resistance shown by the influential custodian of the Vatican's funds, Pierre de Cros, towards relinquishing the castle was evident. He was outraged by the circumstances surrounding Prignano's election and was likely disappointed that his old friend from the curial milieu had accepted it. However, we have no record of mutual antagonism between them during Gregory XI's lifetime.¹²⁷ In any case, the pontiff accused Jean de Cros of using disrespectful language towards him and of embezzling from the papal treasury, which the camerlengo had transferred from the Vatican to Castel Sant'Angelo and then from Rome without taking an inventory. The desertion of a crucial papal official, to whom the curiales had previously pledged their loyalty, severely impacted the functioning of the pope's administration. Therefore, it is unsurprising that Urban subsequently commanded the arrest of the camerlengo.¹²⁸

Robert of Geneva was likely incited to rebel against Urban due to the repeated disparagement of his and other cardinals' honor. The initial encounter between Cardinal Jean de La Grange and Urban had a tense atmosphere, and according to Alfonso Pecha, Robert expressed his disapproval by stating, "You have not treated the cardinals with the respect they deserve, as your predecessors did, and have diminished our dignity. I truthfully tell you that the cardinals will also try to degrade your honor."¹²⁹ And indeed, on May 1, during the celebration of his cardinalate—the commemoration of the day on which the Basilica of the Twelve Apostles was consecrated—Robert, allegedly due to absent-mindedness, forgot to grant the customary indulgences on behalf of the pope at the end of mass. Three weeks later, he privately convinced the Castilian king and emperor's envoys that, except for the incapable Tebaldeschi, all the other cardinals were willing to defy Urban. The energetic, noble-born cardinal

¹²⁷ Cf. Williman, "Schism within the Curia," 40–44. According to this scholar, there is no evidence of official contact between the curiales of Bartolomeo Prignano and Pierre de Cros, see *ibid.*, 34–35. See also Zutshi, "Jean de Cros," 346.

¹²⁸ "Factum Iacobi di Ceva," 506–507; Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 123–124; Weiß, "Luxury and Extravagance," 81. On the crucial significance of the camerlengo's office, see Daniel Williman, "The Camerary and the Schism," in *Genèse et débuts du Grand Schisme d'Occident*, ed. Jean Favier, *Colloques internationaux du CNRS* 586 (Paris: CNRS, 1980), 65–71.

¹²⁹ This is the deposition of Alfonso Pecha from November 1379, see *Annales ecclesiastici*, 7:379: "In effectu [pater beatissime] vos non tractastis dominos cardinales cum illo honore quo debetis, sicut antecessores vestri faciebant, et diminuitis honorem nostrum. Dico vobis in veritate, quod cardinales conabuntur etiam diminuere honorem vestrum."

apparently assumed the responsibility of freeing the European monarchs from their allegiance to Urban.¹³⁰

It was not a coincidence that Robert of Geneva supported Jean de La Grange during his audience with Urban. When de La Grange, an influential and affluent cardinal, who advised the French king Charles V, appeared before Urban at the end of April, the pope reproached him for his extensive diplomatic activities in several countries. While remaining in Italy, Urban expressed his dissatisfaction with the terms of reconciliation that were being discussed in his negotiations with Florence. Urban also disapproved of the fact that the cardinal had entrusted the administration of the city of Viterbo in the ecclesiastical state to Francesco di Vico, a Roman prefect whom Urban regarded as an enemy of the Church. As a result, the disgraced cardinal's house in Rome probably became a hub for dissidents' plotting meetings. The opposition of Jean de La Grange to Urban does not appear to have had a primarily national-political background, although there were later reports that he favored a Frenchman as pope.¹³¹

The Urbanists, however, attributed the castellan's reluctance to surrender the Castel Sant'Angelo to two other cardinals. They suspected Géraud du Puy of intrigue since he had appointed Gandelin as castellan years before as papal vicar in Italy, and the two were friends. They also cast a shadow of treachery over the great lawyer in the Sacred College, Cardinal Pierre Flandrin. They accused him of embezzling the funds he had received from Urban to get the castle under the pontiff's control. And these suspicions were not unfounded. Ludovico di Francesco, the bishop of Assisi, later gave a deposition that Géraud du Puy and Flandrin had dispatched him on a covert mission to the castellan, imploring him not to relinquish control of the fortress.¹³²

We are aware of the identities of five highly motivated dissidents who took charge and remained active in plotting against Urban. The pope was fully cognizant of the turbulent conditions surrounding his election and the spread of various rumors. He could not even discount the negative discourse circulating in Tuscany as of April 27, which portrayed him as a fearsome individual whose

¹³⁰ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 121–123, and Jamme, “Renverser le pape,” 451–452.

¹³¹ Valois, *La France*, 1:69–71; Ullmann, *The Origins*, 46–48; Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 119–121; Jamme, “Renverser le pape,” 442–443.

¹³² “Factum Jacobi de Ceva,” 507–508; Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 126–130.

actions and words terrorized many.¹³³ He thus actively endeavored to cement his legitimacy and reputation, particularly at the royal courts.

The Roman Pontiff had decided that the envoys sent by him would deliver there both the letters of the cardinals and his own regarding the canonicity of the April election. However, his efforts were not solely focused on correspondence and verbal communication. He also ordered that the monarchs and their kin be given scarlet liveries (*raubas*) adorned with the eagle emblem of the Prignano family, which Urban also utilized for his both lead and wax seal. There is ample evidence to support this practice. For instance, on May 19, the pope authorized Bertrando di Massello, who was the collector of the Apostolic Camera in the kingdoms of Castile and Navarre, to obtain scarlet cloth for the purpose of making a robe for the king of Navarre as a gift.¹³⁴ Thus, the practice of donning cloaks with the pope's dynastic insignia was performed to affirm the legitimacy of the pope.¹³⁵

The sources document the sending of papal delegations to the Holy Roman emperor, the king of France, the kings of the Iberian Peninsula, and England. Neapolitans were crucial to Urban's rule, and this was evident in his appointments for the aforementioned legations, for which he consistently selected a Neapolitan knight. The scheming cardinals did not let this go unnoticed and persuaded the pontiff to include their own noble representative in the delegations as well. Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille convinced his brother-in-law to go to the emperor, while another of Guillaume's relatives, who was heading to Paris, was briefed on the rebels' plans by the camerlengo Pierre de Cros in the presence of Pierre Flandrin. Cardinal Pierre de Vergne in turn requested that his confidant carry the election letters to Spain and Portugal. Guy de Malesset appointed his kin to join the delegation to England. The knights appointed by the cardinals were tasked to covertly caution the recipients against regard-

¹³³ From Pisa, Bartolomeo Serafini, prior of the charterhouse in Gorgona, wrote to Catherine of Siena about this, see *Leggenda minore di S. Caterina da Siena e lettere dei suoi discepoli*, ed. Francesco Grotanelli (Bologna: Gaetano Romagnoli, 1868), 260. Cf. Daniel Ols, "Sainte Catherine de Sienne et les débuts du Grand Schisme," in *Genèse et débuts du Grand Schisme d'Occident*, ed. Jean Favier, Colloques internationaux du CNRS 586 (Paris: CNRS, 1980), 337–347, at 338.

¹³⁴ Evidence was collected by Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 612, note 2, and Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 91–92, where information about Urban's bull is also included.

¹³⁵ The phenomenon of performance is the focus of Rollo-Koster, *The Great Western Schism*, which, however, does not mention the papal robes.

ing the cardinals' letters as authentic. Instead, they were to perceive them as coerced, given that the election's legitimacy was questionable. Additionally, the knights were to imply that once the cardinals departed from Rome, they would disclose their intentions to the recipients and provide more comprehensive details.¹³⁶

Thus, it is clear that in May, Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille, chamberlain of the College of Cardinals, joined the five rebels. In early April, he had strongly advocated for Prignano's election, and he was successful in making a good impression on the pope for a significant amount of time. Cardinal Guy de Malesset acted similarly.¹³⁷ The behavior of Cardinal Pierre de Vergne, another one of the Limousins, was even more contradictory. If we are to believe the available depositions, it appears that he was engaging in duplicity. He attended clandestine gatherings at Jean de La Grange's residence while simultaneously cautioning Urban about the potential threat posed by the cardinals. Even in the latter half of July, despite the evident rupture, he directed his confidant to assure Urban that he and Cardinals Bertrand Lagier, Pedro de Luna, Hugues de Montalais, Guillaume Noëllet, and Pierre de Sortenac had no intention of supporting the schism.¹³⁸ The evidence available on the positions of those mentioned confirms their lengthy indecisiveness on how to address the escalating tensions between their radical colleagues and Urban.¹³⁹ Finally, the major penitentiary, Cardinal Jean de Cros, appears to have been influenced by notable figures such as his brother.¹⁴⁰

As spring advanced, the rising temperatures made the stay in Rome increasingly uncomfortable. Consequently, the cardinals started to withdraw to Agnani, a town located roughly 18 miles from the metropolis, for the summer. Gregory XI assigned it, along with the adjoining Campagna Romana region,

¹³⁶ On the individual delegations, see Valois, *La France*, 1:90–92 (France), 198–199 and 226–228 (Spain and Portugal), 264–265 (Holy Roman Empire). On England, see Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 132–133. Cf. also Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 600, and Stacul, *Il cardinale Pileo*, 100–101.

¹³⁷ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 130–134.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 137–139.

¹³⁹ See *ibid.*, 139–140 (Bertrand Lagier), 142–144 (Pedro de Luna), 140–141 (Hugues de Montalais), 141–142 (Guillaume Noëllet), and 135–137 (Pierre de Sortenac). It took Robert of Geneva a particularly long time to convince Pedro de Luna to rebel. The Aragonese is said to have left Rome for Anagni in June, hoping to convince his colleagues of the legitimacy of Urban's election, see Valois, *La France*, 1:73–74.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 134–135. On him, see Zutshi, "Jean de Cros."

to Onorato Caetani, the count of Fondi, from whom he obtained a loan. In May, however, Urban dismissed the count from the rectorate without having settled the debt and replaced him with the Roman senator Tommaso di Sanseverino.¹⁴¹ The pope's dispute with Caetani was advantageous for the rebels. Cardinals Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille and Guy de Malesset were the first to depart for Anagni at the start of May while Pedro de Luna and Robert of Geneva were the last to leave Rome on June 17 and 21, respectively. The cardinals continued to maintain contact with Urban by sending him letters and making requests.¹⁴²

In early June, a rumor circulated in Florence that Cardinal Pierre de Monteruc, who lived in Avignon, had been declared pope by the French king. The disputes among the elites of the Church were evidently starting to permeate the public and gain momentum.¹⁴³ Urban, however, appears not to have viewed his position in relation to the College of Cardinals as being significantly in doubt. Conversely, he contemplated travelling to Anagni at the beginning of the month and dispatched his chamberlain to oversee the preparations. Nevertheless, despite numerous appeals from the cardinals, notably Robert of Geneva, who lingered in Rome, he postponed his departure. By the end of

¹⁴¹ Ullmann, *The Origins*, 50; Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 101–102; Partner, *The Lands of St. Peter*, 368; Jamme, "Renverser le pape," 447.

¹⁴² Valois, *La France*, 1:74–75; Ullmann, *The Origins*, 521; Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter*, 175–176. We may add that Jean de La Grange is still remembered in Rome on May 27, see Bliemeetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 122–123, no. 5. Although the cardinal-bishop Jean de Cros is still recorded as major penitentiary in Rome on June 19—see *Die Regesten der Erzbischöfe von Köln im Mittelalter*, vol. 8, 1370–1380, ed. Norbert Andernach (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1981), 527–528, no. 1926—he may, in fact, have already been in Anagni. Zutshi, "Jean de Cros," 345, argues that the dating refers to the location of the pope's residence, not that of the penitentiary.

¹⁴³ See "Diario d'anonimo fiorentino," in *Cronache dei secoli XIII e XIV*, ed. Marco Tabarrini, *Documenti di storia italiana 6/1* (Florence: M. Cellini, 1876), 293–481, at 355. According to the same source, news reportedly reached the city as early as May 10 that the pope was about to leave for Anagni. However, he learned of the ultramontanes' intention to poison him, so he cancelled the departure and dismissed all the officials and hired new Italian ones. The cardinals left Rome after the plans were revealed. See *ibid.*, 354. The spread of this rumor in Florence as early as the middle of May in the form indicated, however, I consider unlikely. Cf. also Étienne Delaruelle, Edmond-René Labande, and Paul Ourliac, *L'Église au temps du Grand Schisme et de la crise conciliaire (1378–1449)*, vol. 1 (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1962), 13; Alison Williams Lewin, *Negotiating Survival: Florence and the Great Schism, 1378–1417* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003), 53; and Jamme, "Renverser le pape," 446–447.

June, rumors circulated in the Vatican about the potential election of an anti-pope and the Romans entreated Urban not to travel to Anagni. Alternatively, they urged him to promptly appoint new cardinals. The pope unequivocally relinquished his plan to relocate to Anagni by June 24, after being apprised that the cardinals and the count of Fondi had intended to detain him.¹⁴⁴

During this period, the first delegation of cardinals arrived in Rome between June 21 and 26 under the leadership of the Carthusian prior of Naples, who was a confidant of Urban. He advised the pontiff to travel to Anagni, stating that he was pope unjustly and the cardinals intended to either re-elect him or take other actions to his satisfaction. It is surprising that Urban was not resentful and chose to negotiate. He was even reported to be willing to visit Anagni had his advisers not dissuaded him.¹⁴⁵ His position was not bad yet. Four Italian cardinals stayed by his side in Rome, prepared to mediate between him and the Sacred College. He also looked to his former allies among the disgruntled for support.¹⁴⁶ In response to the prior's message, Urban dispatched Cardinals Corsini, Orsini, and Borsano to Anagni. On June 27, he personally travelled to Tivoli, a town that was under Roman authority, and decided to make it his summer residence. Due to his poor health, Cardinal Tebaldeschi refrained from participating in the arduous task with his colleagues and also did not accompany Urban to Tivoli. He followed the pope only in July.¹⁴⁷

The trio of Italian cardinals conducted negotiations in Anagni between June 26 and 30. In the name of Urban, they assured their rebellious colleagues that they need not fear any danger from the Romans, nor that the pope would threaten them with any novelties, such as, perhaps, the appointment of new cardinals. Conversely, they reassured them that Urban wanted to stay with them at Anagni or Tivoli and assured them of his favor. The ultramontanes

¹⁴⁴ Cristoforo da Piacenza knew on June 24 that the pope would go to Tivoli, for it was rumored that he had summoned the cardinals there, who were already planning a revolt, see Brandmüller, ed., "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 41, no. 24. See, further, Ullmann, *The Origins*, 52–53, and Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 152–154.

¹⁴⁵ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 154–156.

¹⁴⁶ The Italian cardinals later claimed that Urban had not allowed them to leave Rome, see Gayet, ed., *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 2, Appendix, 23. On the relationship of the four Italian cardinals to Urban, see Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 146–150.

¹⁴⁷ The date of Urban's departure from Rome is given in the "Casus trium cardinalium" of July 26, 1378, in Dykmans, ed., "La troisième élection," 226–238, at 238. On the departure of Cardinal Tebaldeschi to Tivoli, see Wilhelm Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels von Luxemburg zum römischen König 1376* (Münster: Lit, 1990), 216–217.

denied that they had engaged in any collusive activity in opposition to the pope and expressed surprise at his trust in rumors. However, the following day in the residence of the ill Robert of Geneva, they confided in the Italian cardinals that they had elected Bartolomeo Prignano under duress due to concerns for their safety. They swore on the Gospels that he was not the legitimate pope and implored the cardinals to remain in Anagni and work towards filling the vacant See.¹⁴⁸

However, those who swore were not in agreement in their approach towards Urban. Based on multiple testimonies, the radicals had already planned to detain Prignano upon his arrival in Anagni at the end of June.¹⁴⁹ Pierre de Cros, the camerlengo, began openly performing his duties as if the Holy See was empty, no later than July 1. The treasurer of the Apostolic Camera, Pierre de Vernols, who was based in Avignon, was instructed to no longer hand over collected sums to Urban. Additionally, Bartolomeo Prignano was summoned to the Camera court in July, where he was stripped of his archbishop of Bari title.¹⁵⁰ The leaders of the revolt did not also underestimate the level of agitation needed to achieve their goals. A member of Cardinal Flandrin's household, Gilles Bellemère, travelled to Avignon on July 3 to coordinate subversive activities with the six cardinals who had not expressed any doubts about Urban until then.¹⁵¹ Concurrently, Robert of Geneva persisted with his campaign to stir up rebellion among secular rulers.¹⁵² Nevertheless, the radicals continued

¹⁴⁸ The subject matter of the meeting is described in a report of three Italian cardinals, perhaps from the first half of 1379, addressed "ad principes patriarrii"; on the report, see Martin Souchon, *Die Papstwahlen von Bonifaz VIII. bis Urban VI. und die Entstehung des Schismas 1378* (Braunschweig: Benno Goeritz, 1888), 82; the latest edition can be found in Gayet, ed., *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 2, Appendix, 22–26, see at 23–24. Cf. Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 615–616, and Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 156–157. The oath is highlighted by Dykmans, "La troisième élection," 221–222, note 12 (dating it cautiously to June 27), who argues that all thirteen cardinals could be sworn in because it was enough for six of them to convince the others that they had not voted freely in the April election, so that Prignano was not elected by a two-thirds majority. See also *ibid.*, 252. Cf. Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter*, 189–190.

¹⁴⁹ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 124.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* Přerovský sets the start of the trial for July 16. Williman, "Schism within the Curia," 45, argues for a time before July 10. The confirmation of Pierre de Vernols in the office of treasurer by Pierre de Cros, see *idem*, "The Camerary," 69, perhaps also dates as early as July 1.

¹⁵¹ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 126 and 152–153.

¹⁵² More on this below.

to favor negotiation with Urban through the Italian cardinals. The mercenaries had not yet arrived in adequate numbers for their protection, and it was unclear whether the pope, aided by the Romans, would react to their machinations with violence.¹⁵³

The moderate faction of the cardinals aimed to avoid radical actions and prevent a schism. The idea of re-electing Urban—which had been mentioned in Rome by the cardinals' first envoy, the Carthusian prior—was ultimately dismissed in Anagni. This decision was based on the belief that Prignano was unsuitable for the papacy due to his lack of knowledge and inappropriate behavior.¹⁵⁴ Consequently, those who threatened a schism proposed a new settlement: Urban was to accept one or more coadjutors from the cardinals. Their second mission, which was led by Urban's friend Martín de Zalba, the bishop of Pamplona in Navarre, arrived in Tivoli between June 27 and 30. When faced with the risk of being captured by the pope, he chose to flee. The Clementists claimed that he fled because he had encouraged Urban to step down. However, as argued by Olderic Přerovský, the sources do not eliminate the possibility that the pontiff received a proposal for the appointment of a coadjutor, which was mentioned by the Urbanists, albeit without any direct connection to Zalba's mission.¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless, it was unrealistic to think that a pope who aimed to absolutize his power would reconcile with the self-appointed guardians of the papacy, not to mention the absence of any historical or legal precedent for such a government.

It is possible that the radicals had difficulty accepting the proposals for compromise and may have conspired to increase pressure on the moderates during the summer. Alfonso Pecha subsequently alleged that Robert of Geneva had collaborated with Jean de La Grange to send his chamberlain Pierre Chambon to Charles V and his brother Louis of Anjou with a complaint about the Limousin cardinals. They were purportedly anticipating the king's rebuke of the cardinals for electing an Italian instead of a Frenchman and hoping that

¹⁵³ On the attitude of the radicals, see Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 177–178. On the cardinals' efforts to buy time, see *ibid.*, 156.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 127–128, 135, 138–139, 152, and 157–159. Cf. also Ullmann, *The Origins*, 172–175.

¹⁵⁵ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 160–162. Cf. Zutshi, "Adama Easton," 52–53.

the monarch's warnings would persuade the Limousins to take a united stance on the issue of the schism.¹⁵⁶

Although this is an account by a convinced Urbanist and may be doubted in detail, there is justification for the secret mission, whenever it occurred during the summer, because unity was a necessary condition for the success of the radicals. However, if they thought they could enlist the three Italian cardinals to their cause, they were mistaken. They declined to remain in Anagni and returned to Tivoli on June 30. Later, they gave evidence that they were still interested in warding off a rift. They fully informed the pope and acquainted him with the oath taken by the ultramontane cardinals at Anagni. Although he was angered, he feigned disbelief, having received other information from another source. When the Italian cardinals realized that Urban was being influenced by his noble advisers Charles of Durazzo, Nicola Orsini, Tommaso di Sanseverino, and Rinaldo Orsini, they secretly urged the latter to make the pope acknowledge the gravity of the situation. Since the advisers were also unsuccessful, the Italian trio decided that it was their duty to put the circumstances of Urban's election in writing, and to prepare a report. They wanted to provide the pope with a solid basis for his decision-making, to prevent any excuses based on ignorance, and to justify their actions. Consequently, they began to work in secret on the so-called *Casus trium cardinalium*.¹⁵⁷

Throughout July, Urban persevered in seeking recognition of his election, which he proclaimed as miraculous while in Tivoli. He held onto the hope of swaying some cardinals in his favor through personal correspondence, messengers, and offers of clemency. However, the utmost he accomplished was receiving affirmation from Cardinals Pierre de Vergne, Pedro de Luna, Hugues de Montalais, Guillaume Noëllet, and Pierre de Sortenac on July 18 that the schism was not advantageous to them.¹⁵⁸ These cardinals kept in touch with the pope through their family members, who relocated to Tivoli during the

¹⁵⁶ Pecha claims this in his *Conscriptio* from the second half of the 1380s, see Lerner, ed., "Alfonso Pecha's Treatise," 447. Lerner, who drew attention to this testimony, finds it plausible and argues that the secret mission must have occurred about a month before the election of Robert of Geneva as Clement VII, since the aim was to influence the Limousins to vote for him. See *ibid.*, 423–424.

¹⁵⁷ See Gayet, ed., *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 2, Appendix, 23–24.

¹⁵⁸ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 162–163, and Anna Maria Voci, "Giovanna I d'Angiò e l'inizio del Grande Scisma d'Occidente. La doppia elezione del 1378 e la proposta conciliare," *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 75 (1995): 178–255, at 196–197.

first half of the month. On their journey, they were to inform the ambassador of the Castilian monarch that their actual objective was to stall the enemies of their lords until the hired soldiers reach Anagni, since the cardinals were anxious about Urban collaborating with the Romans against them.¹⁵⁹

The situation shifted when camerlengo Pierre de Cros recruited 200 mercenaries from the Viterbo and Ancona regions under the leadership of the renowned captain Bernardon de La Salle. They clashed with the Romans at Ponte Salaro on July 16 and reportedly killed several hundred before reaching Anagni a few days later. This incident worsened the situation, particularly since Urban also received assistance. On July 27, Marsilius of Inghen, an envoy of the University of Paris, reported on the situation to his alma mater. He noted the controversy surrounding the validity of Urban's election, the violent battle, the arrival of mercenaries at Anagni, and the rising animosity between Italians and Frenchmen. He also mentioned that Queen Joanna of Naples provided Urban with 300 men.¹⁶⁰

However, the queen had no interest in the war and started mediating between the cardinals and Urban in July. Her husband Otto of Brunswick led the first embassy, and the second, which left after the battle of Ponte Salaro, may have been led by her relative, Charles of Durazzo.¹⁶¹ It is likely that the queen's attempts to reduce the conflict at that time are demonstrated by an entry in the municipal book of Marseille. On or before July 25, Joanna's seneschal in Provence requested that the burghers of Marseille prevent Renier Grimaldi, the lord of Menton, from seizing valuable items such as jewels, money, and other precious objects that were being sent by the cardinals and members of the Roman Curia to Avignon.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 127–128. Cf. also Ullmann, *The Origins*, 53.

¹⁶⁰ On the action of the mercenaries, see Valois, *La France*, 1:75–76, and recently in the broader context Jamme, "Renverser le pape," 457–460. "Factum Iacobi de Ceva," 508, claims that the mercenaries were hired with money fraudulently extorted from Urban by Cardinal Flandrin. On Joanna of Naples, see Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 105, who apparently mistakenly stated that Joanna provided 600 men; and also Voci, "Giovanna I d'Angiò," 184; and Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 195–96, including further literature. For the letter of Marsilius, see *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, vol. 3, 1350–1394, ed. Heinrich Denifle and Emile Chatelain (Paris: Ex typis fratrum Delalain, 1894), 553–555, no. 1608.

¹⁶¹ Voci, "Giovanna I d'Angiò," 201.

¹⁶² The entry was published by Valois, *La France*, 1:100, note 1, who believes that Grimaldi acted on Urban's instructions. Robert-Henri Bautier speaks of a letter from Urban VI to Grimaldi and interprets the valuables as being part of the papal treasury and jewels that the

Meanwhile, the ultramontane cardinals heightened pressure on Urban and his entourage. It is likely that they were already being safeguarded by the hired mercenaries when they dispatched a messenger to Tivoli on July 20 with a letter attached with thirteen seals. They informed the Italian cardinals in writing that the election had been held against their will, under pressure from armed individuals and under threat of death, which was in line with their earlier oral confession, and invited the cardinals to meet in Anagni within five days of receiving the letter to discuss the appropriate procedure to be followed.

The three cardinals informed Tebaldeschi (whom the messenger did not dare to approach) and Urban about the contents of the letter. The pontiff was greatly displeased and arranged collaborative deliberations. At this juncture, the three Italian cardinals completed the aforementioned report on the circumstances surrounding the April election. In the presence of the pope's noble advisers, they presented it to him on July 26 and appealed to him to seek a solution to the Church's predicament.¹⁶³

The Hunt for the Truth about the Election and Revolt

The *Casus trium cardinalium* is the first-ever narrative by cardinals detailing the events that took place before, during, and immediately after the tumultuous conclave. Since Bartolomeo Prignano was absent, it served as a way to instruct him properly through the eyes of witnesses. The piece warrants attention as it was later circulated and debated in the pursuit of uncovering the truth behind the election and rebellion, even in the royal courts.

There are two known versions of the text: the official recension dates back to July 26, 1378, while the second was presented to the Avignon cardinals in Nice

camerlengo Pierre de Cros had embezzled and sent to Avignon at the end of June, see *idem*, "Aspects politiques du Grand Schisme," in *Genèse et débuts du Grand Schisme d'Occident*, ed. Jean Favier, Colloques internationaux du CNRS 586 (Paris: CNRS, 1980), 457-481, at 462-463. However, this is only a hypothesis.

¹⁶³ The letter of July 20 is published in *Annales ecclesiastici*, 7:328. Here only twelve cardinals are mentioned; Bertrand Lagier is missing. He is, however, mentioned in the form of the letter inserted in Pierre Flandrin's tract on the schism, see Bliemetzrieder, ed., *Literarische Polemik*, 13-14. See also the testimony of the Italian cardinals in Gayet, ed., *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 2, Appendix, 25. Cf. Williman, "The Camerary," 68.

on November 17, 1380, by Simone da Borsano and Pietro Corsini. A detailed comparison by Marc Dykmans has concluded that the Nice version is the original and older, whereas the official Tivoli version, which was given to Urban, represents the new redaction from the pen of Cardinal Giacomo Orsini.¹⁶⁴

The Nice version of events presents a mostly factual to neutral narrative. The deliberations and actions of the city administration prior to the election are described with some sympathy for both the Romans and Prignano. However, Orsini eliminated certain mitigating factors from the official version, included accusations against the city administration, and above all emphatically labelled the rioting and chanting of the people as coercion (*impressio*). While describing the “first election,” he added that the cardinals, under pressure, had chosen Prignano suddenly and only out of fear of death. In discussing the “second election,” the author specified that the cardinals had retreated to a secret chapel out of fear for their lives, and that the door had been forcibly opened with axes. Likewise, the author defended the Tebaldeschi incident as necessary to prevent the death of the cardinals, particularly the ultramontanes.

The differences between the two versions become more apparent when describing the “third election” on April 9 and the subsequent collaboration between the cardinals and the pope until their departure for Anagni. While both versions concur that the cardinals regarded Urban as a pope (*usus est ut papa*), they differ in their interpretation of the circumstances. The original version is again essentially neutral. There is ample evidence suggesting that the cardinals had a good relationship with Prignano. However, Orsini’s interventions altered this view. The details that previously established Urban’s legitimacy are no longer present. Instead, it is now asserted that the cardinals never intended to grant Prignano more legitimacy (*ius*) than what was derived from the simple (i.e., coerced) act of his election. Orsini also noted that the ultramontanes, in particular, had never felt safe in Rome.

It is apparent that the focus on the use of force and intimidation during the election was only emphasized in the official version of the *Casus trium cardinalium*.

¹⁶⁴ See the comparative edition of “Casus trium cardinalium,” 226–239. It should be added that Borsano and Corsini inserted minor additions to the original version of the *Casus* no later than 1380, see Dykmans, “La troisième élection,” 224, but these are not relevant for our interpretation. Orsini’s authorship is suggested by the report of the Italian cardinals “ad principes,” see Gayet, ed., *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 2, Appendix, 25: “Eundem casum scriptum manu D. cardinalis de Ursinis, copiis apud nos retentis.”

lium. The original, which was mostly neutral, did not mention this particular aspect. The reason for the change in the Italian trio's attitude was most likely due to the ultramontanes' appeal on July 20, which unquestionably confirmed that Urban's election was coerced.¹⁶⁵ As the prospect of a new election started to appear on the horizon, Orsini took this possibility seriously and incorporated it directly into the revised *Casus*. After the "first election," the cardinals agreed to re-elect Prignano at a secure location outside of Rome, according to the Nice version. Orsini altered this episode, stating that Prignano would be advised to relinquish the post out of caution, and the cardinals would then re-elect (another pontiff) to prevent a schism.¹⁶⁶ Therefore, on July 26, Giacomo Orsini and his colleagues informed Urban that his position was uncertain and it would be advisable for him to abdicate and allow for a new election.¹⁶⁷

The Italian cardinals, however, proceeded with caution. While the original version is a simple descriptive story, the official recension of the *Casus* holds a deeper significance. It serves as the foundation for answering two inquiries placed at the end of the text. Readers are requested to assess, based on their reading, whether the election was canonical and, if not, whether Urban's legitimacy was adequately affirmed by the tacit consent (*tacitus consensus*) of the cardinals after the election.¹⁶⁸ Thus the question mark following the whole account indicates the Italians' desire to keep their options open to various parties.

Soon after the Italian cardinals presented their *Casus* to Urban, they also provided it to the ultramontanes at Anagni, who utilized it in composing their comparable narrative. The *Casus cardinalium ultramontanorum* was published

¹⁶⁵ For this, see Ullmann, *The Origins*, 87–88.

¹⁶⁶ See "Casus trium cardinalium," 234, where the original version reads: "Secederent [i.e., domini cardinales, D.C.] ad locum tutum et securum, et tunc ipsum de novo reelegent," and the July 26 version: "Secederent ad locum tutum et securum, et tunc quod ipse renuntiaret ad cautelam, et tunc quod ipsi de novo reelegent." As the juxtaposition of the two versions is in this case not clear in the edition, I quote directly in the first case from the ms. Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 3934, fol. 79r.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. also Voci, "Giovanna I d'Angiò," 197.

¹⁶⁸ "Casus trium cardinalium," 238.

by them and affixed with twelve seals in Anagni on August 2. In this version, Cardinal Pierre Flandrin appears to have acted as the author.¹⁶⁹

The ultramontanes seized the chance to expand on Orsini's motives of coercion and fear when outlining the election and subsequent events. They further conceded their disappointment in Prignano's personality, suggesting that their revolt targeted not only an imposed but also an incompetent or troublesome pontiff.¹⁷⁰ However, they went to great lengths to justify their "tacit approval" of Urban's papacy before traveling to Anagni. They did so by including details that once again demonstrated their profound sense of fear and danger should they act independently in Rome.

The tendencies described in all three forms of the *Casus* can also be expressed in the language of numbers. In the original version of the Italian cardinals, we do not find the word *impressio* at all. It appears five times in the version of July 26 and thirteen times in the *Casus* of August 2. Similarly, the expression *periculum mortis* appears only once in the original version, in connection with the intrusion of the people into the conclave, which seems natural. In the text of the *Casus* of July 26, it already appears twice in the description of the "first election." And in the *Casus* of August, it appears six times in the description of the same event, either as *periculum mortis* or *timor mortis*.¹⁷¹ As for the form and stylization of the text, the ultramontanes had no need to ask any further questions. They gave their *Casus* the form of a manifesto. They provided it with a preface explaining that they were publicly presenting the true evidence of what had been done to the detriment of the Church in Rome, and they also

¹⁶⁹ "Casus cardinalium ultramontanorum," 227-239. The hypothesis that Flandrin was the main contributor to the creation of the *Casus* is based on the fact that he commented on it in his tract on the schism, see Dykmans, "La troisième élection," 223-224, and Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter*, 190-191. However, Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 4:173 [820], considers Guy de Malesset, Pierre de Sortenac, and Guillaume Noëller to also be authors, in addition to Flandrin.

¹⁷⁰ "Casus cardinalium ultramontanorum," 235: "Et ipsum, tamquam eis, ut credebant, magis notum, et in factis et moribus curie magis expertum, licet sequens experientia contrarium ostenderit manifeste, elegerunt in papam."

¹⁷¹ John of Legnano, a leading Italian jurist who will be discussed further below, is reported to have said that any aspiring law graduate would have declared the election invalid on the basis of the *Casus* of August 2, whereas the *Casus* of July 26, which he had, suggested otherwise, see the deposition of the Castilian envoy in Seidlmayer, ed., *Die Anfänge*, 236.

added a conclusion with a call to repentance for those who had caused this injustice.¹⁷²

The *Casus* of the three Italian cardinals, which included two legal questions and was presented to Urban on July 26, naturally prompted a response. Three prominent Italian jurists wrote on the matter: Bolognese Professor John of Legnano, who was in the company of Urban at Tivoli at the end of July; Baldo degli Ubaldi of Perugia, a professor from Padua; and Bolognese lawyer Bartolomeo da Saliceto, who explicitly stated that he received the *Casus* from Orsini. Unlike his colleagues, however, he did not rush to finish the tract, only delivering it to the cardinal in August 1379. All of them described the election as canonical, siding with Urban.¹⁷³

It is noteworthy how these analyses combine legal discourse and historical storytelling. Legnano introduced his legal expertise, named *De fletu ecclesie*,¹⁷⁴ by presenting two narratives of past incidents: in addition to the *Casus* of the Italian cardinals, which he deems to be false and fabricated,¹⁷⁵ he also incorporated an extensive “true narrative of the reality that originated and was written down in the City.”¹⁷⁶ This is the text known as the *Factum Iacobi de Ceva*.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷² “Casus cardinalium ultramontanorum,” 227 and 239.

¹⁷³ Dykmans, “La troisième élection,” 223; 249–250; Helmut G. Walther, “Baldus als Gutachter für die päpstliche Kurie im Großen Schisma,” *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte: Kanonistische Abteilung* 92 (2006): 392–409, at 400–402; Ansgar Frenken, “The Long and Stony Road to Union: The Intellectual Development of the Concept of *Via Concilii* from the Outbreak of the Great Western Schism to the Councils of Pisa and Constance,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 109 (2023): 23–50, at 33–35. On Bartolomeo da Saliceto, see Niccolò Del Ré, “Il ‘Consilium pro Urbano VI’ di Bartolomeo da Saliceto (Vat. lat. 5608),” in *Collectanea Vaticana in honorem Anselmi M. Card. Albareda a Bibliotheca Apostolica edita*, vol. 1, *Studi e testi* 219 (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1962), 213–263.

¹⁷⁴ See John P. McCall, “The Writings of John of Legnano with a List of Manuscripts,” *Traditio* 23 (1967): 415–437, at 425, no. 22.

¹⁷⁵ Giovanni da Legnano, *De fletu Ecclesie*, ed. Berardo Pio (Bologna: Banca di Legnano, 2006), 199: “Hic subicitur casus falsus et fictus ab adversantibus traditus.”

¹⁷⁶ Inserted in *ibid.*, 133–194, see 133: “Facti narracio vera in Urbe elicita et conscripta.” On the reception of the work, see Souchon, *Die Papstwahlen*, 90–91, who argues that the curiales presented the *Factum* to John of Legnano probably in September 1378 in Rome.

¹⁷⁷ It is surprising that this crucial text for the origins of the schism is still available only in the seventeenth-century edition, see “Factum Iacobi de Ceva”, though it is known to be very inaccurate and incomplete. See Souchon, *Die Papstwahlen*, 87, note 3, for information on other partial editions. The manuscripts are evidenced by *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, 3:557, no. 611, and Valois, *La France*, 1:125–126. The list may be extended by ms.

Jacques de Sèze, a Provence-native and doctor of law, served as a diplomat, marshal of the Roman Curia, and was specifically in charge of the ecclesiastical trial of the Florentines during Gregory XI's papacy. Later, he joined Urban's service.¹⁷⁸ The extensive *Factum*, attributed to him in the manuscripts, details the April election and events related to it until the end of July 1378. It defends Urban's legitimacy while polemicizing with the *Casus* of the Italian cardinals.¹⁷⁹ At the very end, the author summarizes the *Casus* in eleven paragraphs, offering more detailed criticism of specific points. The possibility that this was a collaborative work involving Urban himself cannot be excluded, especially since it ultimately appeared—albeit in a slightly abbreviated form—as his official position. In the early 1380s, the pope sent this *Factum Urbani* to the king of Castile, who, together with the *Casus cardinalium ultramontanorum*, subjected it to thorough examination and witness interrogation.¹⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the foundational narrative for the Urbanist position was the *Factum Iacobi de Ceva*, likely in circulation as early as mid-August 1378.¹⁸¹

This is a comprehensive, 118-point account brimming with information. The author acknowledged his involvement in an agitational pursuit of historical

Berlin, Staatsbibliothek-Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Ms. lat. fol. 210, fols. 71–104; Eichstätt, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. st. 698, fols. 204r–245v; Merseburg, Domstiftsbibliothek, Ms. 62, fols. 134r–162v; Prague, National Library, XIV D 19, fols. 60v–79v.

¹⁷⁸ On him, see Valois, *La France*, 1:123–125, and most recently Daniel Williman and Karen Corsano, “The Interdict of Florence (31 March 1376): New Documents,” *Rivista di storia della chiesa in Italia* 56 (2002): 427–482, at 431–432, who suggest that he came from the village of Ceva on the border of Piedmont and Liguria. Rehberg, “Le inchieste dei re d’Aragona,” 260 (note 51), who cites evidence of his Provençal origin, is rightly skeptical of this conclusion. He also draws attention to the different variants of the spelling of his domicile in the sources.

¹⁷⁹ The reception of the *Casus* of the Italian cardinals was already suggested by Souchon, *Die Papstwahlen*, 88. This, however, was contradicted by Steinherz, “Das Schisma von 1378,” 620, note 2, and 622, note 2, who held that it was the *Casus* of the ultramontanes. On the basis of the juxtaposition made possible by Dykmans’s edition, it is clear that Souchon is right, and the *Factum* contradicts the *Casus* of the Italian cardinals, see and compare, e.g., “Factum Iacobi de Ceva,” 511: “Recederent ad locum tutum et quod ipse electus renunciaret ad cautelam et quod pro tunc de novo reelegiretur”; “Casus trium cardinalium,” 234: “Secederent ad locum tutum et securum, et tunc quod ipse renunciaret ad cautelam, et tunc quod ipsi de novo reelegirerent,” and “Casus cardinalium ultramontanorum,” 235: “Secederent ad locum tutum et securum, et tunc ipsi eum reelegirerent de novo.”

¹⁸⁰ See the “*Factum Urbani*” in *Annales ecclesiastici*, 7:348–360. On the relationship between the two texts, see Souchon, *Die Papstwahlen*, 91–92; Dykmans, “La troisième élection,” 221, note 9. For the investigation, see Rehberg, “Ein ‘Gegenpapst’ wird kreiert,” 238–239.

¹⁸¹ Souchon, *Die Papstwahlen*, 89, and Valois, *La France*, 1:125.

truth, consistently asserting that the evidence presented was true, obvious, well-known, and subject to public debate in Rome, the Roman Curia, Italy, and beyond.¹⁸² In the introduction, he explained the structure of the College of Cardinals and the rationale behind the city representatives' desire to elect an Italian. He also delved into the confidential negotiations among the different factions of the Sacred College that occurred in the lead-up to and aftermath of Gregory's passing. He emphasized that the Limousins aimed to nominate and elect Prignano, a plan reportedly familiar to the Curia prior to the election.

However, the essence of the polemics with the *Casus* of the Italian cardinals lay elsewhere. The author of the *Factum* asserted that the people vocally demanded the election of a Roman solely upon the arrival of the cardinals at the conclave, and when they forcefully entered it themselves. He described the "first election" as being characterized by silence among those present in and around the palace, when two-thirds of the cardinals freely elected Prignano.¹⁸³ He also recounted how in the "second election," the cardinals freely and unanimously re-elected the archbishop of Bari as the rightful pope, in a peaceful manner and safe environment. Furthermore, the author emphasized the high level of security surrounding the conclave. According to him, the people who stormed the conclave were attempting to prevent the cardinals from leaving before the election results were announced. Despite this, the cardinals were able to return to their dwellings safely and with the respectful company of Romans and friends. This was not the case for Prignano. Since he was not of Roman origin, he feared for his life due to rumors of assassination and took refuge in the palace. The author, thus, dismissed reports of people's pressure (referring to *impressio, metus, violentia*) on the cardinals during the election as based on false premises.¹⁸⁴ If certain cardinals withdrew to Castel Sant'Angelo and others to castles located outside the city, it was allegedly due to their apprehension that their false enthronement of Tebaldeschi would be exposed as fraudulent.

¹⁸² See, e.g., "Factum Iacobi de Ceva," 494: "Verum, publicum et notorium ac etiam commune, communis assertio, communis opinio et reputatio, publica vox et fama in Urbe et Romana curia ac Italia praedictis et alibi fuit et est."

¹⁸³ Ibid., 492: "Omnibus qui erant in dicto palatio et circa ipsum palatium existentibus tunc in pleno silentio." Ullmann, *The Origins*, 38–39, points out that no other sources make reference to an utterly silent crowd.

¹⁸⁴ "Factum Iacobi de Ceva," 494.

It is evident that the author attempted to divert the public's influence on the electoral process, and this posed a challenging task. In the third section, however, he launched an attack, providing a detailed description of Urban's coexistence with the cardinals. He extensively noted how they aided the pope during divine services, showed him customary respect, corresponded with the princes and cardinals in Avignon regarding the canonical election, conducted regular consistories with him, and executed official tasks. Furthermore, they requested promotions and benefices for themselves and their relatives, which the pope granted, such as Bertrand Lagier's elevation to cardinal-bishop of Ostia. The author also did not shy away from scrutinizing individuals. He portrayed the camerlengo Pierre de Cros as a thief of the papal treasure, charged Géraud du Puy and Pierre Flandrin with dishonesty in the case of the Castel Sant'Angelo, and disparaged Jean de La Grange for his dealings with enemies of the Church.

Jacques de Sèvè argued that the ultramontane cardinals opposed Urban primarily due to his refusal to fulfil their improper and unjust demands.¹⁸⁵ He thus contextualized the rebellion within the framework of reform. This perspective is particularly striking, as the *Factum* made no mention of the cardinals' supposed desire to return to Avignon. If such a desire had indeed existed and held any relevance in the cardinals' rebellion, the Urbanists would hardly have omitted it from their flagship manifesto. This omission supports the previous suggestion that the Avignon motive was likely championed by a select group of Urban's followers who aligned with the political legacy of Birgitta of Sweden.

Between the Pope's Tyranny and the Cardinals' Vanity

On July 26, the three Italian cardinals decided to be an imaginary balance on the scales of the Church crisis. In Tivoli they declared their intention to engage in further discussions with the remaining cardinals for the sake of their

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 508.

honor and Church unity, before leaving the pope. However, instead of going to Anagni, they relocated to the Orsini castle in Vicovaro.¹⁸⁶

During their journey they may have met a group of three ultramontane cardinals, Pierre Flandrin, Robert of Geneva, and Guy de Malesset, in a country church near Palestrina (about halfway between Tivoli and Anagni), with whom they may have discussed the means of declaring Urban's illegitimacy and of ensuring a new election. This would have been a good opportunity to present their *Casus* to the ultramontanes.¹⁸⁷

In any case, they soon departed from Vicovaro Castle and journeyed to the town of Sessa located in the Neapolitan Kingdom. Giacomo Orsini proceeded to Naples on July 30 to negotiate with Queen Joanna. The meeting occurred the following day in Castel Nuovo. Witnesses later attested that the French cardinals had already made the monarch aware of Urban's illegitimacy, and she wanted to confer with her confidant Giacomo Orsini to ascertain the truth. The cardinal made an oath in front of the queen, Archbishop Niccolò Brancaccio of Cosenza, and Chancellor Niccolò Spinelli, stating that Prignano was not the legitimate pope. Subsequently, some of the participants recommended Orsini as a new option, as he was acceptable to both the Italians and the French. However, the queen considered Cardinal Pietro Corsini a suitable candidate, and his brother, who had access to the royal council, advocated for the same with the archbishop of Cosenza.¹⁸⁸

There are no means of validating the depositions; however, the evidence supports the scenario presented in the surviving sources. It is known that only the ambitious Cardinal Orsini, a Roman by birth, did not vote for Prignano in the "first election." However, certain Urbanists testified that he instigated

¹⁸⁶ See the cardinal's report, "ad principes", in Gayet, ed., *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 2, Appendix, 25.

¹⁸⁷ Voci, "Giovanna I d'Angiò," 198–199. She relies on the testimony of Johannes Ram, a member of Cardinal Guy de Malesset's household, of 1386. The problem is that the same group clearly met in the same place on August 4 and 5. Since the cardinals did not discuss the general council until the beginning of August, Voci sees this as the main reason for considering the existence of two meetings to be plausible.

¹⁸⁸ The depositions are cited *in extenso* by Salvatore Fodale, *La politica napoletana di Urbano VI*, Viaggi e studi 13 (Caltanissetta–Rome: Salvatore Sciascia, 1973), 29, note 39. The queen's contacts with the cardinals and the likely content of the meeting were discussed in detail by Voci, "Giovanna I d'Angiò," 188–201. Cf. also Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 166–167, who suggested that Orsini was used by the ultramontanes to ensure the neutrality of the Neapolitan queen.

the public's desire for an Italian or Roman pope through his relatives.¹⁸⁹ He also edited the *Casus* of July 26 to Urban's disadvantage. Orsini was evidently uninterested in keeping Prignano on the See of St. Peter, and the election of an Italian cardinal seemed like a satisfactory solution to the crisis.

After Giacomo Orsini visited Queen Joanna's niece Margaret, who was the wife of Urban's adviser Charles of Durazzo, on August 1, he travelled to Aversa and returned to Sessa the next day, where he met with Corsini and Borsano.¹⁹⁰ It was just at this moment when the twelve dissident cardinals published their *Casus* in the form of a manifesto at the episcopal palace in Anagni. The first person to sign and seal it, however, was the camerlengo, Pierre de Cros, who presided over the assembly as judge. Although the cardinals themselves could only make decisions without the pope in conclave, they were not prohibited from attending a trial for the temporal administration of the Church, which the head of the Apostolic Camera convened under his authority.¹⁹¹ The rebellion, which had been rumored for some time, was officially sanctioned on August 2, and Urban had to respond. The Italian cardinals once again acted as mediators and, apparently, negotiated for the second time on August 4 and 5 in the small church at Palestrina with representatives of the ultramontanes, including Pierre Flandrin, Robert of Geneva, and Guy de Malesset.

The letter sent to Urban by the Italian cardinals the day following the meeting indicates their compliance with his wishes. They disclosed that, as per the terms that had been agreed upon in his presence, they had proposed a general council to the three ultramontanes. However, the trio rebutted the proposal, citing the lack of a mandate and instead advised the Italians to proceed to Anagni to negotiate, pledging to provide a response there. This, in turn, Orsini, Corsini, and Borsano rejected and, as they wrote to Urban, they opted to wait for a reply at a neutral location.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Fodale, *La politica napoletana*, 30, note 42. See also Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 167.

¹⁹⁰ *Cronicon Siculum incerti authoris ab anno 340 ad annum 1396*, ed. Giuseppe de Blasiis (Naples: F. Giannini, 1887), 39. Cf. Souchon, *Die Papstwahlen*, 152.

¹⁹¹ See the notarial record in Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 4:182-183. Cf. Williman, "The Camerary," 68, and again by idem, "Schism within the Curia," 45-46.

¹⁹² The letter dated August 6 at the castle of Zagarolo, which belonged to the Roman Colonna, is published by Gayet, ed., *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 2, Appendix, 65-66. The report of the Italian cardinals, "ad principes", speaks vaguely of their having discussed the benefits and affairs of the Church, see *ibid.*, 23.

Pierre Flandrin later testified that all the cardinals in Anagni rejected the solution of solving the crisis through a general council, believing it to be pernicious and prejudicial (*via dampnosa et preiudicialis*). He further stated that the Italian cardinals also recognized this approach as harmful to the Church.¹⁹³ These words appear to have some basis in the truth.

Considering the contemporary legal theory, the pope was responsible for convening and directing the assembly of the general council, implying that he was in control of it, which makes us believe that the council was predominantly his initiative.¹⁹⁴ This is why the ultramontane cardinals could not proceed with it, and why the Italians did not fully accept it. Their negotiations with the rebels regarding the council at the pope's behest was indeed an excellent pretext for the talks. Yet, their actual goal seems to have been the laying of the foundation for the election of another Italian candidate, preferably from their own faction.¹⁹⁵ As the circumstances were not yet ripe for this purpose, the Italian cardinals retreated to Sessa where they apparently remained until the start of September.¹⁹⁶

Negotiating for a general council proved immediately beneficial for the troubled Urban VI, as it granted him time to stabilize the situation. Jacques de Sève advocated for his interests in literary agitation and his interpretation of the events, while prominent Italian canonists also contributed to the discourse. Urban himself also engaged with the clergy and signed *rotuli* and graces, which he had not previously done to such an extent.¹⁹⁷ Above all, however, the pontiff

¹⁹³ On this also with quotations from Flandrin's texts, see Voci, "Giovanna I d'Angiò," 204-206.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 199.

¹⁹⁵ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 164, argued that the conciliar initiative came from the Italian cardinals, who introduced it to Urban before they left Tivoli. Their initiative is also highlighted by Hans-Jürgen Becker, "Simone da Borsano. Ein Kanonist am Vorabend des Großen Schisma," in *Rechtsgeschichte als Kulturgeschichte. Festschrift für Adalbert Erler zum 70. Geburtstag* (Aalen: Scienza Verlag, 1976), 179-196, at 185, and more recently by Frenken, "The Long and Stony Road," 29. However, this was rightly challenged by Voci, "Giovanna I d'Angiò," 199 and 203-206. Her reasoning was accepted by Jamme, "Renverser le pape," 460. Cf. also Eßler, *Schisma als Deutungskonflikt*, 47-49.

¹⁹⁶ Voci, "Giovanna I d'Angiò," 206.

¹⁹⁷ "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 12: "Et tunc [i.e., around July 25, D.C.] primo eciam incepit facere et signare rotulos et gracies, quas ante non feceret." However, Cristoforo da Piacenza wrote to Mantua as early as June 24 about granting favors to the poor, see "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 41, no. 24: "Subsequenter bullam aperuit, et adhuc est aperta, duratura usque ad mensem augusti, et omnibus pauperibus graciam volentibus fecit et facit,

endeavored to secure secular support in Italy and across the Alps in response to the rebels' practical measures. The leaders of the rebellion, familiar with the Italian conditions from their previous experiences, maintained good relations with several members of the local nobility who welcomed the opportunity to enrich themselves at the expense of the pope in the Papal States. Simultaneously, the cardinals worked on securing the loyalty of the captains of mercenary companies.¹⁹⁸

Urban launched a counter-offensive in two ways. At the end of July, he gave approval to King Wenceslas's royal election in an effort to gain favor with his father, the Holy Roman emperor. Since the approbation logically led to an invitation to launch a campaign in search of the imperial crown in Rome (the so-called *Romzug*), the entire matter had a notably Italian aspect, which we will address separately below. Of more immediate importance to Urban's Italian interests, however, was his willingness reach a parallel reconciliation with Florence and its ally Siena on favorable terms, in order to prevent them from allying themselves with the rebel cardinals.¹⁹⁹ The reconciliation process between the pope and the Florentine League, which included financial and property compensations on one side and the abolition of Church penalties on the other, was not completed until September 1378. By then, however, negotiations were already underway for the supply of armed forces into Urban's service.²⁰⁰

The cardinals were aware that Urban was trying to delay and they were unwilling to grant him any additional time. After their negotiations with the

adeo quod omnium clericorum de omnibus nationibus mundi maximus concursus est in urbe."

¹⁹⁸ On this overall, see Jamme, "Renverser le pape," 455-459.

¹⁹⁹ Urban's strategy of goodwill towards the emperor and Florence in a critical moment was already highlighted by *Theoderici de Nyem de scismate libri tres*, 31. Cf. also Alison Williams Lewin, "The Great Tringle: Florence, Naples, and the Roman papacy in the late fourteenth century," *Nuova rivista storica* 77 (1993): 257-276, at 261-263; idem, *Negotiating Survival*, 60. On Siena, see Brandmüller, "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 17, and Nardi, Paolo, "Siena e la Curia pontificia nel 1378," in *La Roma di santa Caterina da Siena*, ed. Maria Grazia Bianco (Roma: Studium, 2001), 49-66, at 55-58.

²⁰⁰ See Anna Maria Voci, ed., "Alle origini del Grande Scisma d'Occidente: Coluccio Salutati difende l'elezione di Urbano VI," *Bulletino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo e Archivio Muratoriano* 99 (1994): 297-339, esp. at 397-303. On the discussions in Florence as to how the convention with Urban was to be fulfilled, see Lewin, *Negotiating Survival*, 62-64. On the provision of armed men to Urban, see Jamme, "Renverser le pape," 463.

Italian cardinals, Pierre Flandrin, Robert of Geneva, and Guy de Malesset returned to the group at Anagni to draw conclusions from their apodictic manifesto regarding the forced election. The cardinals recognized that despite the absence of their Italian colleagues, they had achieved a precise two-thirds majority (of Urban's original electors) to conduct a new election. Moreover, they probably felt adequately protected by the hired mercenaries.²⁰¹

On Monday, August 9, the patriarch of Constantinople, Giacomo d'Itri, explained in biblical language during the sermon at the mass ordered by the camerlengo Pierre de Cros how the occupation of the See of St. Peter had been disputed and who should make amends. At the end of the service, an encyclical was read to all Christians, stating the same directly and without metaphor.²⁰²

The thirteen cardinals, including Jean de La Grange, declared in their circular letter that the Roman officials and the armed people had forced them to elect an Italian or a Roman under the threat of death. Consequently, without consultation, they elected Bartolomeo Prignano. Although the cardinals hoped that he would not accept the election in accordance with his conscience due to external pressure, he did so regardless, causing outrage among the people. He declared himself pope and illegally usurped the office. After the election had been published, he disregarded the secret and kindly admonitions of the cardinals to renounce the office, and began to occupy the Roman See, dragging the others down with him into the abyss. Therefore, the cardinals, who had crowned him out of fear, subsequently declared him to be excommunicated and illegally installed (*intrusum*) without canonical election, and they urged the recipients of the circular letter not to obey him. They also urged Prignano to relinquish the papal insignia, cease activity in the office, and repent, stating that only then would he receive forgiveness. Otherwise, the cardinals would

²⁰¹ See Armand Jamme, "Réseaux, stratégies de communication et Storytelling au début du Grand Schisme d'Occident," in *Gegenpäpste: ein unerwünschtes mittelalterliches Phänomen*, ed. Heribert Müller and Brigitte Hotz (Cologne: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht-Böhlau, 2012), 261–284, at 267–268.

²⁰² See the sermon in *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum, complectens regum ac principum aliorumque virorum illustrium epistolas et diplomata*, vol. 2, ed. Edmond Martène and Ursin Durand (Lutetiae Parisiorum: Florentin Delaulne et al., 1717), 1075–1081. Further see *Cronicon Siculum*, 32; Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 1:449, and Valois, *La France*, 1:77.

show no mercy towards him.²⁰³ It is worth noting that a similar, separate personal appeal to Prignano has also been preserved.²⁰⁴

The crisis was further escalated by the cardinals. They shifted the primary responsibility from the rioting people to the usurping tyrant, and took on the task of ousting him from the office he occupied. Although there were some canonists who acknowledged the possibility of the cardinals deposing the pope, the rebels, who were mostly excellent jurists, opted for a different approach, perhaps considering the contentious nature of the possibility. They did not strictly depose Bartolomeo Prignano since they believed he had not been legitimately elected as pope. Rather, their intention was to compel him to accept this opinion. Both letters are dated accordingly during the *sede vacante* period.²⁰⁵

The cardinals' refusal to accept the legitimacy of Urban's status resulted in legal turmoil as it cast doubt on the validity of the pontiff's orders, graces, and *bullae* issued up to that point. This caused recipients and addressees to involun-

²⁰³ See *Concilia Magnae Britanniae*, 3:128–129, or *Annales ecclesiastici*, 7:334–336, where, however, the text is interspersed with the editor's comments. Further see *Regesta Imperii*, vol. 8, *Erstes Ergänzungsheft zu den Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter Kaiser Karl IV. 1346–1378*, ed. Alfons Huber (Innsbruck: Wagnersche Universitäts Buchhandlung, 1889), no. 156a. The following manuscripts contain the cardinals' declaration, too: Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, A IX 8, fol. 2v ("Littera cardinalium ad infamandum dominum papam"), Prague, National Library, XIV D 19, fols. 44r–45r, and Vatican, Biblioteca apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 4924, fols. 2v–5v (fol. 2v: "Littera cardinalium ad infamandum dominum papam Urbanum Sextum"). Dykmans, "La troisième élection," 225, considers the cardinals' declaration to have been written by Cardinal Flandrin. The declaration was subsequently circulated with a preface to the secular rulers, see Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 1:450–454.

²⁰⁴ *Veterum scriptorum et monumentorum historicorum, dogmaticorum, moralium amplissima collectio*, vol. 7, ed. Edmond Martène and Ursin Durand (Paris: Monatlant, 1733), 433–435. There is a medieval copy of very good quality in ms. Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.ch.f.84, fols. 140v–141r.

²⁰⁵ The use of ecclesiastical terminology for tyranny was already noted by Jamme, "Renverser le pape," 460. On the possibility of deposing the pope, see Walter Brandmüller, "Die kanonistischen Hintergründe der Wahl von Fondi," *Annuarium Historiae Conciliorum* 39 (2007): 125–130, esp. 128. Frenken, "The Long and Stony," 24, note 3, assumes that the cardinals were making an effort to avoid discussion of who had the right to depose the pope. Bautier, "Aspects politiques," 459–460, argues that the scandalousness of the cardinals' actions may have been diminished by the existence of the contemporary trend of secular corporations asserting their power to intervene in the rule of sovereigns when an elected person was found unworthy or incapable of holding office.

tarily become caught up in the escalating, public conflict.²⁰⁶ However, it appears that not all the Anagni cardinals were again in favor of this radical approach. According to depositions, on August 9, Hugues de Montalais attended mass in the Anagni cathedral while under the supervision of armed personnel. He and five others also wrote to Urban to express their disagreement with the declaration.²⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the Sacred College started feeling like a sovereign entity and, from August 10 onwards, self-administered Church affairs.²⁰⁸

Urban VI did not yield to intense pressure and may have returned to Rome as early as mid-August, as he did not feel safe in Tivoli. He chose not to enter the Vatican due to it being bombarded from the Castel Sant'Angelo and instead temporarily located his court to the Church of Santa Maria in the neighboring district of Trastevere.²⁰⁹ Cowardice, however, was not a trait of his character. The cardinals in Anagni had declared that Prignano should resign his office, and some sought to facilitate this. Pedro de Luna allegedly dispatched a Dominican prior to Rome in the hopes of convincing the pope to abdicate and be appointed Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia. Some others perhaps still considered the possibility of appointing a coadjutor to oversee the “mad” pope.²¹⁰ Nevertheless, the prior claimed that Prignano unexpectedly presented himself as a warrior eager for battle, affirming his resolute determination to fight.²¹¹ The beleaguered pontiff likely gained strength in his resistance from knowing he was not alone in his struggle. More influential Italian figures voiced their support for Urban during his time of need.

²⁰⁶ For the wavering of the students of the Roman *studium generale* between both sides in the submission of their petitions during the year 1378, see Giulio Battelli, “Il rotolo di suppliche dello Studio di Roma a Clemente VII antipapa (1378),” *Archivio della Società Romana di storia patria*, 114 (1991): 27–56, at 31–32 and 40. It was only on November 14, 1378, when promulgating regulations for his chancery, that Clement VII determined that graces issued by Urban before August 9 should be recognized as valid, see Edith Pásztor, “La Curia romana all'inizio dello Scisma d'Occidente,” in *Genèse et débuts du Grand Schisme d'Occident*, ed. Jean Favier, *Colloques internationaux du CNRS* 586 (Paris: CNRS, 1980), 31–43, at 40–41.

²⁰⁷ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 140.

²⁰⁸ Jamme, “Renverser le pape,” 460–461.

²⁰⁹ See *Cronicon Siculum*, 32, which links the relocation to the fact that the three Italian cardinals, at Urban's urging, no longer wanted to return to Tivoli. Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 143, note 143, dates the transfer between August 10 and 19. On the precarious situation in Tivoli and the shelling from the castle, see Jamme, “Renverser le pape,” 462.

²¹⁰ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 143 and 166.

²¹¹ Michael Seidlmaier, ed., “Peter de Luna (Benedikt XIII.) und die Entstehung des Großen Abendländischen Schismas,” *Spanische Forschungen* 4 (1933): 206–247, at 246.

Among them was the mystic, visionary, and “living saint” Catherine Benincasa of Siena,²¹² who, similar to her Swedish forerunner, also yearned for the papacy’s return to Rome.²¹³ In the initial six months of 1378, she remained in Florence to assist with peace talks.²¹⁴ Her opinions and outlook during that period are especially evident in the letters she dictated for important figures.²¹⁵ She selected Pedro de Luna as her mediator with the new pontiff. She composed a letter to the cardinal in April expressing that reform should be the top priority of Urban’s pontificate, followed by peace (in Italy) and the crusade to the Holy Land.²¹⁶ In May, she received a letter from Rome reassuring her of the good intentions of the pope, who had already begun to reform the Church with confidence. When announcing this to one of her Dominican sisters, Catherine may have already hinted at the emerging conflict among the Church’s elites by stating that the world was facing an unparalleled crisis.²¹⁷ Likely in the latter half of May, she candidly corresponded with Pedro de Luna, during which she became aware of the pope’s probable nomination of new cardinals. Catherine wanted the pontiff to appoint individuals who would not fear sacrificing their lives for the sake of reform. She herself, as she assured the cardinal, would willingly undertake this sacrifice to remedy the Church’s deficiencies.²¹⁸

²¹² Cf. Carolyn A. Muessig, George P. Ferzoco, and Berverly Mayne Kinzle, eds., *A Companion to Catherine of Siena*, Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition 32 (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2012).

²¹³ Thomas F. Luongo, *The Saintly Politics of Catherine of Siena* (Ithaca, NY–London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 175.

²¹⁴ Ols, “Sainte Catherine,” 337, and Luongo, *The Saintly Politics*, 197–201.

²¹⁵ On the vernacular letters and their accessibility, see, e.g., Ralf Lützelschwab, “Sainte Catherine de Sienne et la politique de la papauté avignonnaise: les lettres aux cardinaux, le retour à Rome et l’éclatement du Grand Schisme (1377–1378),” in *Voix de femmes au Moyen Âge*, ed. Leo Martin Caruthers, Publications de l’Association des Médiévistes Anglicistes de l’Enseignement Supérieur 32 (Paris: AMAES, 2011), 179–210, at 194–196. The correspondence relating to the schism was analyzed by Antonio Volpato, “Le lettere di santa Caterina sullo scisma,” in *La Roma di santa Caterina da Siena*, ed. Maria Grazia Bianco (Roma: Studium, 2001), 75–118, esp. at 75–80. Below, I have consulted the English translation *The letters of Catherine of Siena*, trans. Suzanne Noffke, vols. 3–4 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2007–2008), taking into account the Italian edition *Le lettere di S. Caterina da Siena*, vols. 3–4, ed. Niccolò Tommaseo (Florence: Barbèra, 1860).

²¹⁶ See the letter no. 284: *The letters of Catherine*, 3:116–117; *Le lettere di S. Caterina*, 4:40–44.

²¹⁷ See the letter no. 271: *The letters of Catherine*, 3:132; *Le lettere di S. Caterina*, 3:464–465.

²¹⁸ See the letter no. 293: *The letters of Catherine*, 3:129–130; *Le lettere di S. Caterina*, 4:75–76.

Catherine's correspondence with Urban VI displays a comparable commitment to reformation. In early July, she requested that he become a true knight and shepherd, who would strive to reform the people not solely through words but also through action, and who would be willing to sacrifice his life in the process. She also censured the Church's "fragrant flowers", the cardinals, for their impurity and, particularly, simony, and once again recommended that Urban select new advisers who were unafraid of the public.²¹⁹

The Sienese visionary also corresponded with the pope two days prior to the Fondi election. She asserted that the loathing of vice and love of virtue would provide the strength for him to withstand the blows of the cardinals who wished to beat him with the rod of heresy, and who had released the darkness of falsehood. Thus, he was to punish sacrilege, ostentation, and excessiveness. Catherine believed that the cardinals rebelled due to their vanity and selfish love, as Urban had refused to allow them to indulge in the vices specified. She advised him not to lose hope and to pursue justice with courage. Furthermore, she encouraged him to seek out advisers who give sincere and impartial guidance, free from their own passions and self-interest. The saint desired to join Urban on the battlefield, enduring hardships and fighting for the truth until death.²²⁰

Catherine of Siena had encountered Bartolomeo Prignano in Avignon, where he did not share her commitment to reform, but could later be counted amongst those who shared her views.²²¹ It is fascinating how Urban's resolution to confront the rebellious cardinals in August closely resembled the determined appeals of the Sienese charismatic. Indeed, during the autumn of 1378, Urban extended an invitation to her to relocate to Rome and assist him in his struggle.²²² He also remembered her spiritual *famiglia*, and there was a valid reason for this.

Before the Fondi election, a supporter of Catherine took up the pen and perhaps directly at her urging sharply criticized the cardinals and their declaration in an invective with the incipit *Quid agitis*.²²³ Using Catherine's values

²¹⁹ See the letter no. 291: *The letters of Catherine*, 3:153–154; *Le lettere di S. Caterina*, 4:66–68. On the metaphor of fragrant flowers, see Lützelschwab, "Sainte Catherine," 202–203.

²²⁰ See the letter no. 305: *The letters of Catherine*, 3:213–217; *Le lettere di S. Caterina*, 4:126–132.

²²¹ Ols, "Sainte Catherine," 337, note 2.

²²² Ibid., 338, and Nardi, "Siena e la Curia," 62–63.

²²³ The work was published by Franz Placidus Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Raimund von Capua und Caterina von Siena zu Beginn des großen abendländischen Schismas," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 30 (1909): 231–273, at 242–265.

as a critical lens through which to judge the cardinals, the author condemned the cardinals' selfish love and lack of support for reform. The author considered this to be the fundamental reason for their rebellion. In his analysis of the tumultuous April election, the author agreed with the *Factum Iacobi de Ceva* multiple times. This concord is remarkable because he himself was present in Rome during the tumultuous events. He firmly believed that the people had desired a Roman, which Prignano was not. Hence, the cardinals had elected him without coercion, and the sole reason for their fear was the Tebaldeschi incident. However, even if irregularities had occurred during the election, the author suggested that it was not the responsibility of the cardinals to make judgments, only the general council.²²⁴

The text was attributed to Catherine's spiritual mentor, the Dominican Raymond of Capua, given the author's Catherinian way of thinking and connection to Rome. The Bolognese professor of theology similarly pursued reformist-ascetic ideas, and his order, absent a representative in the Sacred College, also supported the idea of reform.²²⁵ Nonetheless, another significant figure in the Roman spiritual community, Alfonso Pecha, was also associated with the invective. While our intention is not to explore the question of authorship, it is worth noting that the writer of the invective failed to consider the topic of the cardinals' longing for Avignon, a topic that held significant importance for Pecha.²²⁶

As Catherine Benincasa was illiterate, it is natural that the literary polemic in favor of Urban was led by scholars. The pope especially appreciated the support from the aforementioned professor of both civil and canon law and significant lay intellectual of his time, John of Legnano.²²⁷ Already on August 18, while working in Bologna, he had written a letter urging Pedro de Luna and

²²⁴ See *ibid.*, 257–263. The *Quid agitis* was polemically replied to by Cardinal Flandrin, who was aware of the similarity with the *Factum Iacobi de Ceva*, since he evaluated the text as a “facti narracio variata”, see *ibid.*, 273.

²²⁵ Lützelschwab, “Sainte Catherine,” 209.

²²⁶ The invective was attributed to Raymond by Blaemetzrieder, “Raimund von Capua,” 231–241. The evidence for Pecha's authorship was put forward by Meersseman, “Spirituali romani,” esp. 557–562. Although the latter claimed, see *ibid.*, 559, that the author, like Pecha, criticized the cardinals for their reluctance to return to Rome, or rather their desire to return to Avignon, I find no such criticism in the *Quid agitis*.

²²⁷ Cf. Berardo Pio, *Giovanni da Legnano: un intellettuale nell'Europa del Trecento*, Studi e memorie per la storia dell'università di Bologna 15 (Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2018).

his colleagues to temper their passionate spirits and avoid causing scandal. If the reports he received regarding the April election and the implicit endorsement of the cardinals were accurate, he believed that Urban was canonically elected. And as Pedro de Luna had assured him of a unanimous election, he was strengthened in this belief despite the circulating rumors. The letter indicates that the Bologna professor intended to meet the pope and especially the cardinals to discuss the numerous ideas (*fantasticis*) that he had penned following his departure from Tivoli. He stated, however, that God was supposedly against it, so he at least greeted the radicals Jean de La Grange, Robert of Geneva, Pierre Flandrin, Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille, Guy de Malesset, and Pierre de Sortenac and warned them of the dangerous constellation of stars he had seen, unless they were smarter than the stars.²²⁸

John of Legnano evidently alludes to a stance developed on the *Casus* of the Italian cardinals, discussed above, in which he expounded more extensively on astrology in the context of the schism.²²⁹ Shortly after dispatching the letter, he departed from Bologna and embarked on a journey. Instead of heading towards the cardinals, he directed his course to Rome, seeking an audience with Urban. There, he likely acquainted the pope with his expertise and received the *Factum Iacobi de Ceva* from the curiales, which he incorporated into his tract. Considering the needs of the University of Bologna, he was granted permission to return on September 28, despite the pope's desire to retain him.²³⁰ The extensive work *De fletu ecclesie*, which the Italian completed shortly thereafter,

²²⁸ The letter has not yet been published. It is known from three copies registered by McCall, "The Writings of John of Legnano," 426, no. 23. I cite the ms. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 1462, fol. 116r-v, here 116v: "Conceperam visitare dominum nostrum et vos singulariter et stare vobiscum, quod non potui, dum ibi eram [i.e., in Tivoli, D.C.], et de multis fantasticis, que post recessum inde compilavi, loqui. Sed non placuit Altissimo. Si placet recommendare me dominis meis singularibus singulariter Ambianensi, Gebenensi, Eustacii, Agrifolio, Pictaviensi et Vivariensi et si placet, dicatis, quod si eorum prudencia non supereret astra, quod potest, eventura video suprascripta, truffabuntur et merito, quia mathematica." The excerpts also appear in *Annales ecclesiastici*, 7:318; Dykmans, "La troisième élection," 248, and Valois, *La France*, 1:126, note 4.

²²⁹ This connection was already pointed out by Berardo Pio, "Giovanni da Legnano intellettuale e uomo politico nell'Europa del Trecento," in *Giovanni da Legnano. De fletu Ecclesie*, ed. idem (Bologna: Banca di Legnano, 2006), 24-67, at 47-48.

²³⁰ See Urban's letter of September 28, 1378, to the representatives of Bologna in Cherubino Ghirardacci, *Della historia di Bologna parte seconda* (Bologna: Giacomo Monti, 1657), 372. Cf. Souchon, *Die Papstwahlen*, 90-91.

became the seminal work of the Urbanists. It was disseminated to universities and royal courts, inevitably attracting polemical interest from the Clementists. Urban himself sent it to the University of Paris at the end of the year and, on January 27, 1379, to the Aragonese King Pedro.²³¹

Tuscany lent still another resonant voice to the pope's cause. Prignano offered Florence a dignified prospect of peace at the end of July, a development that brought joy to its chancellor, Coluccio Salutati, the preeminent Italian humanist in the generation succeeding Francesco Petrarch.²³² As a proficient literary figure, Salutati had been engaging in political correspondence with the commune for several years, and his literary output includes also his open letter to the ultramontane cardinals. This text responds to the August declaration and, in its conclusion, also addresses the election in Fondi. Salutati stylized the letter as a manifesto of the faithful who had observed the recent events with amazement. Although it was not their prerogative to arbitrate disputes among the Church's hierarchy, the matter concerned the entirety of Christendom and had not yet been adjudicated according to law, thus necessitating the cardinals to hear their concerns.²³³

At the outset and conclusion of the letter, the author categorically rejected the cardinals' narrative about a coerced election. Since he was not an eyewitness, he consistently relied on the testimony of others who asserted that the cardinals had already agreed to Prignano's candidacy before entering the conclave. Consequently, the author was hesitant to believe that the election was a hasty response to coercion. The people desired a Roman, not an Italian, as evidenced by the farce involving Tebaldeschi. The violence was caused by the prolonged inaction of the cardinals after the demise of Gregory XI and during the conclave. Above all, the cardinals had to clarify why they had treated Urban

²³¹ Valois, *La France*, 1:126–28, and Pio, "Giovanni da Legnano intellettuale," 50. Further see Maria Consiglia De Matteis, "Giovanni da Legnano e lo scisma," in *Conciliarismo, stati nazionali, inizi dell'umanesimo* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1990), 29–46.

²³² Cf., e.g., Ronald G. Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works and Thought of Coluccio Salutati*, Duke Monographs in Medieval and Renaissance Studies 16 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1983).

²³³ The letter was analyzed and critically edited by Voci, ed., "Alle origini del Grande Scisma." Its copies in England and Germany are discussed in more detail below. On his view of the schism in general, see Daniela De Rosa, "Coluccio Salutati e il Grande Scisma d'Occidente," in *Le radici umanistiche dell'Europa: Coluccio Salutati cancelliere e politico*, ed. Roberto Cardini and Paolo Viti, *Humanistica* 2/2 (Firenze: Polistampa, 2012), 197–238.

as the legitimate pope. It was foolish to present a false pontiff to the people as the Vicar of Christ, even more unwise to announce it through official documents, and the most foolish act was subsequently concealing the truth.²³⁴

The author suggested that the pope's Italian nationality may have caused concern among the cardinals. If he had been a Frenchman, there would be no mention of fear and pressure. However, the Vicar of Christ was expected to be chosen from all nations, as in the early Church. Since no Frenchman had historically rejected the first rank, Prignano had no grounds to do so. Although the initial election might have been motivated by fear, repeating it would be a more righteous and appropriate course of action than starting a conflict, which the clergy ought to avoid. Consequently, the author censured the cardinals for relying on mercenaries to resolve the dispute and queried their reluctance to convene a general council when they were confident in the veracity of their position.²³⁵

Moreover, the election of Robert of Geneva as pope came as a shock to the faithful, as the cardinals made a monster with two heads out of the Church. The same Robert of Geneva as a papal legate enabled the cruelty of mercenaries who were responsible for the massacre of Cesena's inhabitants—mercenaries who also ensured his election. Hence, the author raised the question of whether a Church can be reformed and strengthened by anyone with blood on his hands. It was widely known that he was chosen to gain support from his powerful relatives. Salutati believed, however, that rulers would not be so imprudent as to endorse the monster. The use of secular power to enforce obedience foreshadowed the future Antichrist's reign. All individuals should have the opportunity to choose their pope, and whoever garners the majority of votes should be accepted, according to the author. The authority to confirm the appointment of both the supreme pontiff and secular princes was exclusive to God. Therefore, the author urged the cardinals to relinquish their inflexible stance in refusing to allow for justice to be served at general or partial councils; it was beyond their competence to decide the dispute according to law.²³⁶

²³⁴ Voci, ed., "Alle origini del Grande Scisma," 321-324 and 329-332.

²³⁵ Ibid., 324-326.

²³⁶ Ibid., 326-329. Especially remarkable are the words: "Deponantur arma, nec principum potentia, nec alia vi compellantur huic vel illi fideles credere, sed liceat cuique quem vult

Like the invective of the anonymous supporter of Catherine Benincasa, Coluccio Salutati's manifesto is another instance of the creation of the Urbanist narrative, as fundamentally set by the *Factum Iacobi de Ceva*. However, the Florentine perceived that the rebellion was instigated more by national and political motives than resistance to reform, the necessity of which he did not deny. Perhaps this was linked to the fact that, as an Italian, he himself had felt undervalued years ago in the service of the household of the papal secretary.²³⁷ Nevertheless, he agreed with the anonymous supporter of Catherine that a council was the only competent authority to evaluate the dispute. Since none of them doubted the legitimacy of Urban and the insincerity of the cardinals, they could not be considered to be neutral. Rather, we can again conclude that they both reflected the pope's own position and his interests in convening a council, as discussed earlier.²³⁸

However, there is another important aspect. Neither the *Factum*, nor the anonymous invective, nor Coluccio's letter mention a word about the cardinals' desire to return to Avignon. This is particularly noteworthy in the case of the Florentine chancellor. Because he was sensitive to the national-political context of the revolt, he would hardly have kept the Avignon issue silent if it had played any role in the cardinals' revolt and had been publicly discussed. Thus, once again, it appears that this was a specific issue for Alfonso Pecha and his friends within the Urbanist community.

The temperament of devout charismatics, coupled with the erudition and eloquence of Italian intellectuals, was Urban's immediate source of strength and resistance in a critical personal episode and in the struggle for public

ut pontificem honorare, et ille, in quem credet maior fidelium multitudo, ille in pontificem assumatur", *ibid.*, 328.

²³⁷ During Urban V's temporary stay in Italy, Salutati was hired to work in the household of the papal secretary, Francesco Bruni, but found himself disparaged and underestimated there, and his sense of disillusionment remained. See Williman, "Schism within the Curia," 35.

²³⁸ See also Voci, "Alle origini del Grande Scisma," 303–305 and 310–311, where she argues in favor of the hypothesis that Salutati wrote the letter not at the behest of Florence, but of Urban VI himself, who needed his rhetorical prowess. Cf. also Franz Placidus Bliemetzrieder, "Zur Geschichte der großen abendländischen Kirchenspaltung: Die Kardinäle Peter Corsini, Sim. de Borsano, Jakob Orsini und der Konzilsgedanke," *Studien und Mitteilungen aus dem Benediktiner- und Cistercienser-Orden* 24 (1903): 360–377, 625–652, at 634, who, however, considers the words about the council to be a reflection of the initiative of the Italian cardinals.

opinion. However, as he received more verbal endorsements, his bureaucracy provided less practical support. According to the curial and chronicler Dietrich of Niem, Urban was left isolated, like a sparrow on a roof. Among the cardinals, the camerlengo Pierre de Cros, and other prelates, a noteworthy segment of the curial administrative apparatus had indeed withdrawn their support from him.²³⁹

Urban's mandate from August 29, 1378, clearly displays his disapproval of officials who exercised their office without his consent outside the Roman Curia. He prohibited all from doing so without exception and even singled out specific individuals, such as the major penitentiary Jean de Cros and his brother, the head of the Apostolic Camera, Pierre. Simultaneously, he instructed the collectors and sub-collectors of Camera revenues, along with all other curiales, to abstain from obeying or favoring their superior, who no longer held the position of camerlengo.²⁴⁰ Urban endeavored to personally fill the vacancies left by the departed high officials, as demonstrated by a letter sent the subsequent day to the Rhineland, in which he was acting in the post of major penitentiary.²⁴¹ As the proposed solution proved to be unsustainable, he promptly took the action that he had previously considered and was encouraged to do so by both the Romans and Catherine of Siena. On the Dry Days, namely, September 17 and 18, he assigned twenty-nine new cardinals.

The renewed Sacred College was exceptionally diverse. In addition to twenty-two individuals from Italy, Urban designated three Frenchmen, and one individual each from England, Spain, Bohemia, and Hungary. The installation of select new cardinals from different nations did not proceed smoothly for him. The bishop of Lisbon, Agapito Colonna, took his time to consider, although he eventually accepted the dignity. However, Leonardo Rossi, a Franciscan theology professor, and Stefano di Sanverino, originally from Naples, declined the purple, as sooner or later did William Courtenay, the bishop of London, Pierre-Raymond de la Barrière, the bishop of Autun, and Gutierre Gómez de Luna, the bishop of Palencia and protégé of the Castilian king. The reasons for their rejection were not always politically motivated. Stefano di Sanverino preferred marriage and family life. William Courtenay complied with the desire of

²³⁹ See *Theoderici de Nyem de scismate*, 27–28. On the defection of the penitentiary staff, see Zutshi, "Jean de Cros," 347.

²⁴⁰ See no. 4 in Appendix below.

²⁴¹ *Regesten der Erzbischöfe von Köln*, 8:542–243, no. 1964.

the London community to retain their bishop. Urban accepted his resignation, but to avoid England being excluded, he later decided to grant the cardinal's hat to Adam Easton of Norwich, an Oxford theologian and admirer of Birgitta of Sweden. The three remaining nominees were probably sympathetic to the rebels, and they eventually joined them.²⁴²

Over time, it became clear that those who were hesitant to accept the purple were right to do so. Becoming a cardinal in Urban's pontificate was perilous in a context where not everything went according to his reformist ideas. The reasons behind the almost permanent disagreement between the pope and the members of the cardinals' college were suggested by Catherine of Siena just a year and a half after the September creation. In a metaphorical reference to the cardinals, she wrote to Urban that the Church had indeed gotten rid of the old plants with their pride, vices, and greed, but the newly planted ones were

²⁴² The envoy of Strasbourg announced the election of 29 cardinals to the city council from Rome on September 29, 1378. He specifically noted the appointment of a Czech and a Hungarian but no Germans. See *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Straßburg*, vol. 5, *Politische Urkunden von 1332–1380*, ed. Wilhelm Wiegand (Straßburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1896), 975, no. 1331. Raynaldus in *Annales ecclesiastici*, 7:360–361, gives twenty-four names of those who accepted the cardinalate (among them William Courtenay) and five others who rejected it (among them, erroneously, Giovanni Fieschi). I have been unable to verify the identity of the Neapolitan Stefano di Sanseverino, who is said to have planned a marriage, see *ibid.*, 361. Konrad Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica medii aevi*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Münster: Libraria Regensbergiana, 1913), 23–24, gives twenty-five names, because he includes Courtenay among those who took the title. For valuable biographies of these persons, see <https://cardinals.fiu.edu/bios1378.htm> (accessed Sep. 25, 2023). A still different approach was taken by the authors of the inventory in *Geschichte des Kardinalats im Mittelalter*, ed. Jürgen Dendorfer and Ralf Lützelschwab, *Päpste und Papsttum* 39 (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 2011), 492–493, who list twenty-seven names, omitting Rossi and di Sanverino. Thus, there is no consensus in the literature on the number of cardinals, and neither on the dating of the creation. Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica*, 1:23, dates it to September 18. Evidence for this is given by Valois, *La France*, 1:159, note 2, and Stacul, *Il cardinale Pileo*, 101. Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 629, note 3, however, draws attention to the work of the Baroque Prague canon Thomas Pessina de Czechorod, see *idem*, *Phosphorus Septicornis, Stella alias Matutina* (Prague: Jan Arnolt, 1673), 542, who dates the creation of the Prague archbishop Jan Očko of Vlašim very precisely to September 17, and is unlikely to be mistaken. The records in the Italian chronicles are referred to by Margarete Rothbart, *Urban VI. und Neapel* (Berlin–Leipzig: W. Rotschild, 1913), 34, note 1. On the reluctance of Colonna, see Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 2:770 [1247]; on the two Englishmen, see Perroy, *L'Angleterre*, 62, and most recently Zutshi, "Adam Easton," 46–47.

starting to grow and adopt the same ways. Simultaneously, she implored the pope to temper the sudden impulses of his nature.²⁴³

Urban VI did not completely sever ties with the original College when he appointed new cardinals in September 1378, even though Pietro Tebaldeschi was the only one who remained loyal to him until his death on September 6.²⁴⁴ Urban only revoked cardinalate dignities and granted them to new individuals in the cases of the leaders of the rebellion or an absent major penitentiary. Hugues de Montalais was also among those who received such punishment, though the reason for this is not entirely clear.²⁴⁵ During August and early September, Urban continued to have contact with three Italian cardinals. However, the specifics of their communication remain unknown. The surviving fragments imply that the Italians were tasked with presenting something to the ultramontanes yet again, and Urban was eager to learn the outcome.²⁴⁶

From the Church Council to the Second Election

By August 27, the dissident cardinals relocated to Fondi, the residence of Count Onorato Caetani, which was situated in the Kingdom of Naples, as they no longer felt secure in Anagni. It is improbable that this occurred without Queen Joanna's awareness.²⁴⁷ The Italian cardinals arrived in Fondi by around Sep-

²⁴³ See the letter probably from early January 1380, no. 364: *The letters of Catherine*, 4:351–352; *Le lettere di S. Caterina*, 4:441–443, but also, for example, *Theoderici de Nyem de scismate libri tres*, 85. Cf. Meersseman, “Spirituali Romani,” 565–566; Weiß, “Luxury and Extravagance,” 80; Zutshi, “Adam Easton,” 47–59.

²⁴⁴ Valois, *La France*, 1:72.

²⁴⁵ Cf. Steinherz, “Das Schisma von 1378,” 630, note 1, and Přerovský, *L’elezione di Urbano*, 140–141.

²⁴⁶ See their letters to Urban from Subiaco and Sessa dated August 16 and September 4 in Gayet, ed., *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 2, Appendix, 66–67. Cf. Přerovský, *L’elezione di Urbano*, 167, and Dykmans, “La troisième élection,” 206.

²⁴⁷ Dated according to “Vita secunda Gregorii XI”, in Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 1:437–459, at 458–459. Tommaso di Acerno stated that the cardinals went to Fondi as a result of the food shortage in Anagni, see *Rerum Italicarum scriptores*, 3/2:728. Cf. Valois, *La France*, 1:77, and Rothbart, *Urban VI. und Neapel*, 33.

tember 12.²⁴⁸ The gathering was most probably orchestrated by the queen's chancellor Niccolò Spinelli, with Pierre Flandrin and Guy de Malesset personally extending invitations to the Italians for the purpose of negotiating the pope's election.²⁴⁹ In addition, Pierre de Sortenac and Guillaume Noëllot were also present at the negotiations. Robert of Geneva refrained from participating on this occasion.

Accounts of the progression of the multi-day negotiations are inconsistent. In the first half of 1380, Pierre Flandrin released two comments concerning the discussions.²⁵⁰ According to the French cardinal, the debates initially aimed to end the crisis with the convocation of a council. However, this was not a general council (*concilium generale*), which had already been dismissed as harmful at the start of August, but a more specific gathering referred to as a partial council (*concilium particulare*).²⁵¹ Both parties agreed that one-third of the synod would come from Italy, another third from France, and a final third from Spain, Germany, Hungary, and England, as the latter countries did not have as many scholars. The Italian cardinals suggested assembling the council in Venice, Pisa, or Naples, but the ultramontanes opposed any location where the people held power. Although Naples was under the rule of the Neapolitan queen, it was argued that the citizens supported their fellow inhabitant, Bartolomeo Prignano. Hence, the majority reached an agreement concerning the Piedmont territory in Savoy, subject to Count Amadeus providing security guarantees. Nevertheless, there existed uncertainty regarding the governance of the Church until the convocation of the council. Ultimately, the decision was made that two cardinals would supervise secular affairs while individual prelates would be responsible for spiritual matters.²⁵²

Pierre Flandrin, in one of his statements, specified that the conveners of the partial council were supposed to be cardinals residing in both Italy and

²⁴⁸ Hugues de Montalais stated in May 1380 that the Italians held eight days of negotiations in Fondi, see Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 11745, fol. 37v: "Item dixit, quod quando fuerunt in villa Fundorum accesserunt ibi cardinales Italici illi tres et fuerunt ibi per octo dies et tractabant cottidie."

²⁴⁹ Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 2:565 [1049].

²⁵⁰ Flandrin made his first statement in February 1380 in response to the critique of the archbishop of Toledo, Pedro Tenorio, see Bliemetzrieder, ed., *Literarische Polemik*, 88. He gave a second testimony in May 1380 in Avignon, see Seidlmaier, ed., *Die Anfänge*, 244–245.

²⁵¹ On the terminology, see Bliemetzrieder, "Zur Geschichte," 364.

²⁵² Seidlmaier, ed., *Die Anfänge*, 244.

Avignon. He further explained that the council of well-learned and prominent prelates was designed to function as an advisory body to the Sacred College, which would then make decisions based on its advice.²⁵³ In July 1380, Urban's Cardinal Bartolomeo Mezzavacca provided a distinct interpretation of the gathering's purpose. According to him, the Italian cardinals presented three proposals to resolve the crisis at Fondi: If the cardinals believed that Prignano's election was somehow insufficient, they should rectify this deficit and learn to tolerate Urban in some way. Alternatively, they could call for a general council to endorse this solution (*pro hiis declarandis*), or they could make arrangements for a partial council with the same purpose. It is clear from Mezzavacca's account that, according to him, the ecclesiastical assembly, of any kind, was primarily intended to be a tool to maintain Prignano in office.²⁵⁴

It is very likely that Cardinal Mezzavacca linked separate debates, as the first two proposals were apparently discussed in August.²⁵⁵ However, his testimony remains valuable, as it sheds light on why Urban and his supporters favored the idea of the council.²⁵⁶ It is also worth mentioning that the discussed national composition of the partial council corresponded to the spectrum from which Urban chose his cardinals, even though the proportion of the representation of

²⁵³ Bliemetzrieder, ed., *Literarische Polemik*, 88.

²⁵⁴ See Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 11745, fol. 87r: "Per quas litteras cardinales ipsi statim deliberarunt ad electionem procedere; statimque infra biduum processerunt decipiendo in hoc prefatos tres cardinales Ytalicos, qui cum eis tunc convenerant, ut se interponerent pro tolendo tanto scandalo, quantum dubitabitur tunc et postea exortum, in proponendo ipsis tres vias, scilicet vel quod pro minori scandalo, si quis secundum eos esset defectus in eleccione domini nostri, vellent supplere et ipsum pocius talem qualem dicebant esse tollerare quam maioribus scandalis et periculis se ipsos et ecclesiam dei involvere vel de convocando concilio generali pro hiis declarandis vel saltem quodam particulari." See also the significantly worse wording in Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Eine Streitschrift," 701.

²⁵⁵ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 165, connects all of the contents of the statement to the beginning of August, but I disagree with his assessment.

²⁵⁶ It is noteworthy that around the same time, Urban was also regarded as the initiator of the idea of the council in Poland, see "Joannis de Czarnkow Chronicon Polonorum, 1333–1384," in *Monumenta Poloniae historica*, vol. 2, ed. August Bielowski (Lwów, 1872), 559–756, at 669–670: "Sentiens autem dominus papa [i.e., Urban VI, D.C.], quod cardinales alium eligere velent, misit ad ipsos nuncios solemnes hortans eos et affectans, ut non procederent ad electionem alterius, sed quod convocaretur concilium generale et si concilium omnium episcoporum in concilio consistentium ipsum dicerent non bene electum fuisse, extunc electioni de se factae renunciare promittebat et ipsi ad electionem alterius cuiusvis digne procedere possent."

individual groups was not one-third. It is hence highly probable that the Italian cardinals instigated discussions in Fondi regarding a partial council once again at the pope's behest. Nonetheless, in conjunction with the ultramontanes, they altered the papal concept of a synod in accordance with their own thoughts and objectives.²⁵⁷ Ultimately, however, both groups readily abandoned the council idea, as they pursued more dynamic plans in Fondi.

Pierre Flandrin, in his first testimony from 1380, stated that it was the Italian cardinals who no longer wanted to continue the debate on the council and wanted to proceed with the second election.²⁵⁸ In his second testimony, he expressed this differently. He mentioned that on a certain day, likely September 19, he had lunch with Cardinal Orsini and hinted to him that the Italians were not nimble negotiators (they were *remissi*), and therefore it would be more beneficial for the Church to discuss the election. Giacomo Orsini agreed but wanted to consult with his Italian colleagues. Neapolitan Chancellor Spinelli was also present at their discussion. Later that evening, the count proposed a compromise, known as *via compromissi*, to Flandrin. The essence was that a committee comprised of three Italian and three ultramontane cardinals would be tasked with conducting the election. There was even a record made of the proposal. However, Flandrin raised concerns over the unbalanced ratio, to which Spinelli responded that the ultramontanes should be satisfied because the Italians would thus acknowledge that Bartolomeo Prignano was a usurper, and the Apostolic See was vacant.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ Afterwards, the Italian cardinals themselves only vaguely stated that they had made certain proposals to the ultramontanes in ecclesiastical matters, see Gayet, ed., *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 2, Appendix, 23. The literature generally only takes Flandrin's deposition into account, see, Valois, *La France*, 1:80; Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 168; Voci, "Giovanna I d'Angiò," 206–207; Eßer, *Schisma als Deutungskonflikt*, 49. Mezzavacca's testimony was recalled only by Bliemetzrieder, "Zur Geschichte," 363, note 3. Note also that Henry of Langenstein in his *Epistola de cathedra Petri* of 1395–1396 stated that at the beginning of the schism the way to resolve the conflict seemed to many to be through two types of council, see August Kneer, *Die Entstehung der konziliaren Theorie. Zur Geschichte des Schismas und der kirchenpolitischen Schriftsteller Konrad von Gelhausen († 1390) und Heinrich von Langenstein († 1397)*, Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte. Suppl. 1 (Rome: F. Cuggiani, 1893), 138.

²⁵⁸ Bliemetzrieder, ed., *Literarische Polemik*, 88.

²⁵⁹ Seidlmayer, ed., *Die Anfänge*, 244–245, and Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 168–169. "Notam scriptam de isto modo ad procedendum ad electionem" mentions Archbishop Niccolò Brancaccio, see Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 2:565 [1050].

Although the preserved wording of the French cardinal's testimony is not entirely lucid, the Italians' desire to gain an advantage in the second election in exchange for formally renouncing Urban is logical. Giacomo Orsini's aspirations have been mentioned, and other Italian cardinals also recognized that they had a chance at the papal throne. Pedro de Luna later recalled that during discussions about the *via compromissi* Giacomo Orsini and Pietro Corsini both expressed the view that electing an Italian cardinal would resolve the conflict. From the Spanish cardinal's perspective, the Italians seemed to indicate that they did not consider the first election to be valid and were open to a second election.²⁶⁰ As the ultramontanes dispatched a messenger to their Italian counterparts, inviting them to participate in an election, the messenger recalled that they were willing to travel to Fondi provided that the ultramontanes intended to elect an Italian candidate.²⁶¹ And there is further sufficient evidence that each of the Italians campaigned for themselves and hoped to be elected.²⁶²

This is how both the Clementists and Urbanists testified about the negotiations in Fondi. Niccolò Caracciolo Moschino, the Neapolitan inquisitor and Dominican, who was also one of Urban's cardinals, openly acknowledged that the Italians were driven to Fondi by their ambitions, as the ultramontanes deceitfully convinced them that one of them would be elected pope.²⁶³ Such ambitions were plausible. As mentioned earlier, an Italian candidate especially could have had the opportunity and inclination of asserting himself in his homeland against Urban and his supporters. Some even believed that if Giacomo Orsini were elected, Urban would either be killed or captured by the Roman Orsini clan and their allies.²⁶⁴

The ultramontane cardinals, however, were not sympathetic to the ambitions of their Italian counterparts. According to Pierre Flandrin, the discus-

²⁶⁰ See Gayet, ed., *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 2, Appendix, 158–159; for the vernacular version, see Seidlmayer, ed., "Peter de Luna," 242. Roger Charles Logoz, *Clément VII (Robert de Genève). Sa chancellerie et le clergé romand au début du grand schisme (1378–1394)* (Lausanne: Réunies S. A., 1974), 73, recalls in this context not only ambition but also personal motives: Borsano was insulted by Urban, Orsini did not vote for him in April, and Corsini held a grudge because the pope initially did not want to make peace with Florence.

²⁶¹ This is the deposition of Fernando Petri, dean of Tarazona, in Medina del Campo in January–February 1381, see Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 2:659 [1138].

²⁶² See *ibid.*, 2:565–567 [1049–1051].

²⁶³ Seidlmayer, ed., *Die Anfänge*, 253–254.

²⁶⁴ This is the deposition of Bishop Garsias Menéndez of Córdoba in the spring of 1381, see Seidlmayer, ed., *Die Anfänge*, 281. Cf. Voci, "Giovanna I d'Angiò," 207–09.

sions on the election, conducted by a small committee, were considered futile as the six were unlikely to come to an agreement.²⁶⁵ On the other hand, Cardinal Mezzavacca, who was a supporter of Urban, explained the discontinuation of talks in a different manner. He assumed that the ultramontanes had received a letter from the French king on September 18, in which he promised them financial and military support and urged them to continue their progress and elect a person who would suit him.²⁶⁶ Other witnesses do not mention anything similar, and it is at least questionable whether the king directly called for the election. Charles V may have expressed his backing for both the College in general and Robert of Geneva specifically, and the Urbanists could have misconstrued the content of the letter, if it was indeed composed, due to the context of the second election. Géraud du Puy noted that during the discussions, there was already an awareness that two-thirds of the cardinals would support Robert as the pope, although this was not yet public knowledge and he was unaware of it at the time.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ Bliemetzrieder, ed., *Literarische Polemik*, 88. Niccolò Brancaccio also talked about trying to avoid quarrels, see Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 2:565 [1050]: “Sed postea omnes alii cardinales timentes cavillationem aliquam, noluerunt quod procederetur per illam viam, sed per scrutinium vel per viam spiritus sancti. Et ita factum est, quod omnes concorditer elegerunt istum dominum Clementem exceptis illis cardinalibus Italicis.” On the methods of election mentioned here, see Seidlmayer, *Die Anfänge*, 158, note 149.

²⁶⁶ Valois, *La France*, 1:101, note 1, and Bliemetzrieder, “Eine Streitschrift,” 701.

²⁶⁷ Clement VII expressed gratitude to the French monarch on December 31, 1378, for corresponding with both the College and himself as the cardinal, though these letters are nonextant. In these letters, the king expressed his will to protect and defend those concerned as well as the faith and the Church. See Noël Valois, “Le rôle de Charles V au début du Grand Schisme (8 avril-16 novembre 1378),” *Annuaire Bulletin de la Société d’Histoire de France* 24 (1887): 225-255, at 249-251, no. 4. Valois, *La France*, 1:107, argues that Charles V did not usually correspond with Robert of Geneva, so the king probably already anticipated his election and indeed perhaps approved it in advance. This is also emphasized by Steinherz, “Das Schisma von 1378,” 603, who admits that this may have been done through the king’s secretary Pierre de Corbie. However, Weiß is rightly skeptical about this, see *idem*, “Prag-Paris-Rom,” 192-193, and 193-195. The cardinal of Genoa was, because of his origins, the rebels’ informal proxy for communication with the monarchs, and Charles V may also have reflected that he enjoyed their special favor, as Géraud du Puy has suggested, but this is not yet a reason to assume the king’s direct instruction to elect him. The testimony of the latter in ms. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 11745, fol. 38v, reads as follows: “Item dixit quod cardinales Ytalici fuerunt vocati ab aliis dominis cardinalibus, quomodo fuerunt in villa Fundorum super magnis et arduis negotiis ecclesie et accesserunt ibi et postquam accesserunt ibi, domini cardinales tractaverunt de eleccione ecclesie et senciebant

Nonetheless, there is a more definitive cause for the termination of conversations than the correspondence from the French monarch. If Urban began appointing new cardinals in Rome on September 17, the news would have reached Fondi a day or two after. As this move directly affected the leaders of the rebellion, it is reasonable to assume that they no longer had anything to wait for, ceased to consider the wishes of their Italian counterparts, and initiated the second election.²⁶⁸

The audacious act took place on September 20. When all the cardinals gathered at the consistory in the count's palace, camerlengo Pierre de Cros stood guard at the door, as was his traditional role. The prior of cardinal-bishops Pietro Corsini was invited to propose a candidate for the new pope, but declined to do so. Instead, Jean de Cros, Hugues de Montalais, Pedro de Luna, and others took the lead and put forward Robert of Geneva as a nominee. The first reportedly justified his choice by stating that the Italians wanted an Italian and the French wanted a Frenchman, so he nominated and voted for a cardinal of German nationality (*de natione Alammanie*). Other proposals were suggested, but Robert of Geneva was ultimately elected and received twelve votes, possibly having abstained himself. The Italian cardinals present during the election only observed the proceedings. Later, they asked for the announcement of the result to be delayed until the following day as they were concerned for their safety and that of their supporters. Their request was granted, and on September 21, Robert of Geneva, who became Clement VII, was officially declared elected.²⁶⁹

iam, quod due partes consenciebant in istum dominum papam, qui erat tunc cardinalis Gebennensis, set ipse nesciebat nec adhuc fuerat publicatum hoc inter eos."

²⁶⁸ Tommaso di Acerno testified that Urban appointed twenty-nine cardinals on the Dry Days and that the news immediately went to Fondi, where the ultramontanes reacted by electing Robert of Genoa, see *Rerum Italicarum scriptores* 3/2:728. Cf. Logoz, *Clément VII*, 74, and Jamme, "Réseaux, strategies de communication," 269.

²⁶⁹ See Flandrin's testimony in Seidlmaier, ed., *Die Anfänge*, 245, Pierre de Cros's in Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 2:760–761, Hugues de Montalais's in ms. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 11745, fol. 37v: "Item dixit, quod dominus de Luna et iste cardinalis et alii duo cardinales nominaverunt istum dominum Clementem pro papa simpliciter, licet alii aliter se haberent in nominando, quia alii nominabant illum vel illum vel illum et isti quatuor nominaverunt eum sine aliis et dixit, quod quando viderunt Ytalici, quod omnes elegissent istum dominum Clementem, rogaverunt dominos cardinales supplicando, quod different in diem crastinum. Et illi duo Ytalici de Ursinis et de Florencia fecerunt reverenciam sibi et protestati sunt, quod si contingeret eos accedere ad illum, qui est Rome,

The attempt by the Italian cardinals to disassociate themselves from the crucial act raises questions about their stance on the new election and the emergence of a new pope. Depositions, once again, are conflicting. According to Hugues de Montalais as well as Pierre Flandrin, Cardinals Orsini and Corsini paid homage to Clement and declared that if they were to encounter Prignano in Rome, they would not consider him the true pope, but would return to Clement.²⁷⁰ The Italian cardinals themselves later stated that they did not oppose the election and considered it canonical.²⁷¹ However, Cardinal Moschino believed that the Italian cardinals, although present at the election, dissented and issued a statement to that effect.²⁷²

It appears that the Italians did not challenge the legitimacy of either of the popes and showed allegiance to both in order to secure their position as intermediaries. It was only when Robert of Geneva was elected that they publicly adopted and supported the gathering of a general or partial council. From the Tagliacozzo castle, which belonged to the Orsini family, they actively promoted this idea to both sides from the beginning of 1379, presenting it as a neutral platform for resolving the emerging schism. Apparently, they saw this as a way to distinguish themselves and preserve their influence. However, both

non intendeant eum habere pro papa", and Géraud du Puy's in *ibid.*, fol. 38v: "Sed ista die, cum essent ibi cardinales Ytalici et alii, starent omnes simul ipsi et alii cardinales, dixit dominus Lemovicensis, quod ipse non eligebat Ytalicum nec Gallicum, sed unum, qui non erat Ytalicus nec Gallicus, scilicet dominum Robertum cardinalem Gebennensem, quem eligebat et nominabat in papam libere et pure etc. Et idem dixerunt omnes alii exceptis illis tribus Italicis, qui dixerunt, quod supplicabant omnibus, quod illa eleccio non publicaretur usque in sequentem diem nec ponerent eos in periculo mortis." The report of the Italian cardinals, "ad principes", states that out of thirteen cardinals twelve elected Robert of Geneva, see Gayet, ed., *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 2, Appendix, 23. On the election in the palace of Onorato Caetani, see "Prima vita Clementis VII," in Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 1: 469–518, at 487–488. On the proclamation of the election, see "Vita secunda Gregorii XI," 459. Ullmann, *The Origins*, 63, believes that each of the Italians abstained in the belief that he would be the future pontiff. Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 169–170, assumes that the election was purely formal, since it had been agreed upon beforehand, but he too assumes bitter disappointment on the part of the Italians.

²⁷⁰ See the preceding note.

²⁷¹ Gayet, ed., *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 2, Appendix, 23.

²⁷² Seidlmayer, ed., *Die Anfänge*, 253.

Urban VI and Clement VII resisted such a conciliar initiative due to the threat it posed to their established positions.²⁷³

Although the sources present some differences regarding the circumstances that surrounded the election in Fondi, they generally concur regarding the reasons that led to the designation of the thirty-six-year-old cardinal. Bonifacio Ammannati, in a sermon on the occasion of Clement's enthronement, welcomed the kind, generous, dignified, and just bridegroom of the Roman Church. More than ideals, this was a program: the cardinals would rejoice in Clement's kindness, the clergy desiring benefices would benefit from his generosity, cooperating kings and princes from his dignity, and curial officials from his justice.²⁷⁴ Meeting the expectations that indirectly criticized Prignano's tenure naturally took time, but the new pope readily showed kindness towards the cardinals. As someone familiar with the customs of Avignon, he knew the expenses that would come from living as a cardinal. Therefore, after his election, he gave 4,000 florins to each of his electors. However, due to financial difficulties, he was unable to pay them immediately.²⁷⁵

Clement's biographer, who lived in the same period, attributed his election to additional qualities that made him the perfect candidate for the difficult situation at that time. He cited the energy, diligence, and eagerness of the young cardinal to take on the mission of freeing the Church from the control of the usurper. At the same time, he emphasized his noble lineage and relationship "with virtually all the primary Christian princes", offering hope that they would

²⁷³ Cf. Souchon, *Die Papstwahlen*, 157–158; Bliemetzrieder, "Zur Geschichte," 365, and Eßer, *Schisma als Deutungskonflikt*, 49–50. Voci, "Giovanna I d'Angiò," 209–212, proves that the cardinals also played a double game after September 20, 1378.

²⁷⁴ The sermon was analyzed and edited by Andrea Bartocci, "La retorica di un giurista al tempo dello scisma d'Occidente. Il sermone di Bonifacio Ammannati per l'elezione di Clemente VII," in *Costruire consenso: Modelli, pratiche, linguaggi tra Medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. Maria Pia Alberzoni and Roberto Lambertini (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2019), 359–395, see esp. 391–393.

²⁷⁵ See Paul Maria Baumgarten, "Miscellanea Cameralia II: Wahlgeschenke der Päpste an das heilige Kollegium," *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte* 22 (1908): 36–47, at 44–45. Cf. Weiß, "Luxury and Extravagance," 82. It is not clear to me why, with the documented number of twelve electors, Baumgarten set the sum for the whole College at 42,000 florins and Weiß even at 80,000.

heed his words and offer assistance.²⁷⁶ Urbanists like Bartolomeo Mezzavacca and Coluccio Salutati held similar views. They had no doubt that that Robert of Geneva, who spoke multiple languages, was selected because of his relation to the French monarch and other influential individuals whom the insurgents aimed to unite with, such as the Roman emperor and Count Amadeus VI of Savoy.²⁷⁷

The conflict between the cardinals and Urban VI reached a point of no return during the election at Fondi. Clement VII was aware that his rival had not disappeared from the scene, but had instead gained new supporters with cardinal hats. Therefore, on September 24, he warned them not to accept the dignity, or they would suffer the consequences.²⁷⁸ The battle for supremacy had begun.

The Queen's Two Bodies and the Sign of the Cross

For Clement, it was immediately crucial to find powerful protectors in Italy and inform both nearby and distant regions about the election. The recipients' reactions were the first test of their loyalty. Therefore, the Papal Chancery from Fondi immediately began sending announcements of the election, along with explanations of the reasons behind it.²⁷⁹ In a letter to the city of Osimo

²⁷⁶ See "Prima vita Clementis VII," 488. A general characterization of his personality is summarized in Valois, *La France*, 1:81–82. On his family most recently, see Genequand, *Une politique pontificale*, 67–77.

²⁷⁷ Voci, "Alle origini del Grande Scisma," 327. Mezzavacca also stressed in July 1380 that Charles V had a special confidence in Robert, see Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 11745, fol. 87r: "Et sic elegerunt cardinalem tunc Gebenensem velut ipsius regis Francie affinem personamque, de qua singulariter confidebat, qui etiam multorum aliorum principum et potentum in seculo consanguineus erat vel affinus." On his kinship, see Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 196–197; see also, with the focus on the emperor, Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 190.

²⁷⁸ The unpublished letter from Clement to one of the cardinals, deposited in the Vatican archives, was pointed out by Valois, *La France*, 1:159, note 2; see also Stacul, *Il cardinale Pileo*, 101, note 2.

²⁷⁹ Armand Jamme published five of Clement's letters from the first six months of his pontificate, preserved in the former March of Ancona, and used them to analyze the discursive strategy with which he sought to assert himself in central Italy, see Jamme, "Réseaux, stratégies de communication," esp. 269–279.

in the March of Ancona, dated September 22, Clement presented himself as a peacemaker and offered compensation for the damages that the city had suffered a year and a half earlier during his war legation in Romagna.²⁸⁰ He was aware of his actions. It was not only the chancellor of Florence or the anonymous supporter of Catherine of Siena who recounted his bloody past in open letters.²⁸¹ On September 29, Urban's physician, Francesco Casini, also addressed the same issue, warning his compatriots in Siena that Clement was the archenemy of all Tuscans.²⁸²

However, the new pontiff had powerful advocates. A chronicler in Pisa recorded on October 12 that Clement's messenger arrived in the city not only with a letter about his election but also with a writing from the Neapolitan chancellor Spinelli concerning the same matter.²⁸³ The chancellor swiftly adjusted to the new situation, even though he had initially considered electing an Italian cardinal in Fondi. The change in preference was made easier by his pre-existing friendship with Robert of Geneva.²⁸⁴

Clement's letters were not only directed to Italian communes but also across the Alps. This is evidenced by an unpublished document in which the newly elected pope, on October 8, informed the archbishop of Mainz and the clergy of his province about the circumstances of his election. He assumed that the August declaration against Bartolomeo Prignano had already become widely known. Therefore, he ordered its dissemination on Sundays and feasts, along with the accompanying letter about the election in Fondi. In order to enhance the efficacy of the campaign, Clement requested the archbishop to attach his seal to the received letter and dispatch it to his suffragans, urging them to familiarize the clergy with its contents. He also ordered them to thoroughly report on their activities pertaining to this matter.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁰ See *ibid.*, 281–282, no. 2.

²⁸¹ See Voci, ed., “Alle origini del Grande Scisma,” 327–328, and Bliemetzrieder, ed., “Raimund von Capua,” 246. Valois, *La France*, 1:80–81, considers such a motivated campaign against Clement to be exaggerated. More on the events of 1377 are discussed below.

²⁸² See Alcide Garosi, ed., “La vita e l'opera di Francesco Casini, archiatro di sei papi,” *Bullettino senese di storia patria* 42 (1935), 277–378, at 331–332, no. 28. Cf. Jamme, “Réseaux, stratégies de communication,” 274–275.

²⁸³ Giacinto Romano, *Niccolò Spinelli da Giovinazzo, diplomatico del sec. XIV* (Naples: Pierro e Veraldi, 1902) 314.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 75.

²⁸⁵ See Ludwigsburg, Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg, B 503 I: Schönthal, U 87, and no. 9 in the Appendix below.

At the end of the mandate, Clement noted to the recipients—as he did in his letter to Osimo—that his name was not included on the enclosed seal, as it was not customary to use a full bull (*integra bulla*) before the coronation of a pope.²⁸⁶ This comment conceals a more intriguing issue than it might seem. The cardinals informed the French king, Charles V, of the election on October 19. They recapped the “facts” concerning the forced election of Urban through to his tyranny and finally to the unanimous election of Robert of Geneva through the power of the Holy Spirit. The cardinals emphasized that the Fondi election aimed to end the occupation of the Holy See and ensure peace, as well as moral discipline. However, they apologized for writing with a delay because they had hoped the coronation would happen immediately and wanted to announce it along with the election. Still, the pope, for “certain reasons,” ordered its postponement.²⁸⁷

Clement VII finally assumed the insignia of his authority in Fondi on October 31. The long delay in the coronation was unusual for supreme pontiffs, as they could not fully exercise their authority before it, and their jurisdiction remained limited.²⁸⁸ In contrast, Urban was crowned only nine days after his election. Why Clement postponed the ceremony, despite the limitations this imposed, remains open to question.

Since the cardinals had initially expected the election and coronation to proceed in the traditional rapid succession, it is unfounded to attribute the delay to difficulties with the tiara, which had been entrusted to the care of camerlengo Pierre de Cros.²⁸⁹ The only available account of the coronation indicates that Queen Joanna of Naples dispatched a representative delegation comprising of a member of the royal family, Robert d’Artois, and many representatives of the Neapolitan nobility.²⁹⁰ The queen was a vassal of the pope and a significant backer of the papacy in Italy, and as mentioned above, on the day of his coronation, Urban obtained oaths from both religious and secular

²⁸⁶ See page 309 in the Appendix below.

²⁸⁷ See Valois, ed., “Le rôle de Charles V,” 243–245, no. 1, at 244.

²⁸⁸ On this in detail, see Schimmelpfennig, “Die Krönung des Papstes,” 250–256, which also mentions the limited use of the seal.

²⁸⁹ This is assumed by Rollo-Koster, “The Great Western Schism, Legitimacy,” 163–164. On this particular tiara and its probable fate, see Schimmelpfennig, “Die Krönung des Papstes,” 217–218.

²⁹⁰ *Cronicon Siculum*, 33.

figures.²⁹¹ Was Clement VII waiting, therefore, for a clear position from the queen of Naples on his election?

We left Joanna I of Naples earlier at the end of July when Cardinal Giacomo Orsini allegedly assured her that Urban VI was not the true pope. Witnesses claimed that in response to this, Joanna considered the election of a new pope and withdrew her armed forces from Tivoli. However, this assertion cannot be entirely trusted. According to a reliable chronicler, the queen's armed men escorted Urban from Tivoli to Rome, most plausibly in the latter part of August.²⁹² It appears that upon receiving the declaration from the ultramontanes, the queen took an indecisive stance, similar to that of the three Italian cardinals. Nevertheless, after the election in Fondi, she relinquished her restraint and began to rebel.

Joanna outlined her intentions in a letter drafted on November 20, 1378, and confirmed with her royal seal two days later. Historians tend to view it as the queen's official affirmation of support for Clement VII.²⁹³ Nevertheless, this is a reductive inference. The letter is a mandate to the highest judicial officers (*iustitiariis*) to apprehend and detain envoys, executors, and commissioners faithful to Bartolomeo Prignano. The queen was informed that the person she regarded as the illegitimate pope had dispatched them to her realm to carry out his wishes. She substantiated her order in the opening of the document. Joanna was made aware that news of Bartolomeo Prignano's takeover of Peter's See and the election of Robert of Geneva as the authentic pontiff had already permeated her territories. Upon hearing of the election, she pondered her stance and next steps, reflecting on her ancestors who had long been devout protectors and advocates of the Roman Church. Given the weight of this issue pertaining to the salvation of souls and a clear conscience, she sought the counsel of esteemed men from within her realm and beyond—masters of theology, professors of both civil and canon law, as well as prelates, bishops, and masters from other fields of expertise. After substantiating the

²⁹¹ For the oaths, see "Factum Iacobi de Ceva," 500.

²⁹² *Cronicon Siculum*, 32.

²⁹³ See the mandate in Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 1:455–458. There is an addendum at the end of the document that shows that the monarch did not affix her majestic seal until two days later on November 22. Cf. Valois, *La France*, 1:160; Lewin, *Negotiating Survival*, 62; and Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 189.

truth in the presence of the royal council, she opted to acknowledge Clement as the Church's leader.

It is thus highly probable that Joanna of Anjou had already pledged her allegiance to Clement before November 20, considering the implications that had arisen from her loyalty at that time. However, she did not confess her allegiance immediately after the second election, which had been conducted two months earlier, since collecting and analyzing different perspectives required some time. The Aragonese Fernando Petri perhaps hinted at this procedure in his deposition. On a Sunday in October 1378, the Neapolitan chancellor Spinelli and he were dispatched by the cardinals Pierre Flandrin and Pedro de Luna to Cardinal Borsano in the town of Sora. The objective of their mission was to ask Borsano to negotiate with the remaining Italian and ultramontane cardinals at the castle of Spinelli in S. Giovanni Incarico.²⁹⁴

The queen of Naples, however, was not only under the pressure of family tradition and her conscience, but also under the pressure of individuals both close and distant. The French king, most likely in August, urged her to protect the dissident cardinals, in line with his stance. His letter to the queen probably reached her only after the election in Fondi.²⁹⁵ On the contrary, on October 7, Catherine of Siena provided an extensive and pressing warning against the "devilish" cardinals who were poisoned by the venom of selfish love. From her words, it is evident that she was uncertain about the queen's stance and knew only that Joanna favored the cardinals. Catherine, therefore, presented factual arguments to persuade her to make the correct decision and support Urban.²⁹⁶

Around September 25, Emperor Charles IV also approached the ruler. After defending Urban's legitimacy with detailed arguments, the emperor asked the queen to help settle the dispute and re-establish the cardinals' loyalty to the pope. He urged her to be helpful to Urban both in advice and in action.

²⁹⁴ See Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 2:658–659 [1137–1138], and Romano, Niccolò Spinelli, 314.

²⁹⁵ The undated letter, which supposes that the cardinals were still staying at Anagni, was published by Valois, *La France*, 1:99, note 1. He believes that the letter intercepted the queen at the moment she was considering abandoning Urban, and may have played a role in her decision.

²⁹⁶ See the letter no. 312: *The letters of Catherine*, 3:287–292; *Le lettere di S. Caterina*, 4:167–175. Cf. Elizabeth Casteen, *From She-Wolf to Martyr: The Reign and Disputed Reputation of Johanna I of Naples* (Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 2015), 201.

In case the cardinals did not retreat, the emperor insisted that she command their host and her vassal, the count of Fondi, to deny them obedience.²⁹⁷

The emperor's appeal is complemented by two letters from his son, Wenceslas, addressed to the queen and her husband Otto of Brunswick. Although undated, these letters were written after the emperor's death. The deceased monarch held a favorable opinion of the queen; he counted on her assistance, even though he knew that the cardinals were already in Fondi. Wenceslas, however, was less accommodating. Referring to his father's correspondence, he urged the queen, somewhat reservedly and even threateningly, to promptly reconcile with Urban VI and eliminate the schism. He vowed to intervene through any means necessary if she failed to comply. When the young king wrote to the queen's spouse, he assured him of his unwavering commitment to his father's legacy. Therefore, he vehemently implored him to renounce support for the antipope, acknowledge Urban VI as the rightful pontiff, and use his influence to encourage his wife to do likewise.²⁹⁸

There is uncertainty amongst historians regarding the dating of this correspondence, which was in response to Otto of Brunswick's mission to Prague. However, it is thought to have originated in the first half of December 1378.²⁹⁹ If this is correct, considering the average duration of messenger travel between central Italy and Prague and the unfavorable season, it indicates that Joanna of Naples chose Clement by the end of October or early November. It is likely that she also received the emperor's September letter around the same time. Based on the available evidence, an imperial embassy seems to have been present in Rome and later in Fondi by the end of October.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁷ See Pelzl, ed., *Geschichte Kaiser Karls*, vol. 2, Appendix, 389–390, no. 347.

²⁹⁸ See *Über Formelbücher in Bezug auf böhmische Geschichte*, vol. 2, ed. František Palacký, *Abhandlungen der königlichen böhmischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften* 5/5 (Prague: Kronberger, 1847), 31, nos. 18 and 19. A copy is also preserved in ms. Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 220, fol. 102r.

²⁹⁹ The editor F. Palacký dated the letters to 1379, see previous note. Weigel, "Männer um König," 115, dated them to early December, considering that the letters contain nothing about the diet (*Hoftag*) in Frankfurt, which took place in February 1379, and dealt with the schism. Spěváček, *Václav IV*, 114, dated them to the same time period.

³⁰⁰ On the embassy, see pages 236–245 below. If Otto's envoy departed from Naples, he was undoubtedly on his way to Prague for more than four weeks, see Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 611, and Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 199, note 62. We can assume that he travelled together with the envoy of Clement VII and the cardinals, the dean of Vyšehrad, Konrad

For all these reasons, it seems highly probable that Clement VII delayed his coronation until October 31 mainly to secure the unwavering support of a distinguished secular ally in Italy, without whom his papacy would have been impossible to establish—the queen of Naples, who, initially decided to seek endorsement through an expert opinion.

According to her November letter, Joanna of Anjou decided to rely on the expertise of scholars and prelates because a wrong decision could endanger her family's honor, her conscience, and the salvation of her subjects—in other words, her majesty.³⁰¹ She expressed similar sentiments in a letter to Duke Stephan III of Bavaria, who visited Italy in the spring of 1380, among other reasons, to support the resolution of the schism. Here, she emphasized that the dispute concerned faith and the vicar of Christ, so it was necessary to confer with scholars and prelates to distinguish truth from error; she sought insights from both conflicting sides. She also referred to information and handwritten letters from all the cardinals of the old College, emphasizing that they, as electors of the pope, should be trusted. Based on the letters, she also learned that the French king had claimed allegiance to Clement, and according to the queen, the king's verdict was infallible in crucial issues.³⁰²

Historians debate, however, whether legal-religious reasons or the experts' proficiency were the true reason for the queen of Naples' recognition of Clement VII or if there were hidden motives at play. Margarethe Rothbart suggests that the queen strategically stated only official reasons in her correspondence. Under the influence of her advisers, it is likely that she was unable to discern whether her resistance was motivated by hostility towards the irregularly elected pope or towards the pope who was hostile to her.³⁰³

Indeed, contemporary witnesses did testify to the personal animosity of the queen and especially her advisers towards Urban. For instance, in July 1380, Cardinal Mezzavacca stated that the queen of Naples supported the cardinals, along with the counts of Fondi and Caserta, the archbishop of Cosenza, and

of Veselá, who arrived in Prague on December 8, 1378. See "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 13.

³⁰¹ See Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 1:456.

³⁰² The letter to the duke of Bavaria was published by Voci, ed., "Giovanna I d'Angiò," 226–230, see 227–228.

³⁰³ Rothbart, *Urban VI.*, 30–31. Fodale, *La politica napoletana*, 32, is convinced that the severance of relations with Urban was caused by political factors rather than legal-religious ones.

her chancellor, as they believed Urban had deeply offended them. Allegedly, the queen was persuaded that the pope was planning to remove her from the throne and have her sent to a convent. To support this claim, Chancellor Spinelli was said to have written a false letter in the pope's name to the king of Hungary, explicitly suggesting this intention.³⁰⁴

Although other witnesses supported the account of the outraged queen being swayed by her discontented courtiers, not many contemporary historians accepted the alleged details as uncritically as Walter Ullmann.³⁰⁵ Olderic Přerovský proceeded with more deliberation. He highlighted that the pope's substantial criticism was directed towards Joanna's governance, and that the criticism arose from his attempt to establish himself as the ruler of the Kingdom of Naples. So, according to Přerovský, the queen had a political motivation to free herself from his influence, and the cardinals provided her with an opportunity to do so.³⁰⁶

Other suggestions have been put forward, assuming pragmatic intentions on the part of Joanna of Naples. As the French and Hungarian monarchs, together with the emperor, were in discussions regarding the marriage of their offspring in 1378, the potential inheritance after the passing of the queen, who was childless, was also factored in. According to Giacinto Romano and Paolo Stacul, the queen felt threatened by these negotiations. Therefore, she used the schism to stop the creation of family ties between France and Hungary, in order to assume control over the matter of succession. The queen leaned towards France while harboring animosity toward the Hungarian king Louis from the Anjou dynasty, who favored Urban.³⁰⁷ Other historians are of the notion that Urban himself preferred his adviser, Charles of Durazzo as the successor to the Neapolitan throne, which again displeased the queen. Although he was a relative of Joanna's, she did not warm to him due to his upbringing in the court of the Hungarian king.³⁰⁸

However, not all historians have attempted to develop alternative explanations to the queen's official reasons. Emile G. Léonard does not doubt that

³⁰⁴ Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Eine Streitschrift," 701–702.

³⁰⁵ Ullmann, *The Originis*, 49–50. Cf. "Giovanna I d'Angiò," 179–180.

³⁰⁶ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 103–104.

³⁰⁷ Romano, *Niccolò Spinelli*, 310–312, and Stacul, *Il cardinale Pileo*, 160.

³⁰⁸ See Franz J. Scheuffgen, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des großen Schismas* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1889) 11–12, and Lewin, *Negotiating Survival*, 61–62.

Joanna followed the unanimous advice she received. Yet, he expresses skepticism about the French influence due to the marriage talks between Charles V and Louis of Hungary, which must have gone against her intentions. It was only her opposition to Urban that aligned her with the policies of the French king.³⁰⁹

Anna Maria Voci shares a comparable viewpoint by proposing that historians might excessively prioritize the political motivations of the queen over the religious ones. She is skeptical about the evidential value of anecdotes about Urban's offensive behavior, emphasizing that they miss the core issue—the question of the canonicity of Urban's election. She also argues that it cannot be proven that the issue of succession was a relevant topic for both the queen and Urban in 1378, especially when French-Hungarian negotiations were ongoing. Similarly, she does not find Urban's interest in undermining Joanna's rule to be proven or logical. The fact that the queen decided against the preferences of the Neapolitan people and the minor nobility in favor of Clement and the cardinals also suggests a motivation beyond pragmatism. Therefore, Voci highlights the influence of correspondence, personal contacts, and persuasion.³¹⁰

The historians' controversy over the motives behind Joanna of Naples's inclination toward Clement is highly instructive, as it recalls the similarly contradictory judgments in historiography regarding Charles IV's stance toward the ecclesiastical crisis. It will probably never be possible to conclusively resolve the question of whether, during October 1378, the queen was thinking more of her bruised ego and her throne, or of the majesty of her dynasty, the salvation of her soul, and the peace of her conscience. In Ernst Kantorowicz's terminology, it was the queen's "two bodies" that could not be sufficiently separated. Her undying, political body, in this case, was the personification and guarantor of justice.³¹¹

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that it is a difficult task to disentangle Joanna from the personal contacts, positions, and letters documented by the various parties involved. Emperor Charles IV or Catherine of Siena definitely convinced her using particular arguments about Urban's legitimacy because they believed it made sense. Joanna of Naples was the European monarch

³⁰⁹ Léonard, *Les Angivens*, 456.

³¹⁰ Voci, "Giovanna I d'Angiò," 179–187.

³¹¹ See Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), esp. 140–142.

closest to the events and had significant involvement in them as a vassal of the pope. This position put immense pressure on her, however, it also provided the opportunity to gather a substantial amount of information and testimonies about the dispute's essence.

When the emperor tried to win the queen over to Urban by referring to the letters from the cardinals who had written to him in the spring about the canonicity of Urban's election, he could not impress Joanna. As we have learned, the queen had a series of personal statements from the cardinals, either written or oral (as in the case of Orsini), assuring her of the opposite. Nor was the French king, in any case, in such an exposed position, and therefore his influence on the queen's actions, at least at the beginning, could not have been decisive. If Joanna of Naples knew the "wise" king's opinion on the schism, she might have mentioned it in her November mandate and used it to strengthen her position, as it did in 1380, but this did not happen.

In the intense war of confidential information and influential witnesses, Urban and his supporters could not compete with the cardinals and their confidants at the Neapolitan court. Perhaps that is why he only gradually escalated the pressure and took the monarch into consideration for a long time. The ecclesiastical trials that the Roman pontiff initiated in the autumn, first with the rebels and later with the queen, offer intriguing perspective on these events.

Urban VI employed legal instruments by no later than October 1, 1378. This was done via a hitherto unknown bull, in which he compared the Church to a vineyard that had been destroyed by its own children. This led him to take steps to protect it. He accused Robert of Geneva, Jean de La Grange, Géraud du Puy, and Pierre Flandrin of conspiring against him, allowing mercenaries to occupy Anagni, the Castel Sant'Angelo, and other estates in Campania Romana, and causing a schism. Despite demonstrating goodwill and repeatedly admonishing the named individuals and their supporters through three Italian cardinals and other prelates, they remained obstinate and publicly disseminated derogatory texts claiming that he was not the true pope, even though they had canonically elected, enthroned, and crowned him, assisted him in the administration of the Church, and received favors from him for several months. They were also charged for permitting the public preaching of derogatory documents by Giacomo d'Itri, the patriarch of Constantinople, Pierre Bohier, the canonist and bishop of Orvieto, Pierre d'Anguisen, the bishop of Montefiascone, Guglielmo, the bishop of Urbino, Jean de Murol, the

bishop of Geneva, and other followers. Finally, they elected Robert of Geneva as the antipope in the residence of Onorato Caetani.³¹²

Urban instructed Cardinal Giovanni d'Amelia to investigate the accusations and, upon confirmation, summoned the accused to appear before him on October 15 to hear their penalties. He judged them to be schismatics, apostates, blasphemers, and conspirators deserving punishment as heretics. Furthermore, they were guilty of committing the crime of *lèse-majesté* and usurping the estates of the Roman Church; these transgressions fell under the punishments declared against alienators by John XXII and Clement VI, and thus they were henceforth deposed and deprived of their benefices.³¹³

Urban was dissatisfied with solely persecuting the four cardinals and so also targeted their protectors. In October, he summoned camerlengo Pierre de Cros for leaving Rome without permission and taking valuable possessions. Moreover, due to his association with the cardinals and Clement, he also pursued the four bishops and the patriarch mentioned in the bull of October 1. Furthermore, Bishop *Caiaciensis* Francis, Niccolò Brancaccio, the aforementioned archbishop of Cosenza, Bertrand Rafini, the official of the Apostolic Camera, and Masellus Casilli, the rector of the Church of S. Maria di Piedigrotta near Naples, all shared his anger for the same reason. Additionally, secular figures who were taken to court for spreading hatred against Urban included Onorato Caetani, the count of Fondi, Luigi Antonio della Ratta, the count of Caserta, and Niccolò Spinelli da Giovinazzo, the Neapolitan chancellor. Urban's retribution was also harsh against Francesco di Vico—the tyrant of Viterbo—and the leaders of the mercenary companies, Jean de Malestroit, Sylvestre Budes, Bernardon de La Salle, Pierre de Laxaga, and Guilhonet de Sault. This was in response to their seizure of ecclesiastical lands.

All of them were definitively stripped of their offices and titles no later than November 6, as the pope issued an encyclical to the representatives of particular archdioceses, instructing them to inform the faithful about the proceedings in vernacular. The pontiff even encouraged the persecutors of the convicted

³¹² The copy of the bull is preserved in ms. Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.ch.f.84, fols. 141v-143r. For the edition, see no. 8 in the Appendix below.

³¹³ See *ibid.*

to accept the sign of the cross. Those individuals were promised the same full indulgences as those granted to participants in the crusade to the Holy Land.³¹⁴

However, Urban also recognized the power of language. Two days later, and again at the end of December, with reference to his judgement, he issued orders to the Dominican professors, instructing them to exercise spiritual weapons of God's teachings in combating those who had maligned his reputation. He mandated them to defend both his honor and the Church in both public and private sermons and talks. Furthermore, he bestowed upon them the authority to detain supporters of the antipope regardless of their status.³¹⁵

On the day of the death of the Holy Roman emperor, November 29, Urban reinforced the excommunication of all offenders for contempt of court. Reflecting also on the ongoing propaganda campaign of the Clementists, he urged all persons, clerical and lay, to intercept all correspondence from Clement VII and his followers, and to arrest ambassadors sent by their supporters and advo-

³¹⁴ I am aware of four copies of the bull: for the well-known copy for Archbishop Friedrich of Saarwerden of Cologne, which has survived in the original, see *Die Regesten der Erzbischöfe*, 8:553–554, no. 2001. The copy for the archbishop of Trier, Kuno of Falkenstein, is preserved in ms. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, A IX 8, fols. 75r–79r. The exemplar for Simon Sudbury, archbishop of Canterbury, is published in *Concilia Magnae Britanniae*, 3:138–140. On the publication of the bull in England in the spring of 1379, see Perroy, *L'Angleterre*, 63. The exemplar for the archbishop of Uppsala is published in *Registrum Ecclesiae Aboensis eller Åbo domkyrkas Svartbok/ The Black Book of Abo Cathedral*, ed. Elisa Pispala (Helsinki: National Archives of Finland, 1996), 164–169, no. 240. This is a transsumpt of November 12, 1379, for Johannes III Westphal, bishop of Turku (Åbo), which shows that the archbishop had received the bull nine days earlier. The original copy of the letter can be viewed at <https://df.narc.fi/document/874#picture> (accessed Oct. 17, 2023). Most of the names were identified by Jamme, "Renverser le pape," 466, note 194. Only the identity of Bishop Francis is unclear, whose title is spelled *Caiacensis/ Cayaciensis/ Caraciensis/ Gaiatiensis* in the exemplars cited. Jamme, *ibid.*, identifies him as Françoise de Cardaillac, the bishop of Cavaillon. In contrast, Andernach in *Die Regesten der Erzbischöfe von Köln*, 553, states that he was Francis of Charran (*Caraciensis*), i.e., the titular bishop in the Patriarchate of Antioch, see Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica*, 1:544.

³¹⁵ Urban's mandate of November 8, 1378, to Marco di Bologna was issued by Giuseppe Zaoli, *Papa Martino V e i Bolognesi* (Bologna: Stabilimento poligrafico Emiliano, 1912), 7, note 2. The commissioning for two other professors, Gregory and John, dated December 29, 1378 ("III^{ro} kalendis Ianuarii anno primo"), is preserved in a more complete but considerably inferior copy in ms. Vatican, Biblioteca apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 6330, fols. 141v–143r. This bull has already been pointed out by Valois, *La France*, 1:159, note 3, and Romano, *Niccolò Spinelli*, 315, note 2, though with incorrect dating and an inaccurate description of the contents.

cates. He encouraged this action once again with the prospect of obtaining large indulgences. He was also aware that his opponents had powerful supporters, so he urged his subjects to disobey, releasing them from their oaths to their lords.³¹⁶ It can be assumed that his primary target was the subjects of the queen of Naples, who had ordered the arrest of the papal emissaries only a few days earlier.

If Urban definitively condemned important members of the Neapolitan court, who Cardinal Mezzavacca later deemed to have led their queen astray due to personal animosity towards the pope, on November 6, then it indicates that Joanna's allegiance must have already been determined. Nevertheless, it is a fact that, despite his fiery nature, Urban approached the queen herself with caution, endeavoring to prevent her from suffering public shame for an extended period. He sent well-regarded religious and secular figures to her several times, urging her to repent and expressing his willingness to forgive her and preserve her honor.³¹⁷

Raymond of Capua recalled in the *Vita* of Catherine of Siena that Urban planned to dispatch her and Catharine of Sweden to Naples to win over the queen to his side since all three women were acquainted. Nevertheless, an exceptional summit failed to occur due to Birgitta of Sweden's daughter's rejection of the challenging mission. Raymond himself backed her, much to the discontent of the Italian visionary. He believed that the fragile reputation of the pious virgins could be severely harmed by the schemes of the malevolent queen and her satellites, a view allegedly shared by Urban himself, leading to the withdrawal of the mission.³¹⁸ Instead, seasoned friars were again sent to agitate. In January 1379, Urban commissioned Domenico de Stelleopardis, a learned Dominican from Afragola near Naples, to preach against the anti-pope and his adherents in the Kingdom of Naples. To enhance the chances

³¹⁶ See *Annales ecclesiastici*, 7:362–366.

³¹⁷ Urban VI informed the archbishop of Prague and his suffragans in detail about the proceedings on September 22, 1379. The bull was published by Voci, "Giovanna I d'Angiò," 218–226, no. 1, see esp. 219, where the sending of envoys to the queen is also discussed.

³¹⁸ See "De S. Catharina Senensi, virgine de poenitentia S. Dominici vita auctore fr. Raimundo Capuano," in *Acta Sanctorum Aprilis collecta, digesta, illustrata*, vol. 3, ed. Godefridus Henschenius and Daniel Papebrochius (Antwerp: Michael Cnobarus, 1675), 853–959, at 937.

of triumph in his endeavor, Urban conferred upon him the power to pardon those who forswore heresy and submitted to his authority.³¹⁹

The sending of both Catherine of Siena and her older namesake to Naples were justified. Catherine of Sweden was well acquainted with the queen, having stayed at Joanna's court with her mother several years earlier. Birgitta had much to discuss with the queen, as both she and Joanna of Naples supported the return of the papacy to Rome.³²⁰ Thus, the queen would hardly have aligned with Clement VII and the cardinals if their primary motive had been to leave Italy and return to Avignon, as Alfonso Pecha and his allies claimed a year later. In reality, the queen was working to ensure that the ultramontanes maintained their hold on Italian soil. However, this effort ultimately failed.

Urban's patience with Joanna waned in the early spring of 1379. It was only then that he initiated an ecclesiastical trial against her. Nevertheless, he suspended the proceedings when the queen acknowledged him as the authentic pope after the escape of Clement VII and the cardinals to Avignon in May 1379. The population of the Kingdom of Naples, where they were staying under Joanna's protection, rebelled against them. In August, however, the queen reconsidered, and an extremely angered Urban definitively condemned her a month later and informed the leaders of the archdioceses of his decision. To all who would devote themselves to the annihilation of the heretical queen, he again promised the same indulgences as to the crusaders to the Holy Land.³²¹

The situation was escalated also by the ultramontane side. It should be noted that Clement VII commenced official ecclesiastical proceedings against

³¹⁹ The bull of commission for Domenico de Stelleopardis of January 7, 1379, is preserved in *Bullarium ordinis Praedicatorum*, vol. 2, *Ab Anno 1281 ad 1430*, ed. Thomas Ripoll (Rome: Mainardus, 1730), 296–297. Cf. Rothbart, *Urban VI*, 34.

³²⁰ Casteen, *From She-Wolf to Martyr*, 143–144, 147.

³²¹ See note 317 above. In the literature, one encounters the claim that Urban VI did not excommunicate the queen until April 21, 1380, see Casteen, *From She-Wolf to Martyr*, 203, or Lewin, *Negotiating Survival*, 62, note 1. This, however, is a mistake already made by G. Erler in *Theoderici de Nyem de scismate libri tres*, 37, note 2. On this date, Urban VI merely ordered the city of Sora that, as he had long since deposed and excommunicated Joanna of Naples, no one should dare to obey her. See also Urban's letter to the abbot of Montecassino of April 15, 1380, edited by Erasmo Gattola, *Ad Historiam abbatiae Cassinensis Accessiones*, vol. 1 (Venice: Sebastianus Coleti, 1734), 447, where, however, the incorrect date of 1379 is present, followed by Scheuffgen, *Beiträge zur Geschichte*, 11.

Urban and his supporters only the following year in Avignon.³²² While he was still in Italy, he probably was relying on being able to remove him directly. The cardinals issued a warning to Prignano on August 9, 1378, declaring that if he did not vacate the See, they would seek assistance from secular power.³²³ Clement VII wrote to the French monarch on the final day of 1378 stating that he had received support in pursuing the usurper and planned to persist until his utter destruction. However, he required the ruler's immediate aid to accomplish this objective and believed he would receive it.³²⁴

The rebels' pleas for assistance were well warranted. It had become clear that their political situation was deteriorating. They had succeeded in winning over the queen of Naples and her husband, certain Italian nobles, and numerous mercenaries. Yet, most people in Italy turned against them because of Clement's violent past, their lack of real reforms, and their use of foreign soldiers.³²⁵ Urban, naturally, was adept at exploiting these sentiments. By the end of November, he assured the Sienese envoy, Lando Ungaro, in Rome that the soldiers provided to him by the city would be employed for the benefit of the entire country.³²⁶

The endeavor of both warring factions to establish themselves in Italy, even at the cost of armed conflict, brings the opening chapter of the story of the divided papacy to a close. A number of important figures, events, and texts have now entered the stage—ones whom we shall encounter again later in this book. Whatever one may think of the coercive conduct of the *popolo* during the April election, historians increasingly agree that the true catalyst of the ecclesiastical crisis was not the contentious conduct of the conclave itself, but rather the subsequent collapse of relations and trust among the Church's leadership. Many influential ultramontanes became disillusioned with Urban, owing to his severity, eccentricity, and solitary behavior, whilst he accused them of an unwillingness to accept his program of reform. Three Italian cardinals attempted to navigate a course between the two sides, yet their bold expectations ultimately remained unfulfilled at Fondi.

³²² See *Theoderici de Nyem de scismate libri tres*, 37, and "Prima vita Clementis VII," 496.

³²³ *Concilia Magnae Britanniae*, 3:129.

³²⁴ See Valois, "Le rôle de Charles V," 249–251, no. 4.

³²⁵ Weiß, "Luxury and Extravagance," 82–83.

³²⁶ Nardi, "Siena e la Curia pontificia," 62.

The opening chapter also brought attention to several historiographically contentious and previously overlooked issues regarding the origins of the schism, which are likewise important to bear in mind. The alleged desire of the ultramontanes to return to Avignon cannot be considered the principal cause of the crisis between the cardinals and Urban, as claimed by the followers of Birgitta of Sweden, and later by the vast majority of historians writing about Charles IV. It is also evident that the idea of convening a general or partial council did not originate in the summer of 1378 from the supposedly neutral Italian cardinals, as some modern scholars suggest, but rather emerged from Urban himself, with the initiative also being supported by the pontiff's staunchest adherents. The pope's concern was not so much with the council itself, but with using the discussions about convening a general synod as a means to buy time in order to consolidate his own faction.

The extraordinary role of political and expert communication in the early stages of the schism has also been noted. The exchange of opinions and positions most likely accounted for the previously overlooked delay in the coronation of Clement VII, as Queen Joanna of Naples, the traditional protector of the papacy in Italy, was reluctant to act hastily in declaring her support for either side. However, the queen's conduct also highlights a broader issue.

For the sake of clarity, the focus above has been primarily on the narrow group of individuals at the head of the Church. This is a rather traditional perspective on the origins of the schism; however, it is a one-sided view. The case of the queen of Naples and her involvement in the schism clearly demonstrates that secular power was also an element of the ecclesiastical conflict. Indeed, when Urban thanked the Sienese envoy for providing mercenaries, he added in the same breath that the emperor—the formal lord of the Italian commune—would not take offense at this.³²⁷

However, it would be a mistake to assume that the representatives of secular power became involved in the quarrel between the Church's leaders only after the conflict had already run its course. In fact, secular power played a role in shaping the relations between the cardinals and Urban from the outset of their turbulent coexistence. In the spring of 1378, the pontiff found himself in conflict with some of the cardinals, not only over matters of Church administra-

³²⁷ Ibid.

tion and reform but also over the resolution of sensitive political issues that had emerged during the papacy of Gregory XI. As the Holy Roman Emperor was deeply involved in the most pressing of these issues, the tumultuous events in Italy must now be revisited through the lens of Charles IV's papal policies. This perspective sheds new light on the ecclesiastical crisis, offering a fascinating and largely unexplored view.

2.

An Imperial Diadem for the Young King

In the second half of the 1370s, Emperor Charles IV was preoccupied with two political matters in which the papacy played a pivotal role. The monarch was directly involved in a dispute with Gregory XI regarding the approval of the Roman-German royal election of his son Wenceslas. Without papal confirmation, the young king could not receive the imperial diadem from the pontiff's hands. This conflict was a jurisdictional dispute between the Empire and the papacy. The dynamics of the controversy stemmed not only from the fact that the election of a king-son during the lifetime of an emperor-father had not occurred in over a century, but also from the immense rarity of an imperial coronation during the reign of the sitting emperor in the history of the Holy Roman Empire.

The dispute over Wenceslas's approbation was indirectly related to the second political matter, in which the interests of the emperor and the Curia were intertwined. It was assumed that Charles's son would receive the imperial diadem according to tradition in Rome, the center of the Holy Roman Empire and Latin Christianity. However, the popes had been based in Avignon for some time. An attempt by Urban V to return to Rome between 1367 and 1370, which Charles himself witnessed, failed, and his successor Gregory XI was hesitant to commit to a move to Italy. This hesitation was not solely due to ties with France. As noted earlier, the Avignon papacy faced many enemies in Italy. Chief among them were the Milanese Visconti, who led the opposition. Later, Florence emerged as the leader of the rebellion and launched the so-called War of the Eight Saints against the papacy, securing allies from other communes and signorias. Some of these, like Florence, were formally subject to the Holy

Roman Empire, and Gregory XI naturally expected the emperor's full cooperation in the conflict.

However, imperial-papal relations in the second half of the 1370s were not driven solely by political factors. A key aspect of the emperor's papal policy was the appointment of bishops. In particular, the bishops of south-western (Upper) Germany³²⁸ and the Bohemian lands were crucial for his rule. Therefore, the monarch sought an understanding with the papacy regarding the provision of vacant benefices.³²⁹ When consensus could not be reached, these disagreements became a source of tension, often leading to coercive actions by one side or the other.

The following analysis will attempt to unravel the complex web of imperial-papal relations and often conflicting interests. Only then will it become clear what expectations Charles IV had for the pontificate of Urban VI, how the new pope managed the political legacy of his predecessor, and how Urban's policies were perceived by the cardinals tasked with ensuring continuity.

The Royal Election and Papal Approbation as a Bone of Contention

At just fifteen years old, Wenceslas, the king of Bohemia, ascended the Roman-German throne by the will of seven electors (*Kurfürsten*) on June 10, 1376, in Frankfurt am Main and was crowned less than a month later in ancient Aachen. This was an election during the lifetime of the emperor (*vivente imperatore*), which had last occurred in 1220 in the time of the Hohenstaufen, and

³²⁸ Although the term "(Upper) Germany" is somewhat anachronistic in a medieval context, I use it here as a practical reference for the core region of the Empire, which is the focus of this book. For the territorial delimitation of Upper Germany, see Duncan Hardy, *Associative Political Culture in the Holy Roman Empire: Upper Germany, 1346–1521* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 15–16.

³²⁹ Cf. Ludwig Schmugge, "Kurie und Kirche in der Politik Karls IV.," in *Kaiser Karl IV. Staatsmann und Mäzen*, ed. Ferdinand Seibt (Munich: Prestel, 1978), 73–87, 440–441; Gerhard Losher, "Kirchenorganisation und Bistumsbesetzungen als Herrschaftsmittel. Das Verhältnis von Reichsherrschaft und Territorialherrschaft am Beispiel der Kirchenpolitik Karls IV.," *Bohemia* 25 (1984): 1–24; idem, *Königtum und Kirche zur Zeit Karls IV.: ein Beitrag zur Kirchenpolitik im Spätmittelalter*, Veröffentlichungen des Collegium Carolinum 56 (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1985).

which the electors were reluctant to accept because the outcome was known in advance. Since the emperor had to make extraordinary efforts to win the *Kurfürsten* to his cause, it was an event whose consequences determined the balance of power in the Empire long after it had become history.³³⁰ Yet, the election was also a matter for the pope.

The reason for this was described by Innocent III in 1202 in the decretal *Venerabilem*, which was subsequently included in canon law. In it he recognized the right of the princes to elect a king, but with the proviso that the approbation of the chosen belonged to the pope, since he anointed and crowned him emperor. Since the issuance of this decretal, disputes had arisen between the ecclesiastical and secular powers about the extent to which papal approbation did or did not condition the legitimacy of royal election and rule. The fundamental crisis and abandonment of the principle described by Innocent did not occur, however, until the bitter clashes between Emperor Ludwig IV of Bavaria and Pope John XXII and his successor in the first half of the fourteenth century.³³¹

Charles IV himself was elected and crowned king of the Romans in 1346 in accordance with the ideas of the Papal Curia. Before his election he went to Clement VI in Avignon, accompanied by his father, and made several promises in writing. One of them concerned the royal election and coronation. Charles promised to renew all his vows within eight days of the election, and to do so even after he had received his approbation from the pope, which he planned to obtain by sending ambassadors to Avignon. He also promised to renew his oath after his coronation and to draw up the appropriate documents to that effect.³³² Charles essentially followed the outlined scenario. After he was elected king in July 1346, he sent an embassy to Avignon asking for papal approbation

³³⁰ This will be discussed in more detail in chapter four of the present volume.

³³¹ See Emil Engelmann, *Der Anspruch der Päpste auf Konfirmation und Approbation bei den deutschen Königswahlen (1077–1379). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Kampfes zwischen Papsttum und deutschem Königtum im Mittelalter* (Breslau: Wilhelm Koebner, 1886); and esp. Michael Menzel, "Feindliche Übernahme. Die ludovicianischen Züge der Goldenen Bulle," in *Die Goldene Bulle: Politik – Wahrnehmung – Rezeption*, vol. 1, ed. Ulrike Hohensee et al. *Berichte und Abhandlungen. Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Sonderband 12* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009), 39–64, at 40–49.

³³² These promises were made on April 22, 1436, see *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Legum sectio IV. Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum inde ab a. MCCCXLV usque ad a. MCCCXLVIII*, vol. 8, ed. Karl Zeumer and Richard Salomon (Hanover: Impensis Bibliofolii Hahniani, 1910–1926), 12–17, esp. 15.

and waited several months before Clement granted it in early November. Only then did he proceed to his coronation and the exercise of his rule.³³³

However, Charles' body of law drawn up for the Holy Roman Empire ten years later, the so-called Golden Bull, only states in general terms that the king is to be promoted to emperor (*rex Romanorum in imperatorem promovendus*), does not specify the details, and is completely silent about papal approbation. At the same time, it assumes that the elected king would immediately legitimately rule by the authority of the Holy Empire (*virtute sacri imperii*), which corresponds to the self-confidence of Ludwig of Bavaria and the *Kurfürsten* who had already accepted this maxim at their assembly in Rhens in the 1330s.³³⁴ Thus, when it became apparent during the 1370s that Charles IV was also seeking the Roman crown for his son during his lifetime, the conflicting conceptions of the electors, the Papal Curia, and the precedent of Charles's election created a complex situation that once again signaled a formidable political struggle between the Empire and the papacy.³³⁵

³³³ Engelmann, *Der Anspruch der Päpste*, 104–105. Spěváček, *Karl IV.*, 74–76, noted that Charles kept only a few of the promises he had made. However, as Eva Schlotheuber has demonstrated, Charles also upheld his oath during his Italian journey in 1355—an oath to which he reaffirmed his commitment after his imperial coronation, in accordance with Clement VI. See eadem, “Reassessing Charles IV’s Imperial Coronation Journey and the Role of Petrarch,” in *Carlo IV nell’Italia del Trecento: il “savio signore” e la riformulazione del potere imperiale*, ed. Maria Pia Alberzoni, Miriam Rita Tessera, Daniela Rando, and Eva Schlotheuber, *Nuovi studi storici* 126 (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, 2022), 217–254, esp. 223 and 246–247.

³³⁴ See, e.g., *Die Goldene Bulle Kaiser Karls IV. vom Jahre 1356*, ed. Wolfgang Dietrich Fritz, MGH. *Fontes iuris in usum scholarum* 11 (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1972), 55 and 75–76. Cf. Jürgen Miethke, “Die päpstliche Kurie des 14. Jahrhunderts und die ‘Goldene Bulle’ Kaiser Karls IV. von 1356,” in *Papstgeschichte und Landesgeschichte. Festschrift für Hermann Jakobs zum 65. Geburtstag*, Archiv für Kulturgeschichte. Beiheft 39 (Cologne: Böhlau, 1995), 437–450, at 439–444; Menzel, “Feindliche Übernahme,” 40–42; and most recently Eva Schlotheuber and Maria Theisen, *Die Goldene Bulle von 1356. Das erste Grundgesetz des römisch-deutschen Reichs. Nach König Wenzels Prachthandschrift (Codex Vindobonensis 338)* (Darmstadt: WBG Academic, 2023), esp. 14–34.

³³⁵ Cf. also Schlotheuber and Theisen, *Die Goldene Bulle*, 162. In general, on the dualism of the Roman king and the pope and the declining influence of the latter on the rule of the Empire during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see Peter Moraw, “Königliche Herrschaft und Verwaltung im spätmittelalterlichen Reich (ca. 1350–1450),” in *Das spätmittelalterliche Königtum im europäischen Vergleich*, ed. Reinhard Schneider, *Vorträge und Forschungen* 32 (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1987), 185–200, at 192–193.

The first rumors of Charles's German campaign for Wenceslas's election leaked in Avignon in the spring of 1375. By April 19 at the latest, it was reported that Charles IV intended to secure his son's imperial coronation during his lifetime, with the consent of both the electors and the pope. It was also firmly believed that the emperor and his son—or at least Wenceslas and his entourage—would join Gregory XI in Italy.³³⁶ The pope had been considering relocating from Avignon to Rome for some time but had yet to make a final decision.³³⁷

The news of the emperor's dynastic ambitions was likely intermediated in Avignon by the papal collector Tommaso Ammannati, whom we met above during the stormy Roman conclave.³³⁸ After Tommaso had returned from the Empire on March 28, Gregory XI sat down with the cardinals for deliberations, during which they concluded that Wenceslas's election as king of the Romans and his elevation to emperor during his father's lifetime was very unusual for a number of reasons. They did not, however, reject the idea itself; they took advantage of the situation and made their consent subject to a number of conditions. These so-called *capitula* were delivered to the emperor by Tommaso Ammannati.³³⁹

The emperor had already secured the consent of all the electors to the election by a number of treaties. The speedy execution of the election was in his own interest; nevertheless, he postponed the act in respect of the negotiations with the Papal Curia.³⁴⁰ Charles did not agree to all the conditions put to him by Tommaso Ammannati. Of those he accepted, we know two. The emperor

³³⁶ See Garosi, ed., "La vita e l'opera," 327, no. 20: "Item noveritis quod firmissime imperator Romanorum erit hic per totum mensem iunii una cum filio suo primogenito rege Boemie, quem etiam se vivente faciet coronari imperatorem et consentunt omnes novos electores imperii et consentit papa et creditur infallibiliter quod imperator et filius assortiabunt papam in Italiam aut saltem filius cum magna comitiva." Cf. Guillaume Mollat, "Relations politiques de Grégoire XI avec les Siennois et les Florentins," in *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'École française de Rome* 68 (1956): 335–376, at 354.

³³⁷ See Mollat, *The Popes at Avignon*, 160–171; Heinrich Schmidinger, "Die Rückkehr Gregors XI. nach Rom in den Berichten des Cristoforus von Piacenza," in *Ecclesia Peregrinans. Josef Lenzenweger zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Karl Amon (Vienna: Der Verband der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaften Österreichs, 1986), 133–141, at 136–137.

³³⁸ On Tommaso Ammannati and his mission, see Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 122–125.

³³⁹ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, vol. 1, 1376–1387, ed. Julius Weizsäcker (Gotha: Perthes, 1867), 93/13–21, no. 61.

³⁴⁰ Cf. Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 126–129.

promised to come to Avignon before the election to present Wenceslas in person, and to proceed as he had done on his own elevation to the Roman throne.³⁴¹

However, the preparations of the Papal Curia for the reception of the famous delegation were halted at the beginning of 1376 by the news of Charles's poor health. Therefore, Gregory XI decided to send Cardinal Robert of Geneva to the German lands as soon as possible to intercede for Wenceslas with the *Kurfürsten* in the event of the emperor's death and, if possible, to prevent the election of another person. It was a friendly gesture. Robert was related to Charles and for three years—after the death of his powerful uncle, Cardinal Guy de Boulogne—had acted as his confidant in Avignon.³⁴²

In the meantime, however, the electors and the emperor had run out of patience. Perhaps the monarch himself had seen to it that the inconvenient agreement between himself and Gregory fell into the hands of the self-confident princes. At the end of March 1376, Charles announced brusquely to Avignon that the electors had agreed to conduct Wenceslas's election in Frankfurt on June 1 and his subsequent coronation in Aachen. At the same time, he ruled out a visit to Avignon because of the deterioration of his health. All this was reported to the pope by the emperor's chaplain and doctor of law Odolen Boncův (*Odolerius Bonzonis*).³⁴³ Gregory immediately sent to the imperial court the nuncio Audibert de Sade, provost of Prignan, who was given the task of defending the interests of the papacy more resolutely than Ammannati had done.

The general aims of the provost's mission are evidenced by the letter he received from the pope to give to the emperor and the instructions drawn up by cardinals Corsini, Borsano, and Guy de Malesset.³⁴⁴ In Avignon, above all,

³⁴¹ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:93/25–29, no. 61, and 105/31–34, no. 68.

³⁴² See *Über Formelbücher*, 2:25–26. Cf. Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 190; Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:183; Schlotheuber and Theisen, *Die Goldene Bulle*, 163.

³⁴³ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:90–92, no. 60. Cf. Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 152–153, and Schlotheuber and Theisen, *Die Goldene Bulle*, 163, who emphasize Charles's handwritten signature.

³⁴⁴ See *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:93–97, nos. 61–62. The probable reasons for the engagement of the cardinals against the background of their contacts with the Empire and the emperor were analyzed by Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 193–200. Ibid., 200, draws attention to the interesting detail of Guy de Malesset's study of the two documents containing Charles's vows of April 22, 1346.

they were quite dissatisfied that the father and son would not come to the Curia. They had before their eyes the precedent of 1346, when Charles had visited Avignon with his father before his election. The cardinals and the pope not only wished to get to know Wenceslas personally and establish an “indissoluble bond,” but they intended to use the meeting to convene an extraordinary assembly of princes and lords, resembling a council, to deal with reform (*reformatio*) in regard to the conflicts and tribulations in Christian world. This is another indication that the Church leadership was aware of the need for reform on the eve of Prignano’s election. So, in order for a personal meeting to take place, Gregory relented and suggested to the emperor to send at least Wenceslas to Avignon with wise counsellors.³⁴⁵

With this concession, however, the Church leaders’ allowances to the emperor came to an end. They were surprised that the date of the election had been announced without fulfilling the earlier agreement and were disillusioned by the haste of the coronation. The emperor should have understood that without the approval of the candidate and the confirmation of the election by the pope, the coronation could not be carried out nor could legitimate rule be established, and that Charles himself had respected this in 1346; otherwise, there was a danger of a renewal of the conflict that had taken place between Ludwig IV of Bavaria and John XXII. Thus, according to Audibert’s instructions, the emperor and his son were to stick to the original agreement and await the arrival of the legate Robert of Geneva.³⁴⁶

The engagement of Cardinal Corsini, who was on good terms with the emperor and knew his way around the complex imperial situation as a Florentine,³⁴⁷ as well as the announced mission of Robert of Geneva, were signs that the Curia was not interested in escalating the dispute. Audibert, however, received an ambiguous response to the specific demands he had made to the emperor in Nuremberg in the last decade of May 1376.

The provost’s main goal was to get the emperor to write to the pope asking for his consent to Wenceslas’s election. This Charles IV, fearing a grave insult to the electors, flatly refused. He did, however, agree that Wenceslas would promise in writing not to allow a royal election during Wenceslas’s own life-

³⁴⁵ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:96–97. The intended assembly was already compared to a council by Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 153–154 and 160.

³⁴⁶ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:97.

³⁴⁷ Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 194–197.

time. Yet, when Audibert asked Charles to support a papal constitution that would generally forbid election during the king's lifetime or allow it only with papal permission, he again firmly refused. Similarly, he considered it politically risky to travel to Avignon under the circumstances, as it would have meant postponing the election. He agreed, however, that he would go to the pontiff only after the positive settlement of Wenceslas's case. Audibert thus succeeded, in principle, only in the oaths of allegiance to the pope and the Church that were attached to the election.³⁴⁸ In May, Wenceslas sent Odolen Boncův and Count Valentine of Poitiers to Avignon and authorized them to promise the pope that, after his election, he would personally take the oaths that his father and great-grandfather Henry VII had sworn.³⁴⁹

However, Provost Audibert achieved one more pyrrhic victory. Charles had a letter from the pope read to the electors in which Gregory questioned the validity of the coronation without papal approval.³⁵⁰ The emperor surely reckoned that the princes would reject this as contrary to the law and he could again use their indignation to apologize for his own intransigence. He did not hesitate, however, to show helpfulness whenever possible. He promised Audibert that Wenceslas would refrain from any acts of government until the coronation.³⁵¹ He was a pragmatist and knew that the arrival of Robert of Geneva was imminent and negotiations with him could bring about a shift. Therefore, on May 22, he even agreed to postpone the election until the cardinal's arrival (but no later than June 6) and sent two envoys, the deans Dietrich of Wrocław and Jan of St. Apollinaris in Prague, to meet Robert and hasten his arrival. In Basel, however, instead of seeing the cardinal, they met Jean de Saya, the bishop of Agen, who told them that Robert had been charged with another urgent task in mid-May.³⁵²

For nearly a year the papacy had been at war in Italy with Florence and her allies, oftentimes communes that, though belonging to the ecclesiastical state, were disgusted by the long and often unscrupulous rule imposed from "foreign" Avignon. And it was the suppression of resistance in Lombardy and

³⁴⁸ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:98–100, no. 63.

³⁴⁹ See the letter of credentials, *ibid.*, 106–107, no. 70.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 100–101, no. 64.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 101.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 100/13–21, and 106, no. 69. The bishop had already been entrusted with a diplomatic mission to Charles as early as 1370, see Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 136–143.

Romagna that was hastily entrusted to Robert of Geneva, a favorite of the mercenaries, who was afterwards blamed for the bloody massacre at Cesena by the Italian Urbanists.³⁵³

Jean de Saya reported to the emperor at the beginning of June. At that time Charles informed the representatives of Frankfurt that the electors would conduct Wenceslas's postponed election on June 10 and the coronation in Aachen a fortnight later. He also informed them that, according to the papal nuncio, Gregory XI and all the cardinals were in favor of Wenceslas's election and agreed to it, so that nothing would prevent its execution.³⁵⁴ However, this was an overly optimistic interpretation of the bishop's mandate.³⁵⁵

According to Jean de Saya's instructions, Gregory XI was newly willing to agree to the election because the emperor had requested him to do so.³⁵⁶ We have seen above that Charles, in his negotiations with Provost Audibert, firmly refused to send a written request for papal permission to conduct the election. The truth is, however, that as early as April 26, he had addressed a certain letter to the pope, now not extant, in which he made a request of the pontiff.³⁵⁷ In parallel with the younger writings, it may be assumed that he asked the pope for favor and grace, not for permission to vote.³⁵⁸ Gregory thus turned a blind eye because of the pressure of time, but only to impose other serious conditions.

³⁵³ See *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:101–102, no. 65. On the so-called War of the Eight Saints see Alessandro Gherardi, *La guerra dei Fiorentini con Papa Gregorio XI detta la guerra degli otto santi* (Florence: Tipi di Cellini, 1868); and more recently Alison Williams Lewin, *Negotiating Survival: Florence and the Great Schism, 1378–1417* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003), 39–56; David Peterson, “The War of the Eight Saints in Florentine Memory and Oblivion,” in *Society and the Individual in Renaissance Florence*, ed. William J. Connell (Berkley–Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 172–214.

³⁵⁴ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:71/19–21, no. 44.

³⁵⁵ In addition to the instructions (see the next note below), the bishop carried with him two letters from Gregory XI to Provost Audibert. See *ibid.*, 101–103, nos. 65–66. The pope informed the provost of Robert of Geneva's dispatchment to Italy and of the arrival of Jean de Saya. In the second letter the pontiff also appealed to both Audibert and the nuncio Tommaso Ammannati to urge the emperor not to proceed to the coronation until the election had been approved by the Church, as a conflict between the Curia and the Luxembourg monarchs might result.

³⁵⁶ See *ibid.*, 103–105, no. 67, here esp. 104/22: “Fiat de filio electio, prout est a domino imperatore petitum.”

³⁵⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 109/16–18, no. 72.

³⁵⁸ See below.

Even before the election, the pope expected both Wenceslas and Charles to take the oaths of allegiance in the wording brought by Provost Audibert. Gregory also wished to seal the previously agreed-upon *capitula*.³⁵⁹ After the election, the emperor and his son—and if Charles could not, only his son—together with the archbishop of Prague and other important persons were to come in person to ask the pope for the approbation. In any case, Wenceslas was not to be crowned or rule until he was approved by the pope, otherwise Gregory threatened to escalate the situation and never confirm Wenceslas. The participants in the coronation at Aachen, including the electors, who were threatened with ecclesiastical penalties by the Curia, were to be informed of this in writing.³⁶⁰

The war in Italy also became a subject of papal-imperial negotiations. Gregory XI officially opened the ecclesiastical trial of Florence on February 11, 1376, and compelled forty-nine of the city's leaders to his court in Avignon. The verdict came down on March 31 and included the promulgation of an interdict.³⁶¹ Gregory coordinated his actions with the emperor. In late March and early April, Charles threatened the Florentines and Lucca with military intervention, prepared an imperial ban (*Reichsacht*) against Florence, and dispatched an experienced diplomat, Bishop Lamprecht of Brunn. After crossing the Alps, Bishop Lamprecht not only made himself available to the legate in Italy, Cardinal Noëllet, but also visited Florence directly on June 2 with an offer to mediate a reconciliation.³⁶² Bishop Jean de Saya now thanked Charles

³⁵⁹ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:104/23–25, no. 67, and 114/20–24, no. 76.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 104–105, no. 67. As can be seen from the addendum *ibid.*, 105, no. 68, the bishop was aware that he was unlikely to persuade the emperor to abandon the coronation, so he wished to know how to proceed. He received no good advice. He should simply have insisted that there would be no coronation and that the procedure that had been followed for Charles's election should again be followed. It is also worth noting that apparently as early as the beginning of May, Cardinal Hugues de Saint Martial, on the order of the pope, urged the bishop of Liège to try to prevent Wenceslas's coronation with the assistance of the town of Aachen, which was in his diocese, and by other means. The letter was edited by Kistner, "Karl, der Papst und die Kardinäle," 167. Cf. Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 199–202.

³⁶¹ On this, see Williman and Corsano, "The interdict of Florence." Cf. also Richard C. Trexler, *The Spiritual Power: Republican Florence under Interdict*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1974).

³⁶² *Regesta Imperii*, vol. 8, nos. 5549, 5550, 5560, 5569–5571. On the arrival of the imperial embassy in Florence, see Hermann Langkabel, ed., *Die Staatsbriefe: Untersuchungen zum Frühhumanismus in der Florentiner Staatskanzlei u. Auswahledition* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1981), 130–131, no. 33. On Lamprecht's mission, from which he returned no later than July 6,

for his helpfulness and informed him that the pope had entrusted the assessment and promulgation of the ban to Pierre de Sortenac. Above all, however, he sought to induce a pledge from the emperor before the election to further aid the Church in the restoration of the shattered ecclesiastical state in Italy.³⁶³

Gregory had good reason to want to secure the emperor's favor in Italian politics. In their defense, the Florentines had sent two experienced doctors of law, Donato Barbadori and Alessandro dell' Antella, to Avignon in March. They defended their fellows by claiming, among other things, that they were laymen subject to the authority of the emperor and that Gregory had no legal competence to judge them. In 1369, Florence had obtained the restoration of her privileges from Charles IV, paying him an annual *census* of 4,000 florins, and now decided to take advantage of it.³⁶⁴ Moreover, for a year already the political correspondence of Florence had been conducted by the able stylist Coluccio Salutati, who had addressed at least one letter to the emperor, and had endeavored to vindicate the armed resistance of the commune before Charles.³⁶⁵

Unfortunately, we do not know what the monarch eventually promised the papal nuncio. The answers, which the bishop wrote down and the emperor sealed with a small seal (*sigillum secretum*), have not survived.³⁶⁶ Yet, the fact is that Wenceslas's election on June 10 in Frankfurt was a done deal, so the focus of attention was now on the coronation at Aachen.

1376, see Franz Machilek, "Lamprecht von Brunn (gest. 1399): Ordensmann, päpstlicher Finanzmann und Diplomat, herzoglicher und königlicher Rat, Fürstbischof," *Bericht des Historischen Vereins für die Pflege der Geschichte des ehemaligen Fürstbistums Bamberg* 137 (2001): 185–225, at 201.

³⁶³ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:103 and 105–106, no. 67.

³⁶⁴ The imperial element in the Florentine defense is emphasized by Peterson, "The War of the Eight Saints," 192, who cites relevant sources. Other procedural aspects of the defense are noted by Williman and Corsano, "The interdict of Florence," 434.

³⁶⁵ The letter is dated May 6, 1376, see Langkabel, ed., *Die Staatsbriefe*, 120–124, no. 29. Cf. Alexander Lee, "Coluccio Salutati and Charles IV of Luxembourg (1368–1378)," in *Carlo IV nell'Italia del Trecento: il "savio signore" e la riformulazione del potere imperiale*, ed. Maria Pia Alberzoni, Miriam Rita Tessera, Daniela Rando, and Eva Schlotheuber, *Nuovi studi storici* 126 (Roma: Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, 2022), 193–215, at 212. The addressee of the letter of September 1375 is not Emperor Charles IV, as Lee assumes (see *ibid.*, 210), but Charles of Durazzo. See Langkabel, ed., *Die Staatsbriefe*, 88, no. 3.

³⁶⁶ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:115/22–29, no. 76.

The emperor took a risk and postponed the ceremonial act announced for June 24 for fifteen days. This gave Wenceslas time to send ambassadors to Avignon to ask Gregory for his approbation before the coronation, as the pope wished.³⁶⁷ Wenceslas authorized the solemn embassy on the day of his election and notified the pope of its dispatch.³⁶⁸ Noblemen from the Kingdom of Arles, or Burgundy, including Count Amadeus of Savoy, Prince Raymund de Beaux of Orange, Viscount Guillaume Roger de Beaufort of Turenne, Count Peter of Geneva, and Louis de Valence, lent the embassy social prestige. The actual negotiations were entrusted to Wenceslas's chief adviser (*conciliarius princeps*), Bishop Eckard of Worms, Count Eberhard V of Katzenelnbogen, and the dean of Speyer, Konrad of Geisenheim, the imperial secretary. They were charged with the task of petitioning Gregory on behalf of the king for favor and grace (*favor et gratia*), to take oaths of allegiance, and to invite the pope to issue a Bull of Approbation, which was an invitation to the imperial coronation in Rome.

As the sending of the solemn delegation revived the scenario of Charles's elevation to the Roman throne in 1346, the self-confident electors resisted. They saw Charles's agreement to the delegation as a detriment to the Empire, and controversy surrounded the situation for four days. It appears that the three Rhenish *Kurfürsten*, as a sign of their disapproval, finally refused to send the usual letters to the pope announcing the result of the election.³⁶⁹ The electors of Mainz, Saxony, and Brandenburg, who were partisans of the emperor, behaved differently. The letters they issued were consistent with the mandate of the legation and with those of Charles himself.

The correspondence of the three partisan electors and Charles himself has survived in two versions. In the shorter letter, the electors and the emperor announced the results of the unanimous vote to Gregory, explained that the election was due to Charles's poor health, and asked for "the usual favor and grace" for Wenceslas.³⁷⁰ In the longer version, the senders urged the pope to designate Wenceslas king of the Romans, deem him fit to receive that dignity,

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 101/6–12, no. 64. The journey to Avignon was expected to take 16 days, see *ibid.*

³⁶⁸ Ibid., 116–119, nos. 77 and 78. The letter to the pope is preserved in duplicate. One copy came from Charles's chancery and the other from Wenceslas's newly established chancery. See Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 109–110.

³⁶⁹ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:101/13–19, no. 64. Cf. Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 256–257.

³⁷⁰ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:119, no. 79, and 123–124, no. 81.

and grant him the imperial diadem.³⁷¹ As difficult negotiations were expected in Avignon, the opportunity to appeal to the pope flexibly as different scenarios developed came in handy for the royal diplomats.³⁷²

The Rhenish electors' fear that the scenario of 1346 would repeat itself was, however, needless. Before the Frankfurt election, when the papal nuncios insisted that Wenceslas and Charles take oaths of allegiance to the pope and the Church, both did so on one major condition. In the presence of notaries and witnesses, they declared that the text of the oaths presented was neither original nor authenticated by a notary public, so they did not trust them. They therefore refused to draw up the relevant documents of their commitments until certified copies of the oaths had been presented to them. It was therefore arranged that the text of the oaths would be presented to the royal envoys in Avignon in their authenticated form, and that the aforementioned imperial secretary, Konrad of Geisenheim, would inscribe them in Avignon on blank pieces of parchment bearing the seals of the emperor and his son.³⁷³ Charles's desire to avoid making a clear written commitment to the Church before the election and coronation took place was obvious.

Accordingly, on June 9, the day before the election, Wenceslas made a vow in the presence of Bishop Jean and Provost Audibert that he would pledge his allegiance to the pope and the Church in the required wording only if he was elected king of the Romans. These were essentially the articles that Charles IV had pledged to Clement VI in Avignon on April 22, 1346, including the observance of Henry VII's oath of 1310.³⁷⁴ However, even after the election, no meaningful progress was made toward meeting the papal demands. When Wenceslas renewed the oath before the nuncio Tommaso Ammannati on June 16, it was again an act of little consequence. The king undertook to make the appropriate promises to the pope only if Gregory acceded to his approbation and invited him to the Roman journey.³⁷⁵

³⁷¹ See *ibid.*, 120–123, no. 80, esp. 122/34–123/2; and 124–127, no. 82.

³⁷² The reasons why there are two versions have been discussed in convincing detail by Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 257–258.

³⁷³ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:114–115, no. 76.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 107–108, no. 71. For Charles's oath of April 22, 1346, see note 332 above.

³⁷⁵ The promise is known in two versions, see *ibid.*, 127–136, nos. 83–84; see esp. 127/37–38: “Si nos Deo favente contingat eleccionem de nobis factam in regem Romanorum in imperatorem postmodum assumendum per sedem apostolicam approbari, faciemus, prestabimus [...] omnia juramenta.” The differences between the versions have been analyzed

The papal nuncios Audibert and Jean, who decided to return to Avignon accompanied by Wenceslas's envoys, were obviously getting the short end of the stick. They were especially nervous about whether Charles and the electors would wait to crown Wenceslas until after the pope had issued the Bull of Approbation. Since the emperor wrote to Aachen on June 14—the day of the nuncios' expected departure—that he intended to carry out the coronation fifteen days later, he made it clear that the legation was primarily an expression of goodwill, and he was not going to be constrained by it.³⁷⁶

In Avignon they did not wait idly for news from Germany. Gregory took advantage of the presence of the emperor's diplomat Odolen Boncův and sent him back to the imperial court with more precise instructions for his nuncios. The Curia apparently only now knew how it wanted the emperor to ask for consent to the election. Gregory prepared an antedated bull by May 7, 1376, in which he approved the election, but only allowed its dispatch if Charles also issued an antedated document in which he asked the pope not only for grace and favor (*gratia et favor*), as was probably the case in the letter of April 26, but also for his consent (*beneplacitum*). The handover of the papal bull was also conditional on Wenceslas taking the oath of allegiance that Charles IV had taken in 1346 and committing himself in writing to do the same within eight days of the election. The question of the oaths could have been discussed with the pope by the embassy heading for Avignon, which directly fulfilled another of Gregory's requirements, namely, that Wenceslas, before his coronation, should ask for the approbation in person or by proxy. Gregory also continued to insist that Wenceslas make a written promise not to allow the election of

again by Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 143–145. On Roman campaigns, in general, see Christian Jörg and Christoph Dartmann, eds., *Der "Zug über Berge" während des Mittelalters. Neue Perspektiven der Erforschung mittelalterlicher Romzüge*, Trierer Beiträge zu den historischen Kulturwissenschaften 15 (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2014), esp. 3–18.

³⁷⁶ See Thomas R. Kraus, ed., "Unbekannte Quellen zu den Krönungen Wenzels, Ruprechts und Sigmunds," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 38 (1982): 193–202, at 197, no. 2. Spěváček, *Václav IV.*, 89–90, argues that the king began to use the title "king of the Romans" rather than "elected king of the Romans" immediately after his election, in line with the position of the emperor and the court. Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:190, adds that Wenceslas also ignored the pope's request to abstain from acts of government. Neither historian, however, substantiates his claims with sources. The fact is that in the documents addressed to the pope, Wenceslas referred to himself as the elected king (*rex electus*) before his coronation. See, e.g., *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, vol. 1:117/34, no. 78.

a Roman king during his lifetime without the pope's permission, but he would be satisfied if Wenceslas at least made the commitment in secret.³⁷⁷

At the end of June, Odolen, on his way north, met with envoys of the Roman king and papal nuncios in Aix in Savoy. The received instructions confirmed the conviction of Provost Audibert and Bishop Jean that the priority was to achieve the approbation before the coronation, which was fast approaching. They therefore gave preference to settling this matter over the rest of the agenda, which, moreover, had long aroused opposition from the emperor, and continued their journey south. The large delegation did not arrive in Avignon until July 3, 1376. The delay was due to the five-day captivity of the nuncios, about which we know nothing further.³⁷⁸

The sources do not refer to the activities of the legation at the Curia. After the news of Wenceslas's coronation in Aachen on July 6 had reached Avignon, the situation changed radically, and further talks became meaningless. It can be assumed that all three German envoys returned to the Empire, although we only know for certain about the secretary Konrad of Geisenheim.³⁷⁹ The pope threatened the emperor with a fatal rupture if the coronation was carried out without approbation, but he had no power to do so. He did not recognize the ceremony of Aachen and continued to regard Wenceslas as an elected king, but proceeded diplomatically. Officially, he justified his opposition on the grounds that the coronation was performed by the archbishop of Cologne, Friedrich of Saarwerden, who was in aggravated excommunication because of an unpaid debt to the Curia.³⁸⁰

Despite the crisis, the emperor and the pope continued to need each other. Gregory XI had long been focused on the crucial step of returning to Rome

³⁷⁷ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:108–110, no. 72. For the bull of Gregory XI dated May 7, 1376, see *ibid.*, 111–112, no. 74. Among the documents entrusted to the imperial envoy was also a confidential supplement. It again pointed out that after the election Wenceslas should abstain from governing and coronation until after the approbation, and brought further arguments as to why the emperor and son should secretly swear that there would not be no other election during their lifetime. See *ibid.*, 112–113, no. 75.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 115/29–116/4, no. 76, and 101/19–21, no. 64.

³⁷⁹ On his return, see *ibid.*, 140/4–6, no. 86. Kurt Wiemann, *Eckard von Ders, Bischof von Worms, 1370–1405* (Halle an der Salle: Kaemmerer & Co., 1893), 40, assumes that all three envoys returned.

³⁸⁰ On the case of Friedrich, see Sabine Picot, *Kurkölnische Territorialpolitik am Rhein unter Friedrich von Saarwerden (1370–1414)* (Bonn: Ludwig Röhrscheid, 1977), 68–70. Cf. also Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 269–270.

from Avignon. He began his journey in September 1376 and entered the traditional seat of the papacy in January the following year after a lengthy and at times dramatic voyage by ship.³⁸¹ With his arrival on hot Italian soil, the Curia's hunger for money grew even greater, as did its interest in bringing the war with Florence to an acceptable end. Gregory thus had a heightened interest in mending relations with Charles IV, who could be of assistance to him in both. Yet, the pontiff was not at a disadvantage. Without papal approbation, the emperor could not contemplate Wenceslass's imperial coronation, which became more easily achievable with Gregory's return to Rome. The head of the Empire was thus equally motivated to maintain the papacy in Italy and to take a consensual stance.³⁸² Moreover, Wenceslass's royal coronation in Aachen was a *fait accompli*.

We can even assume that it was Charles who instigated the Curia to resume the interrupted negotiations. Probably as early as the end of April 1377 (August at the latest), the Papal Chancery had in its possession an antedated letter from the emperor, in which Charles asked the pontiff for his consent to the election (on April 4, 1376). When Gregory sought a similar letter in June of the previous year, he set out the exact wording it was to contain. Charles, however, did not fully comply this time either (he asked for *benevolentia* and *assensus* instead of the desired *benepacitum*).³⁸³ In any case, the cause of the approbation was set in motion again, and at the end of April 1377, the cardinals requested a detailed report on the past events from Bishop Jean of Agen in Rome, and also demanded the relevant documents in his possession. He

³⁸¹ Cf. Schmidinger, "Die Rückkehr Gregors XI. nach Rom," 139–141; Thibault, *Pope Gregory*, 148–150.

³⁸² Cf. Ernst Dienemann, *Die Romfahrtsfrage in Wenzels Politik*, vol. 1 (bis zum Tode Urbans VI.) (Halle-Wittenberg: Kaemmerer & Co. 1909), 4–5.

³⁸³ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:110–111, no. 73. There is an intense debate in the literature around the emergence of the letter dated April 4, 1376. Some authors, such as Theodor Lindner and Jiří Spěváček, consider it to be genuine, but I find this to be unprovable, as does Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 174–175, who dates the letter to "weeks after the coronation" without explaining why this isolated step occurred. However, a longer interval from the failed negotiations of 1376 is even more likely. Indeed, the existence of the letter is only hinted at in the notes of the Papal Chancery (i.e., instructions to Bishop Galhard) from the spring (summer at the latest) of 1377, see *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:139/26, no. 86. On the dating of the notes, see Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 97–98.

complied with them on June 8.³⁸⁴ Apparently, they had earlier made a similar appeal to Provost Audibert of Prignans.³⁸⁵

At the end of the spring, Gregory XI moved with eighteen cardinals from unfriendly Rome to Anagni, from where, during the summer, another nuncio, bishop of Spoleto, Galhard (or Gaillard), a Frenchman, was sent to the emperor.³⁸⁶ The Curia continued to try to resolve the dispute over papal permission for Wenceslas's election by means of antedated (i.e., forged) documents, and this time achieved an acceptable result. A sealed letter survives in which the emperor finally asks Gregory on March 6, 1376, for his consent to Wenceslas's election in the prescribed wording (he asked for *beneplacitum et assensum ac eciam graciā et favorem*).³⁸⁷ Although the pontiff was anxious to preserve the correct precedent for posterity by wordsmithing, the matter of these antedated documents was more of a success for the emperor.³⁸⁸ Gregory accepted Charles's request,³⁸⁹ despite the fact that it put the German electors and princes at the top of the list of those from whose consent and advice (*beneplacitum et consilium*) the election was to take place.

The second major item in Galhard's instructions was the enforcement of oaths. Gregory continued to push for the emperor to at least secretly promise to agree to the papal constitution forbidding the election of a king during the lifetime of the reigning monarch. Charles IV had rejected such a promise the previous year, and Galhard did not seem to have induced the emperor to reconsider his position. This is the last we hear of the matter. The papal nuncio was, however, a witness when Charles IV swore on September 23 in Tangermünde, Brandenburg that neither he nor his son would allow another elec-

³⁸⁴ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:100–101, no. 64.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 113–116, no. 76. On the relationship between the two reports and the origin of the former, see Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 133–136, where the author rejects the certainty with which the editor J. Weizsäcker attributes both reports to the cardinals' request of April 25, 1377.

³⁸⁶ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:139–140, no. 86. Cf. Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 175–177. Galhard is commemorated in Tangermünde no later than September 11, 1377, see *Die Regesten der Erzbischöfe von Köln*, 8:494, no. 1779.

³⁸⁷ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:140–141, no. 1779.

³⁸⁸ Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 115.

³⁸⁹ Gregory's consent was recorded in a bull dated May 5, 1376, see *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:141–143, no. 88; *Monumenta Vaticana res gestas Bohemicas illustrantia*, vol. 4, *Acta Gregorii XI., pontificis Romani, 1370–1378*, part 2, ed. Karel Stloukal (Prague: Typis Gregerianis, 1953), 631–632, no. 1113.

tion of a Roman king in his lifetime. The act was witnessed by the archbishop of Prague, Jan Očko of Vlašim, and the secretary Konrad of Veselá, dean of the chapter at the royal castle of Vyšehrad near Prague.³⁹⁰ When Galhard demanded from the emperor a sealed oath sworn directly by King Wenceslas,³⁹¹ which was incomparably more important for the future, he failed. The explanation that the king was in Bohemia and unavailable in Brandenburg did not justify his failure. Although the bishop encountered Wenceslas during his mission,³⁹² he still did not bring the coveted charter back to Rome.³⁹³

Nor do we know for certain how the emperor dealt with Gregory's request that the sealed letters (*litere auctentice et sigilate*), which had been brought to Avignon by the king's envoys in July 1376 but taken back to the Empire by Konrad of Geisenheim, be delivered to the Papal Curia.³⁹⁴ These were primarily sealed blank documents, in which the secretary was tasked with copying the authentic text of the oath of allegiance to the Church and the pope at Avignon. Since Wenceslas made the final taking of the oath conditional upon the granting of approbation—which did not occur—it is logical that Konrad brought the documents back to the emperor. Apparently, the letter of authorization of Wenceslas's envoys did not remain in Avignon either.³⁹⁵

A year later, the king's election and coronation were a done deal. Yet, whether the emperor sent any sealed version of Wenceslas's oath of allegiance to the pope remains uncertain.³⁹⁶ He did not hesitate, however, on September 22, 1377, to authorize Konrad of Geisenheim and Bishop Eckard of Dersch, for a second time, to negotiate the approbation at the Curia on behalf of his son.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁰ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:143, no. 89.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 147/7–8, no. 91.

³⁹² See Bliemeijer, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 129, no. 12: "Necessaria de domino Rege Boemie filio serenitatis vestre et qualiter videram eum."

³⁹³ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:147/3–4.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:140/4–6.

³⁹⁵ While Wenceslas's letter to Gregory XI, dated June 10, 1376, was deposited in the papal archives and later taken to Avignon by the rebel cardinals, the authorization of the envoys from the same date has not been preserved in the Vatican archives. Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 185 and 158, also suggests that neither the "blank documents" nor the envoys' authorization were surrendered at Avignon.

³⁹⁶ Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 185, argues that Wenceslas's second embassy likely did not bring the "blank documents" of 1376—i.e., sealed oaths—to Rome.

³⁹⁷ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:137–139, no. 85. The circumstances surrounding the issuance of this letter are discussed in greater detail below.

Into the legation, Charles also enlisted the dean Konrad of Veselá, to whom he gave the task of paying the pope a loan of 40,000 florins, covered by the papal tithe from the Empire, in the event that Gregory would issue the Bull of Approbation.³⁹⁸

The mandate of the ambassadors had not changed since 1376. They were to ask for favor and grace (*favorem et gratiam*), they were entitled to take the necessary oaths of allegiance on behalf of the king, and, above all, they were to ask the pope to “promulgate the election” (*eleccionem publicari*) and to issue a bull that would open the way for Wenceslas to be crowned in Rome.³⁹⁹ Gregory could have expected nothing less. The previous year, the same envoys had already brought letters to Avignon from the emperor and the electors announcing the result of the election, which showed that the papal approbation was for them a formal acquiescence in the sovereign decision of the electors, who had already sufficiently judged Wenceslas’s suitability to ascend the throne.⁴⁰⁰

The Romzug, the War of the Eight Saints, and the Signs of the Stars

With the arrival of Gregory XI in Italy, the negotiations for the approbation got the necessary new impetus. Both the emperor and the pope began to prioritize the common goal: nothing less than Wenceslas’s Roman coronation. In the summer of 1377, the details of the sixteen-year-old king’s Italian campaign were discussed with the papal nuncio, Pileo da Prata, by the emperor’s half-brother Wenceslas, duke of Luxembourg and Brabant, who was to accompany his nephew to Rome. The duke and the nuncio even talked about starting the journey during the coming autumn. When Gregory XI learned of this, he sent

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 137, note 3.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 138–139. It is difficult to determine whether the chosen terminology of Wenceslas’s two letters of authorization in any way limited papal prerogatives, as Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV*, 2:189–190, argues. We do not know how Charles applied for approbation in 1346, but the approbation bull of Clement VI itself mentions Charles asking for “favorem et gratiam”, see Engelmann, *Der Anspruch der Päpste*, 104–105. However, the attempt to avoid the terms *approbatio, confirmatio*, etc., is evident in Wenceslas’s documents, see also Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 165–166; Schlotheuber and Theisen, *Die Goldene Bulle*, 166.

⁴⁰⁰ See *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:122/34–123/2, no. 80.

a letter to Pileo of Anagni, dated August 24, in which he described the early execution of the journey as unrealistic because of the approaching winter and the fact that it would entail considerable additional costs for the Curia during a time when the revenues from the ecclesiastical state remained unavailable. Therefore, the nuncio was given the task of convincing the duke to arrive with a large army in Rome the following spring, when Wenceslas would achieve approbation and subsequently the imperial crown. The pope also had in mind the restoration of the Empire's lost rights in Italy and promised every possible support. However, he reiterated that the Curia could not afford financial subsidies.⁴⁰¹

Things were indeed not going well for Gregory XI in Italy.⁴⁰² At the beginning of the summer, he hoped to force Florence to negotiate a peace at a high price. In negotiations with her diplomats who came to Anagni, he demanded an enormous indemnity of 1,000,000 florins, the rehabilitation of Florentines who had joined the papacy, the dissolution of the League, and a promise from the commune not to enter into any future alliance with papal subjects. He evidently relied on the help of secular rulers, for in early September envoys from the kings of Hungary, England, and Spain, Duke Louis of Anjou, the emperor, the duke of Bavaria, and the dukes of Austria visited the pope and reportedly promised money and soldiers.⁴⁰³

However, the hopes that the hired mercenaries would force the Florentines to accept peace according to the pope's ideas were not fulfilled. The warriors were too fickle and money-hungry. The English condottiere John Hawkwood sided with Florence and the Breton mercenaries began sacking and burning towns loyal to the pope. In early September, they ravaged the countryside just fourteen miles from Rome, which outraged its inhabitants. Their indignation

⁴⁰¹ See *ibid.*, 138, note 1. Cf. Jana Fantysová-Matějková, *Wenceslas de Bohême: un prince au carrefour de l'Europe* (Paris: Pups, 2013), 480.

⁴⁰² Unless stated otherwise, the following works are referenced in this paragraph and the one that follows: Mollat, *The Popes at Avignon*, 172–173; Trexler, "Rome on the Eve of the Great Schism," 494–497; Brucker, *Florentine Politics*, 326–335; Thibault, *Pope Gregory XI*, 148, 150–155; Lewin, *Negotiating Survival*, 48–51.

⁴⁰³ Guillaume Mollat, "Relations politiques," 375–376, no. 20: "Sunt hic ambassiatorum regis Ungarie, regis Anglie, regis Yspanie, ducis Andegavensis, Imperatoris, ducis Bavarie, ducum Austrie, obferentes gentes et pecunias, personas et omnia bona que habent in subsidium suum. Regina vero Cicilie laborat pro concordia inter ipsum et cardinales, et speratur de proximo."

grew further when, on October 30, the Curia made peace with an unpopular member of the Roman nobility, the prefect Francesco di Vico, who had joined Florence a few months earlier—a peace for which Urban VI later severely reproached Jean de La Grange.⁴⁰⁴ Yet, it was the Florentines themselves who added fuel to the fire. In response to Gregory's escalating demands, they ceased to observe the interdict, and the pope, who reluctantly returned to Rome on November 7, had no choice but to respond by tightening ecclesiastical penalties.

Despite the turbulent situation in Italy, the emperor appeared undeterred in his intention to carry out Wenceslas's *Romzug*. By autumn at the latest, two of his envoys were already negotiating the campaign on the Apennine Peninsula. On October 25, 1377, Vilém Zajíc of Házmburk, keeper of the imperial chamber (*camerarius/Kammermeister*), informed Ludovico II Gonzaga, the imperial vicar in Mantua, of his arrival to discuss urgent matters concerning the planned expedition. Among his responsibilities were the inspection of the weapons stored in the city by the emperor and, with Ludovico's assistance, the rectification of any deficiencies.⁴⁰⁵

Vilém wrote from the castle of the Patriarch of Aquileia in Soffumbergo, Friuli, where he was engaged in negotiations with envoys of the Venetian Republic. As he was, for the moment, unable to travel himself, he dispatched the second of the imperial envoys, John—the emperor's chaplain and, it appears, titular bishop of Coronea (*Carminensis*) in Greece—to Mantua. The Bohemian lord asked Gonzaga to receive the bishop and extend to him the necessary support. John had been charged with securing funds in Lucca and Pisa, after which he was to return to Mantua, where he and Vilém were to reconvene and continue preparations for the campaign.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁴ See page 60 above.

⁴⁰⁵ See Archivio di Stato di Mantova, Archivio Gonzaga, busta 514, no. 14, and no. 1 in the Appendix below, esp.: "Sed postquam negocia domini nostri faciemus, inmediate ad vos veniemus, qui ardua negocia vobiscum tractari debemus ex parte domini nostri pro adventu regis Romanorum." The letter was discovered by Ondřej Schmidt, see "An der Seite des Kaisers? Die Gonzaga von Mantua als reichstreue Dynastie zwischen Wirklichkeit, Erinnerung und Instrumentalisierung" (in print). I am grateful to him for facilitating the reproduction of the letter.

⁴⁰⁶ See no. 1 in the Appendix below. The identity of the two imperial envoys is discussed in Schmidt, "An der Seite des Kaisers?" On the ambiguous name of John's diocese, *Carminensis*, see Kenneth Meyer Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*, vol. 1: *The Thirteenth*

While Házmburk described Gonzaga as the emperor's most loyal servant in Lombardy, Ludovico presented himself in a different light. The emperor's chaplain arrived in Mantua on November 6, and the incredulity of the news he reported prompted Gonzaga to send a servant to Milan to consult the bishop's reports with his protector, Bernabò Visconti.⁴⁰⁷

The emperor's envoy told Ludovico that Wenceslas would come to Italy for the coronation with 15,000 horsemen and a large number of German nobles, including four Bavarian dukes. The Czechs were not expected to participate. The emperor himself would stay in Friuli with the patriarch of Aquileia and wait to see how things would turn out. The bishop presented Wenceslas as a warrior determined to overwhelm the whole world, who had bloodily conquered many cities and territories in his lands, heedless of the repeated admonitions of the supreme pontiff. John of Coronea, however, considered himself a peacemaker. He declared that he had come from the pope, and that it was he who had made peace between the pontiff and Francesco di Vico, which the Romans resented, and Gregory was therefore reluctant to return to the city. According to the chaplain, Antonio II da Montefeltro of Urbino also reconciled with the pope. Then, when the pontiff (fearing the Romans) wanted to come to either Lucca or Bologna, both cities refused without the emperor's permission. According to the bishop, not only Lucca but even papal Bologna promised to submit to the emperor. The ruler of Pisa, Pietro Gambacorti, promised the emperor 10,000 florins and the inhabitants of Lucca 4,000 florins and 1,000 men-at-arms. Savona also promised to submit. The Veronians did not give a clear answer as to whether they would accept Wenceslas and wanted to discuss it directly with Lord Vilém.⁴⁰⁸

The report of Wenceslas's large entourage, including Bavarian dukes, seemed unrealistic (*absurda*) to Gonzaga. When the bishop depicted the young king as a conqueror, the lord of Mantua countered by saying that the Italian cities were very strong. Reports of the willingness of the Italian communes to submit to Wenceslas and allow him within their walls also seemed hard to believe

and Fourteenth Centuries (Philadelphia, PA: The American Philosophical Society, 1976), 466, note 157.

⁴⁰⁷ See the instructions to the Mantuan diplomat Bertolino Capilupi, *Documenti diplomatici, tratti dagli archivi Milanesi*, vol. 1, ed. Luigi Osio (Milan: Giuseppe Bernardoni di Giovanni, 1864), 192–194, no. 130. Cf. Lindner, *Geschichte des deutschen Reiches*, 1:90–91, and Schmidt, “An der Seite des Kaisers?”

⁴⁰⁸ *Documenti diplomatici*, 1:192–193.

(*incredibilia*). And because Ludovico himself feared that he would be asked to receive Wenceslas in Mantua, he asked the advice of Visconti, to whom he was completely devoted.⁴⁰⁹

At the same time, Gonzaga explained to the lord of Milan that on the emperor's previous visit (in the summer of 1368) he had faced danger, and was determined to defend himself if threatened this time. He described Charles IV as a crafty and false person, who achieved his purposes more by deceit than by deeds and actions. He therefore advised vigilance. He added that he already knew something of Wenceslas's arrival from Verona, but did not trust it too much. Ludovico therefore wished to know what Visconti, whom he regarded as his "only emperor and pope, indeed, a god on earth," knew and thought about the whole matter. In particular, he wanted to know whether the Bavarian dukes, who were on Visconti's side, would actually come, and whether there would be a massive entourage from Germany. For, according to Gonzaga, the emperor had never wanted to spend his own money in Italy, and the pope lacked resources. He also wanted to know what Vilém of Házmburk had discussed with the Venetians.⁴¹⁰

Ludovico Gonzaga evidently greatly distrusted the bishop's report and doubted the sincerity of Charles's intentions. The emperor's chaplain understandably tried to impress him, but some of his information seems verifiable. When Gregory returned to Rome at the beginning of November, it was rumored that it was only because he had not found a suitable winter residence elsewhere.⁴¹¹ The bishop also knew of the peace treaty with Francesco di Vico, which had been concluded only seven days before his arrival in Mantua. Thus, it is indeed likely that he was involved in the peace negotiations and headed to Gonzaga directly from the pope. In fact, it is indeed possible that he was the emperor's envoy to Anagni in early September and that he also witnessed the Florentines' negotiations with the pope, as we know of the Hungarian king's ambassadors.⁴¹²

The emissaries of Charles also went to Florence. Between November 17 and 26, an unnamed imperial envoy stayed there, and though the commune

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 193–194.

⁴¹¹ Trexler, "Rome on the Eve of the Great Schism," 497.

⁴¹² See the note 403 above. On the Hungarian envoys, see Coluccio Salutati's letter of May 6, 1378, to the king of Hungary, Brandmüller, ed., "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 36, no. 21.

refused to commit itself to anything, it did not spare good words for the emperor.⁴¹³ This was probably Vilém of Házmburk, for there was talk in the town at the time that the emperor was preparing for his arrival, and the officials were trying to find out what the truth was so that they could act accordingly. As early as December 11 the rumor was considered certain, and the reason given for the arrival was the necessity of peace for the Florentine commune.⁴¹⁴

The perception of the emperor's Italian mission as peace-making is noteworthy for the reason that only four days later two Florentine diplomats, Alessandro dell'Antella and Simone di Rinieri Peruzzi, were commissioned to go to Milan to negotiate peace between the commune and the pope with Bernabò Visconti as mediator. However, they did not set off on their journey until December 20, the day after other unknown envoys of the emperor arrived in the city.⁴¹⁵ They may have been ambassadors of Wenceslas heading to Rome to arrange the approbation; they may again have been envoys commissioned to discuss Wenceslas's *Romzug* and related matters. At that time, the city leaders' primary concern was to ensure that the announced arrival of the emperor would not endanger the freedom of the Florentine people.⁴¹⁶ However, it was not only the Florentines who went to Milan to negotiate, but also representatives of the pope. At the beginning of the new year, a Florentine chronicler wished that this would be a harbinger of peace.⁴¹⁷ The talks ended before January 19, when the Florentine diplomats had returned, and it is noteworthy that seven days later, the leaders of the *Parte Guelfa*, an oligarchic faction wishing reconciliation with the pope, publicly declared that Charles IV had embarked on his third Italian journey.⁴¹⁸

At the end of January 1378, Coluccio Salutati specified in a letter to the Florentine allies that a new stage of the peace negotiations had been instigated by Gregory XI, who had revealed to Visconti that he was prepared to come to an amicable settlement with both him and Florence and its allies if the Mila-

⁴¹³ "Diario d'anonimo fiorentino," 345, note 4.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid. Lee, "Coluccio Salutati," 195, states that the Florentine chancellor viewed Charles's imperial authority from 1368 to 1378 as the only means of restoring peace to the shattered peninsula, and the emperor himself as the one capable of securing the papacy's proper status.

⁴¹⁵ "Diario d'anonimo fiorentino," 345–346.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 345, note 4.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 346.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid. and Brucker, *Florentines Politics*, 335, note 149.

nese lord would mediate. Although Bernabò was initially reluctant to take on the role of mediator, the Florentines persuaded him.⁴¹⁹ If this was indeed the case, the pope must have been in favor of peace talks before mid-December, when Florence entrusted its ambassadors with the negotiations in Milan. This is remarkable, because the pontiff was at the same time proceeding harshly against the commune.

Gregory XI complained in writing to the emperor on December 4, 1377, that Florence was trying to tell lies to the faithful princes. He therefore stressed that the (summer) peace negotiations had stalled because of the intransigence of the Florentine diplomats. He appealed to Charles, as protector and defender of the Church, not to hesitate any longer to proclaim an imperial ban against the impious, and also asked for the engagement of the French king, with whom the emperor was to meet.⁴²⁰ Thirteen days later, the pontiff proclaimed the severest form of interdict over the commune, and launched a raid against the Florentine agents in Rome.⁴²¹

We are thus witnessing an escalation of the conflict by the pope and at the same time a new attempt to resolve the war diplomatically on his part. The Italian historian Alessandro Gherardi judged that the supreme shepherd of the Church was overwhelmed by a sense of justice and the resulting love.⁴²² The fact is, however, that Charles IV and his diplomats in Italy were, at the same time, eminently interested in achieving peace and de-escalating the conflict because of Wenceslas's Roman journey.

The prerequisite for the imperial coronation in Rome was, in accordance with tradition, the acquisition of the Iron Crown of the Lombard King, a symbol of dominance and power over Upper Italy.⁴²³ Wenceslas could not accomplish this task without communicating with the lords of Milan, the major power player in northern Italy. In April 1376, Charles was prepared to

⁴¹⁹ Lini Coluci Pieri *Salutati Epistolae*, vol. 2, ed. Giuseppe Rigacci (Florence: Giovanni Battista Bruscagli, 1742), 110–111, no. 34, with an incorrect date of January 29, 1377. See also Salutati's letter to the king of Hungary, Brandmüller, ed., "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 36, no. 21.

⁴²⁰ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:144–146, no. 90.

⁴²¹ Richard C. Trexler, *Economic, Political and Religious Effects of the Papal Interdict on Florence, 1376–1378. A Study of the Secular Penal Power of the Papacy in the Late Middle Ages* (Frankfurt am Main, 1963), 92; idem, "Rome on the Eve of the Great Schism," 501–502; idem, *Spiritual power*, 155.

⁴²² Gherardi, *La guerra dei Fiorentini*, 88.

⁴²³ Schlotheuber and Theisen, *Die Goldene Bulle*, 33.

impose an imperial ban on Florence for, among other reasons, its alliance with the excommunicated Bernabò Visconti.⁴²⁴ However, two months later, Lamprecht of Brunn visited the city with an offer to broker peace. The commune immediately reported this to Milan and assured Bernabò that they would not respond to the imperial envoys before the Milanese lord had given his opinion on Charles's initiative.⁴²⁵ A year later, Ludovico Gonzaga similarly relied on Bernabò's judgment, believing he would be well-informed about the emperor's affairs. Whether this was true, we do not know. What is certain, however, is that Charles exercised restraint in the autumn of 1377 as well. Gregory had to admonish the emperor not to delay in declaring the *Reichsacht* over Florence.⁴²⁶

The peace initiative brokered by Bernabò Visconti proved viable. He won over the warring parties to the wide-ranging negotiations that got underway in March 1378 in Sarzana, in his sphere of influence. An agreement to end the war was at hand when, to Visconti's displeasure, it was thwarted by the death of Gregory XI. The Florentines wanted to know how the new pope would approach the whole affair.⁴²⁷

Yet, Charles IV's intense preparations for the Italian journey were not only reflected in Italian politics and related documents. The emperor's two earlier campaigns to the Apennine Peninsula had forced Italian authors with literary ambitions to reach for the pen and entrust paper with political expectations.⁴²⁸ It was the same this time.

After Wenceslas's election, Niccolò Beccari, a knight and humanist from Ferrara, who was active at Charles's court in Tangermünde, addressed the

⁴²⁴ The contents of the unpublished charter are reproduced by Pelzl, *Geschichte Kaiser Karls*, vol. 2, 886, who uses the phrase "der geächtete Bernabo." The Visconti had long had strained relations with the Avignon popes and, accordingly, with the emperor. See, e.g., Gustav Pirchan, *Italien und Kaiser Karl IV. in der Zeit seiner zweiten Romfahrt*, vol. 1 (Prague: Franz Kraus, 1930), esp. 58–69; Roland Paurer, *Die Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Kaiser Karl IV. und den Päpsten. Italien als Schachbrett der Diplomatie*, Politik im Mittelalter 1 (Neuried: Ars una, 1996), 200–201; Sharon Dale, "Contra damnationis filios: The Visconti in Fourteenth-Century Papal Diplomacy," *Journal of Medieval History* 33 (2007): 1–32.

⁴²⁵ Langkabel, ed., *Die Staatsbriefe*, 130–131, no. 33.

⁴²⁶ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, vol. 1, no. 90, 145/21–26: "Mirandum est, quod adversus pestilentos viros [...] processus tuos imperiales tam diu differas promulgare."

⁴²⁷ Brandmüller, "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 7–8.

⁴²⁸ Cf. Charles Calvert Bayley, "Petrarch, Charles IV and the 'Renovatio Imperii,'" *Speculum* 17 (1942): 323–341.

emperor in 1377 in a lengthy letter.⁴²⁹ He had heard of the arrival of a papal legation—presumably Galhard's—and tried to dissuade the emperor from further negotiations with the Curia about the approbation. Beccari knew that Charles had allowed Wenceslas to be crowned king regardless of the will and consent of the pope, so he urged the emperor not to give in to the demands of the Church even now.⁴³⁰ He believed that in this way Charles would preserve intact the original dignity of the imperial diadem and thus prevent the spread of a dangerous rumor in Italy, namely, that he had bought his son's expected Roman coronation from the Curia with money and deals.⁴³¹ Beccari did not want Charles to be shackled by new obligations under the pretext of obedience to the Church. He spoke highly of how he had dealt with the "Bavarian iniquity," how he had dispelled political division from the Empire, and how he had expanded the Kingdom of Bohemia. And he therefore expected the emperor to similarly restore government in Italy independently of the Church.⁴³²

⁴²⁹ The letter was first published by Karel Hrdina, ed., "Niccolò Beccari, Ital na dvoře Karla IV. [Niccolò Beccari, Italian at the Court of Charles IV]," in *K dějinám československým v období humanismu. Sborník prací věnovaných Janu Bedřichu Novákovi k šedesátým narozeninám 1872–1932* [On Czechoslovak History in the Period of Humanism. A Volume Dedicated to Jan Bedřich Novák on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday, 1872–1932], ed. Bedřich Jenšovský and Bedřich Mendl (Prague: Československá archivní společnost, 1932), 159–177. Without knowledge of this edition, the text has also been made available in print twice by Hanno Helbling, ed., *Saeculum humanum: Ansätze zu einem Versuch über spätmittelalterliches Geschichtsdenken* (Naples: Nella sede dell'Istituto, 1958), 152–168, and *idem*, ed., "Le lettere di Nicolaus de Beccariis (Niccolò da Ferrara)," *Bulletino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo e Archivio Muratoriano* 76 (1964): 241–290, at 261–281, no. 2. Since Helbling's edition has a number of errors, I refer to the text published by Hrdina. Beccari's political concept of the emperorship has been contextually analyzed by Robert Folz, "Der Brief des italienischen Humanisten Niccolò dei Beccari an Karl IV. Ein Beitrag zur Kaiseridee im 14. Jh.," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 82 (1963): 148–162. See also "Beccari, Niccolò," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 7 (1970), [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/niccolo-beccari_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/niccolo-beccari_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) (accessed July 12, 2024).

⁴³⁰ Hrdina, ed., "Niccolò Beccari," 169.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 168: "Ab uno tibi precipue sit cavendum, ne novus et perplexus rumor insurget ad aures Ytalie atque tocius mundi discrimina perventurus certe nec umquam ad fame tue notam per secula defuturus, intermiscens futurum actum firmiter et speratum coronacionis in urbe prefati et sepius nominandi gloriosissimi tui filii ullo thezauro in medium procedente ullisque paccionibus stipulatis et condiccionibus te a consistorialibus impetrasse emptuque venisse."

⁴³² *Ibid.*, 170.

He tried to motivate the ruler to decisive action by referring to the signs of heaven and the old prophecies. According to Beccari, while the conjunction of the planets in 1377 was just paving the way for the restoration of the emperor's Italian dominion, the position of the planets the following year foretold the ideal time for the emperor to take protection of the world (*patrocinium mundi*) and restore peace, freedom, and justice.⁴³³ The prophecies, in turn, foretold that the (Bohemian) two-tailed lion would be joined to the (imperial) eagle, i. e., Charles, would twice descend into Italy and return to Germany, but the third time it would be "by the power of another" (*cum aliis pontencia*). The Italian was convinced that this "another" was the new Roman king Wenceslas.⁴³⁴

However, Beccari noted that the right moment for the campaign also came because Italy itself was for the most part prepared to stand by the emperor, and the monarch's friends were determined to counter the intrigues of the people. There were also already pre-ambassadors (*adsunt prenuncii*)—among whom we could count Vilém of Házmburk and Bishop John of Coronea—in the country. Thus, Charles should not have wasted the opportune time and slackened his work on the Italian campaign, however much he might have been persuaded otherwise.⁴³⁵ Beccari was clear about the outcome of the collective efforts of the Luxembourg monarchs. He ended his manifesto with a vision of the father sitting at the head of a white, richly decorated chariot, with his son at his side, adorned with a new diadem. Together, following the example of the ancient emperors, father Vespasian and son Titus, the two rode in triumphal procession to the Roman Capitol, which the author believed was the true seat of the Empire, despite Constantine's donation.⁴³⁶

The topic of the Roman journey of the Luxembourg monarchs was grasped more practically by an unknown Italian author in the so-called *Tractatus de habilitate temporis ad processum versus Italiam* [Treatise on the suitability of time for a campaign to Italy].⁴³⁷ He interpreted the hostilities in Italy as a good opportunity for the emperor to grant peace to the quarrelling country

⁴³³ Ibid., 171–172.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 172–173.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 173–175.

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 175–177.

⁴³⁷ Critically edited by Ludwig Schmugge, ed., "Der *Tractatus "de habilitate temporis ad processum versus Italiam."* Eine Aufforderung an Kaiser Karl IV. zu einem dritten Italienzug (1376/78)," *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 59 (1979): 198–243, at 218–243.

and show himself as a peacemaker.⁴³⁸ Therefore, in twelve chapters, he wrote several recommendations on how to conduct oneself when going south and how to approach the Italian communes.⁴³⁹ The reason for the campaign was for him also the very election of Wenceslas, but in order that the young son, full of energy, would become the shield and support of his father in the enforcement of his intentions against possible opposition.⁴⁴⁰ If the author turned to literature, he found inspiration particularly in Gautier de Châtillon's *Alexandreis* and the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum secretorum*.

Although in both of the above cases we are dealing with literary texts, they both fit well into the situation we have described above by means of letters, official records, and chronicles. In 1377, Charles IV began intensive preparations for a third Italian campaign. Beccari's letter, however, is exceptional in the way it describes with clarity an issue of great gravity that other sources only tacitly assume. Could Wenceslas have been made emperor in Rome during his father's lifetime? Niccolò Beccari had no doubt in his vision.

The Shared Emperorship and the Riddle of the Parisian Summit

Gregory XI and the cardinals agreed that the newly elected king should be elevated to the dignity of emperor. However, they imposed conditions if this were to occur during the reigning monarch's lifetime.⁴⁴¹ In the Holy Roman Empire, the election *vivente rege/imperatore* became established as a fairly common way of handing over power in a single dynasty from the second half of the tenth century onwards. Until the extinction of the Hohenstaufen dynasty 300 years later, all monarchs secured the kingship of their sons during their own lifetimes (provided they had surviving heirs).⁴⁴²

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 218–224.

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 224–243.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., 225–226.

⁴⁴¹ See *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:93/13–21, no. 61.

⁴⁴² Cf. Eduard Hlawitschka, ed., *Königswahl und Thronfolge in ottonisch-salischer Zeit*, Wege der Forschung 178 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971); Ulrich Schmidt, *Königswahl und Thronfolge im 12. Jahrhundert*, Forschungen zur Kaiser- und Papstgeschichte des Mittelalters. Beihefte zu J. F. Böhmer, *Regesta Imperii* 7 (Cologne: Böhlau, 1987);

However, only Otto I the Great succeeded in having the pope crown his namesake son as co-emperor in his presence. This event took place in Rome on December 25, 967.⁴⁴³ The ceremony was perceived as a demonstration of Otto I's superior status, underscoring the pontiff's indebtedness to him for securing his safe return to the city. According to Rudolf Schieffer, it was Otto I, the senior ruler, who dictated the form of this unusual shared rule.⁴⁴⁴

Because the concept of co-emperorship originated in Byzantium, historians agree that Otto I pursued imperial status for his son, particularly to facilitate a marriage alliance with a Byzantine princess.⁴⁴⁵ Another notable emperor, Frederick I Barbarossa, aimed to do the same two centuries later. He negotiated the imperial coronation of his son Henry with four popes between 1169 and 1190, up until his death, but was ultimately unsuccessful. The reasons for the Papal Curia's resistance were varied and shifting, but one constant factor remained: Henry could only become emperor if Frederick first abdicated. Nevertheless, nothing was certain. It appears that had Barbarossa survived the crusade, Clement III might have eventually yielded to his pressure and performed Henry's imperial coronation.⁴⁴⁶

Charles IV was interested in ancient history for several reasons, one of which was a desire to revive old and long-unheld rituals. This was exemplified in June 1365 when he had himself crowned King of Burgundy at Arles—a cer-

Brigitte Kasten, *Königssöhne und Königsherrschaft: Untersuchungen zur Teilhabe am Reich in der Merowinger- und Karolingerzeit* (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1997).

443 See, e.g., the mid-twelfth-century world chronicle by Otto of Freising, which was read in the Bavarian-Austrian region for centuries, *Ottonis episcopi Frisingensis Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus*, ed. Adolf Hofmeister, MGH. *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum* 45 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1912), 287–288.

444 Rudolf Schieffer, "Otto II. und sein Vater," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 26 (2002): 255–269, at 265.

445 See Mathilde Uhlirz, "Zu dem Mitkaisertum der Ottonen: Theophanu coimperatrix," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 50 (1957): 383–389, at 384.

446 I draw on the knowledge compiled by Werner Ohnsorge, "Das Mitkaisertum in der abendländischen Geschichte des früheren Mittelalters," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte: Germanistische Abteilung* 67 (1950): 309–335, see esp. 329. The condition of resignation is mentioned in Arnold of Lübeck's *Chronica Slavorum*, written in the early thirteenth century, see *Arnoldi Chronica Slavorum*, ed. Johann Martin Lappenberg, MGH. *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum* 14 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1868), 97: "Dicebat enim apostolicus [i.e., Lucius III, D.C.], non posse simul duos imperatores regnare, nec filium imperialibus insigniri, nisi ea prius ipse [i.e., Frederick, D.C.] deposuisset," and 103.

emony last performed by Frederick Barbarossa.⁴⁴⁷ And the Luxembourg monarch was even poised to surpass his illustrious predecessor from the House of Hohenstaufen in the virtual contest for dynastic prestige.

When it was rumored in Avignon in April 1375 that Charles IV sought to effectuate his son's imperial coronation during his lifetime, it was accompanied by the belief that the electors and the pope approved. A meeting between the Luxembourg monarchs—or at least Wenceslas—and Pope Gregory XI on Italian soil was even considered inevitable.⁴⁴⁸ However, the reality was far more complex. The pope and his cardinals, much like their predecessors during the time of Frederick Barbarossa, demanded a high price for their support of such an ambitious dynastic plan. In the spring of 1376, Provost Audibert made it clear to Charles IV that his son could only attain imperial dignity upon his father's death or resignation.⁴⁴⁹

King Wenceslas did indeed take note of this condition after his election, and in June 1376, when authorizing his envoys to Avignon, he requested the imperial diadem from the pope with the understanding that he would receive it either after his father's death or abdication.⁴⁵⁰ He did so because the sensitive issue of his father's resignation had been the subject of negotiations with the Papal Curia for some time. When Provost Audibert discussed the terms of Wenceslas's election with the emperor, he told him that the pope did not find it beneficial or appropriate for the proposed abdication to take place. The pontiff wanted to discuss it fully only "when he and the duke would be together."⁴⁵¹

According to Wilhelm Klare, this may suggest that the debates over Charles's renunciation of power were already connected to the election of the king, and that the emperor's half-brother, Duke Wenceslas, was involved from the outset in the emperor's negotiations with the pope regarding his son's *Romzug* and imperial coronation.⁴⁵² One cannot but agree with this. However, the German historian also noted that King Wenceslas mentioned his father's death or abdication only in the letter of authorization to his envoys and that

⁴⁴⁷ Monnet, *Charles IV*, 95, 146–147; Źurek, *Charles IV*, 194.

⁴⁴⁸ See note 336 above.

⁴⁴⁹ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:98/19–22, no. 63.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 116/34–38, no. 77.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 99/39–41, no. 63: "Item de renunciatione oblata non videtur domino nostro expedire nec congruere quod fiat, sed, cum duce domino simul erunt, plenissime super hoc articulo pertractabunt."

⁴⁵² Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 155.

this passage was absent from a letter sent to Gregory with similar content. Since Klare knew that Konrad of Geisenheim had not surrendered the credentials at Avignon but had brought them back, the possibility of sharing the imperial dignity remained open, in his view, even though it was a revolutionary matter.⁴⁵³ Therefore, it is worth noting that the possibility of co-emperorship remained in play even after the letter of authorization was renewed on September 22, 1377. The condition of granting the diadem only in the event of the death or resignation of the emperor disappeared.⁴⁵⁴

There is no doubt that the question of abdication was a sensitive issue for Charles IV. In the minutes of Provost Audibert, the item of resignation is left unanswered.⁴⁵⁵ If the pope himself proposed to postpone the matter for personal consultations, the emperor could easily have avoided answering. Moreover, there was plenty of time for such consultations in May 1376. Charles's resignation was directly proportional to the successful acquisition of the approbation, the arrival of Gregory XI in Rome, and especially to the successful completion of Wenceslas's Italian campaign, not to mention the fact that, given the emperor's severe gout,⁴⁵⁶ it was by no means certain that he would survive to see these events.

A year later the situation was different. After Gregory XI had settled in Italy, the emperor's half-brother was already discussing the details of the coronation journey with the papal nuncio as early as July 1377. Three months later, the *Romzug* was publicly debated in Italy. The question of the transfer of power on the Roman throne thus became urgent and entered a public arena full of conjecture. Niccolò Beccari warned the emperor of the dangers of rumors. Charles was aware of this and did not treat it lightly. However, he took measures that differed from those envisioned by the Italian humanist.

Bishop Galhard travelled to Germany in the summer of 1377 with a number of tasks. The Curia also wished to obtain, through the emperor, a letter from

⁴⁵³ Ibid., 158: "Der Papst bekam diese Einschränkung nicht schriftlich in die Hand. Die freilich revolutionäre Möglichkeit eines gemeinsamen Kaisertums von Vater und Sohn wurde somit offengelassen."

⁴⁵⁴ See *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:138/8–10, no. 85.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., 99, no. 63.

⁴⁵⁶ Cf. Olaf B. Rader, "He hadde de podagere an den voten." Karl IV. und die Gicht," in *Historiker zwischen den Zeiten. Festschrift für Karel Hruza zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Petr Elbel, Alexandra Kaar, Jiří Němec, and Martin Wihoda (Vienna: Böhlau, 2021), 285–294.

King Charles V of France on a certain issue.⁴⁵⁷ Apparently, news of an impending meeting between the two leading European rulers had reached Anagni.⁴⁵⁸ When Gregory XI asked the emperor in December to enlist his French nephew to fight the Florentines, he explicitly mentioned a meeting between the two monarchs "on certain matters."⁴⁵⁹

The archbishop of Ravenna, Pileo da Prata, was once again in possession of the news. His debate with the emperor's half-brother, Duke Wenceslas, on the Italian campaign was not accidental. The lord of Brabant and Luxembourg sent the canon of Maastricht, Thierry van Hauwert, and another confidant to the emperor in June 1377; they returned to Brussels at the beginning of the following month. The duke then left his residence on July 7 or 8 and went to Ghent, where he met Duke Philip the Bold of Burgundy, the brother of the king of France and son-in-law of the count of Flanders. At the end of the month, duke Wenceslas set out again, and from Flanders he headed for Paris. He stopped at Mons, where he held talks with Albert of Bavaria, duke of Holland and father-in-law of King Wenceslas.⁴⁶⁰

It is more than likely that the emperor's half-brother contacted Pileo da Prata during his stay in Flanders. The archbishop of Ravenna had already been the papal mediator in the war between France and England for four years, and another round of complex negotiations was scheduled for mid-August 1377 in Bruges.⁴⁶¹ Pileo thus had a good opportunity to hear the duke's report on the emperor's plans in Flanders and to send a message about them to Gregory's secretary, Niccolò da Osimo, in Anagni around mid-July. It is not exactly clear from the pope's August response who initiated the negotiations on the Italian campaign. In the given situation, however, it is more logical that the negotia-

⁴⁵⁷ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:140/3, no. 86: "Item habeatur litera super facto... regis Francie etc."

⁴⁵⁸ Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 97–98 and 177, suggests to date at least the introductory part of Galhard's instructions (see *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:139/19–26, no. 86) as early as the end of April 1377. If we apply this dating to the rest of the chancery notes, could the Curia have known about Charles's trip to France so early?

⁴⁵⁹ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:145/27–29, no. 90: "Sicut accepimus, tu et carissimus [...] rex Francorum illustris simul debeatis super certis negociis convenire."

⁴⁶⁰ I am relying on data collected by Fantysová-Matějková, *Wenceslas de Bohême*, 481.

⁴⁶¹ On these negotiations from Pileo's perspective, see Stacul, *Il cardinale Pileo*, 53–90, esp. 88–90. Cf. also Thibault, *Pope Gregory*, 163–180; Andreas Willershausen, *Die Päpste von Avignon und der Hundertjährige Krieg. Spätmittelalterliche Diplomatie und kuriale Verhandlungsnormen (1337–1378)* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 295–296.

tions were instigated by the duke, who had been empowered by the emperor to undertake this task as Wenceslas's guide in Italy. After all, it is unlikely that the pope would have insisted on starting the *Romzug* when he did not have the means to cover the associated expenses, as he repeatedly pointed out to Pileo.⁴⁶² The other side was more proactive.

If the Papal Curia knew about the emperor's trip to France in the summer of 1377, the nuncio clearly did not overlook the main reason why the duke of Brabant came to Flanders. Wenceslas set out from Brussels on his travels, apparently chiefly to inform the princes at the neighboring courts of the emperor's intention to visit his French nephew, and to deliver or arrange for the delivery of a letter to Charles V in which the emperor informed him personally of the impending visit. In Paris, during the first half of August, a Bohemian knight, who may have been directly responsible for delivering the letter, was also present.⁴⁶³ The journeys of the Luxembourg monarchs to Paris and Italy were thus evidently connected, and it may be supposed that the former conditioned the latter. However, since coordinating both matters was demanding, the emperor allowed himself some flexibility.

The French royal chancery made an official report of Charles IV's trip to France, which became part of *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*.⁴⁶⁴ The narrative reveals that the emperor sent two letters to Charles V in quick succession, in which he said that he had already set out on his journey to visit the king and make some pilgrimages with devotion, but did not announce the time of arrival. The French king began preparations to receive the delegation no later than September 12, and thereafter repeatedly sent envoys north to the Luxembourg border in an attempt to learn more about the guests' arrival. All he learned was that King Wenceslas, who had set out from Bohemia with a small retinue in the first half of November, was waiting for his father in Luxembourg. Charles V's groping was halted by another letter from the emperor, in

⁴⁶² The pope's initiative, on the contrary, has been assumed by Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:207, and Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 176.

⁴⁶³ Fantysová-Matejková, *Wenceslas de Bohême*, 481.

⁴⁶⁴ *Chronique des règnes de Jean II et de Charles V*, vol. 2, ed. Roland Delachenal, *Les Grandes Chroniques de France* (Paris: Renouard, 1916), 193–277 (full version); Václav Tille, ed., “Francouzský rukopis o cestě císaře Karla IV. do Francie v letech 1377–1378 [French Manuscript of the Journey of Emperor Charles IV to France in 1377–1378],” *Věstník Královské české společnosti nauk. Třída filosoficko-historicko-jazykozpytná* (1898): no. XIV, 1–16 (short version).

which he set his arrival in Paris for December 16 with the excuse that the delay was due to efforts to settle the wars in Germany.⁴⁶⁵ The emperor left Tangermünde at the beginning of November, but after numerous detours he only arrived at his half-brother's court in Brussels at the appointed time.⁴⁶⁶

Historians are suspicious of the explanation that the emperor was delayed due to his efforts to settle armed clashes, since there are only limited peace-making activities of Charles documented at the time. He was, however, safely occupied in the early autumn with obtaining papal approbation and preparations for Wenceslas's Roman campaign, in which the duke of Brabant continued to be involved.

It can be assumed that the duke's diplomat, Thierry van Hauwert, the canon of Maastricht, headed to the emperor again in August to inform him of the French king's reaction to his letter and to notify him of the duke's negotiations with the papal nuncio about the Italian campaign. For the emperor had issued two documents in Tangermünde on September 10 and 11 concerning Thierry's Maastricht chapter, whose chapel belonged to the Holy Roman Empire. Charles appointed his half-brother Wenceslas as one of the protectors of the sanctuary.⁴⁶⁷ This was no coincidence. Just a few days later, the emperor pawned the *Landvogtei* of Alsace, which he had bought back from the Bavarian dukes for 30,000 florins, to his half-brother for life and tied this act to other minor pawned properties.⁴⁶⁸ The whole transaction was also confirmed by King Wenceslas.⁴⁶⁹ Since the redemption of the Bavarian dukes had cost the

⁴⁶⁵ *Chronique des règnes*, 2:193–195; trans. Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 189–190. Cf. Fantysová-Matějková, *Wenceslas de Bohême*, 483–484.

⁴⁶⁶ Kavka, Vláda Karla IV., 2:210–212; Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 177–180; Fantysová-Matějková, *Wenceslas de Bohême*, 483–484.

⁴⁶⁷ *Regesta Imperii*, vol. 8, nos. 5804–5805. Cf. Fantysová-Matějková, *Wenceslas de Bohême*, 485–486.

⁴⁶⁸ *Regesta Imperii*, vol. 8, no. 5806 (Sep. 14, Tangermünde), and no. 5808 (Sep. 22, *ibid.*). See also Jana Fantysová-Matějková, "Václav Český, vévoda lucemburský a brabantský, mezi Francií a Římskou říší. Východiska, metody, bibliografie [Wenceslas of Bohemia, Duke of Luxembourg and Brabant, between France and the Roman Empire. Background, Methods, Bibliography]," *Historická dílna* 1 (2006): 23–43, at 33, note 27.

⁴⁶⁹ *Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris Moraviae*, vol. II, 1376–1390, ed. Vincenc Brandl (Brünn: Winiker & Schickardt, 1885), 83–84, no. 92.

emperor something,⁴⁷⁰ he could not have been concerned only with obtaining cash. He probably used the pawn transactions to reward his half-brother's commitment to the family's interests and to motivate him to continue in Paris and Italy.

The truth is, however, that the emperor needed considerable sums for his Italian affairs.⁴⁷¹ Chamberlain Vilém of Házmburk went to Italy primarily to provide for Wenceslas's *Romzug* materially, as it was a costly undertaking. And financial subsidies continued to be expected by the Curia because of the war. Bishop Galhard made no secret of this in Tangermünde. It has already been mentioned that Charles IV decided to motivate the pope to issue a Bull of Approbation with a loan of 40,000 florins, which Konrad of Veselá took to Rome. Other borrowed money went to Italy with the nuncio Galhard, who deposited it in Venice.⁴⁷² Vilém of Házmburk apparently negotiated this with Venetian envoys in late October 1377 at the patriarch of Aquileia.⁴⁷³ The pawned properties, the negotiations for the approbation, the mission of the imperial chamberlain to Italy, and the journey to Paris were thus clearly intertwined matters that were not easy to coordinate harmoniously.

Therefore, Charles again acted flexibly and saved time wherever he could. Note that he pawned the Alsatian *Landvogtei* to his half-brother on the same day as his son, although both did so in distant places—Charles in Tangermünde, Brandenburg, and his son in the Bohemian castle of Křivoklát. Moreover, King Wenceslas referred to his father's document.⁴⁷⁴ A similar discrepancy can be observed in the case of the letter of authorization granted by Wenceslas to his envoys to Rome. The charter was issued on September 22 in Písek, Bohemia. Yet, Archbishop Jan Očko of Vlašim is listed as its *relator* (the man responsible for its drawing up), although he witnessed Charles's swearing a day later in Tangermünde, Brandenburg, as did Dean Konrad of Veselá, one

⁴⁷⁰ The emperor had granted hereditary control of the *Landvogtei* to the Bavarian dukes Stephan III and Friedrich on October 1, 1374, for the same sum of 30,000 florins, see *Regesta Imperii*, vol. 8, no. 5382.

⁴⁷¹ Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:208, suggests that King Wenceslas was raising money for the Roman journey through pawns. This is also admitted by Fantysová-Matějková, *Wenceslas de Bohême*, 486, adding that the money may have eventually gone to loans to the pope.

⁴⁷² *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:147/15–17, no. 91.

⁴⁷³ See page 139 above.

⁴⁷⁴ See note 469 above.

of the members of Wenceslas's legation.⁴⁷⁵ The easiest way to explain all these contradictions is that Charles organized everything himself and had the documents drawn up in Wenceslas's name in Brandenburg.⁴⁷⁶

However, the emperor's flexible behavior, even at the cost of unusual measures, had its limits. It is unlikely that he possessed his son's seal, so its affixing to the letter of authorization and the pawn document had to be arranged subsequently in Bohemia. The drafting of Charles's antedated letter asking the pope for his problematic consent to Wenceslas's election could hardly have been approved without consulting the imperial princes. The collection of money also took time. And as one thing was connected with another, the emperor, Bishop Galhard, and King Wenceslas's envoys set out on their journeys with considerable delay. Gregory XI also informed the emperor on December 4, 1377, that he had not yet received any news of the outcome of Galhard's mission. He assured Charles, however, that he remained ready to accede to Wenceslas's approbation upon receipt of the sealed oaths.⁴⁷⁷

The task of delivering the pope's letter and explaining the details was given to the emperor's experienced diplomat, Odolen Boncův.⁴⁷⁸ It is possible that he caught Charles before he entered France in Cambrai,⁴⁷⁹ where the head of the Empire arrived on December 22 accompanied by his son and half-brother, and where they spent the Christmas period together.⁴⁸⁰ It was in the pontiff's interest that his letter asking for the emperor and French king's involvement in Italian affairs would reach the Charles IV before he had parted company with

⁴⁷⁵ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:143, no. 89.

⁴⁷⁶ Lindner, *Geschichte des deutschen Reiches*, 1/1:428, argues that either Charles issued the charter in Wenceslas's name at Tangermünde or Wenceslas accepted the date of September 22 later. Wiemann, *Eckard von Ders*, 42, opposes this, holding that Písek is the actual place of the charter's issuance, since Charles's chancery did not have Wenceslas's seal. Therefore, he also doubts that the archbishop of Prague was present in Tangermünde and thinks that he was—as Wenceslas's mentor—together with him in Bohemia. Ivan Hlaváček, *Das Urkunden- und Kanzleiwesen des böhmischen und römischen Königs Wenzel (IV.) 1376–1419. Ein Beitrag zur spätmittelalterlichen Diplomatik*, MGH. Schriften 23 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1970), 401, note 23, finds the issuance of the charter in Písek questionable with reference to Lindner's argument, and Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:208, note 17, believes it be outrightly fictitious.

⁴⁷⁷ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:144/28–32, no. 90.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 146/11–13.

⁴⁷⁹ This assumption has already been expressed by Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:212.

⁴⁸⁰ *Chronique des règnes*, 2:197–199; trans. Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 191–193.

his French nephew. Charles IV entered Paris on January 3, 1378, and spent thirteen days in the city and its environs.

The tangible fruit of the meeting was six documents by which the emperor granted the son of the French king a lifelong imperial vicariate in the Kingdom of Arles and renewed his vicariate in the Dauphiné.⁴⁸¹ The sources do not report a comparable consideration received by Charles IV, though most historians consider France's involvement in the division of the Anjou inheritance in Hungary and Poland to have been in the emperor's favor.⁴⁸²

King Louis I of Hungary had held the two crowns in personal union for more than seven years, and when his daughters Catherine and Mary were born in the early 1370s, the emperor sought to win the hand of one of them for his son Sigismund and with her Poland. Marriage negotiations had been ongoing since 1372 and were interrupted after three years by an oath from the envoys of the king of Hungary that the marriage contract would be fulfilled by the wedding of Sigismund and Mary as soon as the princess reached her twelfth year (1382). In the meantime, Louis the Great himself began negotiations in Paris for the marriage of his first-born daughter Catherine to Charles V's son, also Louis. The French court was interested in the Hungarian crown because it saw it as an opportunity to open the way to the Anjou inheritance in the Kingdom of Naples and Provence. However, it was an uncertain possibility. Queen Joanna of Naples had strained relations with Louis of Hungary because of her involvement in the murder of his brother Andrew, her first

⁴⁸¹ *Regesta Imperii*, vol. 8, nos. 5858–5863. See also Marie-Luise Heckmann, "Das Reichsvikariat des Dauphins im Arelat 1378. Drei Diplome Kaiser Karls IV. aus dem Pariser Nationalarchiv," in *Manipulus florum. Festschrift für Peter Johanek zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Ellen Widder, Mark Mersiowsky, and Maria-Theresa Leuker (Münster: Waxmann, 2000), 63–98. Cf. Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 276 (one charter was inadvertently not been included). It is worth noting that at least one of the documents—i.e., *Regesta Imperii*, vol. 8, no. 5861—was also confirmed by the Roman King Wenceslas, see the incomplete undated copy from the fifteenth century in Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 220, fols. 120v–121r.

⁴⁸² See Noël Valois, "Le projet de mariage entre Louis de France et Catherine de Hongrie et le voyage de l'empereur Charles IV à Paris (janvier 1378)," *Annuaire Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire de France* 30 (1893): 209–223; Weiß, "Onkel und Neffe," 147–155, and the titles collected by Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 174, note 239.

husband, and Gregory XI took a negative view of the Hungarian succession in Naples in 1376.⁴⁸³

Neither the French nor the Hungarian side were deterred by this and worked towards a final agreement. Before January 25, 1378, an envoy of the king of Hungary arrived in Paris to negotiate the Neapolitan succession, bringing good news. The king of Hungary agreed that Catherine's husband would receive the Neapolitan crown for life, even if his daughter died childless, and his hereditary possession of the counties of Provence, Forcalquier, and Piedmont would be confirmed.⁴⁸⁴

The French king did not hide his joy that Louis of Hungary had finally agreed to the demands of the French side. However, because he wished to see the matter through, he sent back the Hungarian knight with an urgent request to have the king issue documents as soon as possible on the commitments made (they were indeed issued), and he also asked for the Hungarian estates to promise to accept Catherine as queen as soon as possible to avoid confusion in the event of Louis the Great's unexpected death. However, the French monarch also mentioned the emperor's visit and revealed to his Hungarian counterpart that Charles IV had urged him to agree to Sigismund's acquiring the Kingdom of Poland. The French king, however, assured Louis that he would not promise anything to the emperor without his consent, as it was primarily a matter for the king of Hungary and Poland.⁴⁸⁵

There is no reason to doubt that both Charleses spoke on the Polish issue. However, the nephew apparently made no commitments to his uncle, although the emperor was probably assured by Charles V that France was interested in the Hungarian inheritance. Heinz Thomas was therefore justified in looking elsewhere for a counter-offer for the Kingdom of Arles. He recalled Gregory's December letter to the emperor, pointing out that the ecclesiastical question was more significant for the Luxembourg monarchs. According to Thomas, the granting of the vicariate to the dauphin was the price of the French king's agreement to keep the papacy in Rome, since otherwise Charles IV would

⁴⁸³ František Kavka, "Zum Plan der luxemburgischen Thronfolge in Polen (1368–1382). Strittige Forschungsfragen," *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 13 (1986): 257–283; Weiß, "Onkel und Neffe," 147–155.

⁴⁸⁴ See the undated letter of Charles V to the king of Hungary, edited by Valois, "Le projet de manage," 221–222.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 222–223.

hardly have allowed Avignon to be surrounded by territories under the governorship of France.⁴⁸⁶

The fact is, however, that Charles IV had an immediate interest in maintaining the papacy in Italy at the time of the Parisian encounter, primarily because he had already begun preparations for Wenceslas's Roman campaign. If the French king had engaged in Italian politics not only to the south but also to the north of Rome, he would have accommodated the immediate interests of the pope as well as those of the emperor and his son. Such an engagement was not self-evident. It has already been said that Gregory XI was not in favor of the Hungarian succession in Naples, and Charles V also had no reason to support the pope in his struggle with the Florentine League, because he had failed in 1377 in his request to Gregory for the elevation of the bishopric of Paris to an archbishopric.⁴⁸⁷ On the other hand, Valois, in his dealings with the emperor, probably already knew that Louis of Hungary had come through for him on the Neapolitan succession. In order to bring the matter to a successful conclusion as he wished, he had to break the pope's resistance. And Gregory XI was more than ever in need of the French king's help.

The Roman pontiff was very nervous about the meeting of the two Charleses. He did not know what "great and urgent matters" they were to discuss and wished to find out more about them. He therefore, on January 12, addressed from Rome the archbishops of Ravenna and Rouen, long charged with the negotiation of peace between France and England, and requested one of them to go to Paris and hastily report to Rome what had been discussed in general and private consultations. Gregory himself, however, expressed the fear that it might be impossible to find out anything about the negotiations. He was therefore more hopeful about another task that the archbishops had received. If it would not jeopardize the negotiations between France and England, one of them was to go to the two kings and ask them to aid the pope against the

486 Thomas, "Frankreich, Karl IV," 88–90. The argument was accepted by Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV*, 2:219; Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 142; and Rader, *Kaiser Karl*, 349. It is worth mentioning, however, that the idea that the negotiations in Paris included discussion on the plight of the Church had already been anticipated by Spěváček, *Karl IV.*, 185–186 (see also *idem*, *Václav IV.*, 96). He asserted that the Curia was already threatened with schism during Gregory XI's stay in Italy, since the radical pro-French cardinals wanted to return to Avignon in accordance with the French king's policy, which would not have suited Charles. However, this is only conjecture and cannot be substantiated.

487 Françoise Autrand, *Charles V le sage* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), 756.

“sodomites, usurers, and manifest heretics” who were oppressing the Church. Since this was how the Curia traditionally vilified the Florentines, it was clear who was involved. The French king was to be motivated to act by his ancestors’ loyalty to the Church and the emperor by his oath.⁴⁸⁸

Although the pontiff’s urgent letter reached its addressees after the Parisian summit had ended, Gregory XI was satisfied with its results. Among those who bade farewell to the Luxembourg delegation in Paris on January 16 was Pileo da Prata, archbishop of Ravenna.⁴⁸⁹ As he had been staying with his companion in Bruges at the end of November 1377,⁴⁹⁰ he could already then have gone to Brussels to see the emperor and then continued with him to Paris.⁴⁹¹ He sent satisfactory news to Rome. Gregory XI, in his last extant letter to the emperor, praised the two monarchs for having discussed much that was beneficial to the world and for not forgetting “the unspeakable fears and wrongs of the Church.”⁴⁹²

These words carried great weight. Only two weeks after the departure of the Luxembourg delegation, the French king appointed a large embassy to Italy with a mandate to negotiate peace between the Church and the Florentine League. The delegation was led, among others, by the king’s adviser, the bishop-duke of Laon, Pierre Aycelin de Montaigut, with whom the emperor had already greeted on the way to Paris, the steward of the royal court, Aléaume Boistel (*Maitre des Requetes de l’Hôtel du Roi*), who was well acquainted with the Hungarian-Neapolitan question, and the king’s secretary, Pierre Corbie.⁴⁹³ They were expected by the leader of the papal delegation, Cardinal Jean de La Grange, who was also an adviser to the French king, in Pietrasanta in early

⁴⁸⁸ *Inventaire et vente des biens meubles de Guillaume de Lestrange, archevêque de Rouen, nonce du pape Gregoire XI et ambassadeur du roi Charles V, mort en 1389*, ed. Henry de Lestrange (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1888), 154–155. Valois, “Le projet de manège,” 218, note 1, has already brought attention to this letter.

⁴⁸⁹ *Chronique des règnes*, 2:272; Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 232.

⁴⁹⁰ *Mandements et actes divers de Charles V (1364–1380) recueillis dans les collections de la Bibliothèque nationale*, ed. Léopold Delisle (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1874), 761, no. 1518. Cf. Stacul, *Il cardinale Pileo*, 90.

⁴⁹¹ Cf. Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 182.

⁴⁹² *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:147/12–15, no. 91.

⁴⁹³ *Mandements et actes*, 806–808, nos. 1626–1630. On the welcome of the bishop of Laon to the emperor, see *Chronique des règnes*, 2:203; trans. Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 196.

April⁴⁹⁴ and stayed in Florence from April 12 to 19, where the city officials showered them with numerous gifts, which they refused to accept.⁴⁹⁵

It was a magnificent delegation of 150 horses. The Luxembourg entourage to Paris was only slightly larger.⁴⁹⁶ In a letter to Louis of Hungary at the beginning of May, Coluccio Salutati revealed that Florence had assured the French that it would be willing to achieve peace and unity through the mediation of the French king, who had offered to act as an arbiter.⁴⁹⁷ Florence's inactivity after the death of the pope, however, doomed even this initiative to failure. The French left for Lucca and Pisa, where they followed Cardinal de La Grange, who was joined by the husband of the queen of Naples, Otto of Brunswick.⁴⁹⁸

Guillaume Mollat claimed that the "European Congress" in Sarzana was attended by envoys from France, Hungary, Spain, Naples, and the emperor, in addition to Visconti and representatives of the warring parties.⁴⁹⁹ However, he did not substantiate his claim with sources. Other historians have proven only the presence of Otto of Brunswick and representatives of Mantua, Ferrara, and Venice.⁵⁰⁰ Therefore, it is not at all certain whether the French delegation was appointed to the negotiations organized by Bernabò Visconti. Since the French king offered himself as a mediator, the arrival of his delegation in Italy may not have been directly related to the Sarzana talks. Moreover, at the request of Gregory XI, Louis of Hungary also offered the commune a "mediator of peace and unity", namely, Charles of Durazzo.⁵⁰¹

It is thus clear that the pontiff did not only address the Milanese lord in December 1377, but also asked other secular rulers to engage in the Church's

⁴⁹⁴ See Brandmüller, ed., "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 23, no. 4. Cf. *ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁹⁵ "Diario d'anonimo fiorentino," 452.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid. Jana Fantysová-Matějková, "Cesta Karla IV. do Francie. Příspěvek ke kritice Velkých francouzských kronik [Charles IV's Journey to France. A Contribution to the Critique of the Great French Chronicles]," *Český časopis historický* 106 (2008): 627–650, at 650, notes that it had more than 160 horses.

⁴⁹⁷ Brandmüller, ed., "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 37, no. 21: "Rex Francorum suos pro pace tractanda transmiserat oratores [...], qui a nobis honorifice recepti fuerunt, ac ipsis oblatum, quod eramus parati ad pacem et concordiam per medium prefati domini regis, et per manus ipsorum, in presenciam eiusdem regie maiestatis, bonam dispositionem nostram in hoc monstrantes."

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁹ Mollat, *The popes at Avignon*, 173.

⁵⁰⁰ Brandmüller, "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 8; Gherardi, *La guerra dei Fiorentini*, 86.

⁵⁰¹ Brandmüller, ed., "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 37, no. 21.

conflict with Florence. We do not know how much the emperor had to persuade his nephew in Paris to comply with the pope. For Naples' sake, the French king had fresh reason to lend the pontiff a helping hand. Yet, the vicariate in the Kingdom of Arles was also a significant motivation for France to help keep Gregory XI in Italy and to support Wenceslas's early Roman coronation. Charles IV's generosity may have been motivated by a memory of the fate of Urban V, who, after the emperor's departure from Italy in 1369, could not hold on to the country without his help and returned to Avignon.⁵⁰² Therefore, when Gregory XI moved to Rome, the emperor not only began to organize a third Italian campaign, but first paved the way for it in Paris. At issue was not only Italian politics, but also the delicate dynastic matter of the transfer of imperial power from father to son.

We need not doubt the keeping of confidential conversations by the two Charleses. According to *Les Grandes Chroniques*, the emperor had requested a secret visit from his French nephew in his chamber on January 5, and for nearly three hours "he spoke at length to the king," in the presence of only Charles V's chancellor, Pierre d'Orgemont. Before they parted, the head of the imperial chancery, the prothonotary Nikolaus of Riesenborg, also entered the room.⁵⁰³ Similarly, the two kings spent several hours in intimate conversation at the castle of Beauté-sur-Marne on the occasion of Charles IV's announced pilgrimage to the monastery of St. Maur, patron saint of the Empire and protector against gout. The last time this happened was on January 15, the day before the emperor started his return journey.⁵⁰⁴

The presence of the two chancellors at the first meeting is remarkable. Naturally, the first thing that comes to mind are the six documents relating to the Kingdom of Arles, which Nikolaus of Riesenborg handed over to the French side a few days after the departure of the Luxembourg delegation.⁵⁰⁵ However, the imperial prothonotary was also responsible for the execution of almost all of Charles's and Wenceslas's important documents relating to papal

⁵⁰² Seibt, *Karl IV.*, 343.

⁵⁰³ *Chronique des règnes*, 2:229; trans. Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 208.

⁵⁰⁴ *Chronique des règnes*, 2:267 and 271; trans. Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 228–229 and 231.

⁵⁰⁵ On the handover of documents, see *Chronique des règnes*, 2:277; trans. Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 235.

approbation in 1376 and 1377.⁵⁰⁶ The prothonotary's name can also be found on the emperor's antedated letter (March 6, 1376) asking the pope to consent to the Frankfurt election.⁵⁰⁷ Bishop Galhard came to Tangermünde because of this request, but also to ask for a certain letter from the French king. Nikolaus of Riesenburg was in the best position to take care of this in Paris if it was on the agenda.⁵⁰⁸ Let us, however, return to the substance of the confidential negotiations.

Les Grandes Chroniques generally suggests that the central theme of the Parisian meeting was Wenceslas's future government. When Charles IV greeted his nephew's envoys at Cambrai in December, he reportedly told them that, although he intended to make a pilgrimage to the monastery of St. Maur, he wished above all to visit the royal family and introduce them to his son Wenceslas. According to the chronicler, the emperor literally said that "once he had seen him [i.e., the king of France] and spoke to him, and when he had commended his son, the king of Romans, to him, whom he had brought to him to be entirely his, he would happily accept death whenever God called him to Him, because through this he would have fulfilled one of his greatest desires."⁵⁰⁹

Scholars have already sufficiently emphasized, often by comparison with other relevant sources, that *Les Grandes Chroniques* programmatically gives prominence to the sovereign rule of the French king and neglects the imperial majesty and the claims of the Empire.⁵¹⁰ Entrusting the Roman king, the

⁵⁰⁶ On him and his chancery work, see Hlaváček, *Das Urkunden- und Kanzleiwesen*, 193–194, no. 2; Peter Moraw, "Grundzüge der Kanzleigeschichte Kaiser Karls IV.," *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 12 (1985): 11–42, at 38. Cf. also Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 55.

⁵⁰⁷ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:141/15–16, no. 87.

⁵⁰⁸ After all, Niccolò Beccari asked Nikolaus to edit his manifesto stylistically before submitting it to the emperor. See Beccari's letter to Nikolaus of Riesenburg, which has been preserved as the introduction to his manifesto, Helbling, ed., "Le lettere di Nicolaus de Beccariis," 257–260, no. 1. Cf. Hrdina, "Niccolò Beccari," 162; Helbling, *Saeculum humanum*, 151–152.

⁵⁰⁹ *Chronique des règnes*, 2:198–199; trans. Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 193.

⁵¹⁰ Françoise Autrand, "Mémoire et cérémonial: la visite de l'Empereur Charles IV à Paris en 1378 d'après les Grandes Chroniques de France et Christine de Pizan," in *Une femme de Lettres au Moyen Âge. Etudes autour de Christine de Pizan*, ed. Liliane Dulac and Bernard Ribémont (Orléans: Paradigme, 1995), 91–103; Heinz Thomas, "Ein Zeitgenössisches Memorandum zum Staatsbesuch Kaiser Karls IV. in Paris," in *Zwischen Saar und Mosel: Festschrift für Hans-Walter Herrmann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Wolfgang Haubrichs, Wolfgang Laufer, and Reinhard Schneider (Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 1995), 99–119; Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 272–276; Jana Fantysová-Matějková, "The Holy Roman Emperor

future emperor, to the French monarch fits this concept perfectly. Indeed, according to the same source, on January 11, King Wenceslas took a vow before Charles V to love and serve him before all the princes of the world and his children as well.⁵¹¹ On the other hand, the royal chronicle only cryptically hints at the young dauphin's supposed homage to the emperor on account of his acceptance of the vicariate in the Dauphiné and the Kingdom of Arles.⁵¹²

However, the one-sided view presented in *Les Grandes Chroniques* in the interest of the French state does not change the fact that the emperor went to Paris to present Wenceslas as the future emperor.⁵¹³ In France, the young king was accompanied by his Brabant uncle, who thoroughly acquainted him with the members of the French royal family.⁵¹⁴ And there was a deeper dimension to the whole affair, which was aptly suggested by the author of a vernacular chronicle of Metz, Jaique Dex. He stated that when it came time for the men to part, the emperor asked the French king for one gift, namely, to promise him that he would not take any action, or allow any action to be taken, against his son Wenceslas when he ascended the throne after his death. This the king promised him, and he stayed true to his word. According to Dex, this was the real reason why the emperor went to Saint-Maur-des-Fossés.⁵¹⁵

Indeed, France's respect for the imperial rule of the young Wenceslas seems to have been the central subject of confidential negotiations. When Charles IV began to act through his half-brother in favor of Wenceslas's Italian journey in the spring and summer of 1377, and shortly later took the business directly to Italy, he must have expected that rumors of the transfer of power on the

in the Toils of the French Protocol: The Visit of Charles IV to France," *Imago temporis. Medium Aevum* 6 (2012): 223-248. Cf. also Gerald Schwedler, "Deutsch-französische Herrschertreffen im 14. Jahrhundert. Dynastische und staatliche Beziehungen im Wandel," in *Regnum und Imperium. Die französisch-deutschen Beziehungen im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert*, ed. Stefan Weiß, *Pariser historische Studien* 23 (Munich: De Gruyter, 2008), 55-100.

⁵¹¹ *Chronique des règnes*, 2:264; trans. Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 227.

⁵¹² This refers to the scene when the dauphin was placed on the table before the emperor, see *Chronique des règnes*, 2:243; trans. Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 214. On this, see Fantysová-Matějková, "The Holy Roman Emperor," 243-245.

⁵¹³ Fantysová-Matějková, "The Holy Roman Emperor," 247.

⁵¹⁴ Eadem, *Wenceslas de Bohême*, 496-508.

⁵¹⁵ *Die Metzer Chronik des Jaique Dex (Jacques d'Esch) über die Kaiser und Könige aus dem Luxemburger Hause*, ed. Georg Wolfram, *Quellen zur lothringischen Geschichte* 4 (Metz: G. Scriba, 1906), 313. See the English translation by Fantysová-Matějková, "The Holy Roman Emperor," 245-246.

imperial throne would reach the French king. Given the traditionally close ties between the Valois and Luxembourg families, and the importance of France, the emperor was motivated to prevent speculation by personal action.

The consultations certainly could not avoid the thorny issue of the emperor's resignation, which the pope believed was the only way for Charles to effectuate Wenceslas's Roman coronation during his own lifetime. However, the possibility of secret debates about the option of a joint co-emperorship of the father and son cannot be ruled out. We need not immediately invoke the letter from the radical Niccolò Beccari, who advised Charles to ignore the pope, as the monarch had done in the case of Wenceslas's royal coronation. Otto I the Great had secured the imperial coronation of his descendant 400 years earlier through the will of a pope who was indebted to him and in a weaker position. Frederick Barbarossa was unable to overcome papal opposition, but it seems likely that, had he not died tragically, he would have ultimately succeeded.

Charles's chances of success were also far from remote. Gregory XI, having failed to wage war in Italy in 1377, was in no position to deny the emperor's dynastic ambitions. Charles IV, fully aware of his upper hand, acted accordingly. Parallel to the Parisian summit, imperial-royal envoys traveled to Rome with letters of authorization that conspicuously omitted any mention of Wenceslas's Roman coronation being contingent upon his father's death or resignation. Simultaneously, the emperor won the pope's favor with financial support and diplomatic intervention with the French king. Beccari's fears that Charles might "buy" Wenceslas's imperial coronation through financial and political deals were not entirely unfounded.⁵¹⁶ Under these circumstances, the issue of a co-emperorship could hardly have been excluded from the discussions in Paris.

The French monarch, moreover, seems to have been sympathetic to his uncle's ambitious plan. In May 1378, Charles V's influential adviser, Cardinal Jean de La Grange, assured the emperor in writing that he had his interests in mind equally with those of the French king. As this statement was made in the context of Charles IV's efforts to obtain a Bull of Approbation from the Curia inviting Wenceslas to Rome, it was probably written in reciprocity to the

⁵¹⁶ Weiß, "Luxury and Extravagance," 73, argues that, as a result of the conflict with Florence, the papacy became increasingly dependent on donations and loans from secular rulers, and political decisions were sold in exchange for corresponding payments.

generosity shown by the emperor in Paris.⁵¹⁷ The arduous journey to France, however, began to bear fruit in Rome immediately after the results of the negotiations reached the Papal Curia.

Because the emperor and his nephew in Paris remembered the wrongs done to the Church, the pontiff finally decided to make Charles's desire a reality. Not later than February 1378, the long-awaited Bishop Galhard arrived in Rome, and Gregory was pleased to find among the received documents Charles's promise that there would be no royal election during his son's lifetime. Yet, he lacked the same oath from Wenceslas himself. The emperor's loyalty to the Church, however, was a reason for the pope to confirm Wenceslas's election and to solemnly proclaim the approbation, though with the proviso that he would issue the Bull of Approbation only when he had received Wenceslas's sealed promise. He diplomatically excused the absence of the oath by the absence of the young king in Tangermünde and considered the charter to only be late.⁵¹⁸

The pope also had reason to be glad and favorable because Galhard had informed him of the loan from the emperor, which he had deposited in Venice.⁵¹⁹ More borrowed money was soon brought by the dean of Vyšehrad, Konrad of Veselá.⁵²⁰ Gregory was still alive when Konrad arrived in Rome with Bishop Eckard of Worms and Konrad of Geisenheim. The Pope demanded the money and the dean actually handed it over, albeit involuntarily. The Bull of Approbation, to which the loan was linked, had not yet been issued. Cardi-

⁵¹⁷ Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 121, no. 3. Cf. Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 214: "Es ist auffällig, daß vor Karls Paris-Reise kein Kardinal die freundschaftlichen Beziehungen zwischen dem Kaiser und seinem Neffen betont. Grangias Worte über diese Freundschaft können ein Hinweis darauf sein, daß die Paris-Reise auch dazu gedient hatte, Wenzels Nachfolge in Frankreich Anerkennung zu verschaffen."

⁵¹⁸ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:146–147, no. 91. Gregory wrote to the emperor probably not long after February 25, when, according to Cardinal Corsini, he decided to announce the approbation, see Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 123, no. 6.

⁵¹⁹ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:147/15–17, no. 91.

⁵²⁰ Stefan Weiß, "Kredite europäischer Fürsten für Gregor XI. Zur Finanzierung der Rückkehr des Papsttums von Avignon nach Rom," *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 77 (1997): 176–205, at 202–203, has put forward the suggestion that Galhard and Konrad could have been carrying the same money, and that each of them carried it only a part of the way. This cannot be ruled out; however, given how careful Konrad was with the money (see below), I find this hypothesis unlikely. Since the loan of 40,000 florins carried by Konrad was covered by the papal tithe in the Empire up to 70,000 florins (see *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:137, note 3), one could also deduce that Galhard carried the remaining 30,000.

nals Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille, Pierre Flandrin, along with the pope's chamberlain and treasurer were privy to the whole affair, and the funds were again used to cover war expenses.⁵²¹

Gregory entrusted the publication of the king's approbation to Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille, who did not hesitate to notify the emperor.⁵²² At the insistence of some other cardinals, including, notably, Robert of Geneva,⁵²³ the pontiff set the solemn act for April 9 at a public consistory. The preparations went so far that Robert of Geneva's chaplain, Agapito Colonna, who was well known at the imperial court, had already prepared a speech for the ceremony and a clean copy of the approbation bull had been drawn up. However, it remained unsealed because of the pope's demise.⁵²⁴ Cardinal Corsini wrote three letters about this to Charles IV over the course of several months.⁵²⁵

Robert of Geneva, who would become Clement VII, also recalled that the document remained unsealed because the pope was unable to give the seal to the *bullator* due to his paralysis (*propter debilitatem*).⁵²⁶ If the document remained unsealed purely for technical reasons, because of Gregory's death, does this mean that the imperial envoys eventually brought Wenceslas's oath

⁵²¹ Konrad himself recalled that he had released the money before Gregory fell ill, see *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:137, note 1, and "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 4. Pietro Corsini wrote to Charles IV on May 31, 1378, that Konrad had done so unwillingly, see Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 124, no. 6, invoking the testimony of cardinals d'Aigrefeuille and Flandrin and the pope's treasurer and chamberlain. Konrad subsequently asserted to Urban VI that the money had been spent on the recapture of Romagna and the March of Ancona, see "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 13.

⁵²² See the cardinal's deposition in Gayet, *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 2, Appendix, 70–71, and his letter of May 30, 1378, to the emperor, Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 125–126, no. 7.

⁵²³ Clement VII claimed this in 1386 in an instruction to the archbishop of Salzburg, see *Dokumente zur Geschichte des grossen abendländischen Schismas (1385–1395)*, ed. Samuel Steinherz (Prague: Franz Kraus, 1932), 24, paragraph 4.

⁵²⁴ Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 121, no. 4; 123, no. 6, and 124–125, no. 7. On Colonna, see Andreas Rehberg, *Kirche und Macht im römischen Trecento. Die Colonna und ihre Klientel auf dem kurialen Pfründemarkt (1278–1378)*, Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom 88 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1999), 76–77. On his missions to the emperor in the 1360s and 1370s, see Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, vol. 2, according to the register.

⁵²⁵ See Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 123, no. 6.

⁵²⁶ *Dokumente zur Geschichte*, 24, paragraph 5.

with them? Or was the Curia content with money as compensation?⁵²⁷ The latter option seems far more likely. This would explain why Konrad of Veselá risked incurring the emperor's wrath by handing over the money entrusted to him before obtaining the probation document. In any case, the cardinals appear to have considered the matter of Wenceslas's oath to have been settled during Gregory's lifetime.

The news of the supreme pontiff's death between the night of March 26 and morning of March 27 plunged not only the Romans but also the emperor into uncertainty and great expectation. Little was lacking for the imperial envoys to obtain from Gregory XI what they had come for, and Charles and his son could begin to turn their plans for an Italian journey into reality. It took little for the diplomats at Sarzana—including the French delegation, who joined the peace talks with only minor prodding—to reach a final agreement, and the War of the Eight Saints ended after three years. Now it was a matter of waiting to see how the conclave would turn out and how the new pontiff would approach the pending issues.

⁵²⁷ See note 516 above.

3.

Dynastic Interests in a Labyrinth of Ambition and Intrigue

The dynastic policy of the emperor at the Roman Curia in 1378 cannot be examined without explicit reference to the sources. As the conclave was prepared and Urban was elected, the available evidence took on a contested character. Historians are compelled to rely on the testimony of biased witnesses who recalled the outbreak of the schism from the perspective of one party or another—a challenge already noted in the introduction.

Although several testimonies from the years 1379–1386 are cited below, particularly important is the extensive deposition of the emperor's diplomat, Konrad of Veselá. In the summer of 1386, he testified in Avignon as part of an inquiry organized by King Pedro IV of Aragon.⁵²⁸ From March 1378 at the latest, Konrad stayed in Rome, then moved between Anagni and Tivoli, returned to Rome with Urban, and finally went to the rebellious cardinals in Fondi, from where he made his way back to the imperial court in November 1378. He thus knew much about his lord's interests, which he defended at the Papal Curia, as well as about the circumstances of the outbreak of the ecclesiastical crisis.

⁵²⁸ On the investigation in Avignon in 1386, see Seidlmaier, *Anfänge*, 206–208 and 221–223. Konrad's deposition was edited by Gayet, *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 2, Appendix, 169–187, no. 41, and later also using another manuscript by Kamil Krofta in "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 3–16.

However, since Konrad testified at Avignon as a firm supporter of Clement VII, and eight years after the events described, his account of the stances and statements of Urban VI and the cardinals cannot be accepted uncritically. Yet, paradoxically, it is the great distance of the testimony from the events depicted, that is, the factor of time, that blunts the edges of our skepticism. In his testimony Konrad not infrequently quoted or paraphrased the words of individual actors, and it is highly unlikely that he could have remembered these quotations after such a long time.⁵²⁹ It can therefore be assumed that he took into account written records of much earlier date, including documents created close to the events under discussion. He attached some to his deposition.⁵³⁰

This assumption—and, by extension, the credibility of Konrad's testimony—can only be tested definitively through comparison with other sources. Given the existence of numerous contemporary letters addressing the same developments, a direct comparison of these materials will form a crucial component of the subsequent analysis. Such an approach offers a rare opportunity to establish a more secure basis for reconstructing and interpreting the origins of the schism.

The Postponement of Wenceslas's Approbation in Rome

When the dean of Vyšehrad testified in Avignon in 1386 about the conditions that prevailed in Rome before and during Urban's election, he did not offer much new information. He knew about what was happening in the city mainly from hearsay. Only once did he say that he had seen the leaders of

⁵²⁹ I am drawing here on an interesting case in Czech medieval history, which concerned Jerome of Prague. At his trial in Vienna in 1410, a number of scholars testified about events in Prague dating back some two years or less. However, in certain respects, the reliability of their testimonies was low, as Martin Nodl has shown in his study on the memory of intellectuals, see *idem*, "Paměť a intelektuál [Memory and the Intellectual]," in *Septuaginta Paulo Spunar oblata (70+2)*, ed. Jiří Kroupa (Prague: KLP, 2000), 376–384. Cf. also *idem*, *Das Kuttenberger Dekret von 1409. Von der Eintracht zum Konflikt der Prager Universitätsnationen*, trans. Roswitha and Pavel Cervicek (Cologne – Weimar – Vienna: Böhlau, 2017), esp. 177, 208–209, 242–243.

⁵³⁰ See "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 14–17.

the city urging the cardinals to elect an Italian or a Roman. The dean's testimony is oftentimes consistent with the *Casus cardinalium ultramontanorum* of August 2, 1378, another indication that the envoy relied primarily on the testimony of others to recall those tumultuous days. Konrad had been advised by his landlord, a high-ranking member of the Roman municipal administration, to keep away, remain in his dwelling, and display the imperial shield so that it would be obvious to whom he belonged. The symbolic communication was to provide protection from the violence that threatened to erupt if the cardinals failed to meet the expectations of the people.⁵³¹

The imperial diplomat did not stay at home long and on the morning of April 9 entered the papal palace, where dramatic events had taken place a few hours before. He was driven by curiosity, knowing that he had spent a great deal of money without obtaining an invitation for the emperor and his son to the Roman coronation. Upstairs he found Bartolomeo Prignano, whom he knew from Avignon, who greeted him as an old friend in the presence of several cardinals. When Konrad urged him to complete the approbation of Wenceslas, saying that it was enough to proclaim it, the elect assured him that after he had taken office, he would do more for his lord than ten of his predecessors, if the emperor were an obedient son of the Church.⁵³²

Konrad was not the only one in Rome who remembered the emperor's interests immediately after Urban's election. A day later, on April 10, Cardinal Pietro Corsini assured Charles IV in writing that he was prepared to continue working to achieve Wenceslas's approbation. He pinned numerous hopes on Urban.⁵³³ This was a good sign, because Corsini had mediated on the question of approbation between the imperial envoys and the new pontiff.⁵³⁴ The emperor's procurator to the Curia, Cardinal Robert of Geneva, was not left out of the action either. Four days after Corsini, he informed Charles IV that he had spoken briefly with the new pontiff about Wenceslas's approbation and that Urban was in favor of carrying it out. He believed that the pope would soon move from words to deeds, since Robert himself and the emperor's

⁵³¹ Ibid., 4.

⁵³² Ibid., 6. Konrad was in Avignon at least in April 1373, see *Acta judicaria consistorii Pragensis*, vol. 1, ed. Ferdinand Tadra (Prague: Česká akademie, 1893), 24, no. 119.

⁵³³ Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 120, no. 1.

⁵³⁴ See Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 2:785 [1263]: "Post mortem vero ejus resumptus est tractatus de confirmatione dicti filii imperatoris per ambaxiatores suos, mediante domino Florentino, coram domino Urbano."

secretary, Master Konrad, in whom the cardinal of Geneva probably meant Konrad of Geisenheim, were working intensively on it. Robert also conveyed to Charles Urban's wish that the emperor would treat him like his predecessors on the See of St. Peter and become his firm support.⁵³⁵

Thus, a number of testimonies attest that the imperial diplomats with allied cardinals appealed in advance to Urban VI to settle Wenceslas's case immediately after he began to preside at the consistories. They shared the conviction that their expectations would be fulfilled. However, Urban did not find much understanding with the cardinals during their joint deliberations in the second half of April, and the representatives of the secular rulers staying at the Roman Curia were also disturbed by his behavior.

When Urban was informed during a private consistory in the presence of the cardinals of the hard-negotiated concordat between Gregory XI and King Edward III of England, which regulated the occupation of benefices in England, the new pontiff refused to ratify the treaty, saying that he wanted first to ascertain the obedience of the English monarch. To the displeasure of the cardinals, especially Robert of Geneva, Urban is said to have even called the English king a heretic for preventing the pope from freely exercising his rights.⁵³⁶ Harsh words were also heard by the Castilian envoy, who, according to his own words, was instructed by the pope at their first meeting that kings were to serve the Church by deeds and not by words, or else they would be deposed. The Spaniard was astonished, because he considered his sovereign as the bulwark of Christendom, who, moreover, was the only king who had declared war on the Florentines. Urban therefore explained that he had other monarchs in mind.⁵³⁷ Konrad of Veselá likewise testified that Urban VI, after his coronation, declared at a public consistory that he had the power to depose

⁵³⁵ Brandmüller, ed., "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 33–34, no. 17, see esp.: "Magister Conratus serenitatis vestre secretarius." Wolfgang Prange, "Konrad von Geisenheim († 1386)," in *Die Bischöfe des Heiligen Römischen Reiches 1198 bis 1448. Ein biographisches Lexikon*, ed. Erwin Gatz and Clemens Brodkorb (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001), 357, states that Konrad of Geisenheim was the university master and Charles's secretary. Although Konrad of Veselá is mentioned as "Pragensis diocesis secretarius" (see *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:137/19), he is not known to have attained a university degree. Brandmüller, "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 34, note 150, misidentifies the person of the secretary.

⁵³⁶ See the deposition of Gil Sánchez Muñoz, Seidlemayer, ed., *Die Anfänge*, 326, and Jean Le Fèvre's testimony before the count of Flanders, Du Boulay, ed., *Historia universitatis*, 4:520–521. Cf. Perroy, *L'Angleterre*, 269–270, and Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 90–91.

⁵³⁷ See the deposition of Alvaro Martínez, Seidlemayer, ed., *Die Anfänge*, 266.

emperors, kings, and princes, and to install other rulers in their places. The dean of Vyšehrad called such words improper.⁵³⁸

There is no doubt that some of the testimonies were given in an effort to hurt Urban. Yet, their substance does not appear to be fabricated. After the schism broke out, King Richard II of England became a firm supporter of the Roman pontiff in his struggle with Clement VII, but it took several years to win Urban over to the concordat mentioned above.⁵³⁹ Prignano expected the cardinals to faithfully respect his sovereign rule and, in parallel, demanded the monarchs to serve the Church devotedly through their coercive power and to recognize her liberties without fail.⁵⁴⁰ His attitude towards secular power was more fully manifested in the case mentioned by the Castilian envoy, which preoccupied Urban immediately after he began his pontificate.

The Roman pontiff expected, above all, the secular rulers to provide palpable help in the struggle with Florence and her allies who threatened the Italian dominion of the Church. Already on April 15, 1378, before the coronation, he ritually restored ecclesiastical penalties over the Florentine League and began to raise money for the fight.⁵⁴¹ The peaceful activities of Gregory XI and the European monarchs were clearly alien to him. Accordingly, during an audience in late April, he reprimanded Cardinal Jean de La Grange for his pact with Prefect Francesco di Vico and the Visconti of Milan.⁵⁴² Urban, it is said, preferred to see Bernabò Visconti kneeling at his feet with his hands tied behind his back in order to force him to take the oath of allegiance.⁵⁴³ He looked at Francesco di Vico no differently. Because Urban, according to witnesses, had flouted the terms of the peace agreement of October 1377, the prefect resisted, and by the end of April 1378 war had flared up again in the vicinity of Rome. The pope summoned Francesco to court, held his wife and daughter hostage in

⁵³⁸ "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 7.

⁵³⁹ Perroy, *L'Angleterre*, 270–286.

⁵⁴⁰ Cf. Seidlmaier, *Die Anfänge*, 15–16; Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 89–96 and 105; Jamme, "Réseaux, stratégies de communication," 266, parallels Urban's highly hierocratic conception of his authority with that of Boniface VIII and sees in it a break with the polite methods of the Avignon papacy, even though it too expected formal obedience from secular rulers.

⁵⁴¹ On May 5, 1378, Urban demanded that, because of the war with Florence, the papal collector in Aragon and Navarre severely extort the unpaid obligatory payments to the Curia from the prelates, see Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 216–218, no. 13.

⁵⁴² Valois, *La France*, 1:69–71; Jamme, "Renverser le pape," 442.

⁵⁴³ See the deposition of Juan Sánchez quoted by Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 98–99.

Rome, and finally called against him the condottiere Bernardon de La Salle.⁵⁴⁴ The Florentine chancellor, Coluccio Salutati, thus rightly wrote to the king of Hungary on May 6 that he had not yet seen Urban's efforts to pacify the Italian homeland.⁵⁴⁵

Thus, the restraint of the Florentines was soon joined by Urban's intransigence, which during April 1378 definitively put an end to the efforts of the secular rulers to conclude the War of the Eight Saints amicably. The emperor's attempts to pacify Italy before Wenceslas's Roman campaign were dealt another severe blow. Yet, another, worse complication loomed on the horizon that seriously threatened the Italian journey itself.

The expectations of Charles's confidants that the new pope would invite Wenceslas to the imperial coronation without delay were not fulfilled. The approbation of the young king was discussed by the pope and the cardinals at the consistory on May 7.⁵⁴⁶ Urban himself did not know much about the development of the cause. While still archbishop of Bari, he was indeed head of the Apostolic Chancery in Italy, but after Gregory XI's departure for Anagni he remained in Rome, looking after the routine administrative business of the Curia. The pope's political correspondence was managed by his private secretary, probably in collaboration with the office of the Apostolic Chamber.⁵⁴⁷

Cardinal Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille briefed the pope on the progress of the case at the consistory, with the approval of the cardinals, who recommended Wenceslas's confirmation.⁵⁴⁸ The justification (*raciones*) was prepared by Pietro Corsini, who insisted on a speedy promulgation of the approbation, especially because after the departure of the nuncio Galhard to Italy, a rumor had spread in Germany that the approval had already taken place, and the cardinal feared the indignity of delay.⁵⁴⁹ It was not a false fear. The diplomatic activities of the Luxembourg dynasty in various parts of Europe during the latter half of the previous year suggested that Charles IV regarded Wenceslas's invitation to Rome as virtually a done deal. The postponement of the approbation thus threatened to cause resentment at the imperial court.

⁵⁴⁴ On this in detail, see *ibid.*, 100–101.

⁵⁴⁵ Brandmüller, ed., "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 37, no. 21.

⁵⁴⁶ For the date, see Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 123, no. 6, and 125, no. 7.

⁵⁴⁷ See Williman, "Schism within the Curia," 36. Cf. Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 177.

⁵⁴⁸ See Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 122, no. 4, and 126, no. 8. Cf. Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 210–211.

⁵⁴⁹ See Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 123, no. 6.

Urban VI was satisfied with the report of Cardinal d'Aigrefeuille and wanted to close the matter, but he did not follow the appeal of the cardinals for a speedy settlement. He decided first to send an embassy to the imperial court to extort from Charles IV the appointment of a much more eminent delegation with a new commission, since the diplomats from the Empire residing at the Curia had been sent to the deceased pope.⁵⁵⁰

The discussion of Wenceslas's approbation at the consistory on May 7 is attested by the correspondence of the persons concerned with the emperor. The meeting was also touched upon in the testimony of Konrad of Veselá, who, in accordance with his intention to testify about the beginnings of the schism, focused on the relationship between Urban and the cardinals. According to him, when the cardinals and the members of the imperial legation, commissioned to negotiate the approbation, came to the pope, Urban addressed the ecclesiastical princes as follows: "Cardinal of Geneva, I want you to write to the emperor, your kinsman, and to the king of Bohemia, and to other relatives and friends of yours; and you, Cardinal of Florence, you have also pleaded the cause of the emperor; and you other cardinals (many of whom were there) write to the emperor and to your other friends about my election and canonical coronation, and I will write in like manner, and you will see that you agree with me; and before you seal your letters, I want to review them to see if they agree with mine. I will send these imperial ones on their way, and send my envoys with them, and I will send my robes as a present to the emperor and the king of Bohemia, and also to other princes; and do not delay with these letters." Konrad then stated that some of the cardinals objected that it was not customary to send out letters about the election. The pope, however, insisted, and according to Konrad no one dared to contradict him.⁵⁵¹

The deposition of the dean of Vyšehrad this time raises a remarkable problem that puts his words in a critical light. According to him, the pope tried to coerce at least three letters concerning the election from the cardinals: individual letters from Robert of Geneva and Pietro Corsini, and a collective one from all the cardinals. It was no accident. All three were evidently brought

⁵⁵⁰ See *ibid.*, 122, no. 4; 125, no. 7; 126, nos. 8–9; "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 9–10. Cf. also the deposition of Tommaso Ammannati, *Baluze/Mollat*, ed., *Vitae paparum* 2:718 [1200].

⁵⁵¹ "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 7. Valois, *La France*, 1:65, argues that Urban did not check all outgoing letters.

to the emperor in Prague. Yet, the truth is that the cardinal of Geneva had already written to Charles on April 14, and his companion from Florence even four days earlier—that is to say, long before the pope postponed Wenceslas's approbation on May 7 at the consistory and expressed his intention of sending a legation to the emperor. Only the collective letter of the conclave participants was written in the wake of the postponement of the approbation on the following day, May 8. Therefore, unlike the two earlier letters, it mentioned not only the election but also Urban's coronation. Today the collective writing is known in copies made for the emperor, his son, and the French king.⁵⁵²

In essence, then, it is impossible that the two individual letters could have been forced by Urban, as the dean of Vyšehrad suggested. They were written at a time when relations between the pontiff and the cardinals had not yet broken down. The fact is, however, that the writings eventually became inconvenient for their authors because of their positive words about Urban. This will be discussed below. Apparently, Konrad of Veselá was also aware of this, so he deliberately distorted the circumstances of the creation of the two letters during the investigation in Avignon in order to reduce their testimonial value and to support the cardinals' narrative of Urban's coercion.

⁵⁵² The letter for the emperor has been preserved in at least three copies dated May 8, 1378: Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 4924, fols. 1v–2v (titled: "Sequitur litera collegii cardinalium ad eundem de creacione et commendacione eiusdem domini Urbani pape Sexti"); Prague, National Library, XIV D 19, fol. 81r (titled: "Sub tenore infrascripto scripserunt domini cardinales domino imperatori et regibus, ymmo collegium cardinalium"); and Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, A IX 8, fol. 1r–v (titled: "Domino meo cesari"). See the edition in *Chronicon Henrici Knighton, vel Cnitton, monachi Leycestrensis*, vol. 2, 1337–1395, ed. John Lumby, Rolls Series 92 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1895), 128–129; *Summa cancellariae (Cancellaria Caroli IV.)*, ed. Ferdinand Tadra (Prague: Česká akademie, 1895), 212, no. 365; and Brandmüller, ed., "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 38–39, no. 22, who, however, *ibid.*, 38, note 173, erroneously states that the content of the letter was not previously known. An undated copy for King Wenceslas is accessible in *Über Formelbücher*, 2:29, no. 16. A dated exemplar for King Charles V of France has been preserved in Augsburg, Universitätsbibliothek (previously Waihingen, Fürstlich Öttingen-Wallersteinsche Bibliothek), Cod. II. 1 2° 112, fol. 192r–v. The existence of this copy was already pointed out by Ludwig von Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*, vol. 1, *Geschichte der Päpste im Zeitalter der Renaissance bis zur Wahl Pius II. Martin V., Eugen IV., Nikolaus V., Kalixtus III.*, 5th to 7th eds. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1925), 133, note 2. See also the dated copy in Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.ch.f.84, fol. 135r–v, titled: "Copia littere misse regi Francie et aliis regibus per collegium dominorum cardinalium."

However, the collective letter of the cardinals can be considered to have been enforced. It was the same letter that the cardinals had already sent to their colleagues in Avignon on April 19.⁵⁵³ The letter sounded universally positive for Urban and his legitimacy, yet in its introduction the cardinals alluded to false rumors that might have been circulating about the election, which at the same time might have aroused curiosity if not wariness in readers.⁵⁵⁴ Some of the cardinals undoubtedly sought this effect. The dispute over the handover of the Castel Sant'Angelo had already been running for a fortnight, and radicals like Robert of Geneva and Jean de La Grange had no interest in bolstering Urban's legitimacy in a situation where the pontiff was trying to support it at the court of the emperor and other European rulers by any means available.

Urban did not seek to induce Charles IV to send a solemn embassy with a new mandate only negatively by delaying Wenceslas's approbation. He also wanted to present himself in a positive light before the emperor and other rulers by donating papal liveries or granting ecclesiastical benefices and related graces.

Shortly after the postponement of Wenceslas's approbation, on May 9, Urban granted King Richard II of England the right to appoint clerics of his choice to the first two canonries to be vacated in each of the cathedrals and collegiate churches of England, Ireland, and Wales.⁵⁵⁵ Similar, though undated, privileges have been preserved for King Charles V of France and Duke Jean (IV) de Montfort of Brittany.⁵⁵⁶ A charter of the same wording for the emperor is not known, but its existence is more than likely. On May 13, Urban granted the archbishop of Cologne Friedrich of Saarwerden similar authority to reserve a certain number of ecclesiastical benefices in the archdiocese of Cologne at his discretion.⁵⁵⁷ Above all, however, there is an extensive set of reservations with provisions for canonries in St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague, dated between May 11–15, some of which were granted by the pope at the express request of

⁵⁵³ See page 47 above.

⁵⁵⁴ Bliemetzrieder, "Der Briefwechsel," 137, believes that the letter must have had a strange effect on the emperor, and that for the same reason it could not have made a great or lasting impression on the cardinals in Avignon.

⁵⁵⁵ See *Concilia Magnae Britanniae*, 3:130–131.

⁵⁵⁶ Perroy, *L'Angleterre*, 53. Cf. Ullmann, *The Origins*, 103.

⁵⁵⁷ *Die Regesten der Erzbischöfe*, 8:522, no. 1906.

the emperor, the empress, and King Wenceslas.⁵⁵⁸ Such generosity is remarkable.

It is impossible that the imperial family—or anyone else from the Bohemian or German lands—could have asked the new pontiff for the above-mentioned favors and had them granted so quickly. By the beginning of May, the most they could have learned was that Urban had been elected. Urban seems to have complied quickly and generously with the supplications addressed to Gregory XI or to the new pontiff in general, with a view to attaining the petitioners' gratitude.⁵⁵⁹ Since Charles's courtier and diplomat, Peter Wurst, archbishop of Magdeburg, also received two graces on May 10 and 13, it may be assumed that he was involved in the settlement of the petitions of the imperial family. His stay at the Papal Curia is reliably documented no later than July 1378.⁵⁶⁰

Urban's campaign of legitimization aimed at the emperor and other rulers, which began with the postponement of Wenceslas's approbation on May 7 and the sealing of the letters of the cardinals the following day, also had negative consequences for the pontiff. The first two cardinals, who were suffering from the rising temperatures in Rome, Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille and Guy de Malesset, waited for nothing further and extorted permission from Urban to move from Rome to provincial Anagni.⁵⁶¹ Their absence, and the anticipated departures of other cardinals, was another blow to the imminent proclamation of Wenceslas's approbation, and Konrad of Veselá was not about to accept this. He again left a detailed account of the measures he took to reverse the unfavorable situation.

⁵⁵⁸ See *Monumenta Vaticana res gestas Bohemicas illustrantia*, vol. 5, *Acta Urbani VI. et Bonifacii IX. 1378-1404*, ed. Kamil Krofta (Prague: Typis Gregerianis, 1903), 20–29, nos. 4–25.

⁵⁵⁹ Urban's policy on benefices was analyzed by Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 106–111, who pointed out that the pope wanted to have the whole matter under his exclusive control from the beginning of his pontificate. Only in June did he become more lenient, as Cristoforo da Piacenza testified, see Brandmüller, ed., "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 41, no. 24: "Bullam apposuit, et adhuc est aperta, duratura usque ad medium mensem augusti, et omnibus pauperibus gratiam voluntibus fecit et facit." Konrad of Veselá even claimed that Urban did not start granting graces until the end of July, see "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 12: "Et tunc primo eciam incepit facere et signare rotulos et gracias, quas ante non fecerat."

⁵⁶⁰ *Codex diplomaticus*, 11:100–101, nos. III and 112.

⁵⁶¹ See note 142 above.

The dean of Vyšehrad turned for help to the chancellor of the queen of Naples, Niccolò Spinelli, who was another of the confidants of the emperor and his son at the Curia. Konrad probably took into account that Urban had surrounded himself with advisers of Neapolitan origin, of whom Spinelli was one. Both urged Urban to announce the approbation before the cardinals left Rome. Even the request of his counsellor, however, did not soften the pontiff. On the contrary, the pope urged that all the imperial envoys should return to Charles IV with a legation bearing letters of election and robes for the imperial family and the princes. Konrad, however, refused to leave Rome without Wenceslas's approbation because of the loan he had granted. In response, the enraged Urban accused him of counterfeiting money. The dean of Vyšehrad felt insulted by the accusation, although one of the cardinals tried to defuse the tense situation by claiming that the pontiff had only been teasing.⁵⁶²

When the other two members of the imperial legation, Bishop Eckard of Worms and Dean Konrad of Geisenheim, arrived, Urban also called on them to be ready to leave with his embassy. He declared that he did not intend to take up the matter of the approbation of the emperor's son with the Konrads, but expected the highest secular and ecclesiastical dignitaries. When the dean of Vyšehrad objected that the solemn envoys had not come because of the dangers of travel, and that the emperor would not send them, so Urban should be content with them, the pope again angrily shouted at him to be silent. He took the bishop of Worms, Eckard, into an adjoining room, and instructed him at length as to what he had to say to the emperor, especially how miraculously he had been elected. When the pope returned from the consultation and saw the two deans again, he reiterated that he did not want to discuss the approbation with the Konrads.⁵⁶³

As this is the deposition of a biased witness, it cannot be accepted uncritically. However, contemporary correspondence confirms once again that the dean worked with facts. On the occasion of the departure of Urban's legation, a number of people with ties to the emperor took up the pen in May and early June 1378 to recommend themselves and justify their positions in the approbation issue. The letters contain further valuable evidence of Urban's intention to postpone the approbation and document not only the neglect of the two

⁵⁶² "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 9.

⁵⁶³ Ibid. 9–10.

Konrads but also the disapproval of the cardinals concerned about the pope's procedure.

The return of the bishop of Worms, Eckard of Dersch, with Urban's commission was announced to the emperor by Cardinals Borsano and de La Grange at the end of May. Both recommended the hierarch in the confidence that he would portray to the emperor their abiding interest in the settlement of Wenceslas's cause.⁵⁶⁴ At the same time, Niccolò Spinelli also placed himself at the emperor's service. On that occasion he recommended to Charles another of Urban's envoys, the knight Ludovico Brancassini of Naples, who was related to the chancellor and the pope.⁵⁶⁵

Cardinal Pietro Corsini, who had been in contact with Charles for a long time, also wrote at length about Eckard's mission to the emperor on May 31. His letter was much more critical. The cardinal pointed out to the emperor that the pope had decided to send the bishop and others to the Empire despite the fact that Gregory XI had intended to approve Wenceslas and the cardinals had recommended Urban to do the same at the May consistory. According to the cardinal, Urban made this decision after consulting with Bishop Eckard, who had been urging the pope to send the legation since the day of his enthronement (April 9), without anyone else's knowledge. According to Pietro Corsini, this is why he himself, as well as Robert of Geneva and all the other people who were involved in the emperor's affairs at the Curia, remained excluded from the negotiations about the embassy.⁵⁶⁶

The cardinal assured the emperor that he was always concerned only with his affairs, never looking for difficulties, and therefore disagreed with the pope's opinion and tried to persuade him to make the approbation for the sake of the needs of the Church and the Empire. Having failed, he had no choice but to hope that the bishop would bring good news. Corsini knew only that the legation was carrying news of Urban's election and coronation, that the pope was requesting honorable ambassadors from the emperor for the sake of the proper execution of the approbation, and that he wished to deal graciously with the

⁵⁶⁴ See Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 120–121, nos. 2–3, and 129, no. 13.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., 122–123, no. 5.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., 123–124, no. 6, see esp. 123: "Papa deliberavit ad partem cum Wormatiensi episcopo, quia die ipso creacionis papam sollicitaverat ad vestre maiestatis presenciam velle transmitti alii omnino insciis." Even though it is more likely that the correct wording should be "episcopo, qui a die ipso", the scribe actually wrote "quia", see Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, A IX 8, fol. 8ov.

emperor. The Florentine cardinal also mentioned that he would have written earlier about everything, but he had decided to postpone it until the time of the departure of the bishop of Worms, because he had received a certain promise from him and the pope; unfortunately, we do not know what it was.⁵⁶⁷

Finally, the cardinal thought it important to vindicate the other two imperial diplomats, both Konrads, before the emperor. He assured Charles that the pope and the bishop had excluded them from the negotiations, although they had carefully followed the orders they had received, and he pleaded that they should not be blamed for having issued the money entrusted to Gregory XI, since they had done so involuntarily.⁵⁶⁸

Given how highly Urban thought of papal authority, it is very likely that from the beginning of his papacy he did not want to deal with the "Konrads," but was focused only on the idea of having the imperial elites sent directly to him by the emperor. Under what circumstances he found an ally in the bishop of Worms is not clear.

The return of Eckard of Dersch to the emperor with the secret commission of the pope was indeed hard to digest for the cardinals involved. Pietro Corsini addressed the emperor again by letter on June 2, and, referring to the willingness of Gregory XI to make the approbation, reiterated his disillusionment with Urban's action. Robert of Geneva, who must have felt similarly repulsed, also signed the letter.⁵⁶⁹ The cardinal of Geneva, however, had been trying for some time to turn Urban's disregard to his disadvantage. After it became apparent during the consistory on May 7 that Wenceslas's approbation would not take place, and Konrad of Veselá had come into conflict with Urban, Robert dared to fill Konrad in on his intrigues and plans. The dean described the secret talks in his testimony.

The cardinal appealed suggestively to Konrad that he himself knew how the conclave had been conducted, that the election had been unfree because of the threats of the Romans, and how Urban was now pressing the cardinals to write to the sovereigns about the election contrary to the truth and their consciences, threatening that if they did not do so they would expose themselves to the danger of death. He therefore urged the dean to go to the emperor and give him testimony of the violence and coercion, induce him to disregard the letters

⁵⁶⁷ Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 123–124.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid., 124.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid., 124–125, no. 7.

of the cardinals, and not to believe Urban's envoys. On the contrary, Konrad was to tell him that when the cardinals were out of Rome and free, they would proceed to the canonical election of a pontiff, settle the approbation of Wenceslas, and send a solemn embassy describing the truth, which they dared not do from Rome.⁵⁷⁰

Although Konrad agreed with the cardinal on the question of the forced election, he again refused to go to the emperor, saying that the question of the loan of 40,000 florins was still unresolved. The cardinal therefore proposed Konrad of Geisenheim as confidant, whom Urban had also excluded from the negotiations. However, the dean of Speyer too, having been initiated into the secret mission, refused to leave the Curia before the announcement of the approbation. In the end, therefore, the difficult task fell to a servant of the dean of Vyšehrad named Václav Strnad (*Strnado*), who was not only a witness to the Roman events, but appeared to be discreet enough and a well-known enough person at the imperial court to pass on information from the cardinal. Konrad himself sent a letter to the emperor through his cleric, in which he described the course of events and the pressure of Urban.⁵⁷¹

The report of the emperor's envoy about the secret conversation with Robert of Geneva cannot be verified by correspondence this time. Yet, there is a remarkable parallel. King Henry II of Castile, like the emperor, had permanent promoters in the College of Cardinals, namely, Pedro de Luna and Robert of Geneva. In addition, he had sent two diplomats to the Papal Curia in January 1378, Álvaro Martínez and Juan Rodríguez. They were given the task of negotiating with Gregory XI the translation and appointment of bishops as well as the appointment of one or two cardinals of Castilian origin. They learned of Urban's election in Ostia on April 10, when they were a short ride from Rome. Thereafter, like Konrad of Veselá, they followed the ecclesiastical crisis closely and remained in Italy until late autumn.

Martínez testified about his legation in 1380 in Medina del Campo, and his deposition is considered by historians to be factual.⁵⁷² The Spaniard reported that when he and his companion obtained a hearing from Urban, they were

⁵⁷⁰ "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 7–8.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., 7–9. Cf. Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 610–611; Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:226; Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 201–202.

⁵⁷² See Seidlmayer, ed., *Die Anfänge*, 265–271. For an assessment, see *ibid.*, 6: "Alvarus Martini, einer der unbefangensten Beobachter an der damaligen Kurie."

not satisfied with the outcome. They learned that the pope had not planned to appoint new cardinals because of other priorities and the sufficiency of the existing College. Around May 23, however, Cardinal Jean de La Grange indicated to the Castilians that Urban did intend to appoint new cardinals after all. They therefore began to negotiate and decided to obtain a pontiff for their cause through Pietro Tebaldeschi. From the old cardinal they received the same recommendation that the imperial envoys had previously received from the pope—the Spaniards were to appeal to their king as soon as possible to send solemn ambassadors to Urban with a new commission if he wished to achieve anything.⁵⁷³ And the parallel with the cause of the emperor did not end there.

When the king's promoter, Robert of Geneva, learned of Tebaldeschi's answer, he wished to speak secretly with Martínez. He called the cardinal of St. Peter's before him a dullard (*idiota*) who was the only member of the Sacred College who was trying to establish Urban's legitimacy. He asked Martínez to go to his king, to inform him of the cardinals' intention (not to recognize Urban), and to urge him not to send new envoys until he had discussed the matter with his friend, the king of France, and together they should decide what to do next. When Martínez, like Konrad of Veselá, refused to go on account of his duties, the cardinal urged him to send his confidant, preferably without letters, or to send a letter without naming names, if he had no such person. Martínez did both. He sent a messenger with a handwritten note (*cedula*) in Castilian without mentioning any names.⁵⁷⁴ On this basis, we can assume that the dean of Vyšehrad followed the same precaution and sent a letter in Czech to the emperor without naming anyone.

It cannot be directly proven that the familiars of Konrad of Veselá and Álvaro Martínez were part of Urban's delegations. It is probable, however, for the reason that the scheming cardinals managed to appoint their own confidant to them. The spectrum of travelling persons was thus quite rich.

The French nobleman Bertrand de Veyrac (*Vayracho*) went to the emperor with Bishop Eckard and the Neapolitan Brancassini. Bishop Galhard of Spoleto announced this to the emperor from Rome on May 14. Bertrand was the brother-in-law of Cardinal Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille, to whose clientele Galhard belonged. The bishop did not conceal his regret that Wenceslas

⁵⁷³ Ibid., 267–268.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., 268–269.

had not been approved, despite the fact that Gregory XI had decided on the approval and all the cardinals had unanimously insisted that the matter be settled. He attributed this to Urban's desire for a new imperial delegation with revised letters of authorization. Galhard recommended Bertrand to the emperor, with the understanding that he would inform him of the death of Gregory XI and the state of the Curia.⁵⁷⁵

More about the dispatch of the French knight to the emperor was written by Cardinal d'Aigrefeuille himself on May 30 from Anagni. He also greatly regretted that, in spite of the efforts of many persons, himself not excluded, Urban did not approve of Wenceslas, and hoped that the reasons for this would be explained to the emperor by the well-informed bishop of Worms. The cardinal, however, refused to rely on Eckard alone. He told the emperor that he would not write to him about the circumstances of Gregory XI's death and the selection of his successor, as he would be informed of everything by his brother-in-law Bertrand, the bearer of the letter, who had once been a courtier of Pope Clement VI, the emperor's favorite. From the cardinal he received a certain message for Charles, which the emperor was to trust.⁵⁷⁶

Adam Easton testified in Rome in November 1379 before the envoy of the king of Aragon that he witnessed Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille appointing his brother-in-law Bertrand to the legation to inform the emperor of the election. He also confessed that he had seen letters from the same cardinal to the German bishops asking them to recommend his brother-in-law to the emperor. Later in Rome, a relative of the bishop of Worms, Konrad Verelehem, is said to have shown them not only to Easton but also to other witnesses. Yet, the Englishman is also said to have seen the letter that Robert of Geneva sent to the emperor about the free election via Bishop Eckard. The latter entrusted it to the care of the aforementioned Konrad Verelehem. And the Oxford theologian had also seen similar letters from Cardinals Borsano, Corsini, and de La Grange.⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁵ Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 121–122, no. 4.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., 125–126, no. 8.

⁵⁷⁷ See Leslie J. MacFarlane, ed., "An English Account of the Election of Urban VI, 1378," *The Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 26 (1953): 75–84, at 85/152–153, as well as the deposition of Bartolomeo, Bishop of Recanati (March 1379, Rome), Gayet, *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 1, Appendix, 106, par. 20: "Scio quod D. de Agrifolio cum magna instantia suplicavit D. N. ut de gratia concederet sibi, quod Bernardus de Bayraco et Petrus de

Easton was obviously trying to prove that the cardinals had initially considered Urban canonically elected. Two of them rejected his interpretation seven years later at Avignon. Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille argued that he had sent his brother-in-law to the emperor to counter the accusation that he was to blame for the delays in proclaiming the approbation. He therefore arranged for Bertrand to join the Neapolitan knight and to deliver a letter to the emperor setting out the right reasons for the delay in Wenceslas's confirmation. At the same time, he ordered his brother-in-law to inform the emperor of the pressure exerted by the Romans on the cardinals at the conclave in case he would be able to speak to the monarch without the Neapolitan knight.⁵⁷⁸

In Avignon, Pietro Corsini was also asked about the truth of Easton's words. He objected to them as well. He testified that he had written the letter announcing the election by order of the pope, who knew him to be well known to the emperor. Secretly, however, he is said to have inserted a handwritten note in the letter, in which he warned the emperor not to believe the contents of the letter because the reality of the situation was different. He promised to provide further details about those differences.⁵⁷⁹ Corsini had a complicated relationship with Urban, and he bore the postponement of Wenceslas's approbation and the fact that he was excluded from the negotiations on the embassy with difficulty. However, we have no further evidence that he was already plotting against Urban in late May, as Robert of Geneva and other radicals were.⁵⁸⁰ Thus, it cannot be ruled out that this was mere pretext and that no note existed.

Noël Valois has already documented that Urban VI sent delegations not only to the Holy Roman Empire, but also to France, the Iberian Peninsula, and England around the turn of May and June 1378 to officially announce the April election and to establish relations. The delegations always included a Neapolitan knight and nobleman appointed by the cardinals. For Urban, relying on his Neapolitan relatives, this was an excellent opportunity to promulgate and reinforce his legitimacy at the imperial and other courts, whether by letters from himself or the cardinals, or through the gift of purple liveries bearing the arms of his family. The scheming cardinals did not take this lightly. Evidence on the

Murles consanguiney sui portarent litteras coronationis sue ad regem Ungarie et Imperatori [Murles actually went to France, D.C.]."

⁵⁷⁸ See Gayet, *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 2, Appendix, 69–70.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., 60. During his deposition, the cardinal asked to be shown the note.

⁵⁸⁰ Cf. Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 147–148.

embassies to France and southern Europe also suggests that their nominees were instructed to agitate secretly against Urban and his legitimacy.⁵⁸¹ Yet, the delegation to the emperor was specific in the way it intensified the crisis in relations between Urban and the cardinals involved and brought division to the imperial legation.

Selected cardinals had long been involved in Gregory XI's negotiations with Charles IV, whether it concerned Wenceslas's election, approbation, or related help in the fight with Florence. Simone da Borsano, Guy de Malesset, Jean de La Grange, Guillaume Noëllet, Pierre de Sortenac, and Pierre Flandrin were probably not as active in their communication with the emperor as were Robert of Geneva, Pietro Corsini, and Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille.⁵⁸² All of them, however, must have been affected by Urban's solitary approach to the question of approbation. The latter trio differed in that they did not openly conceal their disillusionment, or even displeasure, with the pope's action, and therefore also abdicated responsibility to the emperor for the further development of Wenceslas's cause. The exclusion from the proceedings was not only an attack on their dignity and the work they had done, it also weakened their credentials with the emperor.

In this sense, the consistory of May 7 appears to have been a similar milestone in the crisis between Urban and the cardinals to the dispute over the handover of the Castel Sant'Angelo. During the meeting, the cardinals learned that they were to write unusual letters to European rulers about the canonicity of Urban's election, which sparked a new wave of intrigue from the radicals. Immediately after the consistory and the sealing of the letters, the first cardinals began departing for Anagni, among them Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille. The Frenchman was the most prestigious and influential member of the Sacred College and could claim the lion's share of credit for Prignano's election, who therefore trusted the cardinal.⁵⁸³ Nevertheless, Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille was so annoyed by Urban's behavior that he joined the schemers.

It is noteworthy that Wenceslas was proposed for approval on May 7 by all the cardinals, including Robert of Geneva and Jean de La Grange. They must have known that if Urban listened to their recommendation, they would contribute significantly to strengthening his legitimacy. Did they still consider

⁵⁸¹ See page 61–62 above.

⁵⁸² See also Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 186–225.

⁵⁸³ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 43–45, and Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 210–212.

cooperation with him possible? Or did they not dare to threaten the emperor's cause?

In any case, after the postponement of the approbation, the radicals did not give Prignano a second chance and decided to make the most of the situation. As Robert of Geneva secretly told Konrad of Veselá, they planned to settle the approbation only after a new election. The interests of the emperor and his son thus began to play a special role in the escalating crisis between Urban and the cardinals. The pontiff made Wenceslas's approbation hostage to his ambitions and the rebels to their discontent with Prignano. The game was now to see which side would find more sympathy with the emperor.

Urban's Envoys in Prague

Eckard of Dersch, Ludovico Brancassini, and Bertrand de Veyrac left Rome around May 31 and arrived in Prague to see the emperor perhaps at the end of June.⁵⁸⁴ The stay of the legation in Bohemia has been documented only because the correspondence of the cardinals and the intrigues connected with it were later the subject of investigations and the rivalry of the obediences. Our insight into the situation at the Prague court is thus again heavily laden with schism, and it is not easy to grasp the range of topics discussed and the reaction of the emperor. However, two subjects of discussion were made clear. Firstly, there was talk of Urban's election in April, the establishment of relations, and co-operation, and secondly, a demand was made for a new embassy to be sent to the pope to proclaim the approbation. Let us turn our attention first to what Charles had learned of the strained relations at the Curia.

Our reporters are contemporary witnesses who glossed the correspondence delivered to the emperor. Three letters of the cardinals on Urban's election and nine letters on Wenceslas's approbation and the dispatch of the envoys have

⁵⁸⁴ Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 611, estimates the arrival of the envoys in Prague for mid-June. However, he did not know about the correspondence published by Bliemetzrieder. Since Cardinal Corsini wrote to the emperor on May 31 about the departure of the embassy (see Bliemetzrieder, "Der Briefwechsel," 124, no. 6), it is necessary to postpone the estimation of their arrival in Prague. Charles stayed in the Bohemian capital with his son from the middle of May to the end of July.

been preserved. An explanation for such a favorable situation is provided by a contemporary commentary on the whole collection in the Basel codex. In it the anonymous glossator stated that the letters, the originals of which were in the possession of the provost Nikolaus of Riesenburg, clearly prove that Urban was elected canonically, unanimously, and without coercion, and was therefore a true pope.⁵⁸⁵ The correspondence thus clearly served as an instrument of Urbanist propaganda.

The glossator in question also focused his attention specifically on Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille's letter to the emperor of May 30. He remarked that Bertrand de Veyrac, by the cardinal's authority, had communicated only that "the election and coronation of our Pope Urban VI were holy, canonical, and unanimous, and that the pontiff was ready for any favors for the emperor." The monarch, pleased with the good news, is said to have rewarded Bertrand with knighthood in Prague cathedral and many precious gifts. And, according to the glossator, the bishop of Worms gave the same report and spoke, moreover, of solemn envoys to be sent to the pope.⁵⁸⁶

The well-informed glossator—perhaps directly the head of the imperial chancery, Nikolaus of Riesenburg—was evidently an open supporter of Urban. It is therefore noteworthy that the failure of Bertrand's secret mission was confirmed by Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille himself during questioning by investigators in Avignon about his brother-in-law's commission. The cardinal testified that his relative, upon returning from the emperor, told him that the Neapolitan Brancassini "knew how to arrange it" so that Bertrand could not speak secretly to the emperor and inform him of the pressure on the cardi-

⁵⁸⁵ See Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, A IX 8, fol. 84v: "Per has suprascriptas litteras imperatori et regi successive transmissas, quas originaliter habet prepositus Bunnensis alias Camericensis, claret aperte dominum nostrum Urbanum papam VI^{um} canonice concorditer et non per impressionem electum ipsumque esse verum papam in legitima possessione papatus." See also Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 129, note 2.

⁵⁸⁶ See Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, A IX 8, fol. 82v: "Nota quod iste Betrandus, de quo supra est mencio, non aliud retulit virtute huius credencie quam eleccionem et coronacionem domini nostri pape Urbani Sexti sanctam, canonicam et concordem et papam esse dispositum ad quevis grata cesari. Et ob hanc bonam relacionem imperator creavit eundem Betrandum militem in ecclesia Pragensi, precinxit baltheo militari, publice ac multis preciosis encenii honoravit. Nota, episcopus Wormaciensis similem relacionem fecit imperatori super premissis et de nunciis sollempnibus pape mittendis." See also Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 126, note 1, and 139.

nals.⁵⁸⁷ According to the testimony of Konrad of Veselá, however, his chaplain Strnad succeeded. The emperor is said to have received him graciously, as well as the information from Robert of Geneva and the dean's letter, and to have replied to his secret message before witnesses that he wished to remain with the College of Cardinals.⁵⁸⁸

It thus seems that Urban had the upper hand and the intrigues of the malcontents were given only limited space. Because the former courtier of Clement VI, Bertrand de Veyrac, was unable to speak to the emperor in confidence, Charles seems to have received immediate information from the rebels only through the verbal message of a simple cleric, Václav Strnad, and a letter he had passed on. The existence of the note that Pietro Corsini is said to have inserted in his letter is doubtful. Moreover, there are indications that the cardinals' letters were tampered with. A certain Bohemian Carthusian revealed a year later, in the summer of 1379, that his friend, a canon of Prague, had provided him with a copy of Robert of Geneva's letter of April 14 in the imperial chancery, which, according to him, was sent by the cardinal to the emperor and was presented to him "at the appropriate time" (*que sibi fuit presentata tempore congruo*).⁵⁸⁹ We know that Robert's letter was carried to Bohemia by a relative of Eckard of Dersch. The bishop of Worms was certainly aware of the importance of the document for Urban's legitimacy, and he too may have resorted to intrigue in Prague.

On the other hand, the correspondence the emperor received from Rome or Anagni was ambivalent. Although it was later disseminated by Prague Urbanists as evidence of the falsity of the cardinals and Urban's legitimacy, the content of the letters was not black-and-white. Robert of Geneva, despite his positive comments about Prignano, cast a shadow over his election on April 14 when he mentioned that the conclave had met for only one night because the Romans would not agree to a longer delay. Similarly, the cardinals warned at the beginning of the May 8 letter of rumors that might be circulating about the election. And the letters of Pietro Corsini, Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille, and Robert of Geneva on the dispatch of the embassy gave vent to their exaspera-

⁵⁸⁷ Gayet, *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 2, Appendix, 70.

⁵⁸⁸ "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 8–9.

⁵⁸⁹ See Franz Placidus Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Eine von den Kreisen des Hofes Kaiser Karls IV. inspirierte Verteidigung der Wahl Urbans VI. (1379)," *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Deutschen in Böhmen* 47 (1908/1909): 375–405, at 393.

tion at Urban's conduct on the question of approbation. The emperor learned that its promulgation was already imminent in the time of Gregory XI and that all the cardinals had recommended to Urban on May 7 that the whole matter be settled to the emperor's satisfaction, but the pontiff had failed to do so.

The bishop of Worms was tasked with defending the pope's actions. His role was to explain the postponement of the approbation to the emperor and persuade him to send a new embassy to Rome. When Eckard of Dersch and his companions addressed Urban's willingness to grant the emperor any favors, as noted by the glossator of the Basel manuscript, they could assure the emperor—like the papal envoys who visited the king of Castile—that the pope intended to grant ecclesiastical benefices exclusively to his subjects, not to foreigners.⁵⁹⁰ The national aspect of benefice distribution was a matter to which the emperor had long devoted attention.⁵⁹¹

However, the pope's generosity was not the only strategy employed to sway Charles. Konrad of Veselá testified that Urban had instructed the bishop of Worms to explain the "miracle" of his April election to the emperor.⁵⁹² It was widely known that the conclave on Italian soil had been made possible by the death of the Avignon pope in Rome after many decades. The Romans and the spirituels interpreted Gregory's demise as divine intervention, intended to prevent the Curia from returning to Avignon.⁵⁹³ Additionally, there was talk in Rome that the unexpected selection of the Italian pope miraculously

⁵⁹⁰ For details regarding the audience of Urban's envoys with King Henry of Castile in Córdoba, see "P. López de Ayala, Crónica del rey don Enrique, segundo de Castilla," in *Crónicas de los reyes de Castilla desde don Alfonso et Sabio hasta los Católicos don Fernando y doña Isabel*, vol. 2, ed. Cayetano Rosell (Madrid: M. Rivadeneira, 1877), 1–38, at 34. Cf. Seidlmaier, *Die Anfänge*, 29–30.

⁵⁹¹ See Jaroslav Eršík, "Národnostní aspekty Karlovych benefičiární politiky [Nationality Aspects of Charles's Benefice Policy]," in *Karolus Quartus. Sborník vědeckých prací o době, osobnosti a díle českého krále a římského císaře Karla IV.* [Karolus Quartus. A Volume of Scholarly Works on the Time, Personality and Work of the Bohemian King and Roman Emperor Charles IV], ed. Václav Vaněček (Prague: Karlova universita, 1984), 173–182.

⁵⁹² "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 10: "Et recepit dictum episcopum per manum et deduxit eum extra cameram et dixit sibi multa, que deberet dicere imperatori, quomodo miraculose, ut dicebat, fuisse electus."

⁵⁹³ See note 112 above.

resulted from disputes among the ultramontanes, who, during their deliberations, could not agree on a French candidate from their own ranks.⁵⁹⁴

The emperor was receptive to the “miraculous” evidence of divine favor. The unexpected deaths that served as signs of Charles’s own “chosenness” naturally resonated with his worldview. In his autobiography *Vita Caroli*, he described at length how, in his youth, the death of the sinful dauphin of Vienne was miraculously foretold to him in a dream. Later, during Charles’s struggle for the German throne, the sudden deaths of his political opponents only reinforced his belief in his own singularity.⁵⁹⁵ According to Martin Bauch, the decisive influence on Charles’s consciousness of his own exceptionalism may have been his meeting with the mystic Christina Ebner, prioress of the Dominican convent in Engelthal, in June 1350. Although the content of their conversation is not directly documented, it likely centered on visions the mystic received in which Christ guaranteed His favor to Charles.⁵⁹⁶

As long as the visionaries adhered to orthodoxy and respected the institutions of the Church, Charles IV was sympathetic to them and their zeal. Several facts support this assumption. The emperor himself donated a manuscript containing the visions of St. Hildegard of Bingen, a twelfth-century mystic, to the Prague chapter.⁵⁹⁷ What is decisive for us, however, is that the emperor’s predilection for revelations from extraordinary women was rein-

⁵⁹⁴ See the invective *Quid agitis*, Bliemetzrieder, ed., “Raimund von Capua,” 258. Cf. also “Factum Iacobi de Ceva,” 489–490.

⁵⁹⁵ See *Karoli IV Imp. Rom. Vita ab eo ipso conscripta*, ed. Kurt Pfisterer and Walther Bulst, *Editiones Heidelbergenses* 16 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1950), 22–23. Cf. Seibt, *Karl IV*, 124–128; idem, “Karl IV. – das Charisma der Auserwählung,” in *Virtuosen der Macht. Herrschaft und Charisma von Perikles bis Mao*, ed. Wilfried Nippel (Munich: Beck, 2000), 89–100; Liebhart, “Kaiser Karl IV.,” 102 and 106; Monnet, *Charles IV*, 9–11.

⁵⁹⁶ See Martin Bauch, “Nicht heilig, aber auserwählt: Spezifik und Dynamik eines sakralen Herrschaftsstils Kaiser Karls IV.,” in *Sakralität und Devianz: Konstruktionen, Normen, Praxis* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2015), 85–104, esp. 98–99; idem, *Divina favente clementia. Auserwählung, Frömmigkeit und Heilsvermittlung in der Herrschaftspraxis Kaiser Karls IV.*, Forschungen zur Kaiser- und Papstgeschichte des Mittelalters 36 (Cologne–Weimar–Vienna: Böhlau, 2015), 63–70.

⁵⁹⁷ Zdeňka Hledíková, “Karel IV. a církev [Charles IV and the Church],” in eadem, *Svět české středověké církve* [The World of the Czech Medieval Church] (Prague: Argo, 2010), 163–190, at 179 (first published in *Karolus Quartus. Sborník vědeckých prací o době, osobnosti a díle českého krále a římského císaře Karla IV.* [Karolus Quartus. A Volume of Scholarly Works on the Time, Personality, and Work of the Bohemian King and Roman Emperor Charles IV], ed. Václav Vaněček (Prague: Charles University, 1984), 137–155).

forced by Eckard of Dersch after his return from Rome. The bishop brought him a copy of *Revelationes* by Birgitta of Sweden from the Eternal City.⁵⁹⁸ This was no coincidence but likely another way to convince the pious emperor of the supernatural origin of Urban's election and its legitimacy.

The emperor had been in contact with admirers of the famous visionary for some time. If we uncritically accept the extensive corpus of her revelations compiled by Alfonso Pecha in the 1380s, we might even argue that Charles knew Birgitta personally and that they corresponded.

The German historian Wilhelm Liebhart identified four allusions to the emperor within the *Revelationes* and related them to his biography where possible. The first two, dating to the 1340s, refer to the emperor in general terms. In these, Christ invites Birgitta to travel to Rome to meet both the pope and the emperor. The third reference, found in the fourth and eighth books of the *Revelationes*, suggests that these visions came to fruition when Birgitta met Charles IV in Italy and urged him to support reform. Liebhart places this meeting in early April 1355, when the monarch was near Rome following his imperial coronation. The final vision, recorded in the eighth book, depicts Christ instructing Birgitta to write a letter to the emperor, encouraging him to

⁵⁹⁸ See the deposition of Magnus Petri at Birgitta's canonization trial, Carl Gustaf Unhagen, ed., "Une source du prologue (Chap. 1) aux *Revelations de sainte Brigitte* par le cardinal Jean de Turrecremata," *Eranos* 58 (1960): 214–226, at 225: "Plures principes et nobiles inibi existentes et alii suos nuncios mittentes pro libris *Revelationum* habendis, quos, postquam eos instanter petiverant, in propriis suis sumptibus cum exquisita diligentia scribi fecerunt. Inter quos notabiliter erant isti infra scripti: dominus episcopus Wormaciensis fecit unum librum scribi Romae, quem deportavit ad imperatorem." Pavlína Rychterová, "The *Revelations of St Birgitta in the Holy Roman Empire*," in *A Companion to Birgitta of Sweden: And Her Legacy in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Maria Husabø Oen, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 89 (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2019), 247–268, at 247–248, suggests that this could be the manuscript of the first redaction of *Revelationes* now held in Warsaw. However, the prevailing view in the literature is that this codex, which belonged to Queen Hedwig of Poland, was acquired in Rome by a student of the University of Prague (see again Unhagen, ed., "Une source," 225) and subsequently presented to the queen by Matthew of Cracow, a theologian at the University of Prague. See Justyna Łuczyńska, "The Neapolitan Manuscript at the Court of Queen Hedwig of Anjou. The *Revelationes Sanctae Birgitae* (ca. 1377) in the National Library in Warsaw, sign. II 3310," in *Cultural Transfer. Umělecká výměna mezi Itálií a střední Evropou* [Art Exchange between Italy and Central Europe], ed. Magdaléna Nová and Marie Opatrná (Prague: Univerzita Karlova v Praze, Katolická teologická fakulta, 2014), 43–48. Cf. also Zutshi, "Adam Eston," 40–41.

review the books she had written based on her visions, evaluate their content, and advocate for the work of God.⁵⁹⁹

However, other historians are skeptical that Charles IV was in direct contact with Birgitta during her lifetime.⁶⁰⁰ After her death, however, the emperor's interest in her legacy is well documented. At the request of Charles IV, King Albert of Sweden, and his barons, Gregory XI appointed the first canonization commission in Avignon in May 1376.⁶⁰¹ Charles addressed the pope again by letter from Tangermünde on September 9, 1377. In the letter, he mentioned being informed by trustworthy individuals about the miracles associated with prayers made to Birgitta and the pilgrimages to her tomb. He therefore asked the pontiff to proceed as soon as possible with her canonization. It is noteworthy, however, that the monarch made no mention of Birgitta's visions.⁶⁰² Alfonso Pecha submitted the first comprehensive redaction of Birgitta's *Revelationes*—comprising seven books with a preface defending their orthodoxy—to the canonization commission as early as March 1377.⁶⁰³

Who informed Charles IV in September about the miracles of the deceased saint and asked for his support is obvious. It was the papal nuncio Galhard, the bishop of Spoleto, who was staying with the emperor at the time to negotiate Wenceslas's approbation. He was the first to conduct an investigation into Birgitta's life and her miraculous deeds and was involved in the first proposal for Birgitta's canonization, which was submitted to the pope on May 29, 1377.⁶⁰⁴

⁵⁹⁹ Wilhelm Liebhart, "Kaiser Karl IV., Birgitta von Schweden und die Reform der Kirche," in *Bayern, Schwaben und das Reich. Festschrift für Pankraz Fried zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. Peter Fassl, Wilhelm Liebhart, and Pfister Doris (Augsburg: Wißner-Verlag, 2007), 93–110, the excerpts from *Revelationes* see at 107–108.

⁶⁰⁰ See Bridget Morris, *St Birgitta of Sweden* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1999), 116; Pavlína Rychterová, "Die Rezeption der Schriften der hl. Brigitta von Schweden in Böhmen in der 2. Hälfte des 14. und im 15. Jahrhundert," in *The Development of Literate Mentalities in East Central Europe*, ed. Anna Adamska and Marco Mostert, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy 9 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 397–414, at 399; Bauch, *Divina favente clementia*, 162–163.

⁶⁰¹ Hutchison, "Adam Easton," 142.

⁶⁰² *Acta et Processus*, 53. Cf. Rychterová, "The Revelations," 248.

⁶⁰³ Rychterová, *Die Offenbarungen*, 70–72.

⁶⁰⁴ Tore S. Nyberg, "The Canonization Process of St. Birgitta of Sweden," in *Procès de canonisation au Moyen Âge/ Medieval Canonization Processes*, ed. Gábor Klaniczay (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2004), 67–85, at 69 and 78.

We do not know how Gregory received the emperor's letter, but Birgitta's admirers spared no gratitude. In addition to Bishop Eckard obtaining a copy of the *Revelationes* for Charles from Alfonso Pecha, another of Birgitta's admirers, Adam Easton, financially supported Eckard's return journey to the imperial court.⁶⁰⁵

Gregory's death and the election of a new pope provided a new opportunity for Alfonso of Jaén to advance Birgitta's canonization. The Spaniard had been Cardinal Pedro de Luna's confessor, so he was well informed about the mood in the Sacred College during the novena. He reportedly sent Birgitta's daughter Catherine to Prignano before the conclave to arrange her mother's canonization with him.⁶⁰⁶ More significantly, however, after his coronation, Urban chose as one of his closest lay advisers the count of Nola, Nicola Orsini, who was not only Alfonso's "spiritual friend" but had also been a close associate of Birgitta herself.⁶⁰⁷ According to Orsini's own testimony, he interpreted during her conversation with Urban V, in which the visionary vainly persuaded the pontiff to remain in Italy.⁶⁰⁸ It also appears from the *Tractatus de summis pontificibus* that he was commissioned to deliver at least two of Birgitta's visions to Gregory XI, urging him to leave Avignon.⁶⁰⁹

Both Alfonso Pecha and the count of Nola were thus highly motivated to reassure Urban, after his controversial election, that the pontiff, intending to reform the Church from Rome, had divine support, as attested by the visions of Birgitta of Sweden. Urban himself reinforced the idea of his supernatural selection by resolving to repay God through Church reform—a goal he openly declared even in the courts of sovereigns. In Córdoba, papal envoys also informed the Castilian king that Urban intended to thoroughly reform

⁶⁰⁵ See MacFarlane, ed., "An English Account," 85. Cf. Zutshi, "Adam Easton," 41.

⁶⁰⁶ See Valois, *La France*, 1:31. Cf. Michael Seidlmaier, "Ein Gehilfe der hl. Birgitta von Schweden: Alfons von Jaen," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 50 (1930): 1-18, at 15, note 50.

⁶⁰⁷ Seidlmaier, "Ein Gehilfe der hl. Birgitta," 15, note 47; Marco Vendittelli, "Orsini, Nicola," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 79 (2013): [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/nicola-orsini_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/nicola-orsini_(Dizionario-Biografico)/) (accessed Oct. 2, 2024); Luigi Tufano, "Lords Facing Death: The Choices of the Orsini, Counts of Nola," in *The Various Models of Lordship in Europe between the Ninth and Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. Antonio Antonetti and Riccardo Berardi (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2023), 320-348, at 327-328.

⁶⁰⁸ Seidlmaier, "Ein Gehilfe der hl. Birgitta," 7, note 17.

⁶⁰⁹ See *St. Bridget's Revelations to the Popes*, 47-52. Cf. Morris, *St Birgitta of Sweden*, 116-117.

the Curia and clergy,⁶¹⁰ and there is no reason to believe it was any different in Prague, as the emperor was indeed interested in Church reform.⁶¹¹

As early as 1359, Charles IV had ordered the bishops at the diet of Mainz to correct their moral failings, reproaching the clergy for their secular lifestyles and negligence.⁶¹² He also extended his protection to the reformist Prague preacher Milíč of Kroměříž, an ascetic and apocalyptic visionary who advocated in Rome with Urban V for a general council to address moral correction. Milíč even travelled to Avignon, where he died in 1374.⁶¹³ Neither Gregory XI nor the cardinals were indifferent to the idea of a reform assembly; two years later, they invited the emperor and his son to Avignon for a quasi-council of prominent Christian princes to discuss “good reform” in light of the conflicts and tribulations in the world.⁶¹⁴

This initiative is also noteworthy because, just a few weeks later, in June 1376, the mystic Catherine of Siena travelled to Avignon to meet Gregory XI. Her aim was to persuade him to support ecclesiastical reform, the return of the papacy to Rome, a crusade to the Holy Land, and peace in Italy.⁶¹⁵ The Sienese visionary often approached prominent figures of her time, seeking to win them over to her causes and influence their opinions. Her letters to the emperor are not extant, but she had the opportunity to discuss her visions with envoys of the Luxembourg monarchs who arrived in Avignon in early July 1376 to seek approval for Wenceslas. The delegation was led by Bishop Eckard of Dersch.⁶¹⁶

⁶¹⁰ See “P. López de Ayala, Crónica,” 34. Cf. Seidlmaier, *Die Anfänge*, 29–30.

⁶¹¹ The emperor’s positive attitude to Church reform was discussed by Hledíková, “Karel IV. a církev,” 179–181.

⁶¹² *Regesta Imperii*, vol. 8, nos. 2919, 2920.

⁶¹³ Ludwig Vones, *Urban V. (1362–1370). Kirchenreform zwischen Kardinalkollegium, Kurie und Klientel, Päpste und Papsttum* 28 (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1998), 52; Peter C. A. Morée, *Preaching in Fourteenth-Century Bohemia. The Life and Ideas of Milicius de Chremisir († 1374) and His Significance in the Historiography of Bohemia* (Heršpice: EMAN, 1999), 64–75; Olga Kalahsnikova, “Apocalypticism and Theology of Church Moral Reform in Bohemia under Charles IV. The Case of Cola di Rienzo and Milíč of Kromeříž,” in *Fiatal kutatók és doktoranduszok X. nemzetközi jubileumi teológus-konferenciájának tanulmánykötete* [Volume of the 10th Jubilee Conference of Junior Theologians and Doctoral Students] (Budapest: National Association of Doctoral Students, 2020), 267–281, at 277–278.

⁶¹⁴ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:97/8–12, no. 62.

⁶¹⁵ Luongo, *The Saintly Politics*, 172–173.

⁶¹⁶ See page 133 above.

So, two years later, when the bishop of Worms—likely with the support of Birgitta of Sweden's reforming visions—urged the emperor in Prague to advocate for the work of God and to consolidate the “miracle” of the unexpected election of an Italian reformist pope by sending a solemn embassy, the monarch could not remain indifferent.

At the same time, however, Charles knew that some of the cardinals had strained relations with Urban and that the pontiff's actions had split Wenceslas's delegation. In these circumstances, fully complying with Urban and sending higher-ranking envoys to secure the approbation would have been like adding fuel to the fire of a conflict whose nature and extent were not yet fully clear.

It must have also been irritating for the emperor that Urban blackmailed him with his demand, in a situation where his predecessor had cashed in a considerable amount of money for the publication of the Bull of Approbation. When Gregory XI had pressed the emperor two years earlier, he had failed. Although the monarch showed good will and, despite the opposition of some of the electors, sent the high nobility to Avignon with his diplomats, it was only an empty gesture.⁶¹⁷ At the moment when Wenceslas's approbation actually came on the agenda, no dignitaries came to Rome to see Gregory XI. According to Konrad of Veselá, this was because of the dangers of travel.⁶¹⁸ Whether this was more of a pretext or an objective reason cannot be known. The fact is that there was fighting in upper and central Italy at the time, just as there was in Swabia and central German lands.⁶¹⁹ And as the situation had not greatly improved by the end of June and the beginning of July 1378, the emperor was able to make excuses for the wars even before Urban's envoys.

Nothing, however, prevented the monarch from giving at least the appearance that he would consider the pope's request. Charles knew that a diet (*Hoftag*) would be meeting in Nuremberg in a few weeks, so he could have asked Urban's envoys for patience, saying that he would consult both clergy and laity about the delegation.⁶²⁰ This would give him time to get his bearings

⁶¹⁷ See pages 130–131 above.

⁶¹⁸ “Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá,” 10.

⁶¹⁹ The wartime clashes in Germany at this time are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 below.

⁶²⁰ In Würzburg on June 30, 1378, imperial envoys announced the arrival of King Wenceslas in Nuremberg for negotiations with the association of Swabian imperial cities, see *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:224, note 2.

in the confusing situation at the Curia. From Prague, Urban's envoys probably headed for Hungary.⁶²¹ Even Charles apparently did not delay and consulted the Hungarian king about the disturbing news as well as the possibilities of mediation between the parties.⁶²² Louis of Hungary had been involved in Italian politics for a long time because of his family ties to Naples and his commercial interests in the Adriatic, so it was natural for the emperor to seek further information from him about the opaque situation at the Papal Curia.

It was thus most advantageous for the emperor to take note of the conflicting reports about Urban's election and conduct, to express his favor to both the pontiff and the College of Cardinals, and to wait to see what their next steps would be. Urban promised to be gracious to Charles, and the emperor gave him an opportunity to prove it. In June the important imperial prince-bishopric of Liège became vacant, and at the end of July Charles advised Urban to grant a provision to Eustace de Rochefort, after having himself recognized him as a secular ruler.⁶²³ The rebels in turn promised to inform Charles thoroughly of their intentions. The conspiring cardinals themselves knew how much the emperor cared about Wenceslas's approbation and that Urban had only postponed it. They thus began to play for time. Prignano, however, proved to be the nimbler strategist.

The Promulgation of the Approbation in Tivoli

With the departure of Bishop Eckard and the two knights, the cause of Wenceslas's approbation did not fall into oblivion in Rome. On the contrary, it

⁶²¹ See note 577 above.

⁶²² See *Theoderici de Nyem de scismate libri tres*, 31–32: “Et quia imperator et Lodewicus rex prefati scrutinium inter se prius habuerunt, si et quomodo se interponere possent inter partes de papatu huiusmodi tunc discrepantes, ne dictum scisma vires assumeret.”

⁶²³ Charles's request is recorded by Émile Schoolmeesters, “L'élection d'Eustache Persand de Rochefort et la nomination d'Arnould de Hornes comme prince-évêque de Liège en 1378,” *Bulletin de la Société des Bibliophiles liégeois* 9 (1910): 191–237, at 224, no. 5. The emperor undoubtedly had references from Duke Wenceslas, as part of Brabant was within the diocese of Liège. Cf. Fritz Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas à la veille de la période bourguignonne (1356–1384): contribution à l'histoire politique et diplomatique de l'Europe occidentale dans la seconde moitié du XIV^e siècle* (Brussels: Le presses de Belgique, 1947), 370–371; Fantysová-Matějková, *Wenceslas de Bohême*, 517.

was reawakened to new life. According to the deposition of Angelo, bishop of Pesaro, the cardinals who went successively to Anagni during May and June gave full authority to their colleagues who remained in Rome to negotiate with Urban on the two most pressing political issues—the approbation of the emperor's son and the war with Florence. Among those who remained in Rome, the bishop mentioned, besides the four Italians, Pedro de Luna and Bertrand Lagier, and they all decided that Urban should approve Wenceslas and invite him to accept the imperial diadem.⁶²⁴

This decision was made during the first half of June, as Lagier left for Anagni then or shortly thereafter.⁶²⁵ Although we know nothing for certain of the circumstances, it is reasonable to suppose that the cardinals were thus seeking to strengthen Urban's authority on the eve of his departure for Anagni, which was then still in question.⁶²⁶ Both the Italian cardinals and Pedro de Luna and probably Bertrand Lagier were still interested in sparking off the threatened rupture between the pope and the ultramontanes.⁶²⁷ Note also that the radical Robert of Geneva, who left Rome at about the same time as Pedro de Luna, that is, not until around June 24, did not participate in the cardinals' decision on the approbation (the bishop did not mention him). It was not in his interest.⁶²⁸ The scheming cardinal was more focused on getting Urban out of the power of the Romans and making him go to Anagni.⁶²⁹

However, at the urging of his faithful, the pontiff decided to go to Tivoli at the end of June, where he began to feel the growing signs of a revolt by the ultramontane cardinals. The truth came out on July 21, when Urban learned of the ultramontanes' sealed letter of the previous day, in which they described his election as forced and urged the Italian cardinals to go to Anagni within five days to discuss the next course of action.⁶³⁰ At a critical moment in the

⁶²⁴ Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 2:785 [1263].

⁶²⁵ Valois, *La France*, 1:74.

⁶²⁶ Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 216 and 220–221, writes about the preliminary proceedings. He also admits that this was a tactical move to win the Roman king for Urban under the pressure of swelling dissension.

⁶²⁷ See Seidlmayer, *Die Anfänge*, 20.

⁶²⁸ I date the departure of the cardinals according to Valois, *La France*, 1:74. However, according to the deposition of Bishop Menéndez of Córdoba, Robert of Geneva left as early as June 17, and Lagier (with Pedro de Luna) afterwards, see Seidlmayer, *Die Anfänge*, 279.

⁶²⁹ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 152.

⁶³⁰ See page 69 above.

nascent schism, Wenceslas's approbation came to the fore again. Konrad of Veselá testified to it.

After the conflict with Urban, the dean left Rome for the cardinals in Anagni. When the ultramontanes indirectly called on the pope to abdicate on July 20, Urban began to look for the emperor's envoy and told him to come to Tivoli to see him, as he had decided to approve Wenceslas. The dean sought the advice of Robert of Geneva, who talked him out of going to Urban. He argued that the cardinals would soon depose him according to law and proceed to re-elect the pontiff, who would solemnly announce the approbation. Konrad countered that there were many Bohemians in Tivoli, along with Archbishop Peter of Magdeburg, or his companion Konrad of Geisenheim, and he feared that if Urban approved of Wenceslas only in their presence the emperor would resent him. When he assured the cardinal that he would not recognize the approbation by Prignano's will and would await the actions of the College, Robert allowed him a brief visit.⁶³¹

Upon his arrival at Tivoli, Konrad of Veselá spoke to Urban in the presence of Cardinal Corsini. The pope apologized to the dean for his harsh words in Rome and told him that he was ready to make the approbation. He then persuaded him secretly in Corsini's presence to go with Archbishop Peter of Magdeburg to the emperor and inform him not only of the approbation but also of the revolt of the cardinals. As he had done in Rome, Konrad again told Urban that he dared not leave before the approbation was settled. The pope tried to explain to him that he could not solemnly proclaim it without the cardinals or the appropriate documents. When the dean continued to resist, he urged him to return to Anagni and arrange with the cardinals who were in charge of the cause to send the necessary documents to Tivoli. Konrad feared that the cardinals would not believe him and wanted Urban to urge them to do so himself, but the latter refused because he had neither bull nor seal. The pope therefore commissioned Cardinal Corsini to write to Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille in his stead. Urban told the ultramontanes to provide the relevant documents and to come to Tivoli, as he had news from envoys returning from the emperor, upon whose arrival he intended to settle the matter of the Roman king immediately. The pontiff wished to see the letter before it was sealed.⁶³²

⁶³¹ "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 10.

⁶³² *Ibid.*, 10–11.

When Robert of Geneva and Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille saw the message, they delayed their reply for several days. Robert again indicated to Konrad that the cardinals were not interested in having Urban's approbation because the new pope would take care of it. However, the dean of Vyšehrad insisted on returning to Tivoli. He continued to fear the wrath of the emperor because of the loan he had paid and also because his enemies were still with Urban. He assured Robert that he would not recognize the possible approbation and that he would return to the cardinals. Again, this helped and Konrad headed to Tivoli with Cardinal d'Aigrefeuille's reply. The Frenchman informed Corsini that, after the commissioners at the consistory in Rome had communicated everything necessary about the approbation, the camerlengo, Pierre de Cros, had deposited the requested documents in the archives of the Apostolic Chamber and sent them to Avignon with other matters. When Urban read this, he was disillusioned that the cardinals would dare to oppose the emperor and block his cause. In view of the tense situation, therefore, he ordered Konrad to remain in Tivoli.⁶³³

The testimony of the dean of Vyšehrad is again supported by contemporary correspondence, which provides further details. Cardinal Corsini kept the emperor informed of the latest news, and another of his letters shows that Konrad of Veselá first arrived in Tivoli no later than July 21, when the revolt of the ultramontanes became known. At that time, Urban, in Konrad's presence, verbally approved Wenceslas as king of the Romans; Cardinals Borsano and Corsini were also present, together with the imperial Secretary Dietrich Damerow of Cracow. For the time being, however, it was kept secret, because Urban wanted to perform the act publicly and solemnly with respect to the prestige of the Church and the emperor. Corsini eagerly announced everything to Charles on July 22, with the understanding that Secretary Dietrich Damerow, the bearer of the letter, would also tell him of the letters that he was to send in favor of the cardinal, in accordance with what had been ordered at the time of the late Gregory XI.⁶³⁴

⁶³³ Ibid., 11–12.

⁶³⁴ Blemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 126–127, no. 9. At the end comes a vague formulation: "Dominus Theode[ricus] predictus [...] eciam dicet de litteris quas habetis mittere iuxta ordinata tempora pro me domini pape Gregorii." The manuscript Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, A IX 8, fol. 83r, does indeed read "tempora"; I suggest reading "tempore."

There was a close connection between the ultramontane declaration of July 20 and the preliminary execution of Wenceslas's approbation a day later. When Urban urged the dean of Vyšehrad to go with the archbishop of Magdeburg to inform the emperor of both the approbation and the rebellion, he clearly wished Charles to begin to view the delays in inviting his son to Rome through the prism of the cardinal's revolt. This is directly attested by a hitherto unknown letter of Urban to the emperor preserved in the Bern collection, written between July 21 and 26.⁶³⁵

Urban wrote to Charles IV that he had complied with his wishes, decided to approve Wenceslas, and informed the cardinals, no doubt alluding to the meeting of July 21. He pointed out, however, that the matter would already be settled if the solemn promulgation of the approbation could be made. The ceremony was, however, hampered by the fact that the necessary credentials and documents had been maliciously concealed and continued to be withheld, which, as Urban explicitly stated, was also known to the emperor's procurator, undoubtedly Konrad of Veselá. Urban therefore continued to expect Charles to send suitable envoys with a new letter of authorization addressed to him. He added that, if the emperor did not delay in delivering the necessary documents, the whole matter would be concluded as soon as possible in the interests of both, and all those who wished to oppose the approbation would be silenced.⁶³⁶

Then the pontiff wrote about the causes of his difficulties. He recommended them to the emperor's attention, saying that he had no other defender and protector on earth besides God and the saints. He informed him that perverse men had arisen who loved only themselves—false witnesses, who were fleeing from the ecclesiastical reform, because he, Urban, wished to exterminate the vices afflicting the Church, as was his pastoral duty. He further noted that these malefactors found their like in depraved manners and, "bound by the noose of schism," tried to tear his honor away by false declarations—he probably meant the letter of the cardinals of July 20. Urban urged the emperor to pay no attention to their "barking" if it reached him, but to banish its originators as men of ill will, and to be firm in this. More was to be told to the emperor

⁶³⁵ See Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 220, fol. 121r–v, and no. 2 in the Appendix below.

⁶³⁶ See pages 291–292 below.

by Peter, archbishop of Magdeburg, whom Urban described as the emperor's faithful servant at the Curia and a zealot.⁶³⁷

Although the letter is preserved in a poor-quality copy from the fifteenth century, this does not detract from its importance. It represents the first known correspondence between the two heads of Western Christendom. It is also probably the earliest explicit evidence to date that the pope himself justified the rebellion of the cardinals by their unwillingness to accept his reformist program. Since his words about the cardinals' selfish love and rejection of reform are strikingly reminiscent of the formulations of Catherine of Siena, Urban was probably already under her influence at this time.⁶³⁸ Yet, the letter also eloquently testifies that from the very beginning of the crisis the threatened pontiff sought support primarily from the emperor.⁶³⁹

It is characteristic of Urban's ambitions that, despite the difficult situation, he continued to make the promulgation of the approbation conditional on the arrival of an imperial delegation with a new mandate. Taking advantage of the situation, he justified his new demand on the grounds of the malice of the cardinals who had denied him access to official documents. History, however, ran more rapidly than the pontiff could have imagined. With a gap of only five days, he reconsidered his position and solemnly approved Wenceslas at a public consistory as early as July 26, even though there was certainly no new imperial embassy in Tivoli.⁶⁴⁰ Whether the news from the envoys sent to the emperor played a role in this cannot be determined. Urban used this news to

⁶³⁷ Ibid., 292–293.

⁶³⁸ See Catherine's letter to Urban of September 18, 1378, no. 305: *The letters of Catherine*, 3:216: "But if I look at where you are, I see there—in the place that belongs to you, Christ on earth—the hell of sin upon sin, with the poison of selfish love. And this selfish love has moved these people to raise their heads against you because your holiness was unwilling to tolerate their living in such wretchedness. But don't let that make you give in." Cf. Lützelschwab, "Sainte Catherine," 200 and 206–207.

⁶³⁹ Stacul, *Il cardinale*, 101–103, hypothesizes that Archbishop Pileo da Prata returned from Flanders to the Papal Curia in late June 1378 and then urged Urban to accommodate the emperor, with whom he may have been in contact, in the approbation. There is, however, no support in the sources for such a hypothesis.

⁶⁴⁰ This was explicitly mentioned in a letter to the representatives of the University of Paris by Marsilius of Inghen, see *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, 3:555: "Confirmavit [i.e. Urban VI, D.C.] electionem factam de rege Almanorum per electores, et ipsum pronunciavit futurum imperatorem, quamvis ex parte imperatoris nulli ambassiatores pro illo fuerint missi."

encourage the ultramontanes to come to Tivoli, but that may have been the reason it was nothing more than a trap.⁶⁴¹

Urban acted in an extremely difficult but not hopeless situation. The essence of the ceremony is expressed in the certificate of approval, to which Urban attached a bull, which he had re-made.⁶⁴² In the disposition, the pontiff announced that, after acquainting himself with the manners and abilities of Wenceslas, and after careful consultation with the cardinals, he accepted him as a special son of the Church and granted him favor and grace, and at the same time appointed him king of the Romans, declaring him fit to receive the imperial dignity at the proper time and place.⁶⁴³

From this it is clear that, from a formal point of view, the pontiff needed official documents and the presence of important persons to carry out the approbation, especially in order to get acquainted with Wenceslas and the circumstances of his election in a situation where the king was not personally present at the Curia. Urban, however, found a way to dispense with the imperial elites and the documents in his time of need. Cardinals, bishops, clerics, and knights are mentioned among the participants in the consistory, including Konrad of Veselá and his companions. Bishop Galhard of Spoleto was also present and had a special role. He was asked to describe "how he had taken the oaths and many necessary things about the Bohemian king and how he had seen him, otherwise the matter would not have been settled." He added

⁶⁴¹ It is not known when the envoys returned. Perhaps it was at the end of August, when Urban was already in Rome, or later. A relative of the bishop of Worms, Konrad Verelehem, showed copies of letters sent by Cardinal Guillaume d'Aigreufeille to the German bishops upon his return from the emperor to Adam Easton, see MacFarlane, "An English Account," 85.

⁶⁴² "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 12.

⁶⁴³ *Monumenta Vaticana*, 5:30–32, no. 26, at 31. Editor Kamil Krofta found (see *ibid.*, 32) that the bull has been preserved in four copies, one of which largely coincides with the text of the approbation bull later issued by Clement VII. The main difference between the bulls of the two popes is that Urban insisted on the right of the pope to grant consent to the execution of the royal election and to judge the suitability of the elect for the imperial coronation. Clement's bull omits the former and assumes only the latter. See *idem*, "K papežské approbaci volby Václava IV. [On the Papal Approbation of the Election of Wenceslas IV]," *Český časopis historický* 7 (1901): 453–456, esp. 456. Following in Krofta's footsteps, the relationship between the two documents and their terminology was discussed by Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 166–167, 172 and 177, who interprets the described difference between the bulls (*ibid.*, 177) to mean that Clement knew that the documents concerning the pope's approval of the election were antedated forgeries and took this into account, whereas this knowledge cannot be assumed with certainty in the case of Urban.

that the pope's influential adviser Count Nicola Orsini of Nola also did much useful work.⁶⁴⁴ The bishop himself recounted this to the emperor, no doubt to point out his and Orsini's merits in an extraordinary situation in which the two devotees of St. Birgitta were substituting for important witnesses and documents.

Although Galhard's presence played an important role in the ceremony, the presence of the cardinals was decisive. Urban felt himself to be sovereign in his actions and made this clear, but he did not go so far as to deny the act its undisputed legitimacy by enacting it without the usual consultation with the cardinals. With regard to Tebaldeschi's probable incapacity and the conflict with the ultramontanes, he depended mainly on the active collaboration of Cardinals Orsini, Borsano, and Corsini.⁶⁴⁵ The involvement of the Florentine cardinal was particularly important, as he was historically familiar with the whole affair and his presence added weight to the ceremony. Urban knew, however, that it was on July 26 that the deadline the ultramontanes had given the Italians to withdraw from Tivoli expired. And since he had an interest both in winning the favor of the Luxembourg monarchs and in negotiating with the rebels for a general council through the Italian cardinals who were preparing to leave, he was forced to act.⁶⁴⁶

The approbation issue once again played a remarkable role in the rupture between Urban and the cardinals. In the ensuing conflict with the ultramontanes, the pope decided to lean on the emperor and his son, realizing that without the promulgation of the approbation he would hardly win their favor. The Italian cardinals went along with Urban because it was to their advantage. They thus retained Prignano's confidence while also emphasizing their merits before the emperor. This is clearly evidenced by Corsini's other letters, in which he announced to both Charles and Wenceslas the promulgation of

⁶⁴⁴ See Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 128–129, no. 12, esp.: "Dixi domino nostro pape et dominis cardinalibus, qui presentes erant, qualiter recepi iuramenta et multa que erant necessaria de domino Rege Boemie serenitatis vestre et qualiter videram eum, quia alias negocium non esset expeditum." In the manuscript, the letter is addressed to King Wenceslas, but from its contents it is clear that it was intended for Charles.

⁶⁴⁵ Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 215–218, leans towards the claim of some sources that Tebaldeschi also attended the consistory.

⁶⁴⁶ Konrad of Veselá directly testified that Urban had declared the approbation in regard to the departure of the Italian cardinals, see "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 12.

the approbation.⁶⁴⁷ At the same time, however, the Italians also took the ultramontanes into consideration. Orsini rewrote the *Casus* describing the election to Urban's disadvantage, handed it over to the pontiff with his companions on July 26, and perhaps left the same day. They thus put as significant a question mark behind the Bull of Approbation, which they had helped to bring about, as they did behind Prignano's election described in the *Casus*. We know the reason for their actions. They sought to secure a strong position as mediators between the parties, knowing that in the event of a new election the Italian candidate had the best chance of success.

The trio of Italians were not the only ones who skillfully maneuvered in Tivoli. The ambassadors of the Luxembourg family—the two Konrads—also tried to find a modus vivendi between the extremes. In respect to the public questioning of Urban's legitimacy, they declared before the notary and witnesses on July 26 that their participation in the proclamation of the approbation would not commit the emperor and his son to anything if the objections to Urban's election proved to be justified. They were expected to take an oath of allegiance to the Church and the pope on behalf of the king, and in this way, they wished to protect themselves and their lords. They insured themselves by the same declaration three days later, when they actually took the oath before Urban.⁶⁴⁸ The question then arises whether Secretary Konrad of Geisenheim also handed over to Urban a sealed document containing the promise from the king, or whether the pope was content with a verbal proclamation.⁶⁴⁹ In any case, the precautionary actions of the two deans indicate that they did not yet have an unequivocal statement from the emperor on Urban's election and the ensuing crisis.⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴⁷ The letter to the emperor is dated July 27. However, based on some of Corsini's allusions in the letter, he undoubtedly wrote it a day earlier, see Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Der Briefwechsel," 127–128, no. 10; for the letter to Wenceslas dated July 26, see *ibid.*, 128, no. 11.

⁶⁴⁸ "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 12–13. For the full text of the two declarations in which Konrad of Geisenheim appears as the main character, see *ibid.*, 14–16 (July 26) and 16–17 (July 29).

⁶⁴⁹ All we know for certain is that Cardinal Pileo da Prata had before him, in April 1379, the written text of the oath of allegiance made by Roman kings, which was part of Urban's bull. This matter is discussed in more detail on pages 232–233 below.

⁶⁵⁰ Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 618–619, hypothesized that Urban's envoys had returned from the emperor before the approbation was announced, and informed the pope that the Luxembourg monarchs had recognized him (but refused to send the solemn embassy). This

After months of waiting, the opportunity finally opened up for Konrad of Veselá to deliver a Bull of Approbation to the emperor against the loan and thus fulfil the task entrusted to him. Therefore, he asked Urban to dispatch the charter and spent another 900 florins for this purpose. The pope, however, told him that he intended to send the bull to the emperor through his envoys, as it was a serious matter, and advised Konrad to join them. Once again, however, Urban's efforts to rid himself of an intrusive and suspicious dean, in league with the ultramontanes, came to naught. The dean refused to budge without the bull and instead began to demand a new papal tithe to settle the debt owed to the emperor. Urban no longer wanted to burden the German clergy with a new tax and also countered that he had neither accepted the loan nor benefited from it. When Konrad explained that the sum had been spent on the conquest of Church territory in Italy, the pope wanted witnesses to prove it. The imperial envoy therefore moved with him from Tivoli to Rome in August.⁶⁵¹

It is understandable that in the given situation the Bull of Approbation was a trump card in Urban's hands, so he intended not to dispose of it through his people until the last moment. This time he sent to the emperor Bishop Pavo of Polignano and two of his other Neapolitan relatives, the knights Carlo Carazulus, called Caraffa, and Carlo Brancaci. In addition to the bull, they carried with them Urban's letter of July 29, in which the pope announced to both Wenceslas and Charles the execution of the approbation and apologized for the delays, which he attributed to obstacles that the papal envoys were to illuminate. The pontiff's letter, however, was not about the past. He looked more to the future. In view of the approbation, he urged the young pretender to the imperial crown to rise to defend and multiply the liberty of the Roman Church, to accept glory in battle, and to take up the *Romzug*.⁶⁵² And it is worthy of notice that we read nothing in either the Bull of Approbation or the pontiff's letter to the effect that Wenceslas could be crowned emperor only in the case of Charles's death or abdication of the throne.

hypothesis, with reference to both declarations, has been rightly discredited by Thomas, "Frankreich, Karl IV.," 94–95.

⁶⁵¹ "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 12–13.

⁶⁵² The letter to Wenceslas is edited in *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:147–149, no. 92; and the adapted version to the emperor in *Summa cancellariae*, 211, no. 364; see also the letter to the emperor in the fifteenth-century copy, Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.ch.f.84, fol. 136r–v.

The future emperor's campaign to Rome with his father's support was a high card in the ecclesiastical quarrel. Urban wanted to win it by making the approbation to benefit himself and throwing it into play immediately. Therefore, he also supported Wenceslas's journey indirectly. When he commissioned the Italian cardinals to negotiate with the ultramontanes to call first a general and then a partial council, he was probably trying to buy time not only for himself but also for the Luxembourg monarchs to come to Italy to support him.⁶⁵³ At the same time—around July 26—Urban effectively paved their way south in secular politics as well.

As late as May the pontiff was still raising funds to continue the war with the Florentine League. By the end of June, the diplomats of the Florentine League had been in Rome for some time to negotiate peace. The envoy of Mantua, who was familiar with the matter, believed in the success of the talks, because, according to him, both the pope and the other side were interested in reaching an agreement.⁶⁵⁴ Florence decided in May to refrain from hostile action against the Church and began to observe the interdict again.⁶⁵⁵ The cardinals leaving for Anagni in turn gave their colleagues who remained in Rome full authority to negotiate not only for Wenceslas's approbation but also for peace with the rebellious commune.⁶⁵⁶ By mid-July, an agreement was imminent. Catherine of Siena then exulted in one of her letters sent from Florence over the end of the war and welcomed peace.⁶⁵⁷ Urban first agreed to a reconciliation with the representatives of Siena on July 26,⁶⁵⁸ and two days later he also confirmed the peace treaty with the envoys of Florence. In particular, he agreed to an indemnity of 250,000 florins, still a huge sum, but considerably less than

⁶⁵³ In this context, it is worth noting that when the Romans offered Queen Joanna of Naples the council as a way of resolving the schism, she rejected their offer for two reasons: firstly, she believed it to be a matter for the pope and the cardinals, and secondly, she saw it as an excuse to stall, since the Romans were, according to her, firm supporters of Urban, see the queen's letter to Rinaldo Orsini of August 1380, which is quoted in Voci, "Giovanna I d'Angiò," 215–216.

⁶⁵⁴ Brandmüller, ed., "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 41, no. 24.

⁶⁵⁵ Brucker, *Florentine Politics*, 356–357.

⁶⁵⁶ Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 2:785 [1263].

⁶⁵⁷ Nardi, "Siena e la Curia pontificia," 62.

⁶⁵⁸ On this in detail, see *ibid.*, 57–58. Cf. Brandmüller, "Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit," 17.

that demanded by Gregory XI a year earlier.⁶⁵⁹ In return he suspended the interdict over Florence on July 29.⁶⁶⁰

Although the pontiff did not announce the achievement of peace and the abolition of ecclesiastical punishment over Florence to the temporal rulers and ecclesiastical dignitaries until September 24,⁶⁶¹ he invited the emperor's son to Rome in July, knowing that he had done everything necessary to end the war in Italy. He certainly knew that Charles had been seeking peace in Italy because of Wenceslas's campaign for some time. It may thus be assumed that the news of the peace treaties with Florence and Siena was another important point in Urban's instructions to his envoys to the emperor.

It is rather unlikely that the bishop and the Neapolitan knights would have set out on a dangerous journey immediately on July 29. When Urban received the *Casus* from the Italian cardinals, an agitational hunt for the truth about the election and the revolt began, and lawyers started to write polemical opinions in favor of the pontiff. Jacques de Sèze also worked on his *Factum*. The necessity of delivering Urban's defense to the imperial court grew even greater after the ultramontanes published their *Casus* in early August, officially declaring Prignano a usurper and a damned man. The escalation of the conflict thus probably delayed the departure of the papal delegation.⁶⁶²

The pulse of history continued to maintain a high frequency. The ultramontanes were understandably not idle and, knowing that they too needed powerful allies, sent out a declaration of Prignano's "deposition" to the royal courts no later than August 21, with a preface warning against false rumors and envoys and calling for the defense of the truth they were making known.⁶⁶³

We have seen above that Urban warned the emperor against the actions of the cardinals and relied on his loyalty. Such was the case on this occasion. This

⁶⁵⁹ The contents of the peace treaty of July 28, 1378, are reproduced by Gherardi, *La guerra dei Fiorentini*, 91–93 (see also 219, no. 392). Cf. Lewin, "The Great Triangle," 261–263, and Voci, "Alle origini del Grande Scisma," 301–302.

⁶⁶⁰ Gherardi, *La guerra dei Fiorentini*, 219, no. 393.

⁶⁶¹ Voci, "Alle origini del Grande Scisma," 302–303. This was due to the Florentines' delay in paying the first instalment of the agreed reparations.

⁶⁶² There is a consensus among historians on the late departure of the delegation, see Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 622; Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:233; Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 204.

⁶⁶³ The formal letter with the incipit *Urget Christi caritas* was printed by Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 1:450–454. Valois, *La France*, 1:106, note 2, brought attention to the original letter of August 21, 1378, addressed to King Charles V of France. Cf. Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:233.

is evidenced by another unknown letter present in the Bern collection.⁶⁶⁴ The pope first praised the emperor's virtues with which he was equipped to rule the world. He described him as a true and God-fearing lover of peace and justice, a zealot for the Church and a defender of the faith. Actually, however, he found refuge with Charles chiefly because he loved unity and hated schism. Urban firmly hoped that those who he believed plotted nonsense and spawned lies would not succeed, and he wished the emperor to remain deaf to the advice of these men and to oppose the opponents of unity, which he asserted to be a necessary condition of salvation.⁶⁶⁵

The *arenga* praising Charles as a virtuous earthly ruler naturally had a deeper meaning. It was a prelude to a request that the emperor, as a lover of unity, should write to the "princes and kings of the earth," especially to the French and Hungarian monarchs, urging them to disagree with the schismatics, oppose them, and disregard their falsehoods, and encouraging them to instead heed the advice of the emperor and behave judiciously towards Urban.⁶⁶⁶

The letter is not dated in its extant form, but was written in Rome, where Urban returned about the middle of August 1378. The pontiff entrusted it to the papal and imperial envoy, Jan of Litomyšl, dean of the Church of St. Apollinaris in Prague, who was tasked with informing the emperor in detail.⁶⁶⁷

Urban's request to send envoys to the leading European rulers forced Charles IV to act. The actions of the other side also gave him resolve. The ultramontanes were consistent in their efforts to assert their authority, and they also sent their declaration of Prignano's usurpation of St. Peter's See to the canons in Silesian Wrocław. They urged them not to heed the letters of the damned, to distrust his orders, and to accept no one whom he would appoint to the episcopal see of Wrocław, which was vacant. On the contrary, they were to continue to administer the bishopric themselves until the diocesan was decided upon. The letter was written in Fondi, where the cardinals had moved from Anagni between August 21 and 27.⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶⁴ See Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 220, fol. 119r, and no. 3 in the Appendix below.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid., pages 172–173. The (self-)presentation of Charles as a wise and pious ruler was last analyzed by Źurek, *Charles IV*, 213–261.

⁶⁶⁶ See pages 293–294 below.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁸ The letter was published by Franz Placidus Bliemetzrieder, "Die Kardinäle des Jahres 1378 an das Domkapitel zu Breslau," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 27 (1906): 603–606, at 604–406,

Charles IV's negotiations with the Roman Curia over the approbation were a temporary chapter in his papal policy, albeit one with a major impact on the dynasty. The filling of episcopal sees in the Empire was a stable pillar of the emperor's cooperation with the papacy. Thus, when the cardinals definitively denied Urban legitimacy on August 9 and began to assert their authority *in partibus*, they placed Charles IV at a crossroads in both dynastic and ecclesiastical-administrative politics. Now he could no longer just gather information about the opaque developments in Italy, but had to take action and take positions himself if he wanted to protect his interests.

according to ms. Merseburg, Dombibliothek, 62, fol. 162v. On the bishopric of Wrocław, see below for details.

4. Charles IV and the Great Schism

When Urban VI promptly approved Wenceslas as King of the Romans and invited him to come to Italy, he surely hoped that this favor would be met with action. Charles himself had prepared for his own coronation journey, undertaken in 1354–1355, for some time and at great political and financial cost. According to Ferdinand Seibt, political maneuvering on three fronts was required to carry out the campaign: in Avignon and Hungary, in Upper Italy, and within the German lands.⁶⁶⁹ Twenty years later, this remained true.

Charles expended considerable effort and resources to secure the papal approval of Wenceslas. Beginning in the autumn of 1377, his diplomats negotiated political and financial support for the *Romzug* in Upper Italy well in advance. At the same time, Charles himself went to France to personally support his son's future reign. However, the emperor's actions to secure support for Wenceslas in the German lands have not yet been fully explored, and this gap needs to be addressed. The situation in the domestic sphere may have influenced the emperor's intentions and decisions even more than papal, Italian, or French policy. In France, Charles negotiated his son's succession with relatives; in Germany, as in Italy, he dealt with a number of confident rivals.

⁶⁶⁹ Seibt, *Karl IV*, 221.

Anatomy of German Policy

Charles IV likely committed to the idea of his son's election as Roman king *vivente imperatore* as soon as it was clear that the much-desired prince, born in Nuremberg on February 26, 1361, to his third wife, Anna of Świdnica, was in good health. Charles took extraordinary care to ensure that young Wenceslas was not only known but also liked and respected by imperial leaders. Above all, the solemn coronation of his two-year-old son as King of Bohemia left no doubt about his father's considerable ambitions. Although the child himself cried during the demanding ceremony, Charles, ever focused on dynastic prestige, saw in it a reinforcement of his public stature.⁶⁷⁰

The cornerstone of Charles's policy was consolidating family power (*Hausmacht*). His father, John of Luxembourg—known as “the Blind” or “the Bohemian”—had already secured the Bohemian royal vote in the election of the Roman king for the Luxembourg dynasty when he assumed control of Bohemia and Moravia in 1310. John then expanded his domain by adding Cheb, Upper Lusatia, and most of the Silesian principalities. After Charles ascended as King of the Romans and Bohemia in the mid-1340s, he quickly moved to incorporate these territories permanently into the core lands. The collective term “Crown of the Bohemian Kingdom,” or simply the “Bohemian Crown,” was adopted for this newly consolidated territorial power, and Charles seized every opportunity to expand it further.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁷⁰ Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 5–7, has clearly shown that historians disagree as to when the emperor conceived the idea of Wenceslas's election *vivente imperatore*. Theodor Lindner, “Die Wahl Wenzels von Böhmen zum römischen Könige,” *Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte* 14 (1874): 249–301, at 254, connects the intention only with the definitive gain of Brandenburg in 1373. Spěváček, Václav IV., 79, makes a similar argument. However, Fritz Vigener, *Kaiser Karl IV. und der Mainzer Bistumsstreit (1373–1378)* (Trier: Jacob Lintz, 1908), 4, argues that this happened already in Wenceslas's early childhood. Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 10–46, supported this conclusion with an in-depth analysis. Cf. also Picot, *Kurkölnische Territorialpolitik*, 73, note 1.

⁶⁷¹ Cf. Joachim Prochno, “Terra Bohemiae, Regnum Bohemiae, Corona Bohemiae,” in *Corona Regni. Studien über die Krone als Symbol des Staates im späteren Mittelalter*, ed. Manfred Hellmann (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1961), 198–224, and Lenka Bobková, “Corona Regni Bohemiae. The Integration of Central Europe as Conceived by the Luxembourgs and their Successors,” in *Unions and Divisions: New Forms of Rule in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, ed. Paul Srodecki, Norbert Kersken, and Rimvydas Petrauskas (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), 295–309.

An opportunity arose in the early 1360s when Charles took advantage of disputes among the descendants of Emperor Ludwig IV of Bavaria, concluding hereditary agreements with his son-in-law, the margrave of Brandenburg, Otto V of Bavaria, and Otto's brother, who died shortly thereafter. Although Otto later attempted to defy the agreement by designating his brother Stephan II and Stephan's sons—Stephan III, Friedrich, and Johann II—as heirs to Brandenburg in April 1371, the emperor responded with two military campaigns. This led to the Fürstenwalde Agreement of August 1373, in which Otto definitively renounced the land in exchange for the substantial sum of half a million florins and part of the so-called New Bohemia in Bavaria. Charles IV subsequently declared Brandenburg a fief of the Bohemian Crown and granted it to his three sons as hereditary possession.

Since the margrave of Brandenburg was one of the electors of the Roman king, the emperor's concerns extended beyond territorial control to securing political power in the struggle for Brandenburg. Although the Fürstenwalde Agreement granted Otto the right to vote, the reality unfolded differently: as margrave of Brandenburg, Wenceslas's eight-year-old brother, Sigismund of Luxembourg, cast the vote for Wenceslas in Frankfurt. However, this *fait accompli* came at a cost to Charles IV. To ease the situation, the emperor provided additional material benefits to Otto and his Bavarian relatives, helping them accept that Wittelsbach's vote for Wenceslas was officially recognized only after the fact.⁶⁷²

This was a time when royal resources were already greatly depleted, and the emperor had to improvise. The financial burden of the electoral campaign was primarily borne by the imperial cities, and it was to them that Charles again turned his attention. On June 24, 1376, the emperor pawned the Swabian city of Donauwörth to the Wittelsbachs, even though it was part of an alliance of imperial cities led by Ulm, which he had promised in the 1340s would never be pawned. The reaction was swift. A few days later, fearing further similar actions, the 14 Swabian cities formed a three-year alliance against anyone who sought to deprive them of their rights. The emperor saw this as a rebellion and demanded obedience. He insisted that the cities pay homage to the new king,

⁶⁷² For the acquisition of Brandenburg, see Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 91–92; Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:129–162; Žurek, *Charles IV*, 135–139. On Sigismund, see Jörg K. Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund: Herrscher an der Schwelle zur Neuzeit, 1368–1437* (Munich: Beck, 1996), 42.

but they refused to do so until Wenceslas had confirmed their privileges and respected their association.

In August, Charles allied himself with the traditional enemy of the Swabian cities, Count Eberhard II of Württemberg. That autumn, he and Wenceslas, joined by a broader coalition that included the Bavarian dukes, besieged the city of Ulm. The first major development in the conflict came in May 1377, when the towns' alliance defeated the son of the count of Württemberg at the Battle of Reutlingen. Charles and Wenceslas then issued several documents offering a settlement to the towns, but the dissolution of the alliance was not achieved. Distrust persisted, and the war between the towns and the counts of Württemberg continued.⁶⁷³ Later, when an imperial envoy in Mantua depicted Wenceslas as a warrior and promised the participation of the Bavarian dukes in the Italian campaign,⁶⁷⁴ this likely reflected the joint commitment of all parties involved against the Swabian cities.

The considerable costs and consequences of war that Charles IV endured to secure the Brandenburg vote stand in stark contrast to the ease with which he won the support of the last of the eastern electors, the duke of Saxony, for his son's election. When the prince expressed his support for Wenceslas's candidacy in January 1375 and pledged unwavering loyalty to the future king and emperor, it was partly due to the traditionally strong relations between the Saxon Ascanians and the Luxembourg monarchs, as well as the emperor's current involvement on their behalf in the dispute over the Duchy of Lüneburg with the House of Welf.⁶⁷⁵

The favor of the Saxon dukes was also important for Charles IV from a geopolitical standpoint. Their estates lay between the westernmost part of Bohemia in the south and Brandenburg in the north. Also wedged between

⁶⁷³ Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 271–276; Eberhard Holtz, *Reichsstädte und Zentralgewalt unter König Wenzel 1376–1400*, Studien zu den Luxemburgern und ihrer Zeit 4 (Warendorf: Fahlsbusch, 1993), 33–52; Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:200; Duncan Hardy, *Associative Political Culture*, 181–184.

⁶⁷⁴ See page 140 above.

⁶⁷⁵ The charter of the duke of Saxony from January 1375, preserved in the Czech Crown Archive, was unavailable to Julius Weizsäcker, see *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:51, no. 25. Richard Lies, "Die Wahl Wenzels zum Römischen Könige in ihrem Verhältnis zur Goldenen Bulle," *Historische Vierteljahrschrift* 26 (1931): 47–95, at 59, note 20, found that it corresponds to the commitment of Archbishop Ludwig of Meissen of December 8, 1374, see *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:10–11, no. 2. On the relationship of the Ascanians to Charles against the background of the election, see Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 37–40, 60, 91.

the lands of the Bohemian Crown were the territories of the archbishopric of Magdeburg and the Margraves of Thuringia and Meissen. It is therefore not surprising that the archbishopric was occupied by the emperor's supporters. From 1371, it was Charles's loyal courtier and diplomat, Peter III, called Wurst (Jelito), a native of Moravia.⁶⁷⁶ Thus, when, two years later, the emperor also restored good relations with the Meissen Wettins, the division of the empire into an eastern Luxembourg bloc and a western Rhine bloc became increasingly evident.

This division had immediate political consequences for King Wenceslas only in 1400, when he was deposed from the German throne. However, the root cause of this crisis lies in what Charles IV was already willing—or forced—to sacrifice in the West during the 1370s to paradoxically ensure widespread support for his son's election and rule.⁶⁷⁷ Therefore, we will now turn our attention westward.

The emperor could most easily secure Wenceslas's crown in the Rhine-land by having a trusted associate occupy one of the ecclesiastical sees with voting rights. He was given an opportunity to do so in Cologne in 1368, when Archbishop Engelbert III of the Mark died, creating a vacancy. Charles IV sought to promote his relative, Jean de Luxembourg-Ligny, bishop of Strasbourg, to the vacant see. According to the provisions of the Golden Bull, the archbishop was responsible for placing the crown on the head of the elected king in Aachen; thus, his opposition could have complicated Wenceslas's accession to the throne. Despite his efforts, however, the emperor failed in Cologne. The elector of Trier, Archbishop Kuno of Falkenstein, was satisfied with the outcome, as in 1370 he had successfully advanced his nephew, Count Friedrich III of Saarwerden, to the archbishopric of Cologne.

The fifty-year-old, experienced Kuno, already a highly influential man, became the most powerful figure in the western part of the Empire and a formidable counterpart to Charles. It was evident that Friedrich, nearly thirty

⁶⁷⁶ On the archbishop, see Erwin Gatz, Jan Bistrický, Zdeňka Hledíková, and Michael Scholz, "Peter Wurst (Jelito) (1320/30–1387)," in *Die Bischöfe des Heiligen Römischen Reiches 1198 bis 1448. Ein biographisches Lexikon*, ed. Erwin Gatz and Clemens Brodkorb (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001), 514–515. For his service to the emperor, see Petr Elbel, "Petr Jelito, dvořan a diplomat Karla IV.," [Peter Wurst, Courtier and Diplomat of Charles IV] *Sborník prací Filosofické fakulty brněnské univerzity. C, Řada historická* 48 (2001): 67–87.

⁶⁷⁷ Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 9, 36, and 88–89. Cf. also Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:139–141.

years younger, would rely on his uncle in matters of high politics.⁶⁷⁸ This dependence became clear in June 1371, when Friedrich assumed the role of archbishop. He not only pledged to align his vote with his uncle's in future royal elections but also promised to remain loyal to the king only as long as Kuno did the same. Moreover, as both refused to vote for the king during the emperor's lifetime, they made it clear that winning their support would come at a high cost to Charles.⁶⁷⁹

Friedrich of Saarwerden urgently needed cash, as he was burdened with debts on all sides. Notably, he had agreed to pay a vast sum of 120,000 florins to the Papal Curia in six annual instalments—the income from Rhine tolls that the Curia had reserved for itself during the vacancy of the see. If this financial strain was not immediately evident, it soon became clear that the commitments made were beyond Friedrich's means. Although the archbishop paid part of the customary annates (*servitia communia*), he hesitated to surrender the customs revenue. His reluctance may have been bolstered by widespread opposition in the German provinces to the papal tithe, which Pope Gregory XI proclaimed in April 1372. By the autumn of 1375, Avignon's patience had run out, and camerlengo Pierre de Cros imposed ecclesiastical penalties on the archbishop and summoned him before the chamber court.⁶⁸⁰

By this time, however, Friedrich's financial distress had already become an opportunity for the emperor, who sought to secure his allegiance with the promise of Wenceslas's election. In November 1374, he welcomed the young archbishop as a close companion at court, promising him 100 florins for each week of his stay. More importantly, in exchange for Friedrich's vote and performance of the coronation, the emperor pledged to negotiate with the Curia for forgiveness of the archbishop's immense debt, or at least to secure a compromised sum, to which the emperor would contribute 30,000 florins, with the understanding that payment would be made even if negotiations with the pope failed.⁶⁸¹ It remains unclear when this promise was fulfilled or whether Friedrich was genuinely interested in repaying the debt to the Curia. Historian

⁶⁷⁸ Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 35–36; Picot, *Kurkölnische Territorialpolitik*, 33–37.

⁶⁷⁹ Picot, *Kurkölnische Territorialpolitik*, 47–48.

⁶⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 44–47, 64–67.

⁶⁸¹ Friedrich's deed with his promise has not survived. We only know of Charles's pledge, see *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:32–34, no. 10; *Regesta imperii*, vol. 8, no. 5423. Cf. Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 65–66; Picot, *Kurkölnische Territorialpolitik*, 78.

Sabine Picot suggests that the archbishop received the promised sum from the emperor before the election but used it to settle debts owed to his uncle.⁶⁸²

Charles also openly supported Friedrich in his efforts to assert his archiepiscopal rights in Cologne. The elector clashed with the townspeople over these rights in the so-called *Schöffenkrieg*, which erupted in the spring of 1375. With the city council securing the support of the Papal Curia, the emperor's backing proved invaluable to the archbishop. Thus, his two disputes became intertwined.⁶⁸³

By December, Friedrich had been placed under aggravated anathema, which was typically followed by an imperial ban (*Reichsacht*). However, there is no record of such a decree from the emperor. The Papal Curia also adopted a conciliatory stance toward the archbishop, granting him a conditional release from ecclesiastical punishment in the spring of 1376. This leniency appeared to assume that Friedrich would receive the promised 30,000 florins from the emperor on the occasion of Wenceslas's election and remit it to Avignon. He had until June 1 to comply, but when no payment was made, the penalties were reimposed.

Friedrich, however, ignored the renewed prosecution and participated in the masses for the election and coronation, which he himself performed. Technically, this meant the new king was crowned by an excommunicated archbishop. The papal nuncio noted this the very next day, declaring that Friedrich had fallen into irregularity as a result. In practice, however, this had significance only for the pope's policy toward the emperor and did not impact Friedrich's position within the Empire. On the contrary, immediately after his coronation, Wenceslas confirmed the archbishop's privileges as Roman king, and Charles further strengthened Friedrich's position in his ongoing dispute with the city of Cologne.⁶⁸⁴

While the young archbishop sought financial, diplomatic, and legal support from the emperor, his uncle, Kuno of Falkenstein, focused on consolidating his own power. This is evident in the electoral agreement Kuno made with

⁶⁸² Picot, *Kurkölnische Territorialpolitik*, 67 and 83.

⁶⁸³ Karlotto Bogumil, "Die Stadt Köln, Erzbischof Friedrich von Saarwerden und die päpstliche Kurie während des Schöffenkrieges und der ersten Jahre des Großen Abendländischen Schismas (1375–1387)," in *Köln, das Reich und Europa. Abhandlungen über weiträumige Verflechtungen der Stadt Köln in Politik, Recht und Wirtschaft im Mittelalter*, Mitteilungen aus dem Stadtarchiv von Köln 60 (Cologne: Neubner, 1971), 279–304, at 297–290.

⁶⁸⁴ Picot, *Kurkölnische Territorialpolitik*, 68–70.

the emperor on the same day in November 1374 as Friedrich. In this agreement, both Charles and Wenceslas pledged not to threaten Kuno by attack or through alliances with anyone from his domain. Additionally, both monarchs committed to attempting to persuade the pope to waive the recently imposed tithe and other financial demands. If Pope Gregory XI refused, they promised to support the clergy and refrain from enforcing the payments. Thus, tensions with the Papal Curia were clearly present not only for Friedrich but also for Kuno.⁶⁸⁵

Equally interesting is the promise from both Charles and Wenceslas that, in the event of Wenceslas's election, Charles would not transfer the administration of imperial affairs to his son before his own death or abdication. Moreover, they agreed that during neither Charles's nor Wenceslas's reign would the Empire be divided into multiple dominions.⁶⁸⁶

Both clauses are noteworthy. We can assume that they reflect concerns about establishing a strong Luxembourg domain in the East.⁶⁸⁷ More importantly, however, this agreement sheds light on why Charles, during his lifetime, never allowed Wenceslas to govern as a fully sovereign Roman king, retaining the final say in political matters himself. This arrangement was clearly not due to excessive caution on the part of Charles, but rather a condition set by the influential elector of Trier.⁶⁸⁸ According to Kuno, Wenceslas's independent rule was only an option in the event of his father's death or abdication. However, this condition does not appear to have applied to the young king's imperial coronation.

The clause dictating the form of co-rule to the Luxembourg monarchs demonstrates the rising power of Kuno of Falkenstein in the Rhineland at the expense of central authority. This was not a given, as the emperor had long relied on his half-brother, Wenceslas, duke of Luxembourg, Brabant, and Limburg, to assert influence in the West. This reliance dated back to the death of Archbishop Balduin of Trier, the Luxembourg dynasty's patriarch, in 1354. In the latter half of the 1360s, Charles appointed Duke Wenceslas as *Landvogt*

⁶⁸⁵ See *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:11–21, no. 3.

⁶⁸⁶ See *ibid.*, 18, paragraph 11.

⁶⁸⁷ Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 64–65.

⁶⁸⁸ Jiří Spěváček, who did not take the emperor's commitment into account, points out that the overly cautious Charles did not allow Wenceslas room for independence, leaving him as merely second in command and unable to break free from his dependence on others, even after his father's death, see Václav IV., 93–95.

in Alsace and, more significantly, as imperial vicar north of the Alps, effectively designating him as his deputy in the West. Duke Wenceslas also had even closer ties to the French court than Charles, thanks to his mother, Béatrice de Bourbon. He held several fiefs in France and, in return, provided military support to the French king against the English along the northern borders of the kingdom.

However, Wenceslas's position of power as imperial vicar on the Lower Rhine and Maas (Meuse) was undermined when he was captured in August 1371 after his defeat at the Battle of Bäsweiler (Baesweiler) by Duke Wilhelm II of Jülich and his allies, one of whom was Friedrich of Saarwerden. He was not released from captivity until the following year, after the emperor intervened. In the summer of 1372, Charles went west for the first time with his son Wenceslas and personally negotiated the duke's release in Aachen in exchange for concessions to the victorious coalition. The title of imperial vicar, previously held by his brother, passed to the archbishop of Cologne, to whom the emperor also granted numerous privileges. Kuno of Falkenstein also grew stronger in relation to the duke of Luxembourg. It is likely that the influential archbishop played a role in mediating Wenceslas's release. However, when it came to his own sphere of power, Kuno did not hesitate to take a hard line. In February 1376, for example, he ordered his officials to excommunicate the emperor's half-brother because of the confiscations he had made on the estates of the Trier chapter in Luxembourg.⁶⁸⁹

689 Wenceslas's personality was comprehensively presented by Fantysová-Matějková, *Wenceslas*. On the consequences of the battle of Bäsweiler, see *ibid.*, esp. 391–417. For the political-dynastic context, see Quicke, *Les Pays-Bas*, 177–220; Heinz Thomas, "Die Luxemburger und der Westen des Reiches zur Zeit Kaiser Karls IV." *Jahrbuch für westdeutsche Landesgeschichte* 1 (1975): 59–94; Michel Pauly, "Karl IV. und sein Halbbruder Wenzel: Das Herzogtum Luxemburg und Karls Politik im Westen des Reiches," in *Prag in der Zeit der Luxemburger Dynastie*, ed. Amelie Bendheim and Heinz Sieburg (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2018), 13–36. The appointment of Wenceslas as imperial vicar is described in detail by Heinz Thomas, "Die Ernennung Herzog Wenzels von Luxemburg-Brabant zum Reichsvikar," in *Westmitteleuropa, Ostmitteleuropa: Vergleiche und Beziehungen (Festschrift für Ferdinand Seibt zum 65. Geburtstag)*, ed. Winfried Eberhard, Hans Lemberg, Heinz-Dieter Heimann, and Robert Luft (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1992), 143–152. On his good relations with France against the background of Charles's western policy, see Weiß, "Onkel und Neffe," 157–158. For the relationship between the archbishop of Trier and the duke, see Georg Parisius, *Erzbischof Kuno von Trier in seinen späteren Jahren 1376–1388* (Halle an der Salle: C. A. Kaemmerer & Co., 1910), 22–25.

Charles IV was unable to enforce his dynastic intentions on the Lower Rhine except through power concessions and material advantages. On the Middle Rhine, he again relied on personal politics in his efforts to secure Wenceslas's election. When Charles granted the regalia to Friedrich of Saarwerden in November 1371, thus acknowledging his defeat in the struggle for the archbishopric of Cologne, he likely did so because he had, by then, developed hopes of securing the most important of the Rhenish ecclesiastical sees—the archbishopric of Mainz—in line with his own interests. However, he encountered significant obstacles this time as well, although it did not seem that way at first.⁶⁹⁰

After the death of Archbishop Gerlach in March 1371, a minority of the cathedral chapter elected his young nephew, Count Adolf of Nassau-Wiesbaden-Idstein, as his successor. The majority of the canons, however, cast their votes for the metropolitan of Trier, Kuno of Falkenstein. Although Kuno had strong historical ties to Mainz, he had no intention of leaving Trier. The outcome of the election ultimately helped secure a foothold for a relative of the emperor, the aforementioned bishop of Strasbourg, Jean de Luxembourg-Ligny, who was appointed to Mainz through papal provision.⁶⁹¹ However, when Jean died two years later, the chapter swiftly elected Adolf of Nassau as the new archbishop, by then the bishop of Speyer. Most of the aristocratic clientele of the see of Mainz had close ties to the Nassau family, so the ambitious elect did not delay and took *de facto* possession of the archbishopric in April 1373, without obtaining a papal provision.⁶⁹²

The territorial domain of the archbishopric of Mainz included the town of Erfurt, which was largely surrounded by the estates of the margraves of Thuringia and Meissen. Sensing an opportunity to take control of the city, the Wettins went to Prague to persuade the emperor to seek the see of Mainz for their brother, Ludwig, the bishop of Bamberg. As Charles no longer had a suitable candidate from his own family, he had to resort to one of the imperial princes. Although the emperor did not have a hostile relationship with Adolf

⁶⁹⁰ The dispute over the archbishopric of Mainz was discussed at length by Fritz Vigener, *Kaiser Karl IV. und der Mainzer Bistumsstreit (1373–1378)* (Trier: Jacob Lintz, 1908), and Alois Gerlich, "Die Anfänge des großen abendländischen Schismas und der Mainzer Bistumsstreit," *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 6 (1956): 25–76.

⁶⁹¹ Losher, *Königtum und Kirche*, 166–169; Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 40–41.

⁶⁹² Lindner, *Geschichte des deutschen Reiches*, 1/1:23.

of Nassau, the Wettins were of greater political value to him. He could bring the Meissen brothers over to his side in the struggle for Brandenburg.⁶⁹³ In keeping with his good political practice, Charles solidified these friendly relations in May 1373 with a marriage contract between the descendants of the two dynasties. In August, he also entrusted the Wettins with the administration of the *Landvogtei* of Wetterau, which lay between their estates in the northeast and the properties of the archdiocese of Mainz in the southwest. However, he had not yet committed himself to anything regarding the occupation of the see, as the papal provision was legally decisive. It alone legitimized the vote of the elector of Mainz in the royal election.⁶⁹⁴

Gregory XI did not rush into a decision this time either. He once again took advantage of the situation to fill the papal coffers, reserving all the income of the archbishopric for himself during the proceedings for its filling. Adolf met the interests of the Curia and complied with many of its financial demands. Ludwig of Meissen travelled to Avignon in October 1373 to personally request a provision.⁶⁹⁵ By this time, Charles had already secured Brandenburg with the Treaty of Fürstenwalde and was no longer compelled to engage in the rivalry among the imperial princes. Ludwig did not succeed at Avignon until the end of April 1374, when the pope officially transferred him from Bamberg to Mainz. Following this, the emperor granted Ludwig the regalia for secular governance, thus siding with Meissen in the dispute over the occupation of the see.⁶⁹⁶

Although Charles hoped that Adolf could be satisfied with the rich bishopric of Strasbourg, the chapter of Mainz and its archbishop-elect opposed both the emperor and the pope. The first military clashes between the two blocs broke out in the autumn of 1374, instigated by the Nassau party, which had entered the Wettin estates.⁶⁹⁷ This occurred at the height of the emperor's election campaign. Ludwig of Meissen took advantage of the situation and, on December 8, not only promised Charles and his son an electoral vote but also pledged unconditional loyalty.⁶⁹⁸

⁶⁹³ Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 44–45.

⁶⁹⁴ For the marriage, see Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:149. On Wetterau, see Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 53.

⁶⁹⁵ Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 53.

⁶⁹⁶ Lindner, *Geschichte des deutschen Reiches*, 1:1:25.

⁶⁹⁷ Vigener, *Kaiser Karl IV.*, 46–47.

⁶⁹⁸ See *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:10–11, no. 2.

The conflict escalated at the end of the year when the city of Erfurt, fearing the Wettins, openly sided with Adolf and expelled Ludwig's followers. Charles proclaimed an imperial ban over the city, and the pope initiated a canonical trial against the Nassau usurper, stating that it was up to the emperor to enforce Ludwig's claims. Tensions reached a climax at the end of August 1375, when the emperor marched his own contingent, accompanied by his son Wenceslas, to Erfurt to aid the Meissen army besieging the city.⁶⁹⁹ Recall the words of the imperial envoy in Mantua, who stated that Wenceslas conquered the cities that did not heed the pope's appeals.⁷⁰⁰

In fact, the conflict ended with a truce in front of Tonna Castle, negotiated on September 6, 1375, which confirmed the status quo. Adolf's supporters were not to be prosecuted by Ludwig's partisans, the distribution of the bishops' "obediencies" was maintained, and the imperial ban over Erfurt was lifted. Although the emperor continued to regard Ludwig as archbishop of Mainz and Adolf as bishop of Speyer only, he implicitly made it clear through a truce lasting until June 24, 1377, that he could not or would not take severe action against the count of Nassau. This was certainly related to the fact that Wenceslas' election was imminent, and Adolf's supporters included his creditor, Kuno of Falkenstein, and his nephew. The Wettin prince, without a domain of his own, remained heavily dependent on the emperor's favor and stayed at Charles's court in the months and years that followed.⁷⁰¹

However, Gregory XI refused to take into account local power dynamics and political calculations. He granted Ludwig the right to punish Adolf's partisans by depriving them of their benefices, declared ecclesiastical administration over Erfurt through the papal vicar, and once again called for the enforcement of ecclesiastical penalties against Adolf.⁷⁰²

Nevertheless, on the eve of the election, Charles IV and his son had no intention of changing anything in the Treaty of Tonna. King Wenceslas promised Adolf of Nassau that he would not take any action against him, his estates, or his people for the rest of his life. This was not a recognition of the count's legal claim to the archbishopric, but a respect for his position of power. It was a safeguard to ensure that Adolf would not complicate the election. This is also

⁶⁹⁹ Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 79–84.

⁷⁰⁰ See page 140 above.

⁷⁰¹ Lindner, *Geschichte des deutschen Reiches*, 1/1:30–31; Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 85–87.

⁷⁰² Vigener, *Kaiser Karl IV.*, 89–90.

why the Falkenstein party finally agreed that Ludwig of Meissen should be invited to a pre-election meeting in Rhens and vote in Frankfurt as the elector of Mainz. However, the Wettin prince does not appear to have attended the coronation in Aachen. He probably took heed of the pope, who disapproved of it and was the only one who consistently defended Ludwig's claims.⁷⁰³

The Luxembourg monarchs and the local nobility respected Adolf of Nassau's position of power even after the election. However, as the expiration of the treaty concluded at Tonna Castle approached, the rival parties began to actively seek allies for the next shift in power. The margraves of Meissen used the end of the truce to resume minor military actions, but these did not lead to any significant progress.⁷⁰⁴

Adolf of Nassau's most powerful neighbor was the Rhenish Count Palatine Ruprecht I (the Elder) of the House of Wittelsbach, and the two worked to deepen their good relations. The high point came at the end of 1377, when they entered into an alliance with an agreement to settle their neighborly disputes.⁷⁰⁵ However, the pact quickly ended when the emperor, for the first time, abandoned his policy of balance and began to actively assert Ludwig's claims in Mainz. He was likely prompted to do so by his regard for Gregory XI, who was losing his willingness to support the emperor's interests until the Wettin princes succeeded in his struggle with Adolf. On December 4, 1377, the pope warned the emperor that he would not appoint a new bishop of Wrocław unless action was taken.⁷⁰⁶ Furthermore, let us not forget that the issue of Wenceslas' approbation was still unresolved. In this situation, the emperor decided to win the count palatine over to his side in the struggle for Mainz.

He prepared the ground well for this intention. On January 9, 1378, while Charles was in Paris, the French king sent two deputies to Ruprecht at Heidelberg to make an alliance with him.⁷⁰⁷ France's offer, which must have flattered the ambitious prince, is easily explained. On the same day in Paris the emperor handed his nephew a scroll listing all those in the Empire who were willing to

⁷⁰³ Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 237–238, 269–270.

⁷⁰⁴ Vigener, *Kaiser Karl IV.*, 112–113.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid., 122–123.

⁷⁰⁶ See *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:146, no. 90.

⁷⁰⁷ See *Regesten der Pfalzgrafen am Rhein 1214–1400*, ed. Adolf Koch and Jakob Wille (Innsbruck: Die Wagner'sche Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1894), 250, no. 4198. Cf. Vigener, *Kaiser Karl IV.*, 121.

defend French interests against England. According to the royal chronicler, these were allies, subjects and supporters of the emperor.⁷⁰⁸

The change of sides was characteristic of Count Palatine Ruprecht the Elder. At the time of Wenceslas's election, he was already sixty-seven years old, and he resembled the emperor in his ability to act strategically when it benefited his own interests and the dynastic ambitions of his family. These ambitions were considerable. Like Charles, the count palatine had several potential successors: his nephew Ruprecht II (the Younger) and his son Ruprecht III. They made it clear during the emperor's election campaign that they would not stand aside in the competition for the Roman throne if given the opportunity. This is why the emperor's pre-election negotiations with the Rhenish Wittelsbachs lasted the longest, until February 1375.⁷⁰⁹

Following the election of Wenceslas and the onset of conflict with the Swabian cities, the counts palatine aligned themselves with the coalition supported by the emperor. Their subsequent alliance with Charles IV in the dispute over Mainz in early 1378 appears to have been secured with relative ease. For Ruprecht, it was more advantageous to support the archbishop of Mainz, whose interests were concentrated in the eastern part of his territory rather than near the Palatinate.⁷¹⁰ Moreover, the three senior members of the Luxembourg dynasty had been preparing for an Italian campaign and required a strategic foothold in the Rhineland. By shifting allegiances, the count palatine was able to significantly enhance his political standing with both the reigning and prospective emperor.

At the beginning of March 1378, it was clear that Ruprecht the Elder and his nephew would bear the brunt of the struggle with the rebellious Adolf of Nassau. The emperor made a detour to Heidelberg on his way back from France and supported the counts palatine in their new role with a series of charters.⁷¹¹ This was just the beginning.

⁷⁰⁸ See *Chronique des règnes*, 2:257–258; trans. Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 222–223. Cf. Monnet, *Charles IV*, 109.

⁷⁰⁹ See *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:46–47, no. 22. Cf. Hubert Röhrenbeck, "Karl IV. und die Pfalzgrafen bei Rhein," *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 114 (1978): 613–643, at 633–643; Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 69–76, 89, 280.

⁷¹⁰ Gerlich, "Die Anfänge," 25–31; Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 52–60, 76–87, 89–91, 237–238, 242–243, 247, 269–270.

⁷¹¹ Vigener, *Kaiser Karl IV.*, 118, 124–127; Gerlich, "Die Anfänge," 28–29.

Charles and Wenceslas arrived in Prague at the beginning of April after their journeys. However, they did not stay there for long. A month later, they travelled to České Budějovice in southern Bohemia to welcome a delegation from Ruprecht the Elder and his nephew and to discuss further measures against Adolf.⁷¹² Peace associations, so-called *Landfrieden*, had been a widely used tool of central authority in stabilizing governance in southwest Germany for more than two centuries.⁷¹³ The emperor now resorted to this method in an attempt to weaken Adolf of Nassau's position of power. On May 5, under Charles's direction, a *Landfriete*-alliance was established on the Upper Rhine and in Alsace, whose members included the two Ruprechts, the emperor's half-brother Wenceslas (as Alsatian *Landvogt*), eleven Alsatian towns, and Strasbourg. Most of the territory covered by the peace alliance belonged to the diocese of Speyer, but Adolf of Nassau was not included.⁷¹⁴

In South Bohemia, the situation in Rome certainly came up as well. While the death of Gregory XI was already known to the participants,⁷¹⁵ news of the dramatic election of Bartolomeo Prignano was apparently still on its way.⁷¹⁶ Of course, Charles IV could have addressed the new pontiff and asked him to support Ludwig of Meissen, but this was not the only way to put in a good word for him with Urban. The monarch also relied on friendly cardinals in the Mainz cause. When Jean de La Grange wrote to Charles from Rome on May 25, he recommended not only himself but also "the cause of the Archbishop of Mainz." He also reported that Urban had personally written to Ludwig regarding his case.⁷¹⁷ The cardinal and counsellor to the French king

⁷¹² Cf. Vigener, *Kaiser Karl IV*, 131–134.

⁷¹³ See Heinz Angermeier, *Königtum und Landfriete im deutschen Spätmittelalter* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1966); Seibt, *Karl IV*, 222–223; Hardy, *Associative Political Culture*, 102–103.

⁷¹⁴ *Regesta Imperii*, vol. 8, nos. 5900–5903. Cf. Angermeier, *Königtum*, 262–263.

⁷¹⁵ News of the pope's death reached Paris—about the same distance away—remarkably quickly, by as early as April 14, see Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rome," 187. Spěváček, *Karl IV*, 190 suggests that Prague was informed even earlier, in early April; similarly, Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 248. However, this seems unlikely, if not impossible. Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV*, 2:225, conservatively argues that the news of Gregory's death could not have been known in Prague before late April, while Rader, *Kaiser Karl der Vierte*, 352, believes it was as late as the end of April or even early May.

⁷¹⁶ Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV*, 2:226, is again very conservative in his estimate, asserting that events in Rome were scarcely known in Prague before the end of May.

⁷¹⁷ Bliemeetzrieder, "Der Briefwechsel," 121, no. 2. Gerlich, "Die Anfänge," 28–29, does not mention this source.

was apparently prompted to action by Charles V's embassy, which departed Paris not long after the emperor. This is another indication that the two related monarchs also discussed German politics in January.

During June, the imperial coalition increased pressure on Adolf, and by July, the possibility of Charles himself intervening militarily against the usurper was seriously considered along the Rhine.⁷¹⁸ On July 14, the emperor also reimposed the imperial ban on Erfurt based on a complaint by Ludwig of Meissen.⁷¹⁹ It is likely that Charles and the archbishop had acted in response to Urban's letter, to which Jean de La Grange had alluded. A papal embassy led by Eckard of Dersch undoubtedly brought this correspondence to Prague at the end of June, along with the cardinal's letter.

The bishop of Worms was commissioned by Urban to persuade the emperor to send a representative legation to Italy to be present at the proclamation of Wenceslas's approbation. Since this was a matter concerning the Empire, it may be assumed that Charles and Wenceslas wished to consult the German princes about it at the diet (*Hoftag*) in Nuremberg.⁷²⁰ From Prague, they headed there at the end of July. Among the princes at Nuremberg were the Wettins, the Rhenish counts palatine, the Nuremberg Burgrave Friedrich V of Hohenzollern, and the bishops of Bamberg and Würzburg, Lamprecht and Gerhard. It is likely that Eckard of Dersch was also present, as he was best informed about the pope's wishes and the situation in Rome. His presence is also likely because the diet was discussing matters that directly concerned him as bishop of Worms. The issue was the *Landfriede* on the Middle Rhine, which had been established on August 28 at the emperor's instigation by Ruprecht III, several counts, and the imperial cities of Mainz, Worms, and Speyer.⁷²¹

Historians assume that, alongside the Upper Rhine *Landfriede*, this was another peace association that guaranteed political stability in the Rhineland and was also directed against the bishop of Speyer, Adolf of Nassau.⁷²² However, applying pressure on the usurper could not have been the sole purpose of both agreements. On the first day of September, at Charles's insti-

⁷¹⁸ Vigener, *Kaiser Karl IV*, 137–138.

⁷¹⁹ *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Erfurt*, vol. 2, ed. Carl Beyer (Halle an der Saale: Otto Hendel, 1897), 592–594, no. 802; *Die Regesten der Erzbischöfe*, 8:532, no. 1940.

⁷²⁰ For the diet, see *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:204–225.

⁷²¹ See *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Worms*, vol. 2, 1301–1400, ed. Heinrich Boos (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1890), 482–490, no. 752; *Regesta Imperii*, vol. 8, no. 5929.

⁷²² Vigener, *Kaiser Karl IV*, 140; Holtz, *Reichsstädte*, 55; Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV*, 2:234.

gation, the *Landfriede* for Bavaria and Franconia was also renewed at Nuremberg, even though the previous year's treaty had not yet expired.⁷²³ And on September 5, the emperor ordered Friedrich of Saarwerden to extend, for another five years, the *Landfriede* between the Maas (Meuse) and the Rhine with Wenceslas of Brabant, Wilhelm II of Jülich, and the towns of Cologne and Aachen, since he had already secured the *Landfrieden* on the Rhine, in Alsace, Bavaria, Swabia, and Franconia.⁷²⁴ The signatories complied with the emperor's order on November 1.⁷²⁵

Charles IV did not, however, limit himself to a series of four or five *Landfrieden* to stabilize the political situation in southwestern Germany.⁷²⁶ At Nuremberg on August 30, he also brokered a reconciliation between the counts of Württemberg, the bishop of Würzburg, and Kraft IV of Hohenlohe-Weikerheim on one side and the members of the league of Swabian towns on the other.⁷²⁷ The emperor abandoned Eberhard of Württemberg, forcing him to surrender the goods he had seized. The Bavarian dukes benefited from this arrangement. The emperor also stripped the count of Württemberg of the Lower Swabian *Landvogtei* and granted it to Duke Friedrich of Bavaria. This transfer meant that the Wittelsbach prince now held the *Landvogtei* in both Lower and Upper Swabia and the *Landvogtei* of Augsburg, which significantly strengthened his position in Upper Germany.⁷²⁸ Both the imperial cities and the Bavarian dukes rewarded the Luxembourg monarchs.

At the close of the diet of Nuremberg, the emperor and his son parted ways. Charles left for Prague sometime after September 5, while Wenceslas remained in Nuremberg until mid-October.⁷²⁹ The king's motives for remaining in Germany are clarified by two unpublished and previously unused letters

⁷²³ See *Regesta Imperii*, vol. 8, no. 5935. For this *Landfriede*, see esp. Angermeier, *Königtum*, 263–265.

⁷²⁴ See *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:223–224, no. 123; *Die Regesten der Erzbischöfe*, 8:543–544, no. 1967.

⁷²⁵ *Die Regesten der Erzbischöfe*, 8:553, no. 2000.

⁷²⁶ When the emperor rewarded Ruprecht for his loyal service on October 30, 1378, he noted that the count palatine had contributed to establishing the *Landfrieden* along the Rhine in Alsace as well as in Wetterau, see *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:210, note 1; *Regesta Imperii*, vol. 8, no. 5943. Cf. Vigenier, *Kaiser Karl IV.*, 142.

⁷²⁷ See *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:213–215, no. 119; *Regesta Imperii*, vol. 8, no. 5931.

⁷²⁸ Holtz, *Reichstädte*, 52.

⁷²⁹ For Charles, see *Regesta Imperii*, vol. 8, no. *5940. For Wenceslas, see Hlaváček, *Das Urkunden- und Kanzleiwesen*, 401. Kavka's assertion in *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:234, that Charles

in the Bern collection. One letter was unfortunately stripped of all names when copied, yet it has retained its testimonial value. In it, a servant of King Wenceslas informs the recipient, among other things, of news concerning the Luxembourg monarchs: The emperor requests the consummation of the marriage "between S and the king's daughter V" once the various castles in Transylvania, Hungary, have been granted and handed over to Charles. The emperor also settled the war "between R and the imperial cities," due to which the cities had appeared to be rebelling against him and the king. The emperor left the king in Germany to manage general affairs. And within a fortnight, "R and R etc." are to receive in the "town R" their fiefs after swearing an oath of allegiance, obedience, and servitude to the king.⁷³⁰

From the second letter, which fortunately has not been anonymized, we learn who was to pay homage to Wenceslas, as well as where and when. In it, the mayors of Ulm, Constance, and other associated Swabian cities that had pledged homage to Wenceslas informed King Louis of Hungary that the bishops of Würzburg and Bamberg, along with the Bavarian dukes Stephan, Friedrich, and Johann, and the burgrave of Nuremberg would receive their fiefs from King Wenceslas after taking the oath of allegiance and servitude in Nuremberg on the Sunday after the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, which was September 12. The majors therefore urged the king of Hungary to persuade Duke Leopold III of Austria to do the same.⁷³¹

The references to Nuremberg, the end of the war, the separation of father and son, the dating of the homage, and the appeal to Duke Leopold all correspond exclusively to the situation at the beginning of September 1378. It was not by chance that the imperial cities turned to the Hungarian king for support. King Louis had arranged the marriage of his youngest daughter, Hedwig, to

and Wenceslas began their journey from Nuremberg to Prague after September 10 is untenable.

730 See Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 220, fol. 106v, and no. 7 in the Appendix below: "Ecce dominus imperator sedatis inter R et civitates imperii gweris omnino, pretextu quarum eidem domino imperatori et regi ipse aliqualiter rebellare videbantur, domino meo rege in Almanie partibus pro disponenda republica relicto assignatisque et traditis eidem castris transsilvanis singulis Ungarie, petit pro felici {utinam} inter S et V, regis filiam, matrimonio consumendo. Infrascripti R et R etc. a die hodierna ad XIIIII dies a domino meo rege in civitate R feuda sua suscipient prestitis per eosdem eidem domino regi fidelitatis, obedientie et homagii debita sacramenta."

731 See Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 220, f. 105v, and no. 6 in the Appendix below.

Leopold's eldest son, Wilhelm, in 1374–1375. The Austrian duke celebrated the engagement of both children with great pomp in Hainburg in June 1378.⁷³² This allowed the Hungarian ruler to exert his influence on the Habsburg.

However, the Swabian cities themselves played an important role in the entire affair. In February 1378, the Austrian duke and his brother Albert III formed an alliance with them and supported the cities in their war against the counts of Württemberg.⁷³³ Albert was traditionally close to Charles IV. He had been his son-in-law for seven years and had promised to recognize Wenceslas as king before the election. Charles, therefore, resumed good relations and, in May 1378, secured the duke's loyalty with money.⁷³⁴ For Leopold, consideration for the Luxembourg monarchs was not a priority. As Bernabò Visconti's son-in-law, he looked more towards Upper Italy or the Burgundian Duke Philip the Bold, with whom he arranged the marriage of their descendants in July 1378.⁷³⁵ Leopold was thus undoubtedly one of the last, if not the last, of the important princes in Upper Germany who had not yet pledged his allegiance to the young king. The reconciled cities and the king of Hungary were to help change that.

It is obvious that the end of the war with the Swabian cities brought immediate benefits to the Luxembourg monarchs, but it came at the cost of a painful compromise. Charles had to tolerate the existence of a new power grouping, which, in the meantime, had spread to Franconia, included a number of lords and other cities, and weakened central authority.⁷³⁶ This again indicates that he had an extraordinary reason for such self-denial.

When Charles IV had engaged in troubled Upper Italy a few months earlier, either through his diplomats or through the French king, he was preparing the ground for an Italian campaign. We can assume that the intense effort to stabi-

⁷³² Lindner, *Geschichte des deutschen Reiches*, 1:158; Christian Lackner, *Hof und Herrschaft. Rat, Kanzlei und Regierung der österreichischen Herzöge (1365–1406)*, Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung. Ergänzungsband 41 (Vienna–Munich: Oldenbourg, 2002), 196.

⁷³³ Lindner, *Geschichte des deutschen Reiches*, 1:1:51–52; Holtz, *Reichstädte*, 51; Hardy, *Associative Political Culture*, 126–127.

⁷³⁴ Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV*, 2:176 and 228.

⁷³⁵ Lackner, *Hof und Herrschaft*, 75 and 196; Brigitte Hotz, "Der Ausbruch des Großen Abendländischen Schismas als Chance offensiver landesherrlicher Kirchenpolitik. Motive der Parteinahme Herzog Leopolds III. von Österreich für Clemens VII.", *Francia* 37 (2010): 353–374, at 355–356.

⁷³⁶ Holtz, *Reichstädte*, 52.

lize the political situation in southwestern Germany had the same motivation. Ultimately, the emperor took all necessary steps domestically so that he and Wenceslas could be absent for an extended period. The impending absence of the Luxembourg monarchs may also explain why, at Nuremberg, the aforementioned imperial cities and princes made or renewed their fief promises to King Wenceslas. Leopold of Habsburg could not remain uninvolved; he controlled the south-eastern Alpine passes from the Empire to Italy, and with his favor, the Italian campaign would have been easier.⁷³⁷ However, Wenceslas did not yet have the necessary papal Bull of Approbation in his hand. Moreover, reports from the Roman Curia suggested a new conflict for which Charles could not prepare.

The Happy Hour of the Roman Campaign

The emperor evidently learned of the misunderstanding between Urban and certain cardinals through letters announcing the papal delegation and postponement of Wenceslas's approbation, which he received in early summer 1378. Urban of Tivoli himself wrote to the emperor about the strained relations shortly before July 26. At that time, the pontiff informed the emperor that he had approved Wenceslas as Roman king but could not formally proclaim the approbation because obstructive cardinals had hidden the necessary documents from him. He therefore urged Charles to send a new embassy with the documents and, at the same time, implored him not to heed the cardinals, who had dishonored his position, resisted reform, and sought to create a schism.⁷³⁸

It was in Urban's interest that the bearer of his letter, Archbishop Peter of Magdeburg, inform the emperor of his difficulties as soon as possible. Since Charles was staying in Nuremberg until at least September 5,⁷³⁹ he likely received the pontiff's urgent letter at the diet. For the emperor and his advisers,

⁷³⁷ When King Wenceslas was preparing for the Italian campaign in the early 1380s, Duke Leopold, a supporter of Avignon, preferred to seek permission from Clement VII to grant Wenceslas free passage through his lands; see the pontiff's permission dated July 16, 1381, *Acta summorum pontificum res gestas Bohemicas aevi praehussitici et hussitici illustrantia*, vol. 2, ed. Jaroslav Eršík (Prague: Československá akademie věd, 1980), 672–673, no. 1174.

⁷³⁸ See no. 2 in the Appendix below.

⁷³⁹ *Regesta Imperii*, vol. 8, no. *5940.

however, it must have been challenging to orient themselves within the rapidly changing situation and to assess the true nature of the dispute, particularly as it also involved the matter of approbation.⁷⁴⁰ The situation shifted with the arrival of Urban's second delegation, led by Bishop Pavo de Griffis, sometime before September 25, by which point the monarch was already clearly aligned with Prignano.⁷⁴¹

Nothing is directly documented about the negotiations between Urban's Italian envoys and the emperor. The content and outcome of these negotiations can only be reconstructed from the broader context. Samuel Steinherz attempted this more than a century ago, and with success, as his interpretation is now firmly established in scholarly works. It will therefore be useful to familiarize ourselves with Steinherz's perspective.

According to him, the ambassadors delivered a letter to the emperor, dated July 29, in which the pontiff announced the execution of the approbation. The Italians also brought the Bull of Approbation, but they were instructed to hand it over only after Wenceslas swore an oath not to allow the election of his successor in the Empire during his lifetime. They informed the emperor of Urban's situation and the apostasy of the ultramontane cardinals who sought to depose him, providing evidence of the pope's legitimacy based on the official document of Prignano's election, i.e., the *Factum of Jacques de Sèvre*. They also emphasized Urban's accommodating attitude toward Germany, his intention to organize the ecclesiastical affairs of the Empire according to the advice of the emperor and the electors, and simultaneously requested Charles's support against the cardinals. The ambassadors succeeded on all points except that Wenceslas did not take the required oath, and thus did not receive the Bull of Approbation. According to Steinherz, this only changed after the emperor's death, when the young king took the oath before the legate Pileo da Prata on April 5, 1379.⁷⁴²

⁷⁴⁰ Historians agree that, during the diet, the emperor was still waiting to see how the situation would develop and did not want to make binding decisions, see Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 623; Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:234; Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 204.

⁷⁴¹ See Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 624, who realistically put the meeting of the envoys with the emperor at about the middle of September. Bishop Pavo can be securely attested to have been in Prague on October 7, 1378, see *Codex diplomaticus*, 11:116–117, no. 127. The letter of the emperor to the cardinals from September 25 is discussed in detail below.

⁷⁴² See Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 624 and 629. Cf. Thomas, "Frankreich, Karl IV.," 100–101; Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:234–235; Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 253; Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 203–204. Only Spěváček stated that the envoys had delivered the bull

It is an insightful argument that captures the main issues at play in the Italians' dealings with the emperor, whether it involved the delivery of the bull or Urban's other acts of mercy in exchange for support in his favor. All these aspects will be addressed below. However, the key to understanding the emperor's reaction lies in the question of the delivery of the Bull of Approbation. Steinherz's claim that Wenceslas did not receive the document is untenable.

It is true that Gregory XI, in February 1378, conditioned the dispatch of the Bull of Approbation on Wenceslas's oath regarding the future election. However, cardinals familiar with the matter later claimed that the prepared charter was not sealed only because the pope fell gravely ill and died. They did not even mention the oath when they wrote to the emperor, informing him that they had advised Urban to execute the approbation on May 7.⁷⁴³ And Urban himself later informed Charles IV that his deceased predecessor had already considered the question of approbation nearly settled.⁷⁴⁴ Thus, it seems that Gregory XI had indeed exchanged the oath for the money that Konrad of Veselá had given him, albeit reluctantly, in anticipation of the swift publication of the bull.

Such an interpretation is consistent with the fact that the young king's promise of April 1379 was in no way related to the question of choosing his successor.⁷⁴⁵ It was, rather, the traditional vow of obedience of the Roman-German kings to the Church and the pope. The surviving notarial record of the ceremony makes it clear that Wenceslas, in the presence of Cardinals Pileo da Prata and Jan Očko of Vlašim, first heard "the oath which the Roman kings were in the habit of taking to the Apostolic See"—the oath was part of an otherwise unknown bull of Urban—and then pledged himself in an abbreviated form with his hand on the Gospels.⁷⁴⁶

in Prague, see *idem*, *Karel IV.*, 477, but he did not draw any conclusions from this statement, which is missing in the German version of his work, see *idem*, *Karl IV.*, 192–193.

⁷⁴³ See pages 179–181 above.

⁷⁴⁴ See page 291 in the Appendix below: "Gregorius papa XI^{us}, predecessor noster, eciam negotium huiusmodi quasi expeditum haberet."

⁷⁴⁵ It should be pointed out that Engelmann, *Der Anspruch der Päpste*, 132–133, had already put forward the hypothesis that Wenceslas received the Bull of Approbation on April 5, 1379, because he had pledged not to allow the election of a successor during his lifetime; similarly argued by Peter Eschbach, ed., *Die kirchliche Frage auf den Deutschen Reichstagen von 1378–1380* (Gotha: F. A. Perthes, 1887), 29.

⁷⁴⁶ *Monumenta Vaticana*, 5:40–42, no. 40. See also the letter of the archbishop of Prague, John of Jenstein, to Urban VI, in which, among other things, he informed the pope about

Wenceslas committed himself to take the oath of allegiance in June 1376, before and after the election, with the understanding that he would take it after his approval by the pope. When Urban fulfilled this condition by proclaiming the approbation at Tivoli, the imperial envoys took the oath on Wenceslas' behalf there three days later.⁷⁴⁷ The king himself did so before the cardinals only in Bohemia.⁷⁴⁸

However, another fact is decisive in answering the question of whether the Bull of Approbation was handed over to the Luxembourg monarchs. A copy of Wenceslas's letter has survived in the Bern collection, in which the king joyfully announced the approbation to an unknown man whom he regarded as an ardent supporter of the emperor. Since he not only referred to the bull but also paraphrased it, he undoubtedly had it in his possession. The place and date of the letter are omitted, but it is certain from Charles's titulature that the text was written during the emperor's lifetime, i.e., before November 29, 1378.⁷⁴⁹ In such a situation, it would have been most logical for Wenceslas to have obtained the bull from Urban's envoys.

Dean Konrad of Veselá in Avignon testified that the pontiff refused to give him the bull because it was considered a matter of great significance.⁷⁵⁰ The charter of approbation offered the prospect of an imperial coronation for Wenceslas only if its issuer asserted his legitimacy in the dispute with the cardinals and maintained control of the See of St. Peter in Rome. It can be assumed, therefore, that Bishop Pavo made the delivery of the bull conditional on the emperor's guarantee that he would not allow Urban to fall, and that Wenceslas would accept the diadem only from Urban's hands.⁷⁵¹ The pope was in desperate need of powerful allies. His diplomats certainly did not hesi-

the taking of the oath, Johann Loserth, ed., "Beiträge zur Geschichte der hussitischen Bewegung, vol. 1, Der Codex epistolaris des Erzbischofs von Prag Johann von Jenczenstein," *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte* 55 (1877): 265–400, at 331–332.

⁷⁴⁷ See pages 131 and 205 above.

⁷⁴⁸ The final, i.e. unconditional, wording of the oath of allegiance sealed by Wenceslas is unknown. However, I am skeptical of the claim that his oath never became definitively valid, see Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 184: "Wenzels Eidesleistung wurde niemals wirklich endgültig," and also Schlotheuber and Theisen, *Die Goldene Bulle*, 165.

⁷⁴⁹ See Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 220, fol. 105r, and no. 5 in the Appendix below.

⁷⁵⁰ See "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 13: "Quia negocium esset magnum et ponderosum."

⁷⁵¹ In 1382, the pontiff reminded Wenceslas that the emperor hoped to witness the day when the king would receive the imperial diadem from Urban's hands, see note 926 below.

tate to inform the emperor about the massacre of Romans at Ponte Salaro by mercenaries in the service of the cardinals, and they likely also mentioned the shelling of the Vatican from Castel Sant'Angelo.⁷⁵²

Thus, in September 1378, Charles IV was faced with the decision of whether to accept the bull, recognize Urban as the rightful pope, and support him in the crisis. The pontiff made the decision easier for the emperor in several ways. In the bull and the accompanying letter, he declared that he would grant Wenceslas the imperial anointing at the appropriate place and time, without mentioning Charles's death or abdication.⁷⁵³ At the same moment he put an end to the War of the Eight Saints in Upper and Central Italy. If Charles did not know of the peace agreement from the Florentines or the Sienese, Bishop Pavo certainly did not hesitate to inform him. He could not have chosen a better moment. The joyous news of the approbation and the conclusion of peace reached Charles just after he had ended the intense phase of the conflict between the German princes and the imperial cities. Southwestern Germany had been stabilized by a series of *Landfrieden*, and Adolf of Nassau had been placed on the defensive. This extraordinary political constellation marked the happy hour of Wenceslas's Roman campaign.

From its perspective, the cardinals were clearly the source of instability and uncertainty. It was therefore natural that the emperor and his son should intervene and, if possible, resolve the dispute between the cardinals and Urban in his favor before irreversible actions, or even a new war, could occur. Only by a quick reaction could Charles make the enormous political and financial strain of the past months, if not years, bear the desired fruit not only in Frankfurt and Aachen but also in Rome.

⁷⁵² See Eschbach, ed., *Die kirchliche Frage*, 80: "Cardinales a tempore mortis felicis recordacionis pape Gregorii castrum sancti Angelii tenuerunt, quod et hodie de facto tenent, populo Romano multas ab eodem castro molestias inferendo." Cf. Jamme, "Renverser le pape," 462.

⁷⁵³ *Monumenta Vaticana*, 5:31: "Decernentes unctionem et consecrationem imperiale per manus nostras tibi oportunis loco et tempore impendendas." This passage was explicitly mentioned by Wenceslas in a letter to the emperor's adherent, see page 297 in the Appendix below: "Impendendumque nobis unctionem et consecrationem sacras loco et tempore oportunis." It is worth noting that Dienemann, *Die Romfahrtsfrage*, 6, note 3, on the one hand, could not imagine that Urban would have placed the imperial crown on Wenceslas's head during Charles's lifetime, but at the same time admitted that the emperor longed to experience it.

Multilateral Diplomacy

The emperor addressed the rebels from Prague on September 25. In keeping with his role as universal ruler, he first acknowledged his duty to promote the unity of the world and confront discord, especially within the Church. He was therefore outraged by a rumor circulating (*volubilis fama loquacitas*) that certain cardinals were opposed to the pope, who “had been received by divine direction, unanimously elected, and canonically exalted,” and had separated themselves from him on spurious grounds. Since this meant the oppression of the Apostolic See and the subversion of the faith, it was all the more intolerable to him. He did not want to believe that their separation was true, because the letters of most of the cardinals he received after Urban’s election showed that they considered him the true pope and assisted him in his public acts. Charles, therefore, turned to the recipients suggestively, asking who among them was the seducer who dared to undermine the unity of the Church and the salvation of souls. How had so many experienced men fallen into ignorance? For this outrageous debauchery threatened to collapse the Church, destroy obedience to the Papal See, and sow error and heresy in the Catholic faith. Therefore, the emperor urged the cardinals not to involve the public in their quarrels with the pontiff, but to reconcile with him and assist him in the governance of the Church. More was to be communicated to them orally by the bearer of the letter, the secretary Dietrich Damerow.⁷⁵⁴

King Wenceslas also addressed the cardinals. He explained to them that, because of their position, they should be an example of virtue and truth. However, from the rumors of the people (*fama hominum*), he had heard that they were unhelpfully staying in a certain place separated from Urban. He therefore urged them to return to him, to render obedience to God and the Church, and to offer friendship to him. In cooperation with his father, he promised to support them with more profitable benefices and benefits. But if

⁷⁵⁴ See *Über Formelbücher*, 2:27–28, no. 15; *Regesta Imperii*, vol. 8, no. 6390. To the three manuscripts given by Thomas, “Frankreich, Karl IV.,” 99, note 158, add ms. Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 220, fols. 117v–118r, with the date September 25 and the indication that the bearer was the provost, Dietrich Damerow.

they had no regard for God, the Church, or his person, he would not overlook it, but would find suitable means to strengthen the Church.⁷⁵⁵

The only known copy of Wenceslas's letter lacks a date. However, it can be assumed that it was written around the same time as the emperor's letter to the cardinals,⁷⁵⁶ even though the king was staying in Nuremberg at the time.⁷⁵⁷ The different emphases of the two letters reflect the distinct roles of the two monarchs in the crisis. Put in exaggerated terms, the young king offered the cardinals a carrot and a stick. He showed friendliness but did not hide his resolve. Urban had invited Wenceslas to Rome, expecting him to act vigorously in defense of the Church, and this was the stance the king took with the cardinals.⁷⁵⁸ If he asked them, in returning to Urban, to regard his position and to act amicably toward him, it is further indication that he was writing with a Bull of Approbation in hand.

The emperor appealed to the cardinals in a different way, writing from the perspective of a peacemaker who did not wish to enter the dispute by force. Unlike Wenceslas, Charles did not threaten the rebels; instead, he persuaded them with reasoned arguments, urged them to act reasonably, and warned them of impending disaster. His goal was to preserve the status quo that had existed before the crisis erupted, so he appealed for a restoration of unity.

A contemporary note survives on one of the medieval copies of Charles's letter, indicating that the monarch used the same language to appeal to Queen Joanna of Naples, asking her to show favor and provide support to Urban. He is also said to have written to the count of Fondi, Onorato Caetani, urging him to cease supporting the cardinals, and to have issued general appeals under his

⁷⁵⁵ See Loserth, ed., "Beiträge, 1," 332, no. 28. It is clear from the address that the letter is intended for only one cardinal. Since there were several leaders of the revolt, Wenceslas certainly did not address just one of them. Robert of Geneva and Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille, in particular, can be considered as recipients.

⁷⁵⁶ Alfred Vahlen, *Der deutsche Reichstag unter König Wenzel* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1892), 170–171, dates the letter similarly; in agreement with him is Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 628, note 1, and subsequent literature. See Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:235; Šmahel, *The Parisian Summit*, 253. Valois, *La France*, 1:265, note 5, believes the letter could have been written even before September 25. Cf. also Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 205.

⁷⁵⁷ It is likely that the letter was drafted by John of Jenstein, the future archbishop of Prague. See Jaroslav V. Polc, *De origine festi Visitationis B.M.V.*, Corona Lateranensis 9A (Rome: Libreria editrice della Pontificia universita' Lateranense, 1967), 17.

⁷⁵⁸ Cf. also Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 628.

majestic seal to the cities and subjects of the Empire in Italy, urging them to remain loyal to Urban and assist him.⁷⁵⁹

At least one letter, to the queen, has survived in full. It is, in fact, an adapted version of the emperor's letter of September 25. In its conclusion, Charles urged the queen to help end the dispute between the factions—so that the cardinals could return to the pope—and provide Urban with support. If, however, the ultramontanes remained obstinate, she was to instruct her vassal, the count of Fondi, to deny them obedience and refrain from aiding them.⁷⁶⁰

We witness the emperor's intense efforts in Italy on behalf of Urban. It is unlikely that the task of delivering the letters fell solely on the secretary, Dietrich Damerow, who was sent to the cardinals. We can assume that a larger imperial embassy departed from Prague for the south at the end of September 1378, leaving at least three distinct traces on the Apennine Peninsula.⁷⁶¹

The fourteenth-century English chronicler Henry Knighton validated the legitimacy of Urban's election in his historical work, citing in full a letter from the College of Cardinals to the emperor dated May 8, 1378. He noted that Charles IV affixed his seal, along with those of fifteen other lords, to the document to verify its authenticity, and had it publicly posted on the door of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.⁷⁶² This display was evidently foreshadowed by the emperor's letter to the cardinals of September 25, in which Charles had already criticized the rebels through their correspondence and accused them of impropriety.⁷⁶³ The demonstrative display of the May 8 letter in Rome, therefore, seems to have been one of the imperial embassy's key tasks.

⁷⁵⁹ See Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.ch.f.84, fol. 137v, and Thomas, "Frankreich, Karl IV.," 99, note 58.

⁷⁶⁰ See Franz Martin Pelzl, ed., *Lebensgeschichte des Römischen und Böhmischen Königs Wenceslaus*, vols. 1–2 (Prague–Leipzig: Schönfeldisch-Weißnerische Buchhandlung, 1788 and 1790), here vol. 2, Appendix, 389–390, no. 347. Cf. Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 628–629; Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:235; Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 205.

⁷⁶¹ Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 632, suggests that the emperor only launched "diplomatic intervention in Rome, Naples, Fondi, and Paris" in early November in response to the news of the election of Clement VII. See also Weigel, "Männer um König," 116. I do not share this interpretation for several reasons, discussed in more detail below, and place the launch of a large-scale campaign as early as the end of September.

⁷⁶² See *Chronicon Henrici Knighton*, 2:128: "Quam [i.e., epistolam cardinalium, D.C.] imperator fecit signare sigillo suo cum aliis XV sigillis aliorum dominorum et transfigi fecit Romae ad ecclesiam s. Petri in testimonium et fidem premissorum omnibus intuentibus."

⁷⁶³ See *Über Formelbücher*, 2:28.

The efforts of Charles's diplomats in Italy are also evidenced by another remarkable account. Stefano Palosio, the bishop of Todi and a native Roman, later testified that it was the emperor's envoys who played a decisive role in persuading Agapito Colonna, the bishop of Lisbon and chaplain to Robert of Geneva, to become Urban's cardinal, despite his initial reluctance to accept the honor. According to Palosio, when Urban elevated Agapito, the bishop of Lisbon resided at the castle of Zagarolo, yet declined the cardinalate. Although he did not doubt Urban's legitimacy, he wished to remain neutral in the conflict. Neither Urban's persuasion nor Palosio's urging could sway him, and consultations with his Roman relatives and a delegation of Romans were equally ineffective. Palosio claimed that Colonna changed his mind only after the arrival of the imperial diplomats.⁷⁶⁴ Colonna knew the emperor personally, and it is possible that the letters from the cardinals, authorized by Charles, helped to convince him.

A moment of truth awaited Dietrich Damerow and his companions in Fondi and throughout the Kingdom of Naples. The imperial envoys had arrived in Italy after the election of Clement VII, making their efforts to advocate for Urban in the face of the ultramontanes not only challenging but also dangerous. This danger was hinted at by the curial historian Dietrich of Niem in his work *De scismate*. To fully assess the significance of his remarks, it will be useful to reproduce the entire passage in which he describes Urban's interactions with the emperor.⁷⁶⁵

According to Dietrich, the sequence of events unfolded as follows: When the ultramontanes secured the support of the Breton mercenaries and part of the Roman nobility, and the first skirmishes broke out in the second half of July, Urban realized he needed allies. He thought of the emperor, who sought approval for his son, and the Florentines, who wished to make peace with the Curia. At the same time, he knew that Charles IV had long ago arranged the marriage of his son Sigismund to the daughter of King Louis of Hungary. Therefore, Urban humbled himself and wrote letters in his own hand to both Charles and Louis, describing the violence, injustices, and numerous harms suffered by him and the Curia, and imploring them to aid the Roman Church.⁷⁶⁶

⁷⁶⁴ See Baluze/Mollat, ed., *Vitae paparum*, 2:770 [1247].

⁷⁶⁵ See *Theoderici de Nyem de scismate*, 30–34.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

The emperor and King Louis had already discussed how they might mediate between the factions to prevent the conflict from worsening. Moved by Urban's plight, they respectfully wrote to Clement VII and the cardinals still residing in Fondi, urging them to abandon the schism they had initiated and to obey Urban, lest greater calamities ensue. However, Clement and the cardinals ignored the entreaties of the emperor and the king, treating their envoys with disrespect, even torturing some clerics, interrogating them, imprisoning them, and holding them for extended periods. Upon learning of this, the emperor and king, according to Dietrich, were outraged and resolved to support Urban.⁷⁶⁷

Shortly afterward, the emperor and Urban reached such an understanding that the pope approved the emperor's son's election, elevated the archbishop of Prague to cardinal, and likewise honored the archbishop of Esztergom in recognition of King Louis. Urban then made peace with the Florentines, Perugians, the people of Ancona, and the Milanese lords Bernabò and Galeazzo. Gradually, he drew them to his side, and, in collaboration with the emperor, extended his allegiance nearly throughout Germany.⁷⁶⁸

Dietrich of Niem was a well-informed witness, having served in 1378 as a *scriptor* and *abbreviator* in Urban's chancery. However, he did not complete his historical work until 1410, so he described the events with considerable hindsight.⁷⁶⁹ Consequently, it is understandable that his condensed narrative does not follow the exact chronology. Nonetheless, his account is largely based on facts that can, for the most part, be verified by other sources. Only the turbulent fate of the emperor's and king of Hungary's ambassadors in Fondi lacks further evidence, and evidence of close collaboration between Charles and Louis—or between Louis and Urban—remains vague.

Hungarian historians claim that the king and the emperor sent a letter to Clement VII in Fondi shortly after his election, asking him to renounce his usurped title. However, this is a well-documented fallacy that traces back to

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid., 31–32.

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid., 33–34.

⁷⁶⁹ Hermann Heimpel, *Dietrich von Niem (c. 1340–1418)*, Westfälische Biographien 2 (Münster: Regensbergische Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1932), 18, 181–210; Werner Maleczek, "Autographen von Kardinälen des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts," in *Manu propria: vom eigenhändigen Schreiben der Mächtigen (13.–15. Jahrhundert)*, ed. Claudia Feller and Christian Lackner, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 67 (Vienna: Böhlau, 2016), 69–148, at 130.

Dietrich of Niem's account.⁷⁷⁰ This does not mean that the two monarchs could not have collaborated closely in Italy; later, we will show that they sent a joint delegation to France in support of Urban.

It is also evident that the diplomats' mission in Fondi was extremely challenging. It is likely that they reached the cardinals in the south only after publicly displaying their letter of May 8 in Rome. This act did not sit well with Clement VII or his electors, and the ultramontanes undoubtedly began investigating who had acted against them. The time was ripe for repression and the enforcement of obedience. When Urban sent Raymond of Capua and Jacques de Sèvre to advocate for him in France in November, they encountered hostility, and the latter was investigated for his literary activities and eventually imprisoned.⁷⁷¹ In December 1378, Urban elevated Dietrich Damerow to the bishopric of Tartu, Estonia.⁷⁷² Was this a reward for his loyalty?

The presence of the emperor's envoys in Italy is likely connected to another event. We can assume that their journey from Prague to Rome took about a month. It is therefore noteworthy that on October 20, Urban VI implemented a significant reshuffle of episcopal sees in Bohemia and Germany, which directly affected the emperor. In September, the pope elevated not only Agapito Colonna to the rank of cardinal, but also Jan Očko of Vlašim, archbishop of Prague and a leading adviser to the emperor.⁷⁷³ Shortly thereaf-

⁷⁷⁰ See Antal Áldásy, *A nyugati nagy egyházsakadás története VI. Orbán haláláig, 1378–1389* [The History of the Great Schism of the West until the Death of Urban VI] (Budapest: Pfeifer Ferdinánd, 1896), 342, and Zsolt Hunyadi, "The Western Schism and Hungary: From Louis I to Sigismund of Luxembourg," in *idem, Keresztesek, lovagrendek: Válogatott tanulmányok* [Crusaders, Knightly Orders: Selected Studies] (Szeged: SZTE Középkori és Koraújkori Magyar Történeti Tanszék, 2019), 101–110, at 48. They refer to Karl Joseph von Hefele, *Conciliengeschichte*, vol. 6/2, 2nd ed. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1890), 792, who refers to *Annales ecclesiastici*, 7:342: "Hortati vero sunt antipapam, et cardinales schismaticos Carolus Imperator et Ludovicus Hungarie rex, ut conflatum schisma dissolventer ob ingentia mala, quae ecclesiae in vecturi essent, sed spreta eorum consilia, atque oratores indigne habitos refert Theodoricus Niem."

⁷⁷¹ Valois, *La France*, 1:123–125.

⁷⁷² Bernhart Jähnig, "Dietrich Damerow (um 1330/35–nach 1408)," in *Die Bischöfe des Heiligen Römischen Reiches 1198 bis 1448. Ein biographisches Lexikon*, ed. Erwin Gatz and Clemens Brodkorb (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001), 149–150; *idem*, "Zur Persönlichkeit des Dorpater Bischofs Dietrich Damerow," *Beiträge zur Geschichte Westpreußens* 6 (1980): 5–22, at 13–14.

⁷⁷³ See Zdeňka Hledíková, "Johann Očko von Vlašim († 1380)," in *Die Bischöfe des Heiligen Römischen Reiches 1198 bis 1448. Ein biographisches Lexikon*, ed. Erwin Gatz and Clemens

ter, Urban removed him from the dignity of archbishop, secured him other benefices,⁷⁷⁴ and on October 20 transferred Očko's nephew, Bishop John of Jenstein, of Meissen to the vacant see in Prague.⁷⁷⁵ This initiated a series of episcopal transfers. On the same day, Urban informed the emperor and his son that he had transferred Bishop Nikolaus from Lübeck to Meissen and installed Konrad of Geisenheim, a bachelor of decrees and another well-known secretary of Charles, in his place, asking the emperor to support Konrad.⁷⁷⁶ The dean of Speyer thus evidently remained loyal to Urban, unlike the Dean of Vyšehrad, Konrad of Veselá.

An important question is whether the pontiff elevated John of Jenstein to archbishop by his own will or at the emperor's request. The archbishop himself later recalled that the pontiff acted alone, without his knowledge or consulting members of his family or the emperor.⁷⁷⁷ Some historians find this hard to believe, considering it unlikely that Urban would have made such an important decision without the emperor's knowledge.⁷⁷⁸ However, it is documented that Urban did not hesitate to act independently in filling episcopal sees in the

Brodkorb (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001), 589–590; eadem, *Jan Očko z Vlašimi. První český kardinál a rádce Karla IV.* [Jan Očko of Vlašim. The First Czech Cardinal and Adviser to Charles IV] (Prague: Vyšehrad, 2024), 214.

⁷⁷⁴ This included a provision for the provostries of St. Vitus and Apollinaris in Prague—formerly held by Robert of Geneva—along with reservations for a certain number of benefices in the province of Prague. See *Monumenta Vaticana*, 5:34–35, nos. 29–30.

⁷⁷⁵ See *Scriptorum rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. 2, *Francisci Chronicon Pragense item Benessii de Weitmil Chronicon ecclesiae Pragensis*, ed. Franz Martin Pelzl (Prague, 1784), 442. The deed itself has not survived.

⁷⁷⁶ See Prague, Prague Castle Archives, Archives of the Metropolitan Chapter of St. Vitus, sig. 382-XIII/23. Accessible from: <https://www.monasterium.net/mom/CZ-APH/AMK/382-XIII%7C23/charter?q=Urban%20VI>. (accessed Oct. 7, 2024). The scholarship has so far assumed his appointment as bishop only in 1379, see Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica*, 1:311, and Prange, "Konrad von Geisenheim," 357.

⁷⁷⁷ See "Johannes de Jenstein, Libellus de fuga seculi," in Jan Sedlák, ed., *M. Jan Hus* (Prague: Dědictví sv. Prokopa, 1915), Appendix, 33*–67*, at 50*. Cf. Polc, *De origine festi*, 19–21, who finds Jenstein's testimony credible.

⁷⁷⁸ See Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:237, who assumes that Charles's request was brought to Rome by Urban's first embassy upon his return from the emperor. Similarly, František Šmahel, "Kdo pronesl smuteční řec při pohřbu císaře Karla IV.: [Who Gave the Eulogy at the Funeral of Emperor Charles IV?]," *Studia Mediaevalia Bohemica* 2 (2010): 215–220, at 217–218. Cf. also Anna Pumprová, Jan Slíva, and Richard Psík, eds., *The Private Prayers of John of Jenstein/ Soukromé modlitby Jana z Jenštejna* (Ostrava–Dolní Břežany: Ostravská univerzita, Scriptorium, 2023), 134.

Empire, even during challenging personal circumstances. At least three such cases are known.

After the death of the bishop of Wrocław, Przećław of Pogorzela, who was also the emperor's chancellor, the canons elected their dean, Dietrich of Klattau, as bishop in April 1376. He is documented shortly afterward as being in the diplomatic service of the emperor, who may have thus favored his election. Although Dietrich personally sought a provision in Avignon, his efforts came to nothing. Nor was he successful when he later met Gregory XI in Rome. In December 1377, the pope informed the emperor that he would not appoint the bishop of Wrocław until Charles had begun to assert Ludwig of Meissen's claim in Mainz. When the monarch began to take the pope's words seriously, Gregory died. Sooner or later, however, Dietrich lost Charles's favor. The emperor urged Urban more than once to transfer the bishop of Lubusz, Wenceslas of Legnica, to Wrocław, but the pontiff did not comply until Charles's death.⁷⁷⁹

The second case was much more significant and controversial. Around September 21, 1378, Urban finally decided to concede the see of Mainz to Adolf of Nassau in order to resolve the long-standing dispute. This decision may have been influenced by Hermann Rost, Adolf's envoy, who was residing in Rome at the time. The pontiff hoped that Ludwig of Meissen, the emperor's protégé, would be satisfied with the title of patriarch of Jerusalem and a commission

⁷⁷⁹ Dietrich's futile efforts to attain the episcopal dignity are reported mainly by "Joannis de Czarnkow Chronicon Polonorum," 666–671. For the transfer of Wenceslas of Legnica, see the letter of Urban VI to King Wenceslas dated July 8, 1382, in Pelzl, ed., *Lebensgeschichte*, vol. 1, Appendix, 51–52: "Clare namque memorie Karolus Romanorum imperator genitor tuus multiplicatis literis et nuncciis apud nos instituit, aliqui eciam de consilio tuo nobis sepius suaserunt, ut translacionem huiusmodi tamquam utilem et necessariam pacifico ac tranquillo statui tuo et regni ac ecclesie Wratislaviensi prefatorum facere dignaremur." Cf. Wilhelm Schulte, *Die politische Tendenz der Cronica principum Polonie* (Breslau: Wohlfahrt, 1906), 82–88. It is doubtful whether, during the same period, John of Neumarkt, bishop of Olomouc, was seeking the see of Wrocław with the emperor's support. This is discussed in detail by Marie Bláhová, "Kandidatura Jana ze Středy na úřad vratislavského biskupa [The Candidacy of Jan of Středa for the Office of Bishop of Wrocław]," in *Tysiąclecie dziedzictwa kulturowe diecezji wrocławskiej* [The Millennial Cultural Heritage of the Diocese of Wrocław], ed. Antoni Barciak (Katowice: Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne, 2000), 86–104.

to temporarily administer the imperial bishopric of Cambrai.⁷⁸⁰ He was mistaken. Ludwig and his relatives did not accept Urban's decision. As a result, after the emperor's death, King Wenceslas urged Urban in early December to restore Ludwig to Mainz, both to pacify the Empire and because Urban's decision contradicted the terms that Charles IV had sent to the pontiff regarding the see of Mainz.⁷⁸¹

Finally, it has been mentioned above that in June the episcopal see of Liège became vacant, and in July, Charles recommended to the pope that Eustace de Rochefort should fill it. He had been elected by the chapter, and the emperor had already recognized him as a secular ruler. However, Urban hesitated so long in granting the provision that by the end of November, he was overtaken by Clement VII. Prignano therefore entrusted the administration of the see to the bishop of Utrecht, Arnold de Horne.⁷⁸²

Urban thus apparently did not hesitate to act independently of the emperor in filling important bishoprics in the Empire, or even contrary to his will, if he considered it useful. This was entirely in keeping with his sense of the sovereignty of the supreme pontiff and the Church. Especially after July 20, he was interested in filling important sees beyond the Alps with able bishops whose loyalty he could be sure of. In Jenstein's case, there are indications that Urban knew well whom he was appointing as archbishop of Prague after the schism broke out.

The bishop of Meissen, who came from a family of the emperor's courtiers, was a man of proper education and an international outlook. In the late 1360s, he studied ecclesiastical law in Padua and Bologna. He also visited the Papal Curia in Avignon, where Urban first heard of him. He then moved on to Montpellier and Paris for further education in law and theology, where he earned a bachelor of decrees in 1375. He was reportedly urged to continue his studies by the French king himself.⁷⁸³

⁷⁸⁰ See "Chronicon Maguntinum," in *Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte vom 14. bis ins 16. Jahrhundert*, vol. 18, *Die Chroniken der mittelreinischen Städte. Mainz* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1882), 127–250, at 200.

⁷⁸¹ See Pelzl, ed., *Lebensgeschichte*, vol. 1, Appendix, 256–258, no. 250, at 257.

⁷⁸² See Fantysová-Matějková, *Wenceslas de Bohême*, 517–518.

⁷⁸³ For Jenstein's biography, see Ernest Ruben Weltzsch, *Archbishop John of Jenstein (1348–1400). Papalism, Humanism and Reform in Pre-Hussite Prague*, Studies in European History 8 (Den Haag: Mouton, 1968), 9–14; Pumprová, Slíva, and Psík, eds., *The Private Prayers*, 129–135. Jenstein's stay in Italy and France can be dated only indirectly.

Jenstein made many friendships in Italy and France. In Bologna, he attended the lectures of John of Legnano, whom he considered a special friend and corresponded with until his death.⁷⁸⁴ In September 1378, the Bolognese professor stayed in Rome with Urban, who thought so highly of his loyalty that he reluctantly granted him permission to return to the university. In the end, however, Urban took advantage of the scholar's departure and sent a cardinal's hat to another expert in ecclesiastical law, Filippo Carafa, who was in Bologna at the time. This newly appointed cardinal was also a friend of Jenstein. The archbishop of Prague even credited him in one of his letters with a share in his elevation.⁷⁸⁵ In Bologna, John perhaps also met Catherine of Siena's confessor, Raymond of Capua, whom he warmly welcomed to Prague five years later.⁷⁸⁶ Another of the newly appointed cardinals close to the Luxembourg monarchs, Pileo da Prata, was also able to speak to Urban about Jenstein. He had been well established at the French court from 1373 to 1375, and the nephew of the emperor's leading adviser, studying in Paris, was certainly worthy of his attention.⁷⁸⁷

After Urban made Jan Očko a cardinal, it took him a month to transfer his nephew from Meissen to Prague. The pontiff therefore had ample time to hold consultations and obtain numerous references for a major reshuffle of the episcopal sees in both Germany and Bohemia, which he likely assumed would strengthen his authority and would not displease the emperor.⁷⁸⁸ He probably communicated his decision to the imperial envoys residing in Rome

784 Rudolf Holinka, *Církevní politika arcibiskupa Jana z Jenštejna za pontifikátu Urbana VI.* [The Ecclesiastical Policy of Archbishop John of Jenstein under the Pontificate of Urban VI], Spisy filosofické fakulty University Komenského v Bratislavě 14 (Bratislava: Universita Komenského, 1933), 14.

785 Jenstein called himself the cardinal's "creation" ("vestram creaturam"), see Loserth, ed., "Beiträge, 1," 395, no. 75. Cf. Holinka, *Církevní politika*, 15–16; Polc, *De origine festi*, 20, note 14; Weltsch, *Archbishop John of Jenstein*, 15, note 30. On Carafa, see Luciano Meluzzi, *I vescovi e gli arcivescovi di Bologna*, Collana storico-ecclesiastica 3 (Bologna: Grafica Emiliana, 1975), 227–231.

786 See Holinka, *Církevní politika*, 16, and Vladimír Josef Koudelka, "Raimund von Capua und Böhmen," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 30 (1960): 206–226, esp. 206–207.

787 Stacul, *Il cardinale*, 101–108, assumes that Pileo stayed in Rome from late June to early November 1378.

788 Konrad of Veselá testified that Prignano had many supporters in the Kingdom of Bohemia and elsewhere because he had promoted Jan Očko to cardinal, his nephew to archbishop, and many others to abbeys, dignities, and offices and other benefices, see "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 13–14.

and perhaps even consulted them, but it does not appear that he acted on the emperor's initiative.⁷⁸⁹ The rotation may have occurred only because Urban had sent Charles's faithful collaborator Jan Očko "into retirement," and it is unlikely that the monarch sought to do so.⁷⁹⁰

The emperor's intense diplomatic campaign in Italy was in keeping with the importance of the region in the emergence of the ecclesiastical crisis. Charles IV agitated in Urban's favor, but also in other countries. We have noted above that the pontiff sent a letter from Rome to the emperor, in which he portrayed him as a lover of unity and urged him to appeal to the princes and kings, especially those of France and Hungary, to reject the schismatics, oppose them, behave judiciously towards him, and heed the emperor's advice.⁷⁹¹ Urban's entreaties were heard.

The pontiff himself testified, six years later, that at his request, Emperor Charles, his son Wenceslas, King Louis of Hungary, and some of the princes sent envoys with letters to the king of France, asking him to remain faithful to the pope.⁷⁹² The cardinals staying in Avignon in the last third of October 1378 were also aware of this mission. They mentioned it in the instructions they drew up for Gilles Bellemère, whom they commissioned to travel to Fondi to inform the rebels of the news from beyond the Alps. Among other things, they assured their companions in Italy that it would soon be possible to obtain the support of the emperor and the kings of Hungary, Scotland, Castile, and others for Clement VII, as they inquired into the French monarch's stance on

⁷⁸⁹ The letter notifying the emperor of the elevation of Konrad von Geisenheim to bishop has survived only in fragmentary form, but the surviving passages do not indicate that Urban acted at the monarch's request. See note 776 above.

⁷⁹⁰ See Hledíková, *Jan Očko z Vlašimi*, 214, who also believes that it is probable that Urban acted independently.

⁷⁹¹ See page 209 above.

⁷⁹² See Paris, *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, Moreau 702, fol. 18iv: "Et licet idem Carolus [i.e., King Charles V, D.C.] per plures magne auctoritatis et scientie viros etiam prelatos et magistros in theologia doctores iuris canonici et civilis et alios in dictis scientiis peritos et magne conscientie viros necnon per solennes nuncios et litteras dive memorie Caroli Romani imperatoris ac etiam carissimi in Christo filii nostri Wenceslai Romani et Boemie regis illustris necnon clare memorie Ludovici regis Ungarie et nonnullorum principum etiam ad nostram requisitionem paterno zelo premunitus et requisitus fuisset, ut ab hujusmodi erroribus resipiseret et in nostra et predicte Romane ecclesie devotione fidelitate et obedientia, prout tenebatur, permaneret." This is the bull of May 13, 1384, about which see Valois, *La France*, 1:312, note 1.

the ecclesiastical crisis. To support their hopeful expectations, they referred to a letter concerning the emperor and the king of Hungary, who had sent envoys to Charles V regarding the ecclesiastical question.⁷⁹³

The cardinals in Avignon clearly had second-hand information, so it is not surprising that their expectations were distorted. The emperor did not doubt Urban's legitimacy. However, since he sought reconciliation between the cardinals and the pontiff, he saw it as beneficial to negotiate with France. For this reason, it is noteworthy that, as early as the first half of September, there was intense debate in Paris about the possibilities of an amicable solution to the ecclesiastical crisis.

In mid-July, the cardinals sent two envoys from Anagni to the French court: Arnauld, bishop of Famagusta, and Nicolas de Saint-Saturnin, administrator of the papal palace, with letters of credentials for the king, the parliament, and the university. They arrived in Avignon in early August, where they succeeded in gaining the support of five of the six cardinals for the revolt and obtained additional credentials for the king. Around August 20, they arrived in Paris. When they asked Charles V to oppose Urban and take the cardinals under his protection, the monarch called an assembly of clerics and scholars, including six archbishops, thirty bishops, several abbots, doctors of law and theology, and members of the universities of Paris, Orléans, and Angers. The meeting began on September 11, and two days later, some of the nobles of parliament joined in. The bishop of Famagusta recounted the circumstances of Urban's election, stating that the cardinals were determined not to recognize him.

The clergy intimated that they did not yet have enough information on such a complex and dangerous matter and advised the king not to react for the time being. They also concluded that the judge of the dispute could not be the cardinals but a general council, though they could not agree on who should call

793 The instructions were published by Noël Valois, "La situation de l'église au mois d'Octobre 1378," in *Mélanges Julien Havet. Recueil de travaux d'érudition dédiés à la mémoire de Julien Havet (1853–1893)* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1895), 451–464, at 458–464, and again by Franz Placidus Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Ein Aktenstück zu Beginn des abendländischen Schismas," *Studien und Mitteilungen aus dem Benediktiner- und Cistercienser-Orden* 28 (1907): 30–37, see *ibid.*, 34: "Cicis attrahet [i.e., Clement VII, D.C.] principes ad obedienciam suam, et specialiter per manum regis Francie, ad quem Imperator, reges Ungarie, et Scocie, ac Castelle et alii se referunt; et viam quam tenebit creditur, quod tenebunt et sequentur, prout videri poterit in quadam littera, que facit mencionem de Imperatore et rege Ungarie, qui ista de causa miserunt ad Regem." Cf. Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 207–208.

it: the pope, the cardinals, or perhaps the secular power. For this reason, the king was advised to remain neutral and actively promote agreement between the parties through diplomatic mediation. Some even suggested that the king and the emperor should send letters to both parties calling for reconciliation. If negotiations failed, the secular rulers were to take charge of convening the general council. The assembly did not object, however, to the king providing material and physical security for the cardinals.⁷⁹⁴

It is unlikely that the resolution of the French clergy would have reached Prague quickly enough to affect the mandate of the imperial legation. However, it aligned well with the emperor's plans to reconcile the two sides through diplomatic means.⁷⁹⁵ Yet, the precipitous developments did not favor the policy of reconciliation.

Charles V sent his secretary, Pierre Corbie, to Italy in August for further information. He returned, probably at the end of September, with the sealed documents: the *vidimus* of the cardinals' *Casus* of August 2, their declaration of August 9, the circular to the sovereigns of August 21, and the sealed letters to the University of Paris of the same date.⁷⁹⁶ It is difficult to say whether the ruler was led to break neutrality by the seals on the official documents or by the determination of his brother, Duke Louis of Anjou.⁷⁹⁷ By mid-October at the latest, Charles V sent Colin de Dormans to the cardinals with letters indicating that he was on their side and had renounced Urban, though secretly for the time being.⁷⁹⁸

794 For the king's reply, which was transmitted by his counsellor Jean Le Fèvre to the envoys of the cardinals, see Bliemetzrieder, ed., *Literarische Polemik*, 1–3. For other sources, see *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, 3:558, no. 1613. The motives for the king's reticence were discussed by Valois, *La France*, 1:103–105; Ullmann, *The Originis*, 53–54; and more recently by Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 188–190, and Esser, *Schisma als Deutungskonflikt*, 52–53, with regard to the issue of the general council. There is also a detailed vernacular report of the assembly, in which the aforementioned royal reply was included, as it was sent to the king of Aragon. This text then served as the basis for the king's resolution at the meeting of the Aragonese clergy in Barcelona. The position was the same as in France: neutrality. See Seidlmaier, ed., *Die Anfänge*, 303–307. Cf. *ibid.*, 68–69.

795 See also Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 206–207.

796 Valois, *La France*, 1:105–106.

797 On Louis's decisiveness in favor of the cardinals, see Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 193 and 195–196.

798 Valois, *La France*, 1:106–108; Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 191.

Thus, when the German-Hungarian mission was discussed at Avignon, the French king was no longer interested in settling the quarrel amicably with Urban remaining pope. The negotiations were definitely paralyzed by the news of the appointment of cardinals in Rome and the election of a new pope in Fondi. The united embassy from the east had no mandate to negotiate further under such exacerbated circumstances.

The question is whether Charles V renounced Urban also because of a change in the marriage triangle involving the descendants of the three monarchs. Noël Valois has stated that the last mention of Princess Catherine of Hungary, betrothed to a French prince, dates from May 1378.⁷⁹⁹ Therefore, some historians believe that the negotiations in France were already overshadowed by the princess's death, creating an unexpected imbalance in the marriage triangle to the detriment of the Valois family, as Charles V was denied access to Naples from the Hungarian north.⁸⁰⁰

Although it cannot be proven that the eldest Hungarian princess was actually dead by then,⁸⁰¹ it is noteworthy that the emperor's cooperation with King Louis in trying to keep Urban in office was preceded by news of future marriages for his other daughters. In June 1378, the youngest, Hedwig, was spectacularly betrothed to the son of an Austrian duke,⁸⁰² and around late August or early September, a courtier of King Wenceslas reported from Nuremberg to a friend that the emperor had demanded "the consummation of the marriage of S to the king's daughter V" and that certain castles in Transylvania had been

⁷⁹⁹ See Valois, "Le projet de mariage," 212–214. Valois's dating of the last mention of the princess to May 1378 is problematic. He relied on the claims made by Charles V's adviser, Jean Le Fèvre, who attempted to win the count of Flanders over to Clement VII in early 1379. The abbot discredited Urban by accusing him, among other things, of ruthlessly excommunicating the queen of Naples for her failure to pay the mandatory tribute, and of threatening to confine her to a monastery and hand over her kingdom to the son of the French king and his future bride, the princess of Hungary. See Du Boulay, ed., *Historia universitatis*, 4:521. If, in the second half of August, Urban was accompanied from Tivoli to Rome by the soldiers of the queen of Naples (see *Chronicon siculum*, 32), then a significant question mark hangs over the alleged fundamental crisis in relations between Urban and the queen as early as May 1378.

⁸⁰⁰ See Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 210–211.

⁸⁰¹ Kavka, "Zum Plan," 281, places Catherine's death approximately in May–October 1378.

⁸⁰² Lackner, *Hof und Herrschaft*, 196.

granted and handed over to him.⁸⁰³ The precise meaning of these statements is unclear, but it is evident that the matter of Sigismund and Mary's marriage, along with the wedding of her younger sister, was being actively addressed alongside the looming threat of schism.

The alliance between the emperor and the king of Hungary was a significant force in the diplomatic campaign supporting Urban, with the imperial elites also actively involved. In Rome, not only the emperor's seal but also those of fifteen other lords were displayed, and letters from the princes in support of Urban were sent to France. Charles IV demonstrably sought their favor. The Czech Baroque historian and Prague canon Thomas Pessina of Czechorod, writing in the seventeenth century, still had access to a codex that allegedly contained letters from Charles IV to German princes and neighboring kings in support of Urban VI, written in Prague in August, September, and October 1378.⁸⁰⁴ In August, the emperor was not in Bohemia, making it impossible for him to have campaigned from there, though later he was indeed in a position to do so.

Through his diplomatic campaign in Germany, Italy, and France, the emperor entered the realm of persuasion and controversy. Let us now take a closer look at what the Charles IV knew about the papal election and the cardinal's rebellion, and how both warring factions in Italy succeeded in their efforts to influence his knowledge and opinion far beyond the Alps.

Lights and Shadows of Agitation

At the beginning of the fifteenth century, Johannes Ambundii, the vicar general of the bishopric of Würzburg, collected remarkable materials from the first year of the schism. This collection consists of seven documents. It will be most

⁸⁰³ See pages 299–300 in the Appendix below: "Assignatisque et traditis eidem castris trans-silvanis singulis Ungarie petit pro felici {utinam} inter S et V regis filiam matrimonio consumendo."

⁸⁰⁴ Thomas Pessina de Czechorod, *Phosphorus septicornis ecclesiae Pragensis* (Prague: Jan Arnolt z Dobroslavína, 1673), 194, note c: "Ms. Epistolae Caroli IV. Imp. ad diversos imperii principes, imo etiam vicinos reges pro Urbano VI. datae Pragae an. 1378 mens. Aug. Septem. Octobr. Pragae datae."

practical to present them in chronological order, rather than in the sequence in which they appear in the codex now held in Würzburg, Germany.⁸⁰⁵

The oldest document is the power of attorney from the six French cardinals residing in the Castel Sant'Angelo, by which they granted permission on April 9 to their colleagues present in the papal palace to confirm Prignano's election.⁸⁰⁶ Also included is the letter of May 8, sent to the emperor by the sixteen participants in the conclave.⁸⁰⁷ Of greater interest is the copy of the cardinals' personal letter to Prignano, in which they officially informed him on August 9 that his election had been coerced and called for his abdication.⁸⁰⁸ Equally significant is Urban's mandate of August 29, by which he forbade papal officials from staying outside the Roman Curia and ordered the collectors not to obey Pierre de Cros, who had been deprived of his office.⁸⁰⁹ The collection also includes a copy of the emperor's letter to the cardinals dated September 25, along with a note describing other letters Charles sent to Italy in support of Urban.⁸¹⁰ Following this is an undated text titled, "A memory of what is to be communicated in the name of Charles IV by the bishop of Bamberg to the electors and other ecclesiastical and secular princes."⁸¹¹ Finally, there is the summons by which Urban, on October 1, ordered the four cardinals who had led the revolt to appear at his court in Rome.⁸¹²

It is a remarkable collection that can be read as a condensed account of the outbreak of the schism through the eyes of a German Urbanist. The first two texts demonstrate the legitimacy of Prignano's election; the third, the betrayal of the cardinals; the fourth and seventh, Urban's reaction; and the fifth and sixth, the emperor's response. These are mostly uniquely preserved official documents, with one exception.

⁸⁰⁵ See Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.ch.f.84, fols. 135r–143v. A digital copy of the manuscript with a description is available from <http://vb.uni-wuerzburg.de/ub/mchf84/ueber.html> (accessed Oct. 10, 2024). See also page 27 above.

⁸⁰⁶ Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.ch.f.84, fol. 138r.

⁸⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 135r–v.

⁸⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, fols. 140v–141r.

⁸⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 143r–v.

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 137r–v.

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*, fols. 139r–140r, see 139r: "Memoria dicendorum pro parte imperatoris principibus electoribus imperii et aliis principibus ecclesiasticis et secularibus per episcopum Bamberensem."

⁸¹² *Ibid.*, fols. 141v–143r.

The undated instructions to the bishop of Bamberg and the emperor's diplomat, Lamprecht of Brunn, hold a special place in the Würzburg collection.⁸¹³ The memorandum contains arguments designed to persuade the imperial elites to recognize Urban as the true pope. Of the twelve articles, four directly concern the emperor, King Wenceslas, or the princes. These will be discussed later. We will first focus on the points in which the emperor commented on Prignano's election and the reasons for the revolt of the cardinals.

In his instructions to Lamprecht of Brunn, Charles substantiated the canonicity of Prignano's election primarily through the cardinals' letter of May 8. He sent it to the princes in full as an appendix, which is likely why it also appears in the Würzburg collection. This serves as further evidence of the widespread dissemination of the letter by the imperial chancery. Charles also argued that Urban held numerous public and private consistories with the approval and assistance of the cardinals, providing a specific example. He emphasized that the cardinals had unanimously urged Urban to proclaim Wenceslas's approbation without delay, supporting this claim by referencing the relevant letters and noting that he had ordered them to be carefully preserved. The correspondence also served the emperor as proof that the cardinals recognized Urban as their lord.⁸¹⁴

This time there is no indication that the letters concerning Wenceslas's approbation were attached to the memorandum in full. However, we know that they too were sooner or later disseminated by the imperial or royal chancery as an instrument of Urbanist agitation, as the Basel manuscript eloquently attests.⁸¹⁵

In the memorandum, the emperor did not limit himself to correspondence to defend the legitimacy of the April election. He also contradicted the cardinals' claims that they had been intimidated during the election, presenting information from the conclave. Charles considered popular pressure unlikely because neither the Romans nor anyone outside the College of Cardinals spoke of Prignano as a suitable candidate. On the contrary, when his election was made public, the people were so unfamiliar with him that they questioned who he was, reacting with such fury and anger that it became necessary to hide

⁸¹³ The instructions were edited by Eschbach, ed., *Die kirchliche Frage*, 77–80, from an unknown manuscript. Apparently, his work was based on the Würzburg manuscript.

⁸¹⁴ Eschbach, ed., *Die kirchliche Frage*, 77–78, articles 1–4.

⁸¹⁵ See pages 187–188 above.

him. The farce involving Cardinal Tebaldeschi occurred precisely because of the public's indignation that a Roman had not been elected.⁸¹⁶

Nor, according to the emperor, was the cardinals' claim that they had elected Urban out of fear in the Castel Sant'Angelo true. He explained that the cardinals had held power over the castle since the death of Gregory XI and had caused harm to the Romans from there.⁸¹⁷ Finally, according to Charles, the legitimacy of Urban's unforced election was affirmed by the fact that the cardinals in the aforementioned castle had confirmed its canonicity by signing it. Once again, the emperor pointed out that a copy of the relevant document, with signatures, was attached to the memorandum in full. This was apparently the power of attorney from the six ultramontane cardinals of April 9, which is also present in the Würzburg manuscript.⁸¹⁸

In the memorandum, Charles also expressed his opinion on the causes of the revolt of the cardinals. According to him, they turned against Urban and began to claim that he had been elected under duress for four reasons: they struggled to accept criticism of their simony, the possession of multiple benefices, and their avarice; they saw that Urban did not want to return to Avignon from Rome; they perceived that Urban was inclined to ensure that the emperor and the princes would not be harmed or restricted in their governance of Italy, Germany, and the Empire as a whole; and, finally, the French had lost hope of controlling the See of St. Peter, which they had long held almost hereditarily.⁸¹⁹

When the emperor referred in his memorandum to the correspondence of the cardinals from the spring of 1378, it is clear which letters he was referring to. However, it is much more difficult to determine the sources from which he drew his knowledge of events in Rome and his understanding of the reasons behind the cardinals' revolt. Let us examine more closely what the known sources suggest about his knowledge.

In the National Library in Prague, there is a codex from the late fourteenth century with 87 folios, which can be considered a kind of Transalpine *liber de*

⁸¹⁶ Eschbach, ed., *Die kirchliche Frage*, 79–80, article 10.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid., 80, article 11.

⁸¹⁸ Ibid., article 12.

⁸¹⁹ Ibid., 79, article 9.

schismate.⁸²⁰ It contains ten texts from 1378–1379, most of which are known from other copies. The following writings and works have already been mentioned above: the *De fletu ecclesie* of John of Legnano,⁸²¹ the open letter of Coluccio Salutati to the cardinals in response to the election of Clement VII,⁸²² the declaration of the cardinals from August 9,⁸²³ the *Factum* of Jacques de Sève,⁸²⁴ and the obligatory letters to the emperor from Robert of Geneva (April 14) and from the participants in the conclave (May 8, 1378).⁸²⁵

There are also texts in the codex that we encounter for the first time. Notably, there is a very sharp, even scurrilous, reply to the cardinals' August declaration, which is attributed in the manuscript to King Richard II of England. However, this attribution cannot be relied upon.⁸²⁶ The codex also contains a letter from Coluccio Salutati to Cardinal Pietro Corsini, dated November 3, 1378, urging him to return to Urban's obedience,⁸²⁷ as well as a *quaestio* from Johannes Braclis, professor at the University of Prague, dated April 22, 1379, regarding Urban's election.⁸²⁸ Equally unique is a copy of a letter from the major penitentiary, Cardinal Jean de Cros, in which, on April 30, 1378, he

⁸²⁰ See Prague, National Library, XIV D 19. A digital copy is available from the Manuscriptorium portal (<https://www.manuscriptorium.com>). For the description, see Josef Truhlář, *Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum latinorum qui in c. r. Bibliotheca publica atque Universitatis Pragensis asservantur*, vol. 2 (Prague: F. Řivnáč, 1906), 303, no. 2527.

⁸²¹ Prague, National Library, XIV D 19, fols. 1r–35v, 50r–v.

⁸²² Ibid., fols. 37r–42v.

⁸²³ Ibid., fols. 44r–45r.

⁸²⁴ Ibid., fols. 60v–79v.

⁸²⁵ Ibid., fols. 80v–81r.

⁸²⁶ Ibid., fol. 36r–v. The letter has such a complicated textual tradition that it is not at all certain that it originated in England, where it was attributed to "catholic bishops." For the most detailed discussion of the text so far, see Harvey, "The Case for Urban," 545–546.

⁸²⁷ Prague, National Library, XIV D 19, fols. 80r–v. The letter was edited by Voci, ed., "Alle origini del Grande Scisma," 334–335, no. 3.

⁸²⁸ Prague, National Library, XIV D 19, fols. 45r–49v, 52r–60r. International scholarship has recorded this treatise, remarkable for its allegorical argument, only in limited measure. Neither Bénédicte Sère, *Les débats d'opinion à l'heure du Grand Schisme: ecclésiologie et politique*, Ecclesia Militans 6 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 425–447, nor Hans-Jürgen Becker, ed., *Konrad von Gelnhausen: die kirchenpolitischen Schriften* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2018), 31–50, mention it in their inventories of the polemical treatises on the schism. It is mentioned only by Swanson, *Universities, Academics*, 29–30. Among the works of Czech authors, see Vít Hlinka, "Obrana legitimity Urbana VI. v traktátu Johannese Braclige z roku 1379 [Defence of the Legitimacy of Urban VI in Johannes Braclige's Treatise of 1379]," *Revue církevního práva* 24 (2018): 45–61.

ordered the Bishop of Famagusta, Arnould, to absolve Henry of Libeň, a cleric of the Prague diocese, from penalties.⁸²⁹

The codex was produced by a scribe who was apparently a member of King Wenceslas's chancery, as evidenced by numerous pen tests referring to the activities of the royal notary.⁸³⁰ How such a varied mix of texts came to be at the Luxembourg court is well explained. Urban himself circulated the seminal work of John of Legnano to universities and royal courts by the end of 1378 at the latest. Coluccio Salutati, as Florentine chancellor, had long been in contact with the emperor. The invective attributed to the English king—if it did not originate in the Empire—demonstrates the close relations between the House of Luxembourg and England that began to develop rapidly after the outbreak of the schism.⁸³¹ Johannes Braclis submitted his scholarly treatise to the royal chancellor, Archbishop John of Jenstein, for revision. Nor would the copy of the seemingly mundane absolution for Henry of Libeň be accidental. In this case, too, it was an instrument of agitation, showing that Cardinal Jean de Cros regarded Urban as the legitimately elected pope before the revolt.

The Prague codex provides valuable insight into the ideological world of Urbanism at the Luxembourg court. However, this is especially true for the time of King Wenceslas. The author of the memorandum could only have considered Jacques de Sèvre's *Factum*, which was the only one of the polemical works originating in Italy that was definitively completed before the election in Fondi.

The literary and ideological links and overlaps between the memorandum and *Factum* were already documented by Martin Souchon at the end of the

⁸²⁹ Prague, National Library, XIV D 19, fols. 42v–43r. Similar writings have been dealt with by Zutshi, ed., “Jean de Cros,” 342–345, who has traced three other letters issued by Jean de Cros as major penitentiary before the outbreak of the revolt.

⁸³⁰ See Prague, National Library, XIV D 19, fols. 81v and 86v. As noted in the introduction above, a codex has been preserved in the Vatican Library that consists exclusively of texts present in the Prague manuscript, see Vatican, Biblioteca apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 4924: these are the letters of Robert of Geneva from April 14 and of the cardinals from May 8 to the emperor, the declaration of August 9, the reply attributed to Richard II, the open letter of Coluccio Salutati to the cardinals, and the *Factum Iacobi de Ceva*. A digital copy is available at https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.4924 (accessed Oct. 10, 2024). The contents are described by Brandmüller, “Zur Frage nach der Gültigkeit,” 38, note 173, who, however, omits the aforementioned invective attributed to the English king.

⁸³¹ See, e.g., Michael Van Dussen, *From England to Bohemia: Heresy and Communication in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

nineteenth century.⁸³² Among other things, he pointed out that Jacques de Sèze had already argued in Urban's favor before the emperor, using the correspondence of the cardinals and citing the case of Wenceslas's approbation as evidence of their collaboration with Urban in the consistories.⁸³³ However, Souchon's careful analysis can also be enriched by a crucial new insight. As mentioned above, the power of attorney of six French cardinals was preserved in the Würzburg collection along with the memorandum. Until now, research has known the contents of the cardinals' document exclusively from Jacques de Sèze's *Factum*. Since the copy of the procuration present in the *Factum* is identical to the copy of the Würzburg manuscript, it is highly probable that there is a close genetic relationship between the two.⁸³⁴ This increases the likelihood that the *Factum* was brought to Prague by Urban's second legation.⁸³⁵

On the other hand, Jacques de Sèze's extensive treatise on Prignano's election and the pope's coexistence with the cardinals could not have been Charles's only source of information. De Sèze justified the intrigues of the ultramontanes solely by Urban's refusal to comply with their improper and unjust demands.⁸³⁶ The memorandum, however, presents the rebels in a much more critical light.

When Charles IV learned from the Italian envoys that the cardinals resented Urban for admonishing them over their simony, accumulation of benefices, lust, avarice, and other transgressions,⁸³⁷ it aligned with what Urban himself had written to the emperor in a letter he entrusted to the archbishop of Magdeburg at the end of July. In it, he portrayed the rebels as perverse individuals devoted to selfish love, fleeing from reform because he, Urban, wished to eliminate vices, as was his pastoral duty.⁸³⁸

⁸³² See Souchon, *Die Papstwahlen*, 95–99.

⁸³³ See "Factum Iacobi de Ceva," 506 (the correspondence) and 505 (the approbation). Because the edition is of poor quality at this point, see also ms. Prague, National Library, XIV D 19, fols. 73r–v and 72v.

⁸³⁴ See "Factum Iacobi de Ceva," 496, and ms. Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.ch.f.84, fol. 138r.

⁸³⁵ This was already indicated by Souchon, *Die Papstwahlen*, 95, and elaborated in detail by Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 622 and 624.

⁸³⁶ "Factum Iacobi de Ceva," 508.

⁸³⁷ Eschbach, ed., *Die kirchliche Frage*, 79, article 9.

⁸³⁸ See pages 201–202 above.

Catherine of Siena's vocabulary recalls the *Quid agitis* invective written by one of her learned followers. The author severely reproached the French for their selfish love and carnality. He also stated that the ultramontanes had long held the See of St. Peter almost by hereditary right, and it was inconceivable to them that the pope should not be one of their own. Therefore, only by divine intervention—because they had disputes among themselves—did they finally elect an Italian.⁸³⁹ The memorandum adopted this idea, accusing the French cardinals of inventing the claim of the forced election of Urban only when they had lost hope of regaining the Apostolic See, which they had long held by hereditary succession, so to speak.⁸⁴⁰ This thesis was not difficult to support. The ultramontanes themselves legitimized their revolt on August 9 by claiming that Prignano had refused to comply with their demands to either reject the election or renounce his usurped dignity.⁸⁴¹

A strong anti-French ethos is also present in the other two statements, which are much more controversial. We have no other evidence that the cardinals, unlike Urban, intended to harm the emperor and the princes in their rule over Italy, Germany, and the Empire, as the memorandum claims.⁸⁴² The accusation that the cardinals rebelled against Urban because he would not return to Avignon with them is no longer so unique,⁸⁴³ but it still draws attention. This claim was characteristic of the admirers of Birgitta of Sweden, first attested in the autumn of 1379, when the Ultramontanes had already relocated beyond the Alps, making it easy to interpret their forced flight to Avignon as the culmination of an old "diabolical plan" for a return.⁸⁴⁴ There is no evidence that the Urbanists made any such accusation against the rebels while they still resided in Italy. However, far away at the imperial court, the discrediting of the cardinals in this way was already possible in the autumn of 1378: it stirred emotions because the return of the papacy to Avignon threatened Wenceslas's Roman coronation.

In addition to questionable statements about the cardinals, Charles IV made one outright false accusation in the memorandum. We have no evidence

⁸³⁹ Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Raimund von Capua," 258.

⁸⁴⁰ Eschbach, ed., *Die kirchliche Frage*, 79, article 9.

⁸⁴¹ *Concilia Magnae Britanniae*, 3:129.

⁸⁴² Eschbach, ed., *Die kirchliche Frage*, 79, article 9.

⁸⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁴ See pages 52–57 above.

that the ultramontanes themselves claimed they elected Urban out of fear of pressure from the people at Castel Sant'Angelo.⁸⁴⁵ Although some cardinals, including the camerlengo Pierre de Cros, had suggested before the election that the conclave should take place in the safety of the papal fortress, the suggestion was not accepted.⁸⁴⁶ Both the Italians and the ultramontanes later, in their *Casus*, situated the election in the papal palace, in accordance with the facts. It is therefore impossible that they would have disgraced themselves by spreading an obvious lie.

Martin Souchon has already reflected on the origin of this dubious thesis and concluded that the author of the memorandum had misunderstood—or rather, greatly simplified—the facts he had read about the cardinals and their stay at Castel Sant'Angelo in the *Factum*.⁸⁴⁷ This seems a plausible explanation, as the memorandum also obscured, if not misinterpreted, the original meaning of the aforementioned power of attorney of the six ultramontanes. The author of Lamprecht's instructions merely emphasized the signatures attached to it, which, according to him, customarily solidified the canonicity of Prignano's election.⁸⁴⁸

If the emperor authorized unverified second-hand information or even participated in the dissemination of outright disinformation, this indicates not only the skillful agitation of Urban's envoys and supporters but also a lack of engagement by the rebels at his court. Both Charles and Wenceslas indicated in letters to the cardinals that they knew of their defection from Urban only by hearsay.⁸⁴⁹ There was no issue with the speed of news transmission; reports from Italy reached the emperor without delay if, by September 25, he already

⁸⁴⁵ See Eschbach, ed., *Die kirchliche Frage*, 80, article 11: "Item non valet allegacio cardinalium, qui asserunt, dictum dominum nostrum papam modernum in castro sancti Angeli per metum popularem tumultum aut impressionem electum."

⁸⁴⁶ Valois, *La France*, 1:18–19; Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 36.

⁸⁴⁷ Souchon, *Die Papstwahlen*, 98.

⁸⁴⁸ See Eschbach, ed., *Die kirchliche Frage*, 80, article 12: "Nam ad roborandam electionem suam canonicam cardinales, ut moris est papam eligere, se in dicto castro sancti Angeli propriis manibus subscriperunt, prout appetet in copia que de hujusmodi subsciptionibus fecit plenissimam mencionem."

⁸⁴⁹ See *Über Formelbücher*, 2:27–28: "Sane volubilis famae loquacitas his diebus Caesareum re stupenda nimis turbavit auditum"; and Loserth, ed., "Beiträge, 1," 332: "Fama hominum ad nostram serenitatem perducere vel perduxerit, qualiter in quodam prefixo loco dispendiosam moram trahitis."

knew that the cardinals were staying in Fondi.⁸⁵⁰ The primary obstacle was clearly the lack of reports authorized by the cardinals.

Assuming that the instructions given to Lamprecht of Brunn reflected Charles's understanding of the ecclesiastical crisis, it is unlikely that the monarch had access to the detailed *Casus* of August 2 at the time they were written. In that document, the ultramontanes clearly stated that the conclave was held in the papal palace. Even the cardinals' declaration of Prignano's "deposition" does not appear to have reached Charles through official channels.⁸⁵¹ This is noteworthy, as Robert of Geneva had already secretly announced in late spring that an official delegation would be sent to the emperor.⁸⁵²

The agile cardinal did what he could in early summer to ensure the success of the revolt in the royal courts. At the end of June, he summoned an envoy of the count of Flanders from Rome to Anagni and informed him under oath that the cardinals did not regard Urban as the true pope, requesting him to inform his master, Louis de Malé, of this fact. He made a similar request to the Aragonese inquisitor, the Dominican Nicholas Eymerich, who, in mid-July, was tasked with informing the kings of Portugal and Castile.⁸⁵³

The former confessor of the French queen, the Minorite Jean de Guignicourt, had also left Anagni a little earlier. In August, he informed Charles V on behalf of the cardinals that, after careful consideration, they had concluded that the election of Prignano was invalid and that the letters officially announcing the coronation of Urban VI had been forced upon them out of fear.⁸⁵⁴ To leave no doubt on this matter, the ultramontanes soon sent Arnauld, bishop of Famagusta, and Nicolas de Saint-Saturnin, doctor of theology, to Paris, and later also sent Charles V a number of important documents through his secretary.⁸⁵⁵

⁸⁵⁰ This is evident, e.g., from the letter of the emperor to Joanna of Naples, see Pelzl, ed., *Lebensgeschichte*, vol. 2, Appendix, 390.

⁸⁵¹ More on this below. Valois, *La France*, 1:267, note 1, also suggests that the emperor was not aware of either of the two cardinals' declarations at the time the instructions were written.

⁸⁵² See "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 8: "Sed postquam essent [i.e., the cardinals, D.C.] extra Romanam in libertate constituti, tunc per proprios nuncios vellent sibi [i.e., to the emperor, D.C.] scribere et notificare."

⁸⁵³ Přerovský, *L'elezione di Urbano*, 122.

⁸⁵⁴ Valois, *La France*, 1:96–97.

⁸⁵⁵ See pages 246–247 above.

We know nothing of similar missions to the imperial court. This is particularly striking because the cardinals knew how much the emperor wanted Wenceslas's approbation. It was therefore in their interest to reassure him as soon as possible that his dynastic ambitions would not be jeopardized by the rebellion. This was doubly true in a situation where the ultramontanes had begun to obstruct the proclamation of approbation, despite Urban having approved Wenceslas. And it is the ceremony of July 26 that suggests a possible reason for the failure of the cardinals to inform the emperor.

Robert of Geneva took care to inform rulers and princes of the revolt through the persuasive voices of their trusted subjects. The Germans and Bohemians with ties to the Prague court remained with Urban at Tivoli at this crucial moment, so as not to miss the proclamation of Wenceslas's approbation and risk annoying the emperor by their absence. The fact that some of them took a neutral position regarding Urban's legitimacy did not change their preferences.⁸⁵⁶ Thus, the cardinals probably lacked enough decisive, influential, and, it must be said, courageous people to entrust with a dangerous mission.⁸⁵⁷

We know of only two individuals with ties to the emperor who, sooner or later, renounced Urban and moved to Fondi.⁸⁵⁸ Konrad of Veselá did so with

⁸⁵⁶ This is attested by the double declaration of Konrad of Geisenheim in Tivoli on July 26 and 29, 1378, see "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 14–17. The list of witnesses provided here serves as valuable evidence of the presence of the emperor's subjects at the Curia. See also page 205 above.

⁸⁵⁷ See also Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 213–215, who had already pointed out the asymmetry in the communication of the cardinals with the French king and the emperor.

⁸⁵⁸ Dietrich of Niem stated that following the election at Fondi, many curiales and prelates—especially French ones—left Urban, with the notable exception of the Germans, as well as some of the English, Bohemians, and Hungarians, see *Theoderici de Nyem de scismate*, 27. This observation is significant, as Steinherz has attempted to demonstrate through specific cases that Konrad of Veselá's departure to Fondi "must have given the impression that the emperor was turning away from Urban, and now the envoys from Germany, sent by bishops and monasteries, had also left Urban's court and turned to the new pope," see *idem*, "Das Schisma von 1378," 333–334; and also Weigel, "Männer um König," 128–129; Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV.*, 2:237. However, I contend that there was no widespread inclination among the envoys to support Clement. The cases Steinherz cites cannot be generalized: the prelates who accepted benefices, graces, or commands from Clement either had not previously succeeded with Urban (such as the bishop-elects of Wrocław and Liège), were approached directly by Clement (such as the archbishop-elect of Mainz), or sought Clement's favor due to pressure from secular neighbors who supported the pope elected at Fondi (such as the bishop of Basel).

his followers only after Clement's election.⁸⁵⁹ Earlier, the cardinals had been joined by the bishop-elect of Wrocław, Dietrich of Klattau. Cardinal Pietro Corsini testified that he entrusted Dietrich with the letter of the new election in Fondi to deliver to the emperor.⁸⁶⁰ If this was the case, the Bohemian would have received the letter on September 20, when the Italian cardinals left Fondi. Dietrich himself, however, did not leave for the Empire until November 8, when the pope granted him the coveted provision for the bishopric of Wrocław and other letters.⁸⁶¹ However, the new bishop got no further than a certain estate of his chapter in Austria. As a precaution, he secretly sent a scout from there to Wrocław, who, upon finding that the chapter and the city were on Urban's side, did not dare to show himself and returned to his lord. Dietrich eventually died in the 1380s in Avignon "exile."⁸⁶²

The role of the official envoy of the cardinals to the emperor was assumed by Konrad of Veselá. He carried letters from each cardinal addressed to Charles, Wenceslas, their counsellors, and the princes, along with detailed instructions (*informaciones plenas*) regarding the schism, Clement's election, and Prignano's illegitimacy. It was only at this point that the ultramontanes sent authorized declarations to the imperial court. However, the dean of Vyšehrad was delayed in Fondi and during his journey, arriving in Prague only ten days after the emperor's death.⁸⁶³ It appears that the delay in Clement's coronation prevented Konrad from departing sooner. The pope, aware of the importance of Wenceslas's approbation, approved the young king,⁸⁶⁴ yet it is unlikely that he could have sealed the relevant document before October 31, when he accepted the tiara. As noted above, he attached only an incomplete bull to the letters and charters prior to the coronation. Therefore, Konrad did not head north with the authorized documents until early November, likely accompanied by envoys of

⁸⁵⁹ "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 13.

⁸⁶⁰ Gayet, ed., *Le Grand Schisme*, vol. 2, Appendix, 60.

⁸⁶¹ *Acta summorum pontificum*, 2:637–638, no. 1105.

⁸⁶² See "Joannis de Czarnkow Chronicon Polonorum," 671, and Schulte, *Die Politische Tendenz*, 89–91.

⁸⁶³ "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 13.

⁸⁶⁴ See *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:149–151, no. 93; *Acta summorum pontificum*, 2:635–636, no. 1102, and also note 643 above. I agree with Klare, *Die Wahl Wenzels*, 166, that the bull was not handed over, or rather that Wenceslas refused to accept it from the pope elected at Fondi. Hence, Clement afterwards called Wenceslas a mere king-elect, like the French chancery. See *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:XCIII.

Otto of Brunswick and his wife, who were also dispatched to the emperor with a response to his letter and news of Robert of Geneva's elevation.⁸⁶⁵ Years later, the dean himself acknowledged that his delay had had serious consequences. He testified that, according to some of the emperor's advisers, Charles IV had longed to see him before his death, wanted to hear of his work in Italy, and had wept bitterly over the lack of information from Clement VII's faction.⁸⁶⁶

The Clementists' inflexible communication is also suggested by the report, which appears to reflect the Empire's representatives' reaction to Konrad's mission. On October 10, 1379, Count Palatine Ruprecht the Elder sent the French king a copy of the letter that the ultramontanes had sent to the emperor and other kings, along with the reply Florence had delivered to the rebels. In this way, the elector sought to inform Charles V why King Wenceslas and the imperial princes had remained loyal to Urban.⁸⁶⁷ We know that the cardinals began circulating a declaration of Urban's illegitimacy with a preface addressed to monarchs no later than August 21, 1378,⁸⁶⁸ so the letter sent by the cardinals to the emperor undoubtedly contained this declaration. However, it seems to have actually reached Prague after a significant delay.

Ruprecht's communication indicates that the reply to the cardinals' declaration included a detailed defense of Urban, as it was intended to inform the French king. This reply was almost certainly not Charles IV's letter to the cardinals of September 25, which did not contain extensive instruction. Rather, the involvement of Florence suggests that the reply was sent after news of Clement VII's election had reached the Empire and tensions were escalating. Since the cardinals' official declaration and accompanying letters were not delivered to Prague until early December by Konrad of Veselá, it is logical that the Empire's official reply was also delayed to the point that communication through intermediaries became necessary.

The gravity of the lack of agitation on the part of the dissidents was fully recognized by the cardinals residing in Avignon. At the end of October, they also instructed Gilles Bellemère to inform Clement VII that, in any gathering of ten people, nine supported Prignano, with only one favoring the cardinals.

⁸⁶⁵ I conclude this on the basis of King Wenceslas's letters to the Neapolitan couple, about which see page 107 above.

⁸⁶⁶ "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 14.

⁸⁶⁷ *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, 1:264/11–15, no. 149.

⁸⁶⁸ Valois, *La France*, 1:106.

nals' stance. They acknowledged that Prignano had numerous followers among powerful figures and their subjects who were poorly informed due to a lack of active advocacy. Consequently, they recommended that Clement consider relocating to Avignon, where, in collaboration with the French king, he could more effectively influence the monarchs who had sent emissaries to France. They also suggested that the pontiff dispatch legates directly to the emperor, the king of Hungary, and other courts.⁸⁶⁹

Note that it was the cardinals who remained in the Rhône region, not those who stayed with Clement in Italy, who pressed him to return to Avignon. Since a move beyond the Alps was not under consideration, the pope preferred to send key legates on important missions. He entrusted the mission to the Empire to Cardinal Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille on December 17, 1378. The French cardinal took a circuitous route through France to obtain letters of recommendation for the emperor and his son from their relatives. Sometime before mid-April 1379, he obtained a letter for the emperor from Louis, duke of Anjou, in Toulouse. This letter was a lengthy *apologia* of Clement, containing a detailed account of the investigations Charles V had undertaken before deciding to support him. And it was not until June, in Paris, that the cardinal received a recommendation from the French king, which was already addressed to Charles's successor, King Wenceslas.⁸⁷⁰

Guillaume d'Aigrefeuille's efforts to enter the Empire with credentials from powerful figures were understandable, if not entirely necessary. However, they also highlighted the cardinals' inflexibility. Urban VI took a different approach. He was explicit about sending an experienced representative to the Empire and to northern Europe in general by no later than September 29, 1378. At that time, the pope instructed the clergy in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway to support Cardinal Pileo da Prata, nuncio to Germany and other regions, with a daily stipend of 25 florins.⁸⁷¹ Pileo took some time to prepare for his journey, during which he was accompanied by a certain John of Prague. He likely awaited the appointment of the new archbishop of Prague to deliver the

⁸⁶⁹ See Bliemetzrieder, ed., "Ein Aktenstück zu Beginn," 34.

⁸⁷⁰ Valois, *La France*, 1:154; Hotz, "Der Ausbruch des Großen Abendländischen Schismas," 345–355. Cf. Noël Valois, "Le Grand Schisme en Allemagne de 1378 à 1380," *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte* 7 (1893): 107–164.

⁸⁷¹ *Acta Pontificum Danica. Pavelige Aktstykker Vedrørende Danmark 1316–1536*, vol. 2, 1378–1431, ed. Alfred Krarup and Johannes Peter Lindbaek (Copenhagen: I Kommission Hos GEC Gad, 1907), 1, no. 761. See also Stacul, *Il Cardinale*, 330, no. 351.

pallium before departing Rome. Pileo was in Venice by mid-December and arrived in Bohemia in early March of the following year.⁸⁷²

The question of an ill-informed emperor was a sensitive issue for the Clementists. The French chronicler and poet Jean Froissart, a protégé of the emperor's half-brother Wenceslas, left eloquent testimony on this matter. In recounting the election of Clement VII in his historical work, Froissart noted that the French king and other monarchs had pledged allegiance to the pope, turning his attention to the emperor as well. He wrote: "At that time, Charles of Bohemia, King of Germany and Roman Emperor, was still alive and residing in Prague, Bohemia. He was well informed of all these matters [i.e., the election of Clement VII, D.C.], and received the news with wonder. And because the entirety of his empire in Germany, except for the archbishopric of Trier, believed in Urban in deed, heart, and intention, and would hear of no other, the emperor feigned and concealed it until his death, responding, when the matter was discussed in his presence, so courteously that all the prelates and barons of his empire were content."⁸⁷³

Noël Valois considered the famous author's words insignificant.⁸⁷⁴ Nor do we have any reason to think that the well-informed emperor feigned ignorance while being surrounded by Urbanists. Froissart was correct, however, in noting that the issues of communication and knowledge played an essential role at Charles's court. The spread of half-truths or outright falsehoods about the cardinals was enabled, in large part, by the cardinals themselves, who allowed Urbanist agitation considerable freedom at the imperial court during a critical period.

On the other hand, Charles made no secret of the fact that he had no authorized information about the cardinals, and that he relied solely on what he had

⁸⁷² The cardinal's journey was detailed by Stacul, *Il Cardinale*, 107–116, who noted that although Pileo is referred to as a legate in the literature, official documents designate him as a nuncio, see *ibid*, 107, note 5.

⁸⁷³ See *Oeuvres de Froissart. Chroniques*, vol. 9, 1377–1382, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove (Brussels: Victor Devaux, 1869), 146: "Encors vivoit Charles de Boësme, rois d'Allemaigne et emperères de Romme, et se tenoit à Prage en Behaigne et estoit bien enfourmés de toutes ces choses qui li venoient à grant merveille, et quoique tous ses empires d'Allemaigne, excepté l'arcevesquiet de Trèves, créissent de fait, de corage et d'intention en Urbain, ne voloient oîr parler d'autre, li emperères se faindi et dissimula tant qu'il vesqui, et en respondeoit, quant on en parloit en sa présence, si courtoisement que tout prélat et baron de son empire s'en contentoient."

⁸⁷⁴ Valois, *La France*, 1:266, note 4. See also Fantysová-Matějková, *Wenceslas de Bohême*, 514.

been told. It is therefore striking how unusually quickly—by as early as September 25—he dismissed the rebels without waiting for authorized spokesmen from the cardinals or discussing the matter at a diet with the bishops and princes. No other European monarch acted so directly.

The kings of the Iberian Peninsula, who remained undecided for a long time, took their time in taking a definitive stance. For example, the ruler of Aragon was still conducting investigations in 1386, and the king of Navarre maintained neutrality until 1390.⁸⁷⁵ Even Queen Joanna of Naples, who was geographically closest to the events, pledged allegiance to Clement and the cardinals only after more than a month of consultations with prelates, scholars, and her council.⁸⁷⁶ Similarly, in early September 1378, the French king convened an assembly of prominent figures from the kingdom, who even advised him to exercise restraint and adopt a neutral stance. When Pierre Corbie delivered sealed documents from the cardinals—likely in late September—the king took additional time to announce his position publicly. He did not officially commit to Clement until November 16, again in the presence of numerous advisers and scholars.⁸⁷⁷

There was even a formal inquiry in England, which had been sympathetic to Urban from the outset. At the end of October, Roger Foucaut, dean of Saint-Émilion and former servant of the Black Prince, landed in London, accompanied by two merchants from Bordeaux. Though French, they were subjects of the English king. As soon as Foucaut published the cardinals' August 9 proclamation in the city, he was arrested by the sheriffs and handed over to the king, who ordered him, on November 5, to appear before the parliament in Gloucester. The bulls, after a quick review by the monarch's counsellors, were presented to the assembly. The king first asked Archbishop Sudbury to examine them in a special synod. The response was swift, with the archbishop carefully justifying his rejection of the bulls before parliament, refuting the cardinals' assertion of a forced election point by point. Parliament unanimously adopted this position without debate. A statute was immediately

⁸⁷⁵ Cf., e.g., Seidlmaier, *Die Anfänge*.

⁸⁷⁶ See page 108 above.

⁸⁷⁷ On the circumstances of Charles V's official recognition of Clement VII, see Valois, *La France*, 1:113–116.

issued empowering the king to act decisively against the Clementists. Foucaut was imprisoned in Gloucester Castle on November 20.⁸⁷⁸

We do not hear of similar official consultations between the emperor and prelates, scholars, and nobles. Charles clearly did not want to wait for the new diet, which had just concluded in Nuremberg, to convene and instead sought to gain as much ad hoc support for Urban as possible outside the established framework.⁸⁷⁹ The reasons for this are suggested by the remaining points in the emperor's memorandum to the imperial elites.

Lamprecht of Brunn was also tasked with announcing that Charles, Wenceslas, and many princes had accepted Urban's numerous bulls and had acknowledged his legitimacy through various letters. It was important for the princes to know that the pope had issued provisions for episcopal churches and other benefices, and that his pontificate had already been publicly proclaimed. The emperor further emphasized that neither he nor the Roman king would grant any imperial bishop the symbols of temporal power unless he received a provision from Urban. All of this had one clear purpose: to encourage the electors and princes to recognize Urban, following the example set by the emperor and the king, and to write to the cardinals, urging them to submit to the pope and avoid involving the public in their disputes. Charles motivated the imperial elites by assuring them that the pope, acting on the advice of the emperor and the electors, was prepared to abolish or waive the mandatory financial burdens (*gravamina*) of bishops and prelates in general.⁸⁸⁰

The dating of the instructions and their purpose are clear. They were written around September 25, because the author explicitly referred to Charles's and Wenceslas's correspondence with the cardinals, quoted from the emperor's letter, and also knew about the rebellion of the cardinals only by hearsay (*prout famatur*).⁸⁸¹ The actual purpose of Lamprecht's mission, then, was to gain allies for the emperor's diplomatic efforts. It was not just a matter of getting the

⁸⁷⁸ See Perroy, *L'Angleterre*, 54–66, and Ullmann, *The Origins*, 104–106. It is noteworthy that the letters from the cardinals (dated spring 1378) were also presented as the primary evidence against them in England; see Harvey, "The Case for Urban," 541–542.

⁸⁷⁹ Cf. Weiß, "Prag–Paris–Rom," 206.

⁸⁸⁰ See Eschbach, ed., *Die kirchliche Frage*, 78–79, articles 5–8.

⁸⁸¹ See *ibid.*, article 7. Eschbach, *ibid.*, 10–12, dated the origin of the instructions as early as the time of the Nuremberg diet. Vahlen, *Der deutsche Reichstag*, 169–171, noted, however, that they reference the emperor's letter to the cardinals from September 25. Steinherz also dates the text to late September or afterward; see *idem*, "Das Schisma von 1378," 623.

electors and princes to recognize Urban and write to the cardinals in the same manner as the emperor. Recall that in Rome, the seal of Charles appeared on the cardinals' letter, but so did that of 15 other lords. It may be assumed that at least some of the seals were secured by the bishop of Bamberg, who received the cardinals' letter from the emperor with instructions. At the end of September, he was perhaps still staying with King Wenceslas in Nuremberg, where he could also have best fulfilled his task.

Lamprecht of Brunn did not need to be urged to act. For some time, he had been litigating before the Papal Curia over lost income from the administration of the bishopric of Strasbourg in 1374–1375. Believing that some of the Strasbourg townsmen had infringed on his rights, he sought to summon them before the Curia, and Urban complied. The pope ordered the auditor, Gilles Bellemère, to personally cite the burghers. This was carried out on May 29, 1378. The town officials decided to defend themselves and, at the end of August, sent a representative to Rome to challenge the personal citation. Lamprecht, therefore, had a personal stake in keeping Urban in office and resolving his dispute as quickly as possible, even considering the costs involved.⁸⁸²

All the texts presented or mentioned in the Würzburg manuscript are related in some way to the emperor's Italian pro-Urban mission: some supported the campaign within the Empire as the memorandum, some were taken to Italy, and others were subsequently brought back from Rome. However, it is not

882 The dispute was rather complicated. Lamprecht had been bishop of Strasbourg before moving to Bamberg in 1374. However, Gregory XI left him the administration of the Alsatian bishopric in the form of a commendation even after his transfer. This arrangement was not without difficulties. The Strasbourg chapter took the initiative and held an election for the vacant see, resulting in two candidates. These candidates soon began to quarrel over the administration of the bishop's estates, with one of them, Dean Johann of Ochsenstein, also entering into a dispute with Lamprecht. The conflict persisted even after Gregory XI appointed Friedrich of Blankenstein as bishop of Strasbourg in July 1375. For more on the dispute in 1374–1375, see Luzian Pfleger, *Kirchengeschichte der Stadt Straßburg im Mittelalter* (Kolmar: Alsatia Verlag, 1941), 109–110; Hermann Heimpel, *Die Vener von Gmünd und Strassburg 1162–1447. Studien und Texte zur Geschichte einer Familie sowie des gelehrten Beamtentums in der Zeit der abendländischen Kirchenspaltung und der Konzilien von Pisa, Konstanz und Basel*, vol. 1, *Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte* 52 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 110. Documents dating back to 1378 were edited in *Urkundenbuch der Stadt Straßburg, 965–969*, no. 1322, and 972–972, nos. 1328–1329. Cf. Jean Rott, "Le Grand Schisme d'Occident et le diocèse de Strasbourg (1378–1415)," *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'École française de Rome* 52 (1935): 367–389, at 368–369.

accurate to associate Lamprecht's instructions solely with the Italian mission. We know that the princes also supported the emperor's mission to France, and for several reasons, it can be inferred that the Rhenish electors were primarily concerned.

If anyone benefited from the emperor's assurance that Urban would be willing to waive the mandatory financial payments, it was Friedrich of Saarwerden and his powerful uncle Kuno, who had long been critical of the collection of papal tithes.⁸⁸³ This was clearly no idle promise on Urban's part. Recall that the pontiff had refused to issue a new tithe in the Empire when Konrad of Veselá requested it, because he did not want to burden the clergy.⁸⁸⁴ Moreover, Urban also remembered Friedrich by confirming the reduction of his enormous debt to the Curia at the emperor's intercession. He even allowed the archbishop to pawn the property of the Cologne chapter for five years without its consent. This is evident from Urban's documents dated July 12, 1378, in Tivoli.⁸⁸⁵

Friedrich was residing in Paris at the time, where Charles V granted him an annual pension of 3,000 florins, as he had become a vassal of the French kings and had pledged to aid them against England, her allies, and their other enemies, with the exception of the pope, the emperor, and his uncle, the Archbishop of Trier.⁸⁸⁶ This was likely another result of Charles IV's journey to France.⁸⁸⁷ If so, Friedrich had even more reason to support the emperor and intercede for the pontiff with the French king. He himself had a vested interest in ensuring that Urban's bulls remained in force.

As early as January, Count Palatine Ruprecht the Elder, who worked closely with the emperor, was also offered an alliance with France. A year later, the French king even planned to arrange the marriage of Ruprecht III to his newly born daughter, Catherine.⁸⁸⁸ Thus, the Count Palatine was also well positioned to support the emperor's mission to France.

⁸⁸³ See pages 216–218 above.

⁸⁸⁴ See "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 13.

⁸⁸⁵ *Die Regesten der Erzbischöfe*, 8:530–531, nos. 1937–1938.

⁸⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 530, nos. 1935–1936. Count Adolf III of the Mark concluded an alliance treaty with the king on May 14, 1378, securing a pension of 1,000 florins. See Valois, "Le Grand Schisme en Allemagne," 138, note 1.

⁸⁸⁷ See pages 223–224 above.

⁸⁸⁸ Valois, "Le Grand Schisme en Allemagne," 118.

Historian František Kavka believed that when Lamprecht's instructions were written, the emperor must have already known about the election of Clement VII, since Charles insisted on provisions from Urban. Therefore, Kavka placed the text at the end of October at the earliest.⁸⁸⁹ However, considering that the cardinals had urged the canons of Wrocław not to accept as bishop anyone confirmed by the usurper Prignano,⁸⁹⁰ Charles had already had reason to insist on provisions from Rome as a precaution before Clement's election. The continuity of the law had to be preserved.

The Power of Spiritual Knowledge

The instructions to Lamprecht of Brunn show even more strikingly than the emperor's letter to the cardinals how Charles IV tried his best to avoid legal chaos. Since he had received Wenceslas's Bull of Approbation from Urban's envoys, and the king had begun to send letters of his approval by the pope, Charles's emphasis on the continuity of the law was a natural reaction.

The emperor's efforts to preserve, or even strengthen, the legal status quo are also evidenced by the only known letter from Charles IV to Urban. In it, the emperor assured the pontiff that he had always wished for the liberties of the Church to be upheld and had encouraged his subjects to do the same. Accordingly, by the fullness of his imperial power and after consulting with the princes and nobles, he forbade all subjects of the Empire from presuming to attack the Church's estates, personnel, or rights. He also consented that the Church's administrators should defend themselves against the invaders and their auxiliaries by suitable means.⁸⁹¹

⁸⁸⁹ Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV*, 2:238, note 47.

⁸⁹⁰ See page 209 above.

⁸⁹¹ See the undated copy in Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 220, fol. 120r–v, with the following inscription: "Sanctissimo in Cristo patri ac domino domino Urbano etc. sanctitatis ipsius devotus filius Karolus etc." Although it is not clearly evident that the letter is addressed to Urban VI (and not about Urban V), the text in the Bern collection is found in the context of letters referring exclusively to Urban VI. It is true, however, that this is not an extraordinary document; it was probably reused when new popes came to power. The same text of the letter is preserved in the form collection of the notary Johannes of Gelnhausen, who worked, among other things, in Charles's imperial chancery. See *Collectarius perpetuarum*

Yet, the emperor was not solely focused on positive law written by human hand; he wrote clearly to the cardinals that Prignano had been elevated by divine intervention (*assumptus divinitus*).⁸⁹² In the context of the dispute over Urban's legitimacy, this could not merely be an obligatory phrase. On the contrary, the emperor's spiritual nature and the sacral conception of his reign—referenced earlier in connection with Bishop Eckard of Dersch's return from Rome⁸⁹³—lent Charles's words a profound dimension. When Urban's second legation arrived in Prague, it was equipped with both the opportunity and the arguments to convince the emperor that Urban was God's chosen one and that the cardinals had sold themselves to evil.

As soon as the ultramontane revolt eventually became public in Italy, reform-minded spirituals took up the pen in defense of Urban. Recall the anonymous invective *Quid agitis*, which passionately criticized the cardinals for their carnality and selfish love. Scholars typically disagree on whether the work was written by Catherine of Siena's mentor, Raymond of Capua, or Birgitta's confidant Alfonso Pecha,⁸⁹⁴ who was also close to the Sienese saint.⁸⁹⁵ The affinity among the Roman spirituals was natural, and the emperor's instructions to Lamprecht of Brunn indicate that their manner of criticizing the cardinals was known in Prague. Charges of simony, greed, and ambition among the "French," as well as their longing for Avignon and desire to hold the See of St. Peter through an almost hereditary succession, are characteristic of writings by admirers of the aforementioned visionaries.

The contacts between the followers of St. Birgitta and Charles IV have already been mentioned. Raymond of Capua was prior of the Roman Dominican monastery of Santa Maria sopra Minerva at the time in question and, like Alfonso, was in the city during Urban's election, witnessing the tumultuous events. He was also close to the Papal Curia and had already been chosen by

formarum Johannis de Gelnhausen, ed. Hans Kaiser (Innsbruck: Verlag der Wagner'schen Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1900), 233–234, no. 280. The mention of the ruler's decision, based on consultations with princes and nobles, is a common feature in imperial writings. However, it is most likely that Charles issued the letter following the Nuremberg diet, and it was delivered to Urban's envoys in September 1378.

⁸⁹² Über Formelbücher, 2:28.

⁸⁹³ See pages 190–191 above.

⁸⁹⁴ See page 86 above.

⁸⁹⁵ Seidlmayer, "Ein Gehilfe der hl. Birgitta," 16.

Gregory XI as an adviser.⁸⁹⁶ While Catherine of Siena first stayed in Florence and then in Siena during 1378, likely only arriving in Rome at Urban's invitation in early November, Raymond had probably been in the pontiff's vicinity for some time. When Urban, in a letter to the emperor at the end of July, described the revolt of the cardinals as the result of their selfish love, it can be assumed that it was the learned Dominican who influenced the pope in Catherine's vein. Prignano trusted his persuasive abilities so much that, in November, he sent him on a perilous mission to France, together with two French curiales, Jacques de Sèze and Guillaume de La Voulte.⁸⁹⁷

In the second half of 1378, the natural link between Urban, the Italian spirituals, and the Luxembourg monarchs was John of Jenstein, the bishop of Meissen and future metropolitan of Prague. He had a close friendship with Raymond of Capua and was particularly gifted in the spiritual perception of the (threat of) schism. Around 1386, Urban VI asked him to describe a dream in which the election of the antipope had been foretold to the bishop. Jenstein complied with the request and sent the pontiff a description of his vision, which is said to have occurred on the night of October 15–16, 1378, while he was still bishop of Meissen and staying with his uncle in the archbishop's palace in Prague.⁸⁹⁸

Around midnight, he was seized by a bodily tremor, and in a dream, he entered a beautiful chapel, where he saw the following image painted on the left side. He beheld a frightfully hideous Satan, who, though his countenance resembled that of a man, had a black body with limbs that were entirely incongruous and inappropriate. He also had a small pig's eye, which flitted about in the manner of a squint. He was simply indescribably ugly. On his head, he wore a bishop's miter with a red border and was draped in a saffron-yellow cloak-pluvial. His body was adorned with various weapons, including a quiver of arrows. Above all, however, he held two large keys in his hands.⁸⁹⁹

⁸⁹⁶ Julien Luchaire, "Un maître général des frères prêcheurs. Raymond de Capoue (1380–1399)," *Revue historique* 74 (1900): 311–317, at 314.

⁸⁹⁷ See note 771 above.

⁸⁹⁸ See Loserth, ed., "Beiträge, I," 351–359, no. 42, at 352–355. Cf. Weltsch, *Archbishop John of Jenstein*, 83–84; and most recently Pumprová, Slíva, and Psík, ed., *The Private Prayers, 137–138*, where further literature is listed. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, three additional versions of the vision were created, adapted to the religious schism in Bohemia resulting from the Hussite movement.

⁸⁹⁹ Loserth, ed., "Beiträge, I," 352–353.

Opposite Satan stood a man dressed in a papal purple robe with a tiara on his head, waiting eagerly to receive the keys. Behind Satan stood a Christ of unspeakable beauty, with the noblest features and a joyous countenance, more youthful in manhood than aged. At the sight of Him, great joy always filled the heart of Jenstein. The bishop did not doubt His majesty but believed he saw Christ as He had once appeared in human flesh (*in humana phizonomia*). His garment was of a bright blue color, and His walk and movements were gentle and pleasing. At a little distance from Him, in a most delightful meadow, stood the Virgin Mary, clothed in a garment of the same color, all fair and beautiful, with a most lovely little Boy.⁹⁰⁰

Jenstein saw such scenes on the wall of the chapel, but all the paintings moved as if they were alive. Christ forced Satan to hand over the keys to the man with the tiara, who was ready to receive them. The demon was reluctant, so Christ pushed him with His hand. His eyes were fixed upward, for Satan was head and shoulders above Him, being the leader of all the sons of pride. Under pressure, Satan finally handed over the keys, and the man in the tiara quickly accepted them, sitting down on a deathly pale throne that reached almost to the ceiling. Though he, too, wore a tiara and saffron cloak, he seemed as black as the ugly demon. His eyes were white, and his lips red. He was assisted by anti-cardinals and others who presented supplications.⁹⁰¹

Jenstein saw everything only for a moment, and in his dream, he said to himself, "Oh, how wonderful are the people of the world who never fail to notice anything. Behold how quickly they have painted these schismatic novelties." When he finished saying this, he suddenly awoke with bodily weakness and began to think anxiously about what he had seen in his dream.

When he arose in the morning, he interpreted it to many people as follows: "Know, dearest ones, that this vision announces a future schism in the Church and a revolt of the antipope against lord Urban." He continued to say this in the days that followed, and in confirmation, he always quoted the words of the Gospel: "These things have I spoken unto you, that you may believe when they shall come to pass [John 14:29]." But because he was telling others of a future schism, of which no one had yet heard, and did not believe that the evils mentioned had taken place, he was ashamed and regretted his bold words, as it was

⁹⁰⁰ Ibid., 353.

⁹⁰¹ Ibid., 353–354.

probable he might have been mistaken. Twelve days later, a swift messenger arrived with letters confirming the outbreak of schism in the Church and the election of Robert of Geneva as antipope. To add weight to his account before Urban, Jenstein listed six witnesses to the events in question. He admitted, however, that some had died in the interim.⁹⁰²

It is evident that Jenstein's reminiscence of the year 1378 contains several layers. First and foremost, it reflects the archbishop's mindset at the time he wrote to the pope, presenting him as a fervent admirer of the Virgin Mary. John of Jenstein provided a detailed interpretation of the various scenes in the vision he described in the letter. Naturally, he also revisited the image of the beautiful Christ and the lovely Madonna and Child in a meadow of flowers and fragrant herbs.⁹⁰³ He emphasized that the soothing scene, contrasting with the satanic ugliness and volatility, was a harbinger of future joy and peace. Consequently, Jenstein called upon Urban, as Christ's deputy, to bring this joy and peace to the people as soon as possible and institute the Feast of the Visitation throughout Christendom.⁹⁰⁴ He evidently believed that this would be of vital assistance in removing the lingering schism.⁹⁰⁵

Jenstein's confidant, the Prague university master Mikuláš of Rakovník, claimed that his master had a special fondness for the memory of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary from his youth. Whenever he had the opportunity, he would gaze at the depiction (*picturam*) of Elizabeth's encounter with Mary [Luke 1:40-56] with great relish, and it would evoke in him feelings of desire and joy. However, Mikuláš also stated that it was only with the passage of time that Jenstein came to believe that the harmonious image of Mary and the Child in his vision foreshadowed the need for the introduction of that feast.⁹⁰⁶

Indeed, the archbishop primarily attributed a much broader purpose to his vision. In the introduction to his letter to Urban, he emphasized the importance of agitation. Jenstein recognized that the learned masters had already clearly demonstrated the pontiff's legitimacy. However, he believed that the

⁹⁰² Ibid., 354-355.

⁹⁰³ Ibid., 358.

⁹⁰⁴ Ibid., 358-359.

⁹⁰⁵ On this, see esp. Polc, *De Origine festi*; and more recently Van Dussen, *From England to Bohemia*, 47; Rollo-Koster, *The Great Western Schism*, 90-92.

⁹⁰⁶ See Augustin Neumann, ed., "Nový pramen k životopisu arcibiskupa Jenštejna [A New Source for the Biography of Archbishop Jenstein]," *Hlídka* 55 (1938): 263-264, 297-299, 332-334, 362-363, 389-393, at 298.

miraculous vision was a powerful tool for establishing the pope's truth among the people (*in populis*). He was convinced that every faithful person could clearly see through it that Urban was the true pope and Robert of Geneva was a schismatic.⁹⁰⁷

Jenstein later had the "animated paintings" he saw in the imaginary chapel recreated, both in the tower of his archbishop's palace in the Lesser Town in Prague and in his castle in Roudnice, northern Bohemia.⁹⁰⁸ The distinct aesthetic contrast between the satanic ugliness and the lovely beauty of Christ and Mary aligned with his positive attitude toward the visual arts.⁹⁰⁹ However, the frescoes or Latin descriptions of the vision were accessible only to a narrow, educated elite. In contrast, the scene of the beautiful Madonna in a pale blue robe with the Boy had a parallel that was accessible to a wider audience. The sculptures of the beautiful Madonna and Child were a unique manifestation of the so-called *Schöne Stil* (Beautiful style) of Jenstein's time. Although it was court art, some statues were displayed in important city churches, such as the Pilsen Madonna, which was completed no later than 1384.⁹¹⁰

By visualizing the outbreak of the schism as a clash between discordant ugliness and harmonious beauty, John of Jenstein engaged in an original way in the struggle for the interpretation of the ecclesiastical crisis. It can be assumed that it took some time for his vision to take on the form and meaning that the

⁹⁰⁷ Loserth, ed., "Beiträge, 1," 351.

⁹⁰⁸ Neumann, ed., "Nový pramen," 269; Jenstein's contemporary biographer has suggested that the frescoes were created after a longer interval, when the archbishop already felt persecuted, see Helena Krmíčková, ed., "Petri Clarificatoris Vita domini Iohannis, Pragensis archiepiscopi tertii," in *Querite primum regnum Dei. Sborník příspěvků k poctě Jany Nechutové* [Querite primum regnum Dei. A Volume of Contributions in Honour of Jana Nechutová], ed. eadem, Anna Pumprová, et al. (Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2006), 441–461, at 457.

⁹⁰⁹ See Jaromír Homolka, "Johannes von Jenczenstein und der Schöne Stil," in *Die Parler und der Schöne Stil 1350–1400: Europäische Kunst unter den Luxemburgern*, vol. 3, ed. Anton Legner (Cologne: Greven und Bechtold, 1978), 35–39; and Stanislav Přibyl, "Jan z Jenštejna a vizuální a obsahový charakter krásného slohu [John of Jenstein and the Visual and Content Character of the Schöne Stil]," in *Nad slunce krásnější. Plzeňská madona a krásný sloh* [More Beautiful than the Sun. The Pilsen Madonna and the Schöne Stil], ed. Michaela Ottová and Petr Jindra (Pilsen: Západočeská galerie v Plzni, 2020), 71–77.

⁹¹⁰ See "Katalog I: Umělecká kultura v kostele sv. Bartoloměje v Plzni [Catalogue I: Artistic Culture in the Church of St. Bartholomew in Pilsen]," in *Nad slunce krásnější. Plzeňská madona a krásný sloh* [More Beautiful than the Sun. The Pilsen Madonna and the Schöne Stil], ed. Michaela Ottová and Petr Jindra (Pilsen: Západočeská galerie v Plzni, 2020), 240–353, at 254–257.

archbishop portrayed to Urban. However, we have no reason to doubt that by the autumn of 1378, he had already shown himself to be a *homo spiritualis*. The spiritual insights of the nephew of the emperor's foremost adviser confirmed his circle's conviction that the destabilization of society by the cardinals and the resulting chaos was of evil origin.

The fact that John of Jenstein was close to the imperial court at that time is indicated by another event from his life, again with Marian overtones. In his work *Little Book on the Flight from the World* (*Libellus de fuga seculi*), written in 1395 or shortly thereafter, the archbishop stated that his unexpected transfer to the Prague see, by the will of Urban, was miraculously revealed to him by the Virgin Mary near the church dedicated to her. He therefore resolved to reform the carnal way of life he was leading at that time. He added that a few days later, he was appointed by the emperor as chancellor to King Wenceslas in the young monarch's presence.⁹¹¹

Jenstein introduced the entire passage by saying that he was a useless archbishop, yet he did not lack favor from above.⁹¹² Such self-justification was understandable. In the mid-1390s, he was plagued by a severe conflict with King Wenceslas, for whom he had been chancellor only until 1384, when the monarch removed him from office. Later, Wenceslas did not even respect his archiepiscopal authority.⁹¹³ Jenstein, therefore, felt the need to prove that he owed his office not only to the pope and the emperor, but also to the Virgin Mary.

Fortunately, we have additional testimony that sheds more light on Jenstein's words, but also introduces new ambiguity. According to Mikuláš of Rakovník, his master was summoned from Prague to King Wenceslas's residence in Písek, South Bohemia, the same year he dreamed of the outbreak of the schism, as he held the office of royal chancellor. Mikuláš himself accompanied him on the journey. When they approached the village of Chrástice and took a short break there, they were intercepted by a messenger with the news that Urban VI had transferred Jenstein from Meissen to Prague of his own accord, without anyone from Bohemia requesting it. The bishop then asked his confidant to whom the church in the nearby village was dedicated. In a stir

⁹¹¹ "Johannes de Ienstein, *Libellus de fuga seculi*," 50*.

⁹¹² *Ibid.*

⁹¹³ See, e.g., Weltsch, *Archbishop John of Jenstein*, 40–78; Pumprová, Slíva, and Psík, ed., *The Private Prayers*, 153–163.

of the spirit, he immediately replied that it was dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Jenstein rejoiced, saying that the glorious Virgin had him in mind, and therefore believed that the unexpected news was true. As Jenstein pondered this, it is said that he was influenced by the Dominican Raymond of Capua's treatise on Elizabeth's *Magnificat* hymn.⁹¹⁴

As shown above, it is likely that Urban decided on Jenstein's transfer only with his advisers, one of whom may have been Raymond. If the bishop of Meissen's mind reacted very sensitively to the turbulent news coming from Italy about the ecclesiastical crisis, it is not surprising that he also interpreted his unexpected transfer to Prague with similar spiritual excitement. On one important point, however, Jenstein disagreed with his confidant: Did he learn the good news from Rome before being appointed by the emperor as chancellor to King Wenceslas, as he claimed, or was he already in office at that time, as Mikuláš of Rakovník suggested?

Experts on Wenceslas's chancery in particular logically assume that the emperor appointed Jenstein to the office immediately after the king's election in June 1376. They admit, however, that this was an empty title, as no document survives from before the end of February 1379 that directly confirms Jenstein's tenure in office.⁹¹⁵ It should also be recalled that Wenceslas's legations to the pope in Avignon and Rome were led by the king's "chief adviser," the bishop of Worms, Eckard of Dersch. Such neglect of the energetic bishop of Meissen is striking. One explanation for Jenstein's passivity, at least, is offered: Wenceslas did not make independent political decisions during the emperor's lifetime. The government of the Empire was firmly in the hands of Charles IV, and with it, the issuing of related documents. Thus, it seems that the activities of Wenceslas's chancellor were not necessary or even desirable in a situation of interconnected chanceries.⁹¹⁶

We have seen above that in September 1377, the emperor issued documents in Tangermünde under the name of the absent king.⁹¹⁷ A similar situation seems to have repeated itself a year later in Prague. The instructions to Lam-

⁹¹⁴ See Neumann, ed., "Nový pramen," 298–299.

⁹¹⁵ Theodor Lindner, *Das Urkundenwesen Karls IV. und seiner Nachfolger (1346–1437)* (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1882), 28; Weigel, "Männer um König," 159–160; Hlaváček, *Das Urkunden- und Kanzleiwesen*, 179–180.

⁹¹⁶ This was already suggested at by Hlaváček, *Das Urkunden- und Kanzleiwesen*, 179.

⁹¹⁷ See pages 154–155 above.

precht of Brunn mention letters written to the cardinals by both the emperor and the king,⁹¹⁸ despite the fact that both were in distant places at the end of September. The former was in Prague, the latter in Nuremberg. The turbulent developments in Italy forced the emperor to react quickly, so it is quite logical that the father himself arranged for the writing of the threatening letter, the date of which is unknown today. This would also explain why Wenceslas may have promised the cardinals that he would, like his father (*nos vero paternis vestigiis inherendo*), repay them materially if they returned to Urban.⁹¹⁹

However, in some respects, the situation differed from that of 1377. We know of Wenceslas's letter from a draft preserved in the epistolary collection of John of Jenstein, suggesting that it was likely conceived by the bishop of Meissen.⁹²⁰ Ivan Hlaváček, an expert on Wenceslas's documents, also noted that where we might expect a chancellor to be mentioned, Archbishop Jan Očko of Vlašim, Jenstein's uncle, was named during the first two years of Wenceslas's reign. The last evidence of this practice found by Hlaváček appears in a charter dated September 2, 1378,⁹²¹ which further indicates that a change occurred in September regarding the issuance of Wenceslas's writings.

Indeed, it seems unlikely that John of Jenstein was appointed as Wenceslas's chancellor only a few days after learning of his elevation. If the messenger with the news had left Rome immediately, he could have reached the bishop of Meissen around November 20.⁹²² And if, as Jenstein claimed, several days had to pass before the appointment took place, the emperor would have already been lying paralyzed on his deathbed. Given the passage of 18 years, some lapse in Jenstein's memory is understandable. Yet, the archbishop may not have been entirely mistaken. If we assume that Jenstein was appointed chancellor by the emperor not a few days after receiving news of his transfer but rather a few weeks earlier, after the king's return from Nuremberg, this would explain why the first direct and indirect evidence of Jenstein's chancellorship does not

⁹¹⁸ See Eschbach, ed., *Die kirchliche Frage*, 78, article 7: "Imperator et rex Romanorum dominum nostrum Urbanum VI^{um} papam modernum recognoscunt literasque quibusdam cardinalibus [...] scripserunt et scribunt."

⁹¹⁹ Loserth, ed., "Beiträge, I," 332.

⁹²⁰ See the argument of Polc, *De origine festi*, 17.

⁹²¹ Hlaváček, *Das Urkunden- und Kanzleiwesen*, 178–179, esp. note 120.

⁹²² Šmahel, "Kdo pronesl," 218, even estimates the messenger's arrival as late as the turn of November and December.

appear until the autumn of 1378.⁹²³ After the emperor accepted Wenceslas's Bull of Approbation, the need grew for a chancellor with the appropriate international outlook and contacts to accompany his son to Rome—especially given the ecclesiastical crisis in Italy.

Jenstein's letter to Urban indicates that a swift messenger bearing news of Clement VII's election would have arrived in Prague on October 28. The emperor was still awaiting the first reports from Italy and France on the reception of his diplomatic initiative. Urban's nuncio, Bishop Pavo de Griffis, remained in Prague and is documented there on October 7 and again on April 21 of the following year.⁹²⁴ It was in Urban's interest for his representative to "keep an eye" on the emperor's loyalty and to counteract the influence of the cardinals' emissaries, at least until a new papal nuncio or legate would arrive. The emperor, however, remained firmly on Urban's side and had no reason to reconsider his position even as hopes for reconciliation between the pontiff and the cardinals faded. On the contrary, he appears not to have let news of the Church's schism go unheeded.

A letter of condolence from the Romans to King Wenceslas has been preserved in the Bern collection. The Italians expressed sorrow over the death of the great emperor but also humbly implored Wenceslas to follow in his father's footsteps and assume his role for the honor of the Church, the Christians, and especially the people of Rome. The Romans noted that they had received letters from the emperor in which he offered them "great hope of good help against the antipope, or rather Antichrist." Now, the Roman people were prepared to welcome the young king respectfully upon his arrival and to pledge their obedience to him. According to the Romans, Charles IV had promised

⁹²³ Polc, *De origine festi*, 21, and Zdeňka Hledíková, "Johann von Jenstein (1347/50–1400)," in *Die Bischöfe des Heiligen Römischen Reiches 1198 bis 1448. Ein biographisches Lexikon*, ed. Erwin Gatz and Clemens Brodkorb (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001), 590, accepted Jenstein's claim about the appointment from *Libellus de fuga seculi*. However, Polc later reconsidered this position, endorsing the possibility that the designation could have occurred as early as 1376, see Jaroslav V. Polc, *Svatý Jan Nepomucký* [Saint John of Nepomuk], 2nd ed. (Prague: Zvon, 1993), 75, note 26, where he also reviews the known sources on this issue. See also Pumprová, Slíva, and Psík, ed., *The Private Prayers*, 134, note 41.

⁹²⁴ See *Codex diplomaticus*, II:116–117, no. 127, and the document of April 21, 1379, Munich, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Kloster St. Emmeram Regensburg Urkunden 701. A digital copy is available at <https://www.monasterium.net/mom/DE-BayHStA/KUREgensburgStEmmeram/000701/charter> (accessed Oct. 19, 2024).

support against Clement not only to them but also to all subjects of the Empire and adherents of the true faith.⁹²⁵

The emperor's promise of support to the Romans against the antipope and their anticipation of the king's arrival suggest that, even after the schism erupted, Charles was contemplating a third Italian campaign for himself and a first campaign for Wenceslas. Urban VI was aware of this as well. Three years later, when he urged the king to come to Rome to receive the imperial diadem, he justified his appeal by stating that, above all else, the emperor had longed to see the day when Wenceslas would receive the imperial diadem from Urban's hands, and that Charles had invested great expense and effort to make this happen.⁹²⁶

There is no reason to doubt the pope's words. The end of the War of the Eight Saints in Italy, the easing of conflicts with the Swabian cities, and the series of *Landfrieden* in southwestern Germany had given Charles reason for great expectations. He also appointed a capable chancellor for Wenceslas. Yet, all his bold plans and dynastic ambitions were thwarted by an accident. On November 2, the emperor and his son were still drafting a proposal for a coinage ordinance for the Kingdom of Bohemia, but shortly afterward, Charles broke the thigh bone at his hip joint and was bedridden. This injury proved fatal, as

925 See Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 220, fol. 108r: "Qui [i.e., King Wenceslas, D.C.] succise iacuturam arboris fructifero palmule viriditate supplebit et qui libertates et immunitates omnemque benivolencie favorem domini promissum ex parte sui genitoris tam Romanis adversus antipapam quam universis Imperii sacri fidelibus et cunctis fidei cultoribus orthodoxe inviolabiliter, ut tenemus, firmiter observabit. Qua propter serenitatem vestram [ms. serenitati vestre] devote et humiliter supplicamus, quatenus post moderatum fletum et lacrimarum consolacionis cordum in Domino spem resumentes, paterna vestigia sequendo, vices suas dignemini ad honorem sancte matris ecclesie tocius cristiani populi et urbis Romane supplere, presertim cum idem genitor vester Romanis magnam spem dederit boni presidii contra dictum antipapam vel pocius Anticristum signanter per suas literas Romano populo destinatas [ms. destinatural] parato utique ac prompto celsitudinem vestram in eius adventu reverenter suspicere et ei dovote fideliterque parare." Cf. also Dienemann, *Die Romfahrtsfrage*, 7–8. It is worth noting that Urban VI knew of Charles's death in Rome no later than December 20, 1378, when he referred to him as "inlyte memoriae," see *Codex diplomaticus*, II:121, no. 132.

926 See Pelzl, ed., *Lebensgeschichte*, vol. 1, Appendix, no. 32, 52: "Ceterum cum dictus imperator pre ceteris desiderabilibus cordis sui optaverit videre diem illum, in quo de manibus nostris reciperes Deo auspice sacri imperii dyadema, propterea magna expensarum profluvia subierit et labores."

the Holy Roman Emperor died on the evening of November 29, apparently from pneumonia complicated by an attack of gout.⁹²⁷

In the early 1410s, at the height of the Great Schism, Gregory XII reminded King Sigismund that his father had, before his death, commanded his descendants—under penalty of eternal damnation—never to renounce obedience to Urban and his successors.⁹²⁸ The memory of the great emperor served the Roman pope well, given that he was already threatened by a second, parallel rival. However, whether the ten-year-old Sigismund, residing in Brandenburg in 1378, ever heard such a pledge from his father's lips remains uncertain. He is not known to have met his father before his death in Prague.⁹²⁹ Contemporary witnesses, however, agree that the emperor, before his last breath, bound his successor Wenceslas to an irrevocable allegiance to Urban.⁹³⁰ Because Wenceslas's political choices were constrained in dealing with the schism by a ruler known to favor diplomacy and strategy over force, this underscores the depth of Charles's conviction that the imperial diadem, received in Rome from the "miraculously" elected pope, was truly unparalleled.

⁹²⁷ Kavka, *Vláda Karla IV*, 2:240; Rader, *Kaiser Karl*, 354.

⁹²⁸ See *Magnum oecumenicum Constantiense concilium*, vol. 1, ed. Hermann von der Hardt (Frankfurt–Leipzig: Christian Genschil, 1700), 163: "Ut verus filius [...] Caroli regis Romanorum, qui tanta cura, tantaque solennitate, diligenti examinatione praemissa, cum concilio principum determinavit obedientiam dare papae Urbano sexto et successoribus eius, ac felicibus natis suis mandavit sub poena maledictionis aeternae, ut a tali fidei sinceritate nunquam recederent." Cf. Steinherz, "Das Schisma von 1378," 639, note 3, who thought this was a fabrication.

⁹²⁹ Hoensch, *Kaiser Sigismund*, 44.

⁹³⁰ For the words of Henry of Langenstein, see note 6 above. See also "Prima vita Clementis VII," 491. Wenceslas, at least at the beginning of his reign, frequently referred to the binding example of his father, see, e.g., *Über Formelbücher*, 2:30, no. 17: "Et in hac fide christianissimus ipse caesar sancte decessit; cuius vestigia nos rationabiliter imitari decet, nec expedit, quod nos aut quicumque fidelis et amicus noster alium quam dictum dominum nostrum Urbanum verum papam et Christi vicarium recognoscamus." In Avignon in 1386, the former papal collector in the Empire, Tommaso Ammannati, also testified to this, see Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 11745, fol. 44v: "Modo iste imperator [i.e., Wenceslas, D. C.] non dicit aliam rationem, nisi quod ipse tenet illum [i.e., Urban VI, D. C.], quia pater suus illum sequebatur."

Conclusion

The Great Western Schism differed from previous ecclesiastical splits. Earlier schisms resulted from factional rivalries within the College of Cardinals or disagreements between popes and emperors.⁹³¹ While it is possible to acknowledge some influence of rival cardinal factions in the emergence of the Great Schism, historians generally agree that the emperor did not play a direct role in this particular ecclesiastical crisis. Robert-Henri Bautier, for example, argues that Charles IV had no involvement in the affair, as it did not entail a conflict between secular and ecclesiastical powers.⁹³² One might agree with the latter part of his argument but not the former. Evidence suggests that the emperor intervened more in the outbreak of the Great Schism than has previously been assumed.

At first, Charles IV did not engage in the Church crisis directly but rather acted through envoys to the Roman Curia, who sought papal approbation for King Wenceslas. This was a matter that concerned the papacy and the Empire exclusively. The approbation of the Roman king's election and his imperial coronation formed a bond that required cooperation between the two powers. The imperial dignity could be conferred on the Roman king only by the pope, who, in return, expected a special oath of allegiance to the Roman Church and to himself.⁹³³ Only the excommunicated Ludwig IV of Bavaria disregarded this protocol. When Senator Colonna placed the diadem on Ludwig's head in Rome in January 1328, the self-confident monarch justified it through the

⁹³¹ Swanson, *Universities, Academics*, 23–24.

⁹³² Bautier, "Aspects politiques," 458: "Il en allait tout différemment cette fois. L'Empereur Charles IV était bien étranger à toute cette affaire et il ne s'agissait nullement d'un conflit entre autorité temporelle et spirituelle."

⁹³³ See Friedrich Kempf, "Das mittelalterliche Kaisertum. Ein Deutungsversuch," in *Das Königtum. Seine geistigen und rechtlichen Grundlagen. Mainau-Vorträge 1954*, Vorträge und Forschungen 3 (Constance: Jan Thorbecke, 1965), 225–242, esp. 237.

“Roman theory of emperorship,” according to which he became emperor by an act of the Roman people.⁹³⁴ Although Charles IV was also assertive toward the papacy and firmly opposed it where he believed it infringed on the Empire’s rights, he still upheld this mutual bond. Thus, the matter of Wenceslas held considerable potential to significantly influence the curial crisis of 1378.

The protracted dispute over the approbation began during the pontificate of Gregory XI and was inherited by Urban. In early May, this issue significantly worsened relations between the pope and an influential group of cardinals. When the ultramontane revolt came to light in Tivoli in late July, the approbation quickly became a hostage to the conflict between the two sides. Urban seized the opportunity to accuse the rebels of schism before the emperor, alleging that they were also responsible for delaying the proclamation of the approbation by concealing the necessary documentation. The three Italian cardinals acted as a balancing force, ultimately permitting the proclamation of the approbation in order to strengthen their role as mediators between the parties.

Eloquent testimony to the significant role of Wenceslas’s cause in the outbreak of the ecclesiastical crisis was also provided by Archbishop John of Jenstein, a strong supporter of Urban. Four years later, in 1382, he identified the imperial diplomat to the Curia, the dean of Vyšehrad, Konrad of Veselá, as “the originator of the present schism”⁹³⁵ and even had him depicted among the leading minions of satanic ugliness in his residences.⁹³⁶

The approbation case continued to escalate the crisis even after Urban’s envoys in Prague had handed the Bull of Approbation to the emperor and he had accepted it. Early in the summer, Charles IV received numerous letters from the cardinals concerning Urban’s election and the deferred approbation. In September, the emperor turned this correspondence against the rebels, making it a solid pillar of Urbanist agitation. Charles portrayed the cardinals as liars by publicly displaying their letter of May 8 in Rome and circulating the power of attorney of the six ultramontanes dated April 9 within the Empire—and apparently beyond it as well.

⁹³⁴ Hilary Seton Offler, “Empire and Papacy: The Last Struggle (Lewis of Bavaria, John XXII, Benedict XII and Clement VI),” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1956): 21–47, at 35.

⁹³⁵ See Loserth, ed., “Beiträge, 1,” no. 45, 368: “Conradus, auctor presentis scismatis.” Cf. Steinherz, “Das Schisma von 1378,” 611, note 1.

⁹³⁶ *Visiones Ioannis, archiepiscopi Pragensis, et earundem explicaciones (Alias Tractatus de origine hussitarum)*, ed. Jaroslav Kadlec (Tábor: Muzeum husitského revolučního hnutí, 1980), 13.

The emperor's diplomatic activities in Italy, France, and Germany in support of Urban were indeed aimed at extinguishing, not further escalating, the ecclesiastical rift. However, the confrontational tone of this campaign, along with its intensity and controversial content, ultimately fueled rather than damped the conflict. We can assume that Queen Joanna of Naples learned of the emperor's inclination toward Urban before she formally declared her allegiance to Clement VII, as may also have been the case for the French king, Charles V. It is impossible to determine whether the emperor's partisanship, his coalition with the king of Hungary, or the potential collapse of the dynastic triangle influenced the decision-making in Naples or Paris. The cardinals' intense agitation campaign at both courts was strong enough to make a significant impression on these monarchs on its own. Nevertheless, the firm positions adopted by both the emperor and the king of Hungary effectively forced Queen Joanna and Charles V to abandon neutrality and declare their stance. Thus, Henry of Langenstein's harsh judgment—accusing Charles IV of intensifying, if not initiating, a schism (*scisma et dissensionem maioravit, nescio si inchoavit*)⁹³⁷—is not as unjustified as it might initially seem.

The Parisian professor's primary concern in the *Epistola pacis* was that the Holy Roman Emperor had not allowed scholars time to consider convening a general council as a supra-partisan means of resolving the crisis. We have no indication that Charles IV actually contemplated convening an ecclesiastical assembly. Discussions about a council, whether general or partial, took place among all the cardinals in August and September 1378, prompted by Urban. Ultimately, they rejected this possibility—likely because the situation favored Urban, who, by instigating these discussions, sought to buy time to consolidate his party. A council as a means of resolving the crisis would not have suited the emperor either; this complex proposal would have cast doubt on Urban's legitimacy and, by extension, on Wenceslass's Bull of Approbation. Nevertheless, Charles IV did not abdicate his responsibility for the fate of the Latin West.

In his correspondence, Urban VI praised the emperor for opposing the schism and promoting unity.⁹³⁸ The monarch did not dispute this. He wrote to the dissenting cardinals that it was his duty to promote the unity of the

⁹³⁷ See note 6 above.

⁹³⁸ See page 294 in the Appendix below: "Imperialis celsitudo [...] est [...] amatrix pacis et iusticie exosa habens cismata et diligens unitatem, zelatrix ecclesie et christiane fidei defensatrix."

world and confront discord, especially within the Church.⁹³⁹ Charles IV also embraced his duty as defender of the Church when he warned the cardinals that the schism threatened to sow error and heresy within the Catholic faith.⁹⁴⁰ His predecessor, Frederick II, had already assigned the emperor and secular authorities a leading role in combating heresy and heretics.⁹⁴¹

In this respect, Samuel Steinherz and Ferdinand Seibt, in particular, had good reason to highlight the emperor's responsibility for Christianity and his legal consciousness. But this was only one side of the coin, inseparable from the other. Queen Joanna of Naples, who considered herself the special protector of the papacy, was also aware that the dispute was about the faith and the Vicar of Christ, and that a wrong decision would endanger her family honor, her conscience, and the salvation of her subjects. Yet, she came to the opposite position of Charles IV. This was because secular rulers had, in the terminology of Ernst Kantorowicz, two bodies.⁹⁴² Their political body, the mystical body, was the undying vehicle of justice, nourished by knowledge and testimony received from the contending parties. It is enough to recall the long inquiries by the kings of Aragon and Castile in their efforts to uncover the truth about the election and the rebellion. The mortal, physical body of monarchs, in turn, was alive with personal interests, ambitions, and preferences. Some historians have tended to separate the two bodies and pit them against each other, but this is counterproductive. The case of Charles IV demonstrates how closely symbiotic the two were.

When Urban's envoys arrived at the emperor's court in September 1378 with the official report of the cardinals' revolt, they also brought a Bull of Approbation with the pope's call for King Wenceslas to come to Rome. They thus stimulated both bodies of the emperor to action. Armed with evidence of Urban's legitimate election and proof of the false pretexts behind the revolt of the ultramontanes, the Italians appealed to Charles's sense of justice and his oath of allegiance to the Church and the pope. At the same time, through the

939 Über Formelbücher, 2:27.

940 Ibid., 28.

941 See Friedrich Baethgen, "Zur Geschichte der Weltherrschaftsidee im späteren Mittelalter," in *Festschrift Percy Ernst Schramm zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*, vol. 1, ed. Peter Classen and Peter Seibert (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1964), 189–203, at 200; Kurt-Victor Selge, "Die Ketzerpolitik Friedrichs II.," in *Stupor mundi. Zur Geschichte Friedrichs II. von Hohenstaufen*, ed. Wolf G. Gunther (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1982), 449–493.

942 See note 311 above.

Bull of Approbation, they accommodated his dynastic ambitions. Charles IV had done what he could in Italy, France, and Germany in the preceding months and weeks to secure the imperial diadem for Wenceslas during his lifetime. In September 1378, the political situation was more favorable than ever for the Italian campaign, but the resistance of the cardinals thwarted plans for its speedy execution.

The first conclusion regarding Charles IV's quick inclination toward Urban is therefore obvious: maintaining the status quo and keeping Prignano in office maximized the likelihood that Charles would live to witness Wenceslas's imperial coronation in Rome. Until the schism formally broke out, the emperor remained dependent on the incumbent pope in this matter, prompting him to launch an intense diplomatic campaign to persuade the cardinals to return to Urban.

Time was of the essence for Charles. The favorable political conditions in Italy and Germany, secured through peace agreements, were fragile and could dissipate. Similarly, the emperor's precarious health posed a constant threat. Nevertheless, the journey to Paris demonstrated that he could still undertake long trips, albeit with significant pain. Charles had strong motivation for enduring such corporal suffering: in Urban's letters, Wenceslas's imperial coronation was not contingent on the emperor's death or resignation, leaving the path to co-emperorship open. Moreover, it remains uncertain whether the emperor intended to accompany Wenceslas throughout his time in Italy. According to the imperial envoy in Mantua, the monarch planned to wait in Friuli, at the patriarchate of Aquileia, to observe how events would unfold.⁹⁴³

However, it was not only the prestige of the Luxembourg dynasty at stake. Imperial dignity was a significant asset to Wenceslas in the conduct of both domestic and foreign policy, as it reinforced his authority. Although the de facto power of the Roman emperor in the fourteenth century was limited and localized, his dignity remained both exceptional and universal.⁹⁴⁴

The second thesis is that the emperor decided in favor of Urban under the almost exclusive influence of the agitation of the Urbanists. It was up to the cardinals to prove that there was something wrong with Prignano's election or even with his personality. But they failed in the field of agitation. Urban was

⁹⁴³ *Documenti diplomatici*, 192: "Dictus imperator remanere debet in foro Jullii apud patriarcham donec viderit alia."

⁹⁴⁴ See Kempf, "Das mittelalterliche Kaisertum," 237–238; Baethgen, "Zur Geschichte der Weltherrschaftsidee," 189–203; Schlotheuber and Theisen, *Die Goldene Bulle*, 33–34.

more prompt in every respect. He had more evidence at hand and more confidants close to the emperor, such as Eckard of Dersch, Peter Wurst, Dietrich Damerow, and Jan of Litomyšl.⁹⁴⁵ Thus, by the end of September, Charles IV had to choose between the approbation bull of the Italian pope based in Rome and the uncertain plans of two groups of cardinals of whom he had only second-hand knowledge. He did not yet know about the election in Fondi. When word of it reached Prague at the end of October, the cardinals continued to lag behind in informing the emperor. The fact that Clement VII had postponed his coronation had taken its toll. The official envoy of the dissenters, Konrad of Veselá, did not arrive with a number of declarations and documents, including the Bull of Approbation sealed by Clement, until after the emperor's death. He himself admitted, with some distance, that the lack of information had fatal consequences for the cause of his party at the imperial court.

The third thesis, as to why the emperor confessed loyalty to Urban and remained faithful to him until his death, is closely related to the second, but cannot be directly proven. Several circumstantial indications suggest that the emperor was influenced by the spiritual conviction that the Italian Urban VI was pope by divine grace. This belief was rooted not only in the "miraculously" unexpected result of the April election, but also in Urban's reforming zeal. Charles IV was sympathetic to both the reformist ethos and Urban's "chosenness," which was validated by visions and signs. Furthermore, he maintained contact with the spirituals who defended Urban's legitimacy.⁹⁴⁶

945 Interestingly, we hear nothing of the experienced imperial diplomat Odolen Boncův, who was still alive at the time. See Josef Tříška, *Životopisný slovník předhusitské pražské univerzity 1348–1409* [Biographical Dictionary of Pre-Hussite Prague University, 1348–1409], Knižnice Archivu Univerzity Karlovy 12 (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1981), 430. It is noteworthy that Odolen, expert on the Papal Curia, was the tutor of the young John of Jenstein. See Holinka, *Církevní politika*, 12.

946 In comparative terms, Jennifer Nancy Brown's study, "Visionary Women, the Papal Schism and the Hundred Years War. Bridget of Sweden and Catherine of Siena in Medieval England," in *Literatures of the Hundred Years War*, ed. Daniel Davies and R. D. Perry (Manchester: De Gruyter, 2024), 272–302, is particularly noteworthy. The American historian shows how the political thinking of these two visionaries, reflecting the events of the Hundred Years' War, influenced England's stance during the schism. This study examines how the political ideas of these women—or, rather, their confessors—who advocated for the return of the papacy to Rome, influenced the emperor's response to the ecclesiastical crisis within the framework of his dynastic aspirations. The interaction between the Empire and Italy in the late Middle Ages manifested in numerous ways, as has recently been highlighted by Len Scales, "Emperors of Rome: Italy and the 'Roman-German' Monarchy, 1308–1452," in *Emperors*

We have direct evidence of the emperor's ties with the admirers of Birgitta of Sweden. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the instructions to Lamprecht of Brunn, we find the earliest evidence yet of the claim that the cardinals rebelled against Urban because he would not return to Avignon with them. Alfonso Pecha and his associates only began to significantly propagate this motif, which became so popular in the literature on Charles IV, in Rome in the second half of 1379, after the cardinals had actually fled to Avignon. Far beyond the Alps, however, where the line between rumor and reality was not at all clear, the Avignon motif may have served an agitational function much earlier. It was an effective way to discredit the cardinals before the emperor, since the return of the Papal Curia to Avignon was a direct threat to Wenceslas's *Romzug*.

It is more difficult to answer the question posed by Olaf B. Rader regarding the extent to which the emperor was influenced by the visionary Catherine of Siena. Direct communication between her and Charles IV cannot be proven. However, a network of personal ties probably played a role in this instance as well. Catherine's mentor and Urban's collaborator, Raymond of Capua, was in contact with King Wenceslas's chancellor, John of Jenstein. The bishop of Meissen, who was inclined toward mysticism, was a natural link between the Italian Urbanists and the emperor. When Urban appointed him archbishop of Prague in October, he most likely consulted people who knew Jenstein. The bishop's Italian connections and his conviction in Urban's legitimacy may, in turn, have contributed to Charles IV's appointment of him as chancellor to the young king, who was preparing for a journey to Rome.

Henry of Langenstein criticized Charles IV in Paris in 1379 for supporting Urban without consulting the scholars and for committing his son Wenceslas to the partisanship. Seven years later, the dean of Vyšehrad, Konrad of Veselá, in Avignon, took a more sympathetic view of the emperor. He believed that if Charles IV had lived just half a year longer, he would have resolved the schism, preventing it from developing as it did. The dean was convinced that the monarch would ultimately have stood up for Clement and his supporters against Prignano.⁹⁴⁷ By the 1420s, the Abbot Ludolf of Žagań in Silesia had grown indifferent to the old partisanship, but he was all the more convinced of

and Imperial Discourse in Italy, c. 1300–1500, ed. Anne Huijbers, Collection de l'École Française de Rome 592 (Rome: Publications de l'École française de Rome, 2022), 11–42.

⁹⁴⁷ "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 14.

the emperor's sense of justice. In his *Treatise on the Long Schism*, he wrote that Charles IV was "so able, good, and just, that it is justly judged that the division of the Church would by no means have lasted long" had he not died so soon after the schism broke out.⁹⁴⁸

We are witnessing an interesting phenomenon: as time passed and the schism prolonged, the conviction of the emperor's sense of justice grew in the minds of contemporary witnesses. His mystical, imperishable body (i.e., legacy) began to overshadow his physical body. Shortly after the emperor's death, Henry of Langenstein criticized him for what he had done or left undone. Konrad and Ludolf, however, increasingly emphasized what he might have accomplished had he not died.

The memory of Charles's "just reign" undoubtedly gained strength in direct proportion to the decline in respect for King Wenceslas's rule.⁹⁴⁹ However, hasty judgments are not justified, even now. Henry of Langenstein suggested that the dying Charles IV deprived his son and successor of the opportunity to approach the schism with the necessary detachment by binding him to unquestioning loyalty to the party that the emperor had chosen for him.⁹⁵⁰ Did Henry get to the heart of the problem here as well? The ecclesiastical policy of King Wenceslas during the Great Schism raises many significant questions, and this is one of them.

948 See Johann Loserth, ed., "Beiträge zur Geschichte der husitischen Bewegung, vol. 3, Der Tractatus de longevo schismate des Abtes Ludolf von Sagan," *Archiv für österreichische Geschichte* 60 (1880): 343–562, at 407: "Karolus quartus tante fuit industrie, bonitatis et iusticie, quod verisimiliter creditur divisionem illam ecclesie nullo modo durasse longo tempore, si omnipotentis dei pietas eum tam subito post eiusdem divisionis exordium de hoc medio minime sublevasset."

949 See, e.g., Jiří Kuthan and Jakub Šenovský, eds., *Wenceslas IV: King of the Romans and of Bohemia and the Origins of the Hussite Revolution* (Prague: Karolinum Press, Charles University, 2024); Petra Roscheck, "König Wenzel IV. Opfer einer Schwarzen Legende und ihrer Strahlkraft," in *Regionen Europas – Europa der Regionen: Festschrift für Kurt-Ulrich Jäschke zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Peter Thorau, Sabine Penth, and Rüdiger Fuchs (Cologne: Böhlau, 2003), 207–230; Klara Hübner, "Mord und Rufmord. Politische Propaganda und die Anfänge der Schwarzen Legende König Wenzels IV.," in *Reformverlierer 1000–1800. Zum Umgang mit Niederlagen in der europäischen Vormoderne*, ed. Andreas Bührer and Dietmar Schiersner (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2016), 57–96; Christian Oertel, "Wenceslaus alter Nero. Die Darstellung Wenzels IV. in der Historiographie des späten 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 74 (2018): 673–702.

950 See note 6 above.

Editorial Appendix

The letters and documents below have not been published previously and have survived either in their original form (nos. 1 and 9) or as copies (nos. 2–8). This variation accounts for the significantly differing quality of their writing. The original texts contain minimal scribal errors and are easy to read and understand, unlike some of the copies. Numbers 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 originate from a form collection preserved in Bern, Switzerland, likely copied in the 1440s.⁹⁵¹ Numbers 4 and 8 are published here from a codex compiled in Würzburg, Germany, by Johannes Ambundii in the early fifteenth century.⁹⁵²

The copies are of rather poor quality, making it impossible to determine whether their scribes were working from flawed drafts or introduced errors themselves. However, the work of the scribe responsible for the Bern manuscript is of considerably higher quality than that of the Würzburg collection. Text number 8, in particular, is heavily flawed, requiring numerous editorial interventions to prepare it for publication.

In general, obvious scribal errors are corrected silently; otherwise, the original, uncorrected version of the manuscript is provided in the footnotes. I have chosen the punctuation style according to the conventions for publishing medieval Latin texts in the Czech Republic. The Leiden system of brackets is employed throughout.

I am deeply grateful to Jana Zachová (Prague) for her meticulous reading of all the texts and for her valuable advice in handling the sloppy work of medieval scribes. Nevertheless, I take full responsibility for the solutions adopted and presented here.

⁹⁵¹ See note 49 above.

⁹⁵² See note 51 above.

No. 1

The imperial chamberlain Vilém Zajíc of Házmburk announces his arrival in Mantua to Ludovico Gonzaga regarding the emperor's affairs and the forthcoming arrival of King Wenceslas. He also requests a kind reception for Bishop John, another imperial envoy.

October 25, [1377], Soffumbergo

Original: Archivio di Stato di Mantova, Archivio Gonzaga, b. 514, no. 14

Magnifico viro et domino, domino Ludovico, fidei servitori sacrosancti imperii et amatori domini nostri servicia nostra semper parata et fidelia.

Vestre dominacioni reverendum patrem et dominum Iohanem, episcopum Carminensem, dilectum capellatum et ambasiatorem una nobiscum per Italiam, Tusciā et Lombardiā serenissimi domini nostri, domini Karoli imperatoris Romanorum et semper augusti, transmittimus, prout a domino nostro in mandatis unacum eo percepimus, ut arma, que sunt per dominum nostrum circa vos reposita, conspicere debeamus, et si sunt in aliquo devasta, cum consilio et auxilio vestro, quantocius possunt, reformatur, quia dominus noster de persona vestra maiorem confidenciam habet et semper habuit, quam de aliquo homine in tota Lombardia vel Italia et plus de vobis confidit quam de aliquo, prout vobiscum conferemus, cum ad vos veniemus. Quia statim venissemus, sed cum domino patriarcha et cum Venecianis sumus occupati in negotiis domini nostri, prout ipse dominus episcopus dicet vobis. Sed postquam negotia domini nostri faciemus, inmediate ad vos veniemus, quia ardua negotia vobiscum tractari debemus ex parte domini nostri pro adventu regis Romanorum.

Alia vobis ad presens non scribimus, quia cito Domino concedente ad vos veniemus. Sed recommendamus vobis dominum episcopum latorem presencium, ut si de aliquo indigens fuerit, id est de pecunia vel de equis vel de aliquo alio, eidem ob reverenciam maiestatis imperialis necnon servitorum nostrorum ob respectu concedatis vel mutuetis, ne⁹⁵³ servicium domini nostri negligeretur. Et nos, cum ad vos venerimus, libenti animo persolvemus, quia idem

pater et dominus vadit versus Lucam et Pisam in legacione domini nostri et statim debet recepta pecunia pro domino nostro imperatore Mantuam redire et ibi nos eum expectare debemus. Petimus, ut eum karitative pertractetis scientes quod,⁹⁵⁴ quidquid ei honoris feceritis, domino nostro gratum in eo servicium ostendetis.

Datum in Saphenberg in castro domini patriarche die XXV^a mensis Octobris indiccione XV^a. Wilhelmus, comes de Hasenburg, supremus camerarius domini imperatoris Romanorum.

No. 2

Pope Urban VI informs Emperor Charles IV of the decision to approve King Wenceslas, requests that an embassy be sent with new credentials, and announces the revolt of the cardinals.

[July 22-25, 1378, Tivoli]

A fifteenth-century copy: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 220, fol. 121r-v

Urbanus etc. Karissime et devotissime fili! Nolumus tuam celsitudinem ignorare, quod iustis tuis desideriis cordis affectum, quantum cum Deo possumus, intendimus confovere et peticiones tuas, presertim statum sacrosancte Romane ac universalis ecclesie honoremque et exaltacionem tue illustrissime domus concernentes, clementer admittere et optatis affectibus mancipare. Verum neveris, amatissime fili, quod circa promocionem karissimi in Christo filii nostri Wenceslai, regis Boemie, illustrissimi primo geniti tui, in regem Romanorum electi, ad imperium postea promovendi, tota nostra iam delibera-
rata versatur intencio graciosiusque sibi proposuimus per te hactenus petita concedere et cum fervenciori caritate diligere operis publici affectum, quando felicis recordacionis Gregorius papa XI^{us}, predecessor noster, eciam negocium huiusmodi quasi expeditum haberet. Quod in mente nostra eciam⁹⁵⁵ cardina-

⁹⁵⁴ Ms.: quam.

⁹⁵⁵ Ms.: ecclesia.

libus manifestata⁹⁵⁶ sollempniter publicassemus, si⁹⁵⁷ procuratoria et munimenta necessaria, sine quibus expedire non potest, maliciose occultata, non fuissent. Sic occultata, detinentur eciam de presenti, quod procuratori tuo R iam notum est.⁹⁵⁸

Sed quia tam arduum negocium non potest, ut expedit, ad effectum desideratum deduci sine illis sollempnitibus, que in huiusmodi negocio consueverunt per Romanos pontifices predecessores nostros solito et apostolico more servari, expectavimus iam et expectamus, ut excellencia⁹⁵⁹ tua iam ex parte nostra super hoc, ut credimus et mandavimus, requisita sufficientes et ydoneos et tanto negocio convenientes procuratores cum procuratoriis literis, instrumentis et munimentis in persona nostra, qui Deo propicio negocium ipsum consumabimus,⁹⁶⁰ conceptis et aliis negocium huiusmodi tangentibus, ut expedire putabamus, transmitteret pro ipsius negocii expeditione votiva. Quare dilectissime fili, ut tuum, ymmo nostrum, propositum cum Dei auxilio feliciter, ut cupimus, impleatur, premissa et alia, que sunt ad hoc exequendum et proficiendum negocium oportuna, non pigriteris, quanto cicius fieri poterit, distinare, ut⁹⁶¹ tolletur omnis occasio volentibus tam desideratum negocium impedire et ora iniqua loquencium obstruentur.

Ceterum, quia post Deum et sanctos suos in te habetur anchora |(fol. 12iv) spei nostre et preter te in terris advocatum et defensorem alium non habemus, nos et hanc sacratissimam sedem matremque tuam, prefatam Romanam ecclesiam, sanctissime et cordialissime tue imperiali celsitudini modis omnibus recommendamus. Scias,⁹⁶² amatisse fili, quod insurrexerunt noviter quidem perversi homines et membra hostis humani generis, se ipsos amantes usque ad contemptum Dei, testes iniqui et in quibus *mentita est iniquitas*⁹⁶³ et in eorum manibus iam inventa multipharie multisque modis et dextera eorum repleta est *muneribus*⁹⁶⁴ utriusque testamenti pagina condempnatis, qui, quia nos extir-

⁹⁵⁶ Ms.: eciam negocium huiusmodi quod in mente nostra eciam cardinalibus manifestata quasi expeditum haberet.

⁹⁵⁷ Ms.: sed.

⁹⁵⁸ Cf. "Depositio Conradi Henrici de Veselá," 11-12.

⁹⁵⁹ Ms.: excellenciam.

⁹⁶⁰ Ms.: consumabibus.

⁹⁶¹ Ms.: et.

⁹⁶² Ms.: sciens.

⁹⁶³ Ps. 26:12.

⁹⁶⁴ Ps. 25:10.

pare vicia cupientes,⁹⁶⁵ prout nobis incumbit ex debito officii pastoralis, correctionem ecclesiasticam dati in sensum reprobum fugientes, dissimiles eorum pravis moribus invenerunt, scismatis iam laqueo involuti seu ligati, falsis eorum allocucionibus et pestiferis conatibus nobis detrahere molliuntur, quorum latratibus, si forte pervenerunt, aures claudat inmaculata tua imperatoria⁹⁶⁶ celsitudo, ipsos velud viros pestiferos repellendo. Adversus quos certum tene, cristianissime imperator, quod exurgit protector noster Deus, et dissipabuntur inimici eius et iam dicte sue ecclesie almifice, nostri, tue et cunctorum fidelium devotorum.

Nos etenim, ut iam prefati sumus, erga⁹⁶⁷ te et gloriosissimam domum tuam latissimo sinu nostros apostolicos favores et gracias libertate plenissima aperuimus, super quibus venerabilis frater noster P(etrus) Magdeburgensis archiepiscopus tuam magnitudinem informabit, quem in tuis agendis apud nos fidelem invenimus honorisque tui et iam dicti primo geniti fervendum zelatorem. Datum.

No. 3

Pope Urban VI commends the virtues of Emperor Charles IV and requests that he write to the princes and kings, particularly those of France and Hungary, urging them not to heed the rebellious cardinals but to oppose them.

[after August 9, 1378, Rome]

A fifteenth-century copy: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 220, fol. 119r

Urbanus etc. carissimo in Cristo filio Karolo etc. salutem etc. Dum attente prospicimus, dum aciem nostre consideracionis figimus, gratulamur in Domino de virtutum numeribus, quibus a Deo dotata imperialis celsitudo consistit, que actus suos Regis eterni beneplacito dirigens plenitudinem gracie meruit

965 Ms.: cupientis.

966 Ms.: imperatorie.

967 Ms.: ergo.

regalium virtutum gloriose titulis insigniri. Est enim discretionis inmensitate sublimis, providencie maturitate fecunda et donacionis claritate conspicua, viam veritatis non deserens, mansuetudine pollens et—quod principium in principe—a timore Domini non recedens, amatrix pacis et iusticie, exosa habens cismata et diligens unitatem, zelatrix ecclesie et cristiane fidei defensatrix. Tantarum itaque virtutum castris munita serena magnificencia tua merito previsa⁹⁶⁸ fuit ad orbis magnalia gubernanda. In te ergo, fili karissime, quiescimus, in te pausamus, in te tuisque brachiis recumbimus velut in devotionis filio, fidei et orbis defensore magnifico et ecclesie stabili firmamento. Flent venti, flunt flumina, domus nostra supra petra posita non corruet in eternum.⁹⁶⁹

Quid ergo poterunt, qui insanias fingunt, mendaciis innituntur, sagitantes in oculis et patulo, ut ledant columpniosis flatibus innocentem? Non veniat in consilium eorum anima devoti cesaris, quinymo ut unitatis adversariis obvietur, quam tantum necessaria fore, ut nemo extra eam salvetur,⁹⁷⁰ Dominus attestatur.

Scribere dignetur, quesimus, eiusdem unitatis amator, cesar inclitus, principibus et regibus orbis terre, precipue karissimis in Christo filiis nostris Francie et Ungarie regibus illustribus, ne scismaticis consenciant, sed toto visu resistent et erga nos et sanctam sedem apostolicam, cui dignata est nos presidere clemencia Salvatoris, prudenter se gerant, non attendendo dementem insaniam, ymmo insaniam demencium cardinalium et falsas inepcias detractorum, sed spretis insanis veritati et cesareis consiliis acquiescant.

Super quibus omnibus dilecto filio Io(hanni), decano ecclesie sancti Appolinarii Pragensis, licenciato in decretis, apostolico et imperiali nuncio per nos informato excellencia tua credat. Datum Rome etc. pontificatus anno primo.

968 Ms.: previsa.

969 Cf. Matt. 7:24–25.

970 Cf. John 14:6.

No. 4

Pope Urban VI commands all officials of the Papal Curia, including the major penitentiary and the administrator of the Apostolic Chamber, not to stay outside the Roman Curia without permission, and commands the collectors and sub-collectors of the Apostolic Chamber not to obey the camerlengo, Pierre de Cros, who has been deprived of his office.

August 29, 1378, Rome

A fifteenth-century copy: Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M. ch. f. 84, fol. 143r–v

Urbanus episcopus, servus servorum Dei. Ad futuram rei memoriam. Decens reputamus et debitum, ut officiales nostri et Romane curie,⁹⁷¹ ad quam veluti ad quendam alienum⁹⁷² universi mundi gentes et negotia confluunt, in eadem curia faciant <habitacionem> personalem et ibidem dumtaxat iuxta laudabilem et antiquitus observatam consuetudinem sua diligenter studeant officia exercere. Cum itaque, sicut displicenter accepimus, nonnulli nostre et predicte curie officiales ab eadem curia absentes eciam <sine> aliqua nostra licencia officia sua, que in predicta curia exercere tenentur, extra eandem curiam exercere presumant, nos volentes super hiis de oportuno remedio salubriter providere omnibus et singulis officialibus predicte curie, |(fol. 143v) quecumque eiusdem curie officia obtainentibus, cuiuscumque dignitatis, gradus vel condicionis existant, eciam si cardinali vel pontificali prefulgeant dignitate ac eciam si⁹⁷³ penitenciarius mayor vel camerarius nostri existant, auctoritate apostolica districcius inhibemus, ne sua officia extra eandem curiam quoquomodo exercere presumant.

Mandamus nichilominus universis et singulis collectoribus et subcollectoribus fructuum et proventuum camere apostolice debitorum et quibuscumque aliis, ne Petro archiepiscopo Arelatensi, olim camerario nostro, aliquas pecunias vel res alias ad dictam cameram pertinentes tradant aut solvant nec sibi

⁹⁷¹ Ms.: curirie.

⁹⁷² However, see page 305 below: “ipsam curiam, communem omnibus patriam.”

⁹⁷³ Ms.: sic.

aliquatenus pareant vel intercedant, ac decernentes exnunc irritum et inane, quidquid in contrarium contigerit attemptari.

Ceterum, ne predicti officiales vel quicumque alii ad excusacionis⁹⁷⁴ sue velamen,⁹⁷⁵ quod huiusmodi inhibicionem ac mandatum et decretum nostra ignorant, quod ad eorum noticiam <non> pervenerint, forsan alligerit,⁹⁷⁶ cartas seu membranas inhibicionem et mandatum et decretum huiusmodi continentes, portis⁹⁷⁷ pallacii nostri apostolici et ecclesie sancte Marie in Transtyberim de urbe, apud quam <unacum> predicta curia residemus, faciemus affigi, que quasi suo sonoro et patulo iudicio inhibiconem⁹⁷⁸ et decretum et mandatum publicabunt predicta, cum non sit verisimile, quoad eas remanere incognitum vel occultum, quod patenter omnibus publicatur. Nulli ergo animo hominum liceat hanc paginam nostrorum inhibicionis, mandati et consitucionis infringere vel ei ausu temerario contraire. Si quis autem hoc attemptare presumpserit, indignacionem omnipotentis Dei et beatorum Petri et Pauli apostolorum eius se noverit incursum.

Datum Rome apud sanctam Mariam in Transtyberim in IIII kalendis Septembris pontificatus nostri anno primo.

No. 5

The Roman King Wenceslas informs a supporter of Emperor Charles IV that he has been approved by Pope Urban VI and recognized as eligible for imperial coronation.

[after July 26, 1378; probably September or October 1378?]

A fifteenth-century copy: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 220, fol. 105r

974 Ms.: execucionis.

975 Ms.: velamine.

976 Ms.: alligerit.

977 Ms.: portas.

978 Ms.: exhibicionem.

Nobilis fidelis dilecte! Regalis excellencie suadet natura, benignitas et racionis humanitatis inducit illos pre ceteris gloriose nostrorum successum auspicis, scripturis et nunciis visitare, quos serenissimus ac invictissimus princeps, dominus et genitor noster, carissimus dominus Karolus Quartus, divina favente clemencia Romanorum imperator semper augustus et illustrissimus Boemie rex circa rempublicam imperii promovendam sensit *<et>* expertus est suorum honoris et nominis precipuos zelatores.

Ut igitur, fidelis carissime, de regalibus successibus, quos omnipotens Deus non meritis nostris, sed sola sua largissima pietate felicibus incrementis augere dignatur, te doceat verissima certitudo, ecce personam nostram dudum per principes electores imperii ecclesiasticos et seculares, ad quos spectat Romanorum regem eligere, concorditer unanimisque votis in regem Romanorum electam et Aquisgrana sollempniter coronatam sanctissimus in Christo pater, dominus noster, dominus Urbanus Sextus, papa modernus die XVII mensis Septembris⁹⁷⁹ proxime preteriti, ut est moris, in civitate Tiburcia in consistorio publico apostolica potestate approbavit, publicavit et pronunciavit in Romanorum regem ac declaravit ydoneam sufficientem et habilem ad suscipiendum imperiale dyademum impendendumque nobis unccionem et consecrationem sacras loco et tempore oportunis, prout desuper sue sanctitatis apostolice litere clare probant.⁹⁸⁰

Que tibi regalium literarum nunciis ad consolacionem specialem per Iacobum de Modrussa, familiarem nostrum, domesticum fidelem dilectum, ostensorem presencium nunciamus, ut fidei tue radicata devocio de nostri status et honoris augmento letetur ac in nostris, sicuti hactenus in paternis fervida fuit, prosequendis honoribus similiter augeatur. Datum etc.

⁹⁷⁹ Correct, July 26, 1378.

⁹⁸⁰ See *Monumenta Vaticana*, 5:31, no. 26.

No. 6

The mayors of the Swabian towns inform King Louis I of Hungary that the bishops of Würzburg and Bamberg, the dukes of Bavaria—Stephan, Friedrich, and Johann—and the burgrave of Nuremberg are going to pay homage to Wenceslas as King of the Romans on the Sunday after the Nativity of the Virgin Mary. They also ask the king to invite Leopold III of Habsburg to do the same.

[before September 12, 1378]

A fifteenth-century copy: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 220, fol. 105v

Serenissimo principi ac domino, domino Ludowico regi Ungarie, illustri domino nostro gracioso, magistri civium, consules, iurati et communitates civitatum sacri Romani imperii per Sweviam, Ulme videlicet, Constancie et ceterarum collegatarum eisdem cum sui recommendacione humili promptum servicium et paratum.

Serenissime princeps et domine noster gracie! Cum universi sacri Romani imperii principes ac etiam nos cetereque eiusdem imperii civitates serenissimo principi ac domino, domino Wenceslao, Romanorum regi semper augusto et Boemorum regi, illustri domino nostro gracioso, velut Romanorum regi suo, vero domino, fidelitatis homagii et obediencie debita iuramenta prestiterint⁹⁸¹ erga ipsum, quod fecerint et facere velint, quod iuris est, consuetudinis et de more. Et specialiter principes infrascripti, reverendissimi domini Herbipolensis, videlicet Bambergensis ecclesiarum episcopi, illustres principes et domini Stephanus, Fridricus et Iohannes Bavarie duces et Nurembergensis burggravius super die dominica proxima post festum Nativitatis Marie in civitate Neuremburgensi sua regalia sive feuda debitis antea super eo eidem domino nostro regi iuramentis prestitis ab eodem velint velut Romanorum rege, suo vero domino, et suscipere sint parati.

Qua propter serenitatem vestram presentibus accurato studio et humilime deprecamur, quatenus magnificencia vestra illustri principi, domino Lupoldo Austrie et Stirie duci, domino nostro singulari, sincere suadere velit et consulere, ad hoc eundem vestris exhortacionibus inducendo, ut ipse erga pre-

⁹⁸¹ Ms.: prestituerit.

dictum nostrum dominum Romanorum regem facere velit et intendat, quod ceteri principes imperii, ac eciam nos, ut premittitur, fecisse cernimur {et}, qui promptis studiis offerant voluntarie se facturos, prout eciam hoc ipsum eidem domino nostro duci scripsimus et suasimus bona fide. Nam revera illud profectui comodo suo congruere firmiter credimus et honori. Datum etc.

No. 7

A courtier of King Wenceslas thanks his friend for the services rendered, requests more in the name of the emperor and the king, and shares news from his residence regarding the two monarchs.

[ca. August 30, 1378, Nuremberg?]

A fifteenth-century copy: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 220, fol. 106v

Amice, fautor et sociorum mi karissime! De sollicitudine et cura diligent, qua in negociis meis nullis hoc ipsum meis poscentibus meritis, prout hoc vestrum tenore pridem literarum accepi,⁹⁸² huiusmodi primum, studiosum et solletem <laborem> reddere curavistis, dilectionis vestre ad plenum regraciari non valeo. Nichilominus pro eisdem et dudum inter nos contracta noticia vestris me offero beneplacitis promptis et humilibus studiis, rebus et corpore famulari. Et ecce, iteratas nunc vobis dirigo. A domino imperatore⁹⁸³ et rege in forma meliori, ut videbitis, acquisivi literas, iuxta quarum tenorem onus procuracionis vobis assummi supplico et cum ipsis de amicorum dominorum et sociorum utrobique nostrorum consilio fieri, ut confido.

Nova hic occurencia vos hucusque latere non credo, ut cum aliquid horum vobis significem. Ecce dominus imperator sedatis inter R et civitates imperii gweris omnino, pretextu quarum eidem domino imperatori et regi ipse aliquatenus rebellare videbantur, domino meo rege in Almanie partibus pro disponenda republica relicto assignatisque et traditis eidem castris transsilvanis

⁹⁸² Ms.: accepit.

⁹⁸³ Ms.: imperatorem.

singulis Ungarie, petit pro felici {utinam} inter S et V, regis filiam, matrimonio consumendo. Infrascripti R et R etc. a die hodierna ad XIII dies a domino meo rege in civitate R feuda sua suscipient prestitis per eosdem eidem domino regi fidelitatis, obediencie et homagii debita sacramenta.

No. 8

Pope Urban VI initiates the trial of four cardinals and their ecclesiastical and lay supporters for sedition and for causing an ecclesiastical schism.

October 1, 1378, Rome

A fifteenth-century copy: Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.ch.f.84, fols. 14IV–143r

Urbanus episcopus etc. Ad futuram rei memoriam. Vinea Domini Sabaoth, sancta videlicet Romana ecclesia, ventrem suum dolet et amaritatis visceribus gravia emittere suspiria et in lamenta prorumpere cogitur, cum filios uteri sui, quos enutrit et ad dignitatum⁹⁸⁴ culmina exaltavit, matris uberibus⁹⁸⁵ spretis conspicit a rectitudinis tramite declinare, qui non solum leges et monita matris despiciunt, sed uterum, quantum in eis est, viperinis conatibus laniare et inconsutilem Domini tunicam scindere sathagentes scandalorum et scismatum seminaria preparant⁹⁸⁶ ac fame sue prodigi et proprii persecutores honoris effecti non tantum se ipsos nexibus peccatorum involvunt, sed in reprobum sensum dati alios secum ad precipicium trahere moluntur.

Nos igitur, qui predicte vinee disponente clemencia solitudinem et curam gerimus, oportet circumspectius⁹⁸⁷ agere et caucius providere, ut pretergredientes veritatis et recte fidei semitam et prevaricationem addentes, ut⁹⁸⁸ eandem vineam valeant dimoliri, tamquam palmites inutiles et degeneres pro-

⁹⁸⁴ Ms.: ab dignitatem.

⁹⁸⁵ Ms.: uberalis.

⁹⁸⁶ Ms.: preparavit.

⁹⁸⁷ Ms.: circumspexit.

⁹⁸⁸ Ms.: et.

paginae de vinea ipsa eiciantur et a veris dicte <matris> et devotisque filiis et fidei cultoribus evitent.

Nuper siquidem notoria evidencia facti demonstrat et publica fama divulgat, <quod> viri nequam iniquitatis alumni, Robertus olim Basilice duodecim Apostolorum, vulgariter dictus Gebennensis, Iohannes tituli sancti Lauren- cii in Lucina, vulgariter dictus Ambiganensis, Geraldus olim tituli sancti Clementis, vulgariter dictus Maioris monasterii, presbiteri, et Petrus olim sancti Eustachii diaconus cardinales nescientes in semitis iusticie dirigere gressus suos nec timorem Dei habentes pre oculis contra nos conspiraciones et diversas colligaciones et machinaciones facere et in Dei ecclesia, que colleccio fide- lium et unica est, scisma et divisionem ponere et⁹⁸⁹ civitatem Anagnim et castrum sancti Angeli de Urbe et nonnulla alia castra, terras et loca nobis et dicte Romane ecclesie subiecta occupari facere seu illa occupantibus iuxta con- silium et favorem prebere presumpserunt temere et presumunt. Et insuper, ut prefatam civitatem Anagninensem et alias terras provincie nostre Campanie facilius occupare et occupata detinere et alios ad consenciendum ipsorum inquis⁹⁹⁰ voluntatibus et operibus eciam violenter attrahere possint, magnam multitudinem gencium armigerarum, que Britones et Vascones nuncupantur, sub certis stipendiis conduxerunt ad dictam civitatem et provinciam venire fecerunt, unde multa homicidia, sacrilegia, rapine, depopulaciones et alia mala dampna et scelera quam plurima sunt secuta et secutura in posterum verisimi- liter formidantur.

Preterea et eorum iniquos et pessimos cogitatus aliquibus falsis et futatis coloribus palliare <satagentes> contra nos, antea in Urbe in papam et Romanum pontificem per dictos Robertum, Geraldum et Petrum et alios tunc cardinales, ad quos spectabat, canonice electos et debitibus consuetisque solempnitatibus observatis intronizatos et publice coronatos, quos tamquam papam et summum pontificem in missarum solempniis et consistoriis publicis et privatis consulendo et ordinando de statu Romane ecclesie ac rei publice per plures menses tractaverunt, recipiendo et a nobis ecclesiastica sacramenta in animarum ipsorum et aliorum salutis remedia, dignitates, honores ecclesiasticas et⁹⁹¹ |(fol. 142r) gracias impetrando nobisque tamquam pape et summo pontifici ac

989 Ms.: in.

990 Ms.: siquis.

991 Ms.: ei.

ipsorum domino debitas et consuetas reverencias exibendo et preparando⁹⁹² diversos libellos diffamatorios proposuerunt et ad nonnullas mundi partes et ad diversos prelatos, reges et principes transmiserunt, per quos presumunt asserere nos non verum papam, sed Anticristum et antipapam et non apostolicum, sed apostatam fore. Et hec per Iacobum, olim patriarcham Constantinopolitanensem, et Petrum, olim Urbevatanensem, Petrum, olim Montisfiasconensem, Guilelmum, olim Urbinateensem, et Guilelmum, olim Gebenensem episcopos in reprobum sensum datos, quam eciam per nonnullos alias eisdem olim cardinalibus adherentes et eis ad premissa prebentes auxilium, consilium et favorem, fecerunt et faciunt publice predicare ac eciam devulgari.

Et tandem ad profundum descendentes malorum et cupientes predicte matris ecclesie scindere unitatem in civitate Fundanensi cum⁹⁹³ quibusdam aliis, quos cum eorum machinacionibus et dyabolicis suasionibus ad eorum iniquum propositum <attraxerunt, congregati in domo iniquitatis filii Honorati Gaytani, olim comitis Fundorum, cum ipsius Honorati auxilio et favore prefatum Robertum⁹⁹⁴ dampnabiliter eligendo <antipapam>⁹⁹⁵ fecerunt ipsumque papam ausu sacrilego vocare et nominare presumpserunt acque presumunt idemque Robertus huiusmodi elecione,⁹⁹⁶ quinymmo destruccioni audaci temeritate propria consciens se papam et Romanum pontificem inaniter asserere non pavescit.

Et licet huiusmodi conspiraciones, colligaciones et occupaciones et alia premissa scelera iam diu fuerunt notoria, quod nulla poterant tergiversacione celari nosque absque aliqua informacione potuisseus animadvertere in predictos olim cardinales <et> alias adherentes eisdem, tamen sperantes ipsos ad cor redire et viam salutis repetere decrevimus eos super hoc monendos et eciam exhortandos ipsosque per venerabilem fratrem, episcopum Portuensem, et dilectos filios nostros Symonem tituli sanctorum Iohannis et Pauli presbiterum et Iacobum sancti Georgii in velum aureum⁹⁹⁷ dyaconum cardinales primo et deinde per plures et diversos alias probos et magnos prelatos ac tandem et iterato per Petrum episcopum et Simonem presbiterum ac

⁹⁹² Ms.: prependo.

⁹⁹³ Ms.: quos.

⁹⁹⁴ Supplemented according to *Concilia Germaniae*, vol. 4, *ab anno MCCXC ad MCCCC*, ed. Josephus Hartzheim (Cologne: Wilhelm Krakamp, 1761), 514; *Registrum Ecclesiae*, 165.

⁹⁹⁵ See *ibid.*

⁹⁹⁶ Ms.: elecione.

⁹⁹⁷ Ms.: cureum.

Iacobum dayconum cardinales prefatos ac et per diversas nostras literas, ut ad viam veritatis *<et iusticie redire et ab huiusmodi erroribus resipiscere vel lent>*,⁹⁹⁸ duximus requirendos et eciam exhorandos. Sed prefati viri nequam more aspidis surde⁹⁹⁹ suas aures obstinantes et in sua pertinaci superbia obstinati, post moniciones et exhortaciones huiusmodi ad faciendum dictos diffamatorios libellos et predictam elecionem, ymmo pocius destruccionem, ausu temerario et instinctu dyabolico procedere presumpserunt.

Et quamvis premissa omnia et singula, ut premissum est, adeo essent, prout sunt, notoria, quod nulla poterant nec possunt tergiversacione celari, tamen nos ad maiorem cautelam certitudinem premissorum dilecto filio nostro Iohanni et sancte Sabine presbitero cardinali commisimus oraculo vive vocis, ut se de omnibus et singulis premissis diligenter informaret et ea, que per informacionem huiusmodi reperiret, nobis referre curaret. Idemque Iohannes cardinalis informacione huiusmodi per eum recepta nobis in consistorio retulit {se} expresse premissa omnia et singula fuisse et esse notoria et eciam manifesta.

Nos igitur attendentes, |(fol. 142v) quantum premissa sunt gravia et graviorem, nisi efficax opponatur remedium, perniciem paritura, cum insolencie, que sine curacione remedia pariente iuvancia¹⁰⁰⁰ tollerantur, animarum pericula et magna scandala consueverunt gravare, neglecta incendia sumunt vires, et nequeuentes¹⁰⁰¹ ulterius absque gravi offensa Cristi et remorsu conscientie tam gravia scelera et excessus amplius tollerare, adversos prefatos nequissimos viros de fratum nostrorum consilio et virtute altissimi decrevimus exurgere et super premissis contra predictos, qui principales patratores dictorum scelerum esse noscuntur ac¹⁰⁰² alios ad premissa dampnanda scelera induxerunt, procedere iusticia mediante.

Prefatos igitur Robertum olim Basilice XII apostolorum, Iohannem olim tituli sancti Marcelli, Geraldum olim tituli sancti Clementis prebisteros, Petrum olim sancti Euchstachii dyaconum *<cardinales>*, presente fidelium multitudine copiosa, cuiusmodi citandi modum ex certis causis eligimus, presencium tenore citamus, ut XV die presentis mensis Octobris, si eadem die

⁹⁹⁸ Supplemented according to *Concilia Germaniae*, 4:514; *Registrum Ecclesiae*, 165. Ms.: vicibus.

⁹⁹⁹ Ms.: surdes.

¹⁰⁰⁰ The last four words, as written in the manuscript, are not clearly understandable and had to be corrected.

¹⁰⁰¹ Amended according to *Concilia Germaniae*, 4:515; *Registrum Ecclesiae*, 166. Ms.: acquirentes.

¹⁰⁰² Ms.: ad.

consistorium erit, alioquin prima die extunc sequenti, qua consistorium per nos teneri contingerit, compareant personaliter coram nobis ubicumque tunc eramus, visuri et audituri per nos ipsos esse scismaticos et apostatas et blasphemos et conspiratores et tamquam hereticos puniendos ac reos criminis lese maiestatis ac occupatores terrarum Romane ecclesie ipsosque propter premissa incedisse¹⁰⁰³ in penas et sentencias in talia perpetrantes tam a iure, quam homine inflictas et promulgatas et propter huiusmodi ocupaciones dictarum terrarum eos in penas et sentencias, contentas in processibus felicis recordacionis Iohannis pape XXII^{di} et Clementis VI^{ti}, qui eas vim perpetue¹⁰⁰⁴ constitucionis habere voluerunt, predecessorum nostrorum, qui omnes et singulos occupatores, invasores, turbatores Marche Anconitane, ducatus Spolitanensis, patrimonii beati Petri in Tussia, Romandiole, Campanie et Marratime provinciarum seu terrarum ipsarum aut alicuius earum aut ipsos invadentibus, occupantibus vel turbantibus prestantes¹⁰⁰⁵ auxilium, consilium vel favorem excomunicacionis sentencia inodaverunt¹⁰⁰⁶ ipsosque et ipsorum quemlibet, eciamsi imperiali aut regali seu pontificali aut quavis alia dignitate fulgerint, omnibus privilegiis, indulgenciis, graciis et inmunitatibus realibus et personalibus per dictam ecclesiam concessis eisdem privaverunt,¹⁰⁰⁷ incedisse aut ipsos Robertum, Iohannem, Geraldum et Petrum olim cardinales propter premissa fore depositos ab¹⁰⁰⁸ cardinalatibus dicte ecclesie et ab omni cardinalatu,¹⁰⁰⁹ conmodo ac honore¹⁰¹⁰ et per nos deponi ac eciam privari ac ipsos omnibus dignitatibus, personatibus et officiis ac prelaturis et beneficiis ecclesiasticis fuisse et esse privatos et {nos} privari ac visuri et audituri per nos alias eis penas infligi, prout nobis visum fuerit et iusticia suadebit, aperte predicentes eisdem, quod sive venerint sive non, nos tamen in dicto termino ad declaracionem ac privacionem ac infliccionem huiusmodi faciendas, prout iustum fuerit, |(fol. 143r) procedemus eorum absencia non obstante.

¹⁰⁰³ Ms.: incendisse.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Ms.: perpetuis.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Ms.: prestantibus.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ms.: inodamus.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ms.: privavit.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Ms.: et.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Ms.: cardinalatus.

¹⁰¹⁰ Ms.: honoris.

Ceterum volumus et auctoritate apostolica decrevimus, quod huiusmodi citacio proinde valeat et plenum robur obtineat firmitatis dictosque citatos proinde arcet quacumque constitucione non obstante, ac si eis intimata et insinuata personaliter et presencialiter extitisset. Et licet venientes ad Romanam curiam, morantes in ea et ab illa recedentes,¹⁰¹¹ plena debeant securitate gaudere ac in spoliantes, capientes et detinentes eosdem excomunicacionis et anathematis sentencie sunt per processus apostolicos promulgatae,¹⁰¹² ne tamen prefati citati ipsam curiam, communem omnibus patriam, locum sibi minus tutum et propter inimicicias vel ex causis aliis imminere sibi periculum in itinere veniendi ad ipsam curiam ad excusacionis sue velamen forsan allegant, universos et singulos patriarchas, archiepiscopos et episcopos et alios ecclesiarum ac monasteriorum prelatos et clericos et personas ecclesiasticas necnon¹⁰¹³ duces, marchiones, principes, potestates, capitaneos et quoslibet alios officiales et eorum locatenentes, communia civitatum, universitates opidorum, castrorum, villarum, terrarum et aliorum locorum tenore¹⁰¹⁴ presencium requirimus et hortamur ipsisque patriarchis et episcopis et aliis prelatis ceterisque subditis nostris districte mandamus, istis prefatis citatis omnibus et singulis in veniendo ad dictam curiam, morando in ea et ab ipsa recedendo in bonis vel personis aut rebus eorum nullam inferant iniuriam vel offensam vel ab aliis, quantum in eis fuerit, permittant inferre.

Ut autem huiusmodi citacio et processus ad eorum citatorum et aliorum, quorum interest, noticia deducatur, cartas sive membranas citacionem et processum continentis eosdem portis ecclesie sancte Marie in Transtyberim de urbe ac palacii nostri apud eandem ecclesiam siti faciemus affigi, que citacionem eandem suo quasi sonoro preconio et patulo iudicio publicabunt, ut iidem citati, quod ad ipsos <non> pervenerit vel eandem citacionem ignoraverint, nulla possint excusacione pretendere vel ignoranciam allegare, cum non sit versimile quoad eos remanere incognitum vel occultum, quod tamen patenter omnibus publicatur.

¹⁰¹¹ Ms.: recedent.

¹⁰¹² Ms.: promulgati.

¹⁰¹³ Ms.: ne dum.

¹⁰¹⁴ Ms.: tenorum.

Nulli ergo omnino hominum liceat hanc paginam nostre citacionis, voluntatis, requisicionis, exhortacionis processus ac mandata infringere vel ei ausu temerario contraire.¹⁰¹⁵ Si quis autem hoc attemptare presumpsit, indignacionem omnipotentis Dei et beatorum Petri se noverit incursum.

Datum et dictum Rome apud sanctam Mariam in Transtyberim kalendis Octobris anno primo.

No. 9

Clement VII announces to the secular and religious clergy in the province of Mainz that he has been elected pope in Fondi, after the cardinals invalidated the April election of Bartolomeo Prignano in Anagni. The pontiff orders that the election be proclaimed on Sundays and feast days in churches. He also requests a report from the Archbishop of Mainz and his suffragans on the measures taken.

October 8, 1378, Fondi

Original: Ludwigsburg, Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg, B 503 I: Schöenthal, U 87

Clemens, electus episcopus, servus servorum Dei. Venerabilibus fratribus, archiepiscopo Maguntinensi et episcopis ac dilectis filiis electis, abbatibus, prioribus, decanis, prepositis, archidiaconis, archipresbiteris, plebanis, rectoribus ac aliis ecclesiarum et monasteriorum prelatis ipsorumque vicegerentibus, capitulis quoque ac conventibus ecclesiarum et monasteriorum ipsorum ceterisque personis ecclesiasticis, secularibus et regularibus, exemptis et non exemptis, Cisterciensis, Cluniacensis, Premonstracensis, Camaldulensis, sanctorum Benedicti et Augustini et aliorum ordinum et domorum hospitalium sancti Iohannis Ierosolimitani, sancte Marie Theutonicorum, Calatravensium et Humiliatorum magistris, prioribus et preceptoribus in provincia Maguntinensi constitutis, ad quos presentes littere pervenerint, salutem et apostolicam benedictionem.

¹⁰¹⁵ Ms.: contrarie.

In eterne clemencia maiestatis altitudo sapiencie, potencie sublimitas et providencie plenitudo consistunt et qualiter operacione superna detur esse rebus et creaturarum status et condicio varientur, humani non capiunt intellectus. Nec mirandum est in summi conditoris operibus, quod ipse, qui est in excellicie bonitate mirabilis, mox elevans humiles ad sublime, providet ecclesie sue sancte, quando circumspicit eam subiacere longe vacacionis incommodis. Nam, que dixit, illico facta sunt, et que voluit, sunt creata, plenam et perfectam habens ad singula, tamquam palmo concludens omnia, potestatem.

Sane “nuper apostolica sede vacante per obitum felicis recordacionis Gregorii pape XI, predecessoris nostri, qui in Urbe mense Marcii proxime preterito suum diem clausit extremum tantique patris defuncti corpore, prout moris est, cum reverencia et honore in ecclesia beate Marienove in eadem urbe ecclesiastice tradito sepulture ac venerabilibus fratribus nostris episcopis et dilectis filiis presbiteris et diaconis sancte Romane ecclesie cardinalibus ibidem existentibus, de quorum numero tunc eramus, pro eleccione futuri pontificis infra palacium apostolicum dicte urbis, in quo idem predecessor noster obierat, in conclavi congregatis de mense Aprilis immediate sequenti, officiales urbis eiusdem cum populi multitudine copiosa, pro magna parte armati, eciam ad pulsationem campanarum propter hoc ad locum huiusmodi confluentes, hostili et rabido more totum circumdantes abextra et abintus fere palacium adimplentes et terrori tam vehementi minas eciam superaddentes, quod nisi eligeremus et sine mora Romanum vel Italicum, statim interficeremur. Eciam congruo spacio temporis, in quo saltem de persona deliberare possemus, penitus nobis subtracto, preter et contra voluntatem et propositum nostrum ad eligendum Italicum subito et ex arrupto per violenciam et metum mortis coegerunt invitos. Propter quod ad evitandum mortis dumtaxat periculum, quod in rumore populi tam furentis nobis proculdubio imminebat, alias non facturi, ut eciam tunc palam inter nos diximus, Bartholomeum, tunc Barensem archiepiscopum, in papam duximus preter et contra voluntatem nostram, ut predictitur, eligendum.”¹⁰¹⁶ Quam eleccionem, si dici mereatur, prefati venerabiles fratres nostri, collegium sacrosacte Romane ecclesie, existentes Anagnie denunciarunt et eciam publicarunt cassam et irritam ac nullius esse roboris vel momenti, ac subsequenter nobis tunc in minoribus constitutis et pro futuri electione pastoris in civitate Fundana unacum dictis fratribus congregatis,

¹⁰¹⁶ See *Concilia Magnae Britanniae*, 3:129.

Sancti spiritus, cuius spiraculis et gracia prefata ecclesia, Cristi sponsa, ac Petri navicula gubernatur et a subversionis periculo preservatur, infusio in prefatorum fratrum animos sic afflavit, ut in imbecillitatem nostram eorumdem vota concorditer concurrerunt nosque, tunc Basilice duodecim Apostolorum presbiterum cardinalem, ad celsitudinis apostolice speculum ad supportandum onus regiminis universalis ecclesie die videlicet vicesima mensis Septembris ultimo preteriti canonice elegerunt.

Nos autem volentes infirmare scissionis aut rumpere rupture dispendia, prout superni consilii decreverat altitudo, eleccionem factam de nobis, de illius confidentes clemencia, qui debiles roborat, duximus acceptandam. Porro insufficiencia nostra et administracionis tam ardue sarcina tantique oneris gravitate in tanta consideracione pensatis, quodam nimirum stupore demissi, diversarum cogitationum fluctibus vexabamur, quid inter tot diversas et varias seculi pugnas agendum, quid tenendum quidve pensandum existeret, animo tepido cogitantes. Sed virtutem spiritus resumentes in illo, qui exurgit in occursum timentium et implorantium nomen suum, qui clementer in semitis suis gressus hominis perficit et sub eo, cuius alarum velamento quisque protegitur, suscepimus virgam apostolice servitutis sub Altissimi fiducia deferendum, ne videtur nobis onerosum aut grave, quod leve videat Jesus Cristus.

Et quia denunciaciōnem et publicaciōnem pretactas vos latere non credimus, eapropter vos et quemlibet vestrum hortamur in Domino et deprecamur attente, vobis per apostolica scripta precipiendo mandantes, quatinus vos et quilibet vestrum per vos, alium seu alios denunciaciōnem et publicaciōnem memoratas nostramque promociōnem et assumptionem ad summi apostolatus officium, quam vobis ad gaudium nunciamus, in vestris ecclesiis, monasteriis et aliis piis locis, in quibus vobis expedire videbitur, populo singulis diebus dominicis et festi vis, dum missarum solennia celebrantur, notificare et intimare cum solerti diligēcia studeatis.

Porro, quia presentes littere requirent forsitan propter diversa impedimenta vestrum singulis commode presentari, volumus, quod per te, frater archiepiscope, dictarum litterarum transcriptum manu publica scriptum tuoque communictum sigillo vobis predictis suffraganeis transmittatur et tam tu, archiepiscope, quam vos, suffraganei, prelati vestrarum civitatum et diocesum et rectoribus parochialium ecclesiarum ac conventibus ordinum mendicantium quorumcumque et aliis, de quibus vobis videbitur, contenta in nostris huiusmodi litteris nuncietis et quicquid feceritis de premissis per vestras litteras sigillatas veridicis relacionibus nobis insinuare curetis. In premissis taliter

facientes, quod vobis et vestrum cuilibet exinde, preter humane laudis preconium, non solum vobis premium eterne retribucionis proveniat, sed favor apostolice sedis accrescat, quam vobis singulis, quantum cum Deo poterimus, exhibere proponimus ac vestras utilitates et commoda, pro quibus ad nos recurrere vos contigerit, cum securitate poteritis favorabiliter promovere.

Ceterum, ne miremini, quod bulla nostra non exprimens nomen nostrum est appensa presentibus, que ante benedictionis et coronacionis nostre solennia transmittuntur, quia hii, qui hactenus in Romanos pontifices extiterunt electi, non consueverunt in bullandis litteris ante predicta solennia integra bulla uti, sed modum huiusmodi observare.

Datum Fundis VIII Idus Octobris ante predicte benedictionis et coronacionis nostre solennia, suscepti a nobis apostolatus officii anno primo.

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