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Alfonso Pecha on Discriminating Truth about the Great Schism*

Among the numerous treatises written to distinguish truth from falsehood regarding the Great Schism of the West, one of the richest has been neglected. I refer to Alfonso Pecha's *Conscriptio bona sub triplici via de electione ... domini Urbani pape sexti* (1385/86), a greatly expanded version of the same author's *Informationes super creatione Urbani* (1379)¹. Pecha's *Conscriptio* was brought to light by Franz Bliemetzrieder, who published it from a manuscript in the University Library of Basel in 1909². But Bliemetzrieder made no effort to evaluate its worth. Perhaps for that reason and perhaps also because the edition appeared in a journal of limited circulation, the treatise has attracted little attention in the intervening century. Certainly it seems time to look at it anew, and all the more because I have located a second copy in the National Library of Prague which has never been noticed³. Although this transmits a text that varies minimally from the one published by Bliemetzrieder, it contains a salutation, missing in the Prague copy, that elucidates the circumstances of composition. Accordingly, the following article will

* Some of the contents of this article interrelate with insights advanced in a seminar paper written under my direction in 1997 by Lesley Lathrop-Vitu. I wish to thank Hana Suckstorff and Hollis Dvorkin for helping to hone my prose.

¹ The *Informationes*, surviving in a single copy made by the Avignon Cardinal Martin of Zalva as part of his "Libri de Schismate", a collection of documents compiled during the 1390s, and now in the Vatican Archivio Segreto, has long been known to scholars as a result of its publication in *Oldericus Raynaldus*, *Annales ecclesiastici*, Bd. 17 (Cologne 1693) 49–53. A modern edition, to which I will refer, is by *Arne Jönsson*, *Alfonso of Jaén: His Life and Works* (Lund 1989) (hereafter: *Jönsson*) 181–203.

² *Franz P. Bliemetzrieder*, Un'altra edizione rifatta del trattato di Alfonso Pecha, vescovo resignato di Iàen, sullo scisma (1387–1388), con notizie sulla vita di Pietro Bohier, Benedettino, vescovo di Orvieto, in: *Rivista storica benedettina* 4 (1909) 74–100. (Hereafter: *Bliemetzrieder*.) To avoid confusion, I retain the title *Conscriptio*, found in Bliemetzrieder's Basel manuscript, even though the alternative title in the manuscript, as n. 3, *Tractatus de assumptione domini nostri Urbani pape sexti*, may be preferable.

³ Prague, Národní knihovna, MS VIII. D. 15, f. 21^v–26^v. In fact the catalogue entry for this manuscript does refer to the treatise: see *Josef Truhlář*, *Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum latinorum qui in C.R. Bibliotheca Publica atque Universitatis Pragensis asservantur*, Pars Prior (Prague 1905) 555. Yet I am not aware that any scholar has paid attention to this.

submit Pecha's treatise to examination based on the available edition and the new knowledge.

1. The Author: The Hidalgo Hermit

Alfonso Pecha of Guadalajara, sometimes referred to as Alfonso of Jaén, and less often as Alfonso of Vadaterro, is known to students of St. Bridget of Sweden as one of her confessors, as editor of her revelations, and as the first prominent spokesman for her canonization⁴. Yet he simultaneously played a significant role in Italian and curial religious politics from 1368 until his death in 1389. Crucial for understanding this role is the fact that he belonged to a Castilian aristocratic family accustomed to moving in high places. Alfonso was born in Segovia in 1327 as the second son of Fernan Rodriguez Pecha of Guadalajara, a wealthy magnate and chamberlain of the king of Castile. Following the customary pattern, his older brother, Pedro Fernandez, was groomed for a career in secular government, and hence succeeded his father as royal chamberlain, whereas the second son, Alfonso, was groomed for a career in the Church. Although students of his life have been aware from a remark in his *Informationes* that he studied canon law in his youth, their inattention to the *Conscriptio* has impeded them from noticing that this occurred in Bologna under the leading law professor, John of Legnano⁵. The latter was close to Pope Urban V, which may be one of the reasons why Alfonso was made bishop of Jaén by papal provision in 1359. Meanwhile the chapter had elected its own bishop, which meant that there were two rival bishops of Jaén until 1367, when the chapter's candidate, Andrew, was eliminated from the scene by death. Alfonso Pecha thus could have ruled the diocese unimpeded and most likely would have risen further in the Spanish hierarchy from there. But in 1368 he suddenly resigned his bishopric and left for Italy, never to return to Spain.

His motives have recently been clarified by the interrelated research of Hans Torben Gikær and Mario Sensi⁶. Alfonso had undergone a conversion to the ideals of ascetic eremitical monasticism and wished not only to practice them but to lobby for them. It helps to see that sometime before 1368 his brother, Pedro Fernandez, had resigned his own office to live the life of a hermit in a Castilian eremitical community, apparently having himself been converted by the saintly Umbrian ascetic, Tomassuccio of Foligno, on the latter's journey to Spain as a pil-

⁴ The best summary of Alfonso's career, despite some flaws, is *Jönsson*. Although Alfonso is sometimes called Alfonso of Pecha in the modern literature this is erroneous: Pecha was not a place name.

⁵ *Bliemetzrieder*, 98: "Fui enim cum illo egregio et excellentissimo utriusque iuris doctore quondam magistri meo, domino Johanne de Lignano".

⁶ *Hans Torben Gikær*, *The Political Ideas of St. Birgitta and her Spanish Confessor, Alfonso Pecha* (Odense 1993); *Mario Sensi*, *Alfonso Pecha e l'eremitismo italiano di fine secolo XIV*, in: *Revista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia* 47 (1993) 51–80. The following paragraph is based on both accounts.

grim to Santiago. Certainly the Castilian community, of which Pedro Fernandez became the leader, was modeled on a Florentine one shaped by an Umbrian-Tuscan circle of “spirituals” associated with Angelo Clareno: its constitutions had been drawn up by Angelo’s correspondent, Gentile of Foligno. And certainly Pedro Fernandez succeeded in 1374, with the help of Alfonso, in gaining papal recognition for a new order growing out of his Castilian community, the subsequently prominent Spanish eremitical order of Jeronimites. Inasmuch as we know that before leaving for Italy Alfonso had visited his brother in his Castilian hermitage⁷, it becomes evident that he left for Italy with the intention of making further contacts with likeminded Italian ascetics, exerting his influence in favor of rigorous monasticism with the pope, and also pursuing the life of a hermit as best he could.

As it happened, Urban V himself was residing in Montefiascone, on the southern edge of Umbria, when Alfonso arrived in Italy in July 1368, allowing him to tender his resignation directly to the pope and establish personal contact⁸. Mario Sensi was the first to notice that Alfonso then engaged in activity to defend Umbrian fraticelli, who had been rounded up for trial in Perugia in the summer of 1368⁹. Specifically, he requested a *consilium* of the Perugian professor of canon law, Pietro degli Ubaldi, regarding the legitimacy of applying John XXII’s constitution *Sancta romana* to the Umbrians in question. Pietro then published this in favor of the fraticelli, and the proceeding became such a milestone that it was preserved by John of Capestrano, evidently as one of the texts that lay behind the emergence of the Franciscan observants. Pietro degli Ubaldi, it should be said, was the brother of the more famous Perugian jurist Baldo (Baldus), whom we will see Alfonso adducing as a friend in his *Conscriptio*. Very likely the Spaniard had come in touch with one or the other Ubaldini while he was a student of canon law in Bologna.

Having opted to become a “hermit”, as he is consistently referred to in the contemporary documentation, Alfonso followed that calling from his arrival in Italy, either in an eremitical community at Monteluco near Spoleto, or, more likely, Santa Maria del Sasso, near Perugia¹⁰. But he seems to have been too restless to have stayed in any hermitage for long. Sometime during this period he gained knowledge of the holy life of Bridget of Sweden and seems to have visited her in Rome between 1368 and 1370¹¹. Certainly Alfonso and Bridget were both at Urban V’s curia in Montefiascone between April and August of 1370, for some-

⁷ Jönsson, 36.

⁸ Michael Seidelmayer, Ein Gehilfe der hl. Birgitta von Schweden: Alfons von Jaen, in: Historisches Jahrbuch 50 (1930) 1–18, here 4–5.

⁹ Sensi, 53–55.

¹⁰ Jönsson, 42; Sensi, 56, 64, n. 47.

¹¹ Sensi, 63, is mistaken in having Alfonso already residing in Rome in 1369. The source he cites refers to 1379 and Alfonso was still residing in a hermitage between December 1370 and early 1371: see Eric [subsequently Edmund] Colledge, Epistola solitarii ad reges: Alphonse of Pecha as Organizer of Birgittine and Urbanist Propaganda (hereafter: *Colledge*), in: Mediaeval Studies 18 (1956) 19–49, here 28.

time during that period Alfonso served as Bridget's confessor for three months¹². Thereafter his relations with her became paramount. He departed from a hermitage (possibly a new one) on a mission from the new pope, Gregory XI, to deliver a message to Bridget in Rome early in 1371, and in November 1371 he joined her and others in her party for a pilgrimage to Jerusalem that lasted until late 1372. Back together in Naples in February 1373, she then sent Alfonso on a mission to Pope Gregory in Avignon.

Around this time Alfonso abandoned any pretense of living as a hermit in favor of dedicating himself to papal service and advancing his religious causes. October 1373 found him in Avignon supporting his brother's petition to gain formal papal recognition of the new order of Jeronimites¹³. In the same month he received 100 florins from the apostolic camera, apparently to cover travelling expenses¹⁴. Later, in 1374, the pope sent him on a mission to Catherine of Siena, at which time Catherine referred to Alfonso as Gregory XI's "vicar"¹⁵. When not travelling, Alfonso had acquired (sometime before March 1379) a dwelling in the Roman district of Trastevere¹⁶ and must have used that as a base for working on his edition of Bridget of Sweden's revelations. (Bridget had died in July of 1373.) Already intent on seeking Bridget's canonization, he looked for influential contacts where he could find them. Particularly crucial in this regard was an alliance he struck with the sole Spanish cardinal, Pedro de Luna. This would have been sometime after Gregory XI's arrival in Italy in 1377 with his full entourage, for by the time of the new papal election in the following spring Alfonso Pecha – bishop-turned-hermit-turned-curialist – had become Cardinal Pedro de Luna's confessor and trusted familiar¹⁷. As will become clear, this relationship gained him privileged information about the events that initiated the Great Schism.

2. The Two Treatises on the Schism

Alfonso's *Informationes super creatione Urbani* has been available in print since the late seventeenth century and has served numerous historians as a valuable source for the history of the Schism. The circumstances of its composition are clear. After the creation of two rival popes in 1378 the kings of Aragon and Castile remained neutral, and advocates for both sides tried to sway them. Accordingly, Spanish adherents of the Roman pope, Urban VI, held two "inquests" in Rome in 1379 to establish his legitimacy, one in March and one in November. Alfonso was

¹² Jönsson, 42.

¹³ Sensi, 71; Jönsson, 69–70.

¹⁴ Sensi, 72.

¹⁵ Sensi, 73.

¹⁶ A notarial instrument was attested in March 1379 "in domo habitationis domini Alfonsi eremite Rome in regione Transtiberim": Jönsson, 41–42.

¹⁷ Jönsson, 42.

prominent in both and wrote his *Informationes* on the occasion of the second¹⁸. The fact that he supported the Urbanist cause was virtually predetermined. Bridget of Sweden had regarded the residence of the curia at Avignon as an abomination and had labored long for a permanent return of the papacy to Rome. Her revelations took that position consistently, and her revelations were the main grounds for her canonization. Bridgettines were Romanists; it was as simple as that.

The argumentative strategy of the *Informationes* is three-pronged. Urban VI's legitimacy can be proven by the will of God ("*per viam Sancti Spiritus et noticie voluntatis Dei*"), by the actual events of the election ("*per viam facti electionis eius*"), and by means of canon law ("*per viam iuris canonici et per veras rationes summorum doctorum*"). In its more recent edition by Arne Jönsson of 1989 the treatise extends to eighteen pages full of rich detail.

And yet Alfonso's subsequent *Conscriptio* is richer still. The date of its composition must first be established. Outside termini are 1380 and 1389: the former because the work refers to Charles V of France as deceased; the latter because Alfonso himself died in August 1389¹⁹. Narrowing can be accomplished on the grounds of an internal reference to the author's presence in Genoa: he writes of documentation that he possesses "in monasterio nostro sancti Jeronimi prope Januam"²⁰. This refers to the house of San Girolamo di Quarto, founded in 1383 by Urbanist Jeronimites who had fled Castile after that kingdom subscribed to the obedience of Avignon²¹. Most likely Alfonso arrived in Genoa-Quarto to join his compatriots soon after they had settled there, yielding termini for the *Conscriptio* of c. 1383 and August 1389.

From there matters become somewhat more vexed. Bliemetzrieder believed that the work was written not long after 10 March 1388 because of evidence concerning the French Benedictine and canonist Pierre Bohier. He advanced two arguments in this regard, but I find neither compelling. One is that Alfonso included in the *Conscriptio* a document written by Bohier with the subscription "Perugia, 10 March" (but no year). Solely on the grounds that Urban VI was in Perugia between 2 October 1387 and 8 August 1388 Bliemetzrieder assumed that Bohier must have been in Perugia because of the papal presence²². But it is entirely plausible that Bohier was in Perugia for another reason. After all he was a canon lawyer, and Perugia throughout the 1380s was then a center of Urbanist lawyers led by the redoubtable Baldus. Thus Bohier might have had good reason to have been in Perugia in some month of March before 1388.

¹⁸ Ibid. 72–73.

¹⁹ The date is firmly established by Colledge, 27, n. 49.

²⁰ Bliemetzrieder, 85.

²¹ Colledge, 26–27; Sensi, 79.

²² Bliemetzrieder, 81. Ulderico Prerovsky, Pietro Bohier vescovo, riformatore, all'inizio dello scisma d'occidente, in: Salesianum 28 (1966) 495–517, here 496 n. 4, puzzlingly gives 10 March 1387.

Bliemetzrieder's other argument relates to Bohier's title as bishop of Orvieto. Raised to this chair in 1364, he was deprived of it in 1379 by Urban VI because at that time he had transferred his allegiance to Avignon. The Avignon pope Clement VII, however, continued to recognize him as bishop of Orvieto until Bohier switched back to the Urbanists. Specifically, Clement suspended him from the see of Orvieto in August 1387 and named another on 2 March 1388²³. Bliemetzrieder wanted to place the *Conscriptio* after either of those last two dates because Alfonso referred to Bohier as "former bishop". But it seems implausible that Alfonso, an ardent Urbanist, would have regarded an act of Clement VII as having any validity. The reference, then, must refer to Urban's own deposition of Bohier in 1379. Moreover, the fact that Bohier himself retains the title of bishop of Orvieto in his document of "10 March" makes it clear that he wrote earlier than March 1388.

Against Bliemetzrieder's late dating, I propose that Alfonso wrote the *Conscriptio* in 1385 or 1386. At the opening of his treatise he mentions a recent command (*preceptum*) that he should write it. This is strong language; many can plea for the composition of a treatise, but few can command it. Although Alfonso might have considered a handful of people to have had such authority, the most likely suspect is the pope himself. And Urban VI in fact was in Genoa from 21 September 1385 until December 1386.

And there is more. Gobelinus Person, a contemporary German author of a world history, the *Cosmidromius*, drew on the *Conscriptio* in writing about events concerning the Schism²⁴. How would this Westphalian have come upon Alfonso Pecha's work? The answer is not far to seek. In his early career Person was in Urban VI's retinue; he arrived with the pope in Genoa in September 1385, and was there on 21 April 1386, when he was ordained as priest. Sometime afterwards, but before 8 February 1387, Gobelinus Person returned to Germany. To my mind it is all but certain that on his return trip he carried Alfonso Pecha's *Conscriptio bona sub triplici via de electione ... domini Urbani pape sexti* in his luggage.

3. The "Neutral" Adjudicant

In comparison to the somewhat sketchy *Informationes*, Alfonso's *Conscriptio* is an elaborate statement proving the justice of the Urbanist cause. By a rough estimate it is twice as long as its predecessor. The longer breath is evident at the start when Alfonso sets down his credentials for writing, as he had not done earlier. According to his studiously modest statement, the dedicatee of his current account (on whom, more later) had entreated him to reconsider a command to write about the issue of the disputed papacy. Now Alfonso wondered why he of all people should be asked to write on the subject. Perhaps it was because he was not a Nea-

²³ Bliemetzrieder, 76; Prerovsky, 496, n. 4.

²⁴ See n. 56 below.

politan, and neither from France nor Italy, but as a Spaniard could not be suspected of national partisanship. Or perhaps it was because he had renounced his bishopric and all vain and worldly honors: hence he could not be suspected of seeking any benefice from the apostolic chair. As he reflected on these considerations it struck him “with no little marvel of mind” (*non cum modica admiratione mentali*) that he should write the truth for the honor of God. Driven thus by charity and obedience to the dedicatee’s request, and guided by his conscience, he now set down the requested information in the name of Jesus Christ.

This preface must be considered a small rhetorical gem. Alfonso managed to convey two good reasons why his account could be deemed “neutral” and also introduced a touch of the miraculous. The “no little marvel of mind” discreetly plants a suggestion that he was guided by divine will²⁵. But the coy protestation about needing to be coaxed ignores the reality that Alfonso had already written a set of *Informationes* in 1379 without coaxing. And his disavowal of ulterior motives ignores his Bridgettine partisanship and concomitant commitment to the “Romanicity” of the papacy.

4. Per viam spiritus

Alfonso surely remembered the *Informationes* while writing the *Conscriptio* because his organizational strategy was the same – to prove that Urban VI was the true pope by the same three routes: *via spiritus*, *via facti*, *via iuris*. Much of the content of the earlier work is also duplicated. But Alfonso was probably relying on his memory in calling up material he had already communicated because there is no verbal repetition, aside from an inevitable few words²⁶.

The first part of the new treatise goes over much of the earlier ground, stretching from c. 1349 to 1379²⁷. Supernatural visions accorded to Bridget of Sweden and the Infante Pedro of Aragon made clear that the Lord wished the papal see to be fixed in Rome, whence the papacy could proceed to reform the Church. Thus as early as the reign of Clement VI, while Bridget was still in Sweden, Jesus commanded her to send a message to the pope conveying his wish that Clement lead the curia to Rome, there to announce the jubilee, begin the work of reform, and make peace between the kings of France and England. Later, immediately after the election of Urban V in 1362, the Franciscan Infante Pedro, uncle of the kings of

²⁵ Whereas the Basel MS gives “occurrit in mente mea scribere veritatem” (*Bliemetzrieder*, 83), the Prague copy (f. 21^v) has an apparent voice speaking to him: “Scribe veritatem”.

²⁶ Nevertheless in recounting one of St. Bridget’s visions the *Conscriptio* does draw on Alfonso’s earlier *Tractatus de summis pontificibus*: see Arne Jönsson, St. Bridget’s Revelations to the Popes. An Edition of the So-Called *Tractatus de summis pontificibus* (Lund 1997) 68–69. The *Conscriptio* also makes a cross-reference to Book VI of Alfonso’s *Liber Celestis* (*Bliemetzrieder*, 86).

²⁷ I omit documentation when I am simply paraphrasing the text as edited by Bliemetzrieder.

Aragon and of France, received several revelations from Christ ordering him to instruct the pope in Avignon that he must go to Rome and reform the Church. Urban did go to Rome, but he not reform the Church and soon indicated that he planned to return to Avignon. Then Bridget, who now herself was in Rome, took up the visionary torch. She saw the Virgin Mary who told her to inform Urban that if he consummated his plans he would die shortly afterwards. Alfonso wrote this message with his own hand and brought it to Urban while the pope was in Montefiascone.

The third pope to receive messages from Bridget was Gregory XI. After Gregory's election in Avignon Christ told Bridget to urge Gregory in writing that he must go immediately to Rome, not with pomp but with humility and charity, which would be the only way to reform the Church. Alfonso again wrote the message, and had it delivered by an emissary. The result was that Gregory sent an emissary to Rome to ask Bridget some follow-up questions, which led her to have another revelation sent by emissary to the pope that reinforced the first: Gregory must come to Rome in humility by a fixed term or else he would be chastised by terrible divine judgment. Not yet heeding Bridget, Gregory inquired of her again two years later about the future, provoking Christ to appear to her in wrath with the message that the pope must come to Rome immediately and without armies. Alfonso not only wrote out the message but carried it to Avignon and discussed it with Gregory, yet the pope still did not leave and thus lost lands in Italy; afterwards, when he finally did obey the divine command to go to Rome, he did so contumaciously with pomp and an army. Even then he was unable to regain lost Church lands, did not reform the Church, and, after announcing his intention to return to Avignon, soon died.

By this time it was clear that God wanted a Roman pope. With the curia located in Rome he got one, but then the outbreak of the Schism challenged the divine will again. Given that Bridget was no longer alive, Alfonso had to turn to unnamed holy men and women from Germany, Italy, Sweden, and Spain who then all were in Rome to learn whether Urban VI, the Roman pope, was the true one. Many of these had divine revelations that spoke in the affirmative, but for an expression of the greatest authority Alfonso invoked the still living Infante Pedro. Although Pedro was not in Rome, Alfonso learned that Pedro had had a revelation from Christ in favor of Urban, the contents of which he had sent to the kings of France and Castile. With this Alfonso concluded the first part of the *Conscriptio*, evidently believing that nothing further was needed to prove the legitimacy of Urban VI "by the spirit".

Although Alfonso covered much of the same ground in the *Conscriptio* that he had traversed in the *Informationes*, his second version provides a host of details he had not included before. Many of these are evidently designed to reinforce trustworthiness by providing greater circumstantiality. For example, he names the bearer of Bridget's first message to Gregory XI from Italy to Avignon as the Roman knight, Latino Orsini, and the bearer of the second as Nicholas, count of Nola, even specifying that Nicholas received 1500 florins for his travel expenses.

Presumably such details proved that Alfonso was not inventing, and anyone who continued to have doubts about his account could check on particulars with the individuals concerned.

But there is also more basic new information in the *Conscriptio*. One example is the report of a revelation accorded to the Infante Pedro after he had travelled to Avignon to deliver his messages from Christ that Urban V should go to Rome. According to Alfonso, as Urban was actually departing from Marseilles for Italy Christ told Pedro that he should warn the pope never to return to France or else he would provoke a schism whereby a million people would die by the sword. In this case Alfonso reports Christ's message to Pedro in direct discourse and then adds a stunning testimonial to his account: the Infante told him all this personally in Avignon during the reign of Gregory XI in the year 1372, and he received it all in writing which he saved and now still had in his monastery near Genoa²⁸.

The most substantial new datum in the *Conscriptio* concerning revelations is a verbatim insertion of a letter sent by Pedro of Aragon to Charles V of France on 1 April 1379²⁹. This was no April Fool's missive but an extraordinarily impassioned piece of rhetoric. Pedro berates the king for disobeying the will of God in supporting the Avignon pope Clement VII and reports in direct discourse an imprecation by Jesus Christ delivered to him when he was in prayer two days earlier. Christ thunders that He works in strange ways. Was it good that He hardened the heart of Pharaoh so that he would not free the people of Israel? No. Was it good that He blinded the Jews so that they cried before Pilate "Crucify, crucify him!"? No. But from the hardening of Pharaoh's heart came the glorious exodus of the children of Israel, and from the blinding of the Jews came the salvation of humanity through Christ's own death. Thus, in the same way, the commotion of the Romans at the time of Urban VI's election was not good, but from the election came "the translation of the Church from the power and regime of the avaricious and grasping Limousins to the power and regime of the Italians on whom was founded the primitive Church and the primitive right rule of the ancient fathers".

With this remarkable letter, Alfonso ends the first part of his *Conscriptio*. The piling up of visions is overwhelming. Most show that Christ (or else the Virgin) expressed his will resoundingly before the outbreak of the Schism that the papacy should be located in Rome rather than Avignon and that the results of Urban V's and Gregory XI's disregard for numerous warnings to this effect were awful. Once St. Bridget's revelations were no longer available after the outbreak of the Schism, Alfonso had to rely primarily on the Infante Pedro to show that God had

²⁸ So far as I am aware, Christ's message to Urban and the Infante's account to Alfonso are both new pieces of knowledge. Cf. *José Pou y Martí*, *Visionarios, Beguinos y Fraticelos Catalanes (Siglos XIII–XV)* (Vich 1930) 351–354, who does not refer to either.

²⁹ Evidently the letter circulated in more than one copy, as can be seen from its inclusion in Martin of Żalva's "Libri de Schismate". This version was printed by *Oldericus Raynaldus*, *Annales ecclesiastici*, Bd. 17 (Cologne 1693) 47–48, and reprinted from Raynaldus by *Lucas Wadding*, *Annales Minorum*, Bd. 9. (Quaracchi 1734) and *César Egasse Du Boulay*, *Historia Universitatis Parisiensis*, Bd. 4 (reprint Frankfurt a. M. 1966) 58.

by no means turned silent but now expressed himself as an Urbanist. All told, the end of Pedro's letter to Charles V is a powerful conclusion to the sequence of divine messages that Alfonso had retailed on page after page, for the Infante tells the king of France: "It is the will of our lord Jesus Christ that you, as *rex catholicus* ... recognize Urban as the true highest pontiff and vicar of Jesus Christ and submit yourself to his obedience so that France never be built with idols ... Beware divine wrath, for anger will lay waste kings and peoples, nations and kingdoms unless they submit to Urban."

5. Per viam facti electionis

Clearly for modern students of the Schism, the middle part of Alfonso's *Conscriptio* is the meatiest³⁰. Here he recounts events on a day by day basis. Realizing that any account of such events could be challenged, he carefully identifies his sources of information. First among them is Cardinal Pedro de Luna, who played a central role in the conclave of April 1378. As we have seen, Alfonso had become de Luna's confessor before the dramatic events, and already in the *Informationes* he had identified the Cardinal as "*dominus meus familiarissimus*"³¹. He emphasizes this relationship on several occasions in the *Conscriptio*³². Alfonso states that he was confessor to one of the cardinals, who frequently discussed his secrets and arduous concerns with him outside of confession, as well as being confessor to two of de Luna's familiars in whom the latter confided much. More specifically, he states that during a given occasion de Luna consulted with him, and, with great circumstantiality, that the Cardinal revealed to him certain events on a given day "at the first hour of the night after compline". Toward the end of his account he says: "these things I know and heard from the Lord Cardinal de Luna, who spoke to me about what happened every day with his own mouth when he returned from the palace".

There were other informants as well. Regarding a crucial discussion held in advance of the conclave between the Cardinal of Geneva (later Clement VII) and Agapitus Colonna which Alfonso did not mention in the *Informationes* and apparently had not been publicized before the *Conscriptio*, he states: "I heard all of this from Lord Agapitus himself, who narrated it in the presence of myself and my brother Pedro of Spain of the Order of Saint Jerome, placing his hand on the book of decretals and swearing it was true by the holy gospels." Additionally he offers

³⁰ It is not my intention to discuss the events of the Schism. A recent account which includes an excellent bibliography of the enormous literature is *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* et al. (Madrid 2005) 433–482.

³¹ *Jönsson*, 195.

³² The passages from the *Conscriptio* regarding the "facts" of the election to which I refer are in *Bliemetzrieder*, 90–97.

“Lord Nicholas of Cremona”, then in the service of the Cardinal of Saint Peter and “the closest familiar of the Cardinal of Aigrefeuille”, as yet another confidant. Although Alfonso of course did not participate personally in the conclave, at one point he refers to himself as party to a relevant conversation held before it began. Two days before the conclave, “at the hour of compline” (he is circumstantial as usual), he was addressed by the archbishop of Bari, who exhorted him to use his influence with the Cardinal de Luna and others to ensure that they elect an “honorable man” who would “reform the Church in its sacred habits and virtues”³³. (Since the archbishop was elected as Urban VI, Alfonso’s point was to show that he had made himself a prominent candidate without any reference to alleged subsequent intimidation.) In sum, Alfonso presents himself as being as well informed as anyone could wish. Nor is there any reason to doubt that he really was.

Many scholars have drawn on the *Informationes* as a source for the conclave of April and surrounding events, but hitherto no one has begun to exploit the much richer *Conscriptio*³⁴. Surprisingly even its discoverer, Bliemetzrieder, refrained from doing so, perhaps because he deemed it “manchevole”³⁵. In one respect that judgment is true. Alfonso’s account was a partisan brief and thus includes only what he considered useful to him. But scholars of the Schism ought not to spurn new data conveyed by an “insider”. Here I will offer only one example that might suffice to show that a full-scale project of evaluation ought to be undertaken. Alfonso says nothing about a discussion before the conclave between Cardinal Robert of Geneva and Agapitus Colonna in the *Informationes*, but reports one in the *Conscriptio* with the warrant of veracity just mentioned.

According to this account, the Cardinal of Geneva, the leader of the “French” (as opposed to Limousin) faction of cardinals, summoned Agapitus, then bishop of Lisbon and the Cardinal’s chaplain, into his presence and said that because the deadlock made it impossible to find a candidate from the college of cardinals he wished to propose Agapitus as a nominee for the papal see. But Agapitus responded “prudently” that he could not accept the offer, for he was of the Roman Colonna family; since one of the current cardinals was an Orsini, and since the two families had long been adversaries his election would only cause “great scandal and controversy”. Robert of Geneva then asked Agapitus whom he might otherwise recommend, and the latter put forth the name of the archbishop of Bari because he was a familiar of the Cardinal “and if he were elected he would do

³³ Bliemetzrieder, 93: “Et tunc instanter ipse archiepiscopus exortabatur et rogabat me, quod ego loquerer cum dicto cardinali de Luna et cum aliis cardinalibus quod eligerent aliquem probum virum et amicum Dei, veram, iustum et timentem Deum, in summum pontificem, qui ecclesiam Dei reformaret in sanctis moribus et virtutibus, et cetera.”

³⁴ Works that rely on the *Informationes* in apparent ignorance of the *Conscriptio* are Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Poets, Saints and Visionaries of the Great Schism, 1378–1417* (University Park, Penn. 2006); Jönsson; Michael Seidlmayer, *Die Anfänge des Grossen Abendländischen Schismas* (Münster 1940); and Walter Ullmann, *The Origins of the Great Schism* (London 1948).

³⁵ Bliemetzrieder, 79: “Quanto alla narrazione del Pecha riguardo ai fatti dell’elezione di Urbano VI, essa è nell’insieme, mi sembra, non poco difettosa e manchevole.”

whatever the Cardinal wished". To which the Cardinal of Geneva replied that he would expend all his efforts to see that the archbishop of Bari be elected³⁶.

Arguments may be found on both sides regarding the historicity of this account. On the one hand it fits perhaps too neatly with Alfonso's own determination to prove that the cardinals had settled on electing the archbishop of Bari before the conclave had actually met and before any threat of intimidation occurred, a supposed threat which led the cardinals to maintain later that duress had invalidated the election. And of course it also makes the very pope of Avignon the one who first proposed his rival, the pope of Rome. Yet the reported conversation does have an aura of veracity, which is enhanced by the narrator's assurances that the story was told to him under oath and in the presence of his brother. Either way, the example ought to show that the middle section of the *Conscriptio* is worth detailed study.

6. Per viam iuris

The *Conscriptio*, as the earlier *Informationes*, ends with reference to judgments of canon lawyers. In both works the final section is the shortest, but the author goes further in the second than he had before in adducing exalted authority. In the *Informationes* he invoked two treatises, one by John of Legnano, and another by a certain "ancient doctor", James of Serra³⁷. The barrage is much greater in the *Conscriptio*, doubtless because the passage of time gave Alfonso more ammunition. He opens by posing a vivid analogy between himself and a merchant who wants to buy a precious gem of enormous value. Just as the merchant seeks the greatest experts who can distinguish between fakes made out of glass and the truly precious natural gem before making his purchase, so he, Alfonso, sought out the greatest doctors of canon law known to the world.

The first two he named did fit that description. One was again John of Legnano, the "eagle of canon law flying above all the others". Now Alfonso explains that he had met several times with John, his former teacher, and that John had laid out the issues for him most seriously and fully. Moreover, he received from John a copy of a treatise he had written in response to the arguments of the French. Like a merchant buying a jewel, Alfonso also sought a second opinion, that of another great canonist, Baldus of Perugia. Again, he engaged with the expert personally and carried on conversations with him about the Schism that satisfied him fully. In addition he saw two treatises that Baldus had written on the same subject.

Although John and Baldus left no doubt in spoken or written words about the justice of Urban VI's cause, Alfonso produced thirdly a clincher of a different nature. His final authority was Pierre Bohier, a French canonist lacking the repu-

³⁶ Bliemetzrieder, 91.

³⁷ Jönsson, 202. I am informed by Professor Kenneth Pennington that Jacobus de Serra is not located in the Bio/Bibliographical guide to medieval canonists he has compiled.

tation of the other two but recommended by a recent change of allegiance. After the outbreak of the Schism Bohier had cast his lots with the Clementists and left Italy for Avignon. Soon after he was asked by Charles V of France to come to Paris to stay in the Celestine cloister and study all the available chronicles of the popes for relevant precedents regarding the current dispute. Unexpectedly, Bohier's research led him to conclude in favor of Urban VI. Perhaps there were ulterior motives, but whatever the case Bohier switched sides and returned to Italy. Beyond retailing this story, Alfonso produced a document the Frenchman had asked him to transmit to the Cardinal de Luna. (Pecha had close relations with Bohier before the Schism as a result of a mutual commitment to eremitical monasticism³⁸.) After the letter from the Infante Pedro to the King of France, this is the only complete document in the *Conscriptio*. Albeit brief, it states with succinct forcefulness that the cardinals had erred in electing a second pope; Bohier's researches proved that Urban's papacy was valid, not only because Urban had been canonically elected but because his election had been confirmed by the clergy and people of Rome according to established precedents.

7. The Occasion for Composition

It is now time to turn to the salutation found in the hitherto unnoticed manuscript of the *Conscriptio*. The new evidence indicates that Alfonso addressed his treatise to "Lord Manfred, marquis of Saluzzo, councilor of the illustrious Lord, the count of Vertus"³⁹. For those not entirely familiar with the cast of characters in the Italy of this period, it might seem puzzling that a count of Vertus (Champagne) would be called an "illustrious Lord", for counts were not at the top of the aristocratic ladder. But this "count of Vertus" was none other than the mighty Giangaleazzo Visconti, lord of Milan and ruler of much of Lombardy⁴⁰. In 1395 he would gain the title of "duke" from the Emperor Wenceslas, but before then his rank as count was the highest at his disposal. As for "Lord Manfred, marquis of Saluzzo", he was titular marquis, having been squeezed out by a rival⁴¹. Given Manfred's situation he became a client of the Visconti family in 1356 and prominent "councilor", influencing the election of his son, Antonio, as archbishop of Milan in 1380. Among the documentary traces Manfred left was witnessing a

³⁸ *Sensi*, 69–70.

³⁹ Prague, Národní Knihovna, MS VIII D 15, f. 21^v: "Magnifico viro domino Manfredo Marchioni Salluciarum Consiliario Illustris domini Comitis Virtutum detur ex parte Alphonsi heremite olym Episcopi Greminsensis [sic]". (I adhere to the majusculs found in the MS.)

⁴⁰ *D. M. Bueno de Mesquita*, Giangaleazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan (Cambridge 1941) 10: "This isolated possession [the County of Vertus] will play no part in our story; but Giangaleazzo derived from it the title 'Conte di Virtù' by which he was universally known."

⁴¹ Most detailed remains *N[icholas] Jorga*, Thomas III Marquis de Saluces: Étude historique et littéraire (Paris 1893) 15, 23–24, et passim.

treaty between the count of Savoy and the lord of Milan in 1378, and witnessing the marriage contract between Giangaleazzo's daughter, Valentina, and Charles VI of France's brother, Louis of Orléans, in April 1387⁴². In 1389 Manfred wrote his testament in the palace of Giangaleazzo in Milan, dying soon after⁴³.

Independent information illuminates the circumstances of the *Conscriptio*'s composition. According to an anonymous and still unpublished tract written in England between 1400 and 1402 in favor of the Roman obedience, around the time of the outbreak of the Schism, Charles V of France had sent the noted diplomat, Philippe de Mézières, to Giangaleazzo Visconti, who was adhering to neutrality, in order to gain his allegiance for the Clementist side. Thereupon Giangaleazzo summoned to his presence Alfonso Pecha because the latter knew much about the Schism, having been Pedro de Luna's confessor in Rome. Alfonso brought a "*libellus*" that employed a three-fold argument in favor of Urban, which vanquished Philippe⁴⁴. The chronology here must be mistaken, for Giangaleazzo was not so mighty a lord as to be worth an embassy from Paris until he had overthrown his brother in 1385, and he was only likely to have summoned Alfonso to his presence after the latter had arrived in Genoa in 1383 or shortly after. The work with the three-pronged argument inspired by Giangaleazzo's summons therefore must be the *Conscriptio* that Alfonso says was requested from him by Manfred the councilor of the count of Vertus. Independently a chronicle of Piacenza reports that in 1386, the time of the composition of the *Conscriptio*, Giangaleazzo had established "close friendship" with Urban VI, who, as we have seen, was then in Genoa⁴⁵. Sealing the connection with the English report is the fact that the *Conscriptio* actually mentions Philippe de Mézières. Specifically, when telling of how Pierre Bohier, who had been dwelling in the Parisian Celestinian cloister, had changed sides and gone over to the Urbanists, Alfonso interjects "Lord Philippe de Mézières who was staying at the same time in the convent of the Celestines at Paris knows this well"⁴⁶. Certainly this allusion to Philippe would have been ir-

⁴² Jorga, 51; Jules Camus, *La venue en France de Valentine Visconti* (Turin 1898) 11–12; Eugène Jarry, *La vie politique de Louis de France, duc d'Orléans* (Orléans 1889) 397, 405.

⁴³ Jorga, 58.

⁴⁴ *Responsiva unitatis fidelium ad processum regis Francie sibi directum*, ed. Noël Valois, *La France et le Grande Schisme d'Occident*, 4 (Paris 1902) 512: "Nonne, circa principium exorte nequicie dicte pestis, clarus genitor tuus [viz. Charles VI] Karolus III [sic] ... illum solertis industrie Philippum de Mageriis, tunc tue adolescencie instructorum ... ad Johannem Galea, duce[m] Mediolanensem, tunc Virtutum comitem, depravandum, de quo confidebat unice, destinavit? Quiquidem tunc comes accersi[vit] ad se venerande memorie Alfonso[m], episcopum olim Giennensem ... qui confessor fuerat Petri de Luna predicti et Rome secum electionis dicti Urbani et novitatum hujusmodi omni tempore solers procurator intererat; et per ipsum episcopum idem Philippus, per viam electionis, per viam juris, et per viam spiritus confutatus, inanis, et vacuus retrocessit. De his enim plena tua curia esse debet, apparetque inde libellus quidam dicit episcopi tunc confectus."

⁴⁵ Rodolfo Maiocchi, *Lo Scisma d'Occidente e Gian Galeazzo Visconti*, in: *Revista di scienze storiche* 2 (1905) 199–204, 467–474, here 472.

⁴⁶ *Bliemetzrieder*, 100: "Hec autem bene scit dominus Phylippus de Maseris, quia in eodem conventu Celestinorum eodem tempore Parisius fuit commoratus." *Bliemetzrieder*, 80, mis-

relevant had Alfonso not been thinking of him as his antagonist in the struggle for persuading Giangaleazzo Visconti about the truth of the Schism.

8. Standards of Proof in the Late Fourteenth Century

Despite the reported friendship between Giangaleazzo and Urban VI, any attempt to sway Giangaleazzo to abandon his policy of neutrality was a very optimistic undertaking. As one Italian scholar has written, “the Count of Vertus alone was a sphinx to all: friend of Urban, but no less of Clement, and negotiating dexterously between the one and the other, he drew profit from their discord to gain advantage for his own interests”⁴⁷. Indeed during the period in question Giangaleazzo apparently was tilting toward the Clementists. In March 1386 he gave shelter to two Urbanist cardinals who had broken with the unstable pope and fled for protection to his court in Pavia⁴⁸. Moreover, by advancing the marriage in the winter of 1386/1387 between his daughter and the brother of Charles VI of France he was countenancing close family ties with the leading political power backing the Clementists. A document sealing the marriage between Valentina Visconti and Louis of Orléans was dated according to the reign of Clement VII, and a nuncio of Clement’s was present in Pavia to witness the confirmation of the marriage document⁴⁹.

Alfonso may have been heartened by the invitation to write by one of Giangaleazzo’s councilors. Manfred of Saluzzo was evidently leaning toward Urban, especially given the fact that his rival and actual holder of the Marquisate of Saluzzo was a Clementist⁵⁰. Nevertheless, our author surely had his work cut out for him. Given that he placed supernatural revelation first, he apparently considered it to be the most persuasive of his three strategies. To be sure, he was as circumstantial as possible, just like any witness in a canonization trial. He could testify to numerous revelations in writing; he could say which person brought which revelation to which party. Most eloquent was his statement that the agreement in the revelations accorded separately to Bridget of Sweden and Pedro of Aragon that Urban V should reside in Rome was worth particular emphasis because the two seers did

understands the passage, which would have made more sense to him had he known of the anonymous English account of Philippe de Mézières’ mission to Giangaleazzo. Philippe’s retirement to the Parisian convent of the Celestines after 1380 is well-known; as a result of the Milanese incident the statement of *Blumenfeld-Kosinski*, *Poets, Saints, and Visionaries* 104, that he “spent the rest of his life there” must be qualified.

⁴⁷ *Maiocchi*, *Lo Scisma d’Occidente* 467.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 471–472; *Bueno de Mesquita*, *Giangaleazzo Visconti* 65.

⁴⁹ *Jarry*, *La vie politique* 393; *Noël Valois*, *La France et le Grande Schisme d’Occident*, 2 (Paris 1896) 137.

⁵⁰ *Camus*, *La venue en France* 14.

not have any knowledge of each other: only the “ray of the Holy Spirit” shining on both could account for the agreement⁵¹.

Alfonso must have assumed that his account of repeated messages from heaven, most recently the voice of Christ thundering to the Aragonese Infante, would carry weight in the councils of Giangaleazzo Visconti. We know independently that appeals to prophecies and revelations were heavily-used weapons in the arsenals of both sides in the Great Schism⁵². Yet we know too that some critics were opposed to placing credence in such appeals, especially if they did not support their side. A directly relevant example is that of the Clementist Franciscan, Tomas Olzina, who declared in a commission meeting in Barcelona in July 1380 to examine the revelations of Pedro of Aragon that “I consider these visions to be dreams or impetuous thoughts, nor do I think that they should be called visions”⁵³. Particularly vehement was the Dominican Clementist Nicholas Eymeric. Preaching in the summer of 1379 before the king of Castille, shortly after Pedro of Aragon’s proclamation of his Urbanist revelation to the king of France, Eymeric asked rhetorically whether one can trust the visions and dreams of so-called holy men. His answer was a ringing “by no means!” Whereas Pedro, to whom Eymeric very likely was referring, had claimed to be hearing the direct discourse of Christ, Eymeric insisted that Christ himself had rejected such claims⁵⁴.

Faced with the likely resistance of Clementist skeptics, Alfonso balanced his proof “by the spirit” with his appeal to what we would call “the facts”. One might say that “modern empiricism” here gains equal billing with “medieval credulity”, for it is hard to imagine a more detailed, circumstantial account of the events surrounding the contested election of Urban VI by a well-informed observer than that found in Alfonso’s *Conscriptio*. Students of medieval historical narrative

⁵¹ *Bliemetzrieder*, 86: “Et scias tamen quod nec beata Brigida cognoscebat predictum fratrem Petrum de Aragonia, nec ipse cognoscebat eam, nec de factis eius aliquid noverat, sed radius Spiritus sancti per utrumque ipsorum, diversis tamen temporibus, voluntatem Dei predicto Urbano pape prophetice, ut prefertur, expresse annunciaverat.”

⁵² From a considerable bibliography, see *Hélène Millet*, *Écoute et usage des prophéties par les prelates pendant le Grand Schisme d’Occident*, in: *Les textes prophétiques et la prophétie en Occident (XII^e–XVI^e siècle)*, ed. *André Vauchez* (Rome 1990) 135–165, and *Blumenfeld-Kosinski*, *Poets, Saints, and Visionaries*.

⁵³ Cited in *Andrés Ivars*, La “Indiferencia” de Pedro IV de Aragón en el Gran Cisma de Occidente, in: *Archivo Ibero-Americano* 15 (1928) 21–97, 161–186, here 57: “Quod illas visiones reputo fuisse sompnia vel vehementes cogitationes, nec credo quod visiones dici debeant, ac eis fides sit adhibenda.”

⁵⁴ *Heinrich Finke*, Drei spanische Publizisten aus den Anfängen des großen Schismas: Matthäus Clementis, Nikolaus Eymeric, der hl. Vicente Ferrer, in: *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kulturgeschichte Spaniens, Erste Reihe, Band I* (Münster 1928) 174–195, here, 185, n. 13: “Num begardi, sancti viri nomine et devoti, qui dicunt se visione videre et sompnia sompnari ac a Christo invisibiliter mitti, habent auctoritatem questionem huiusmodi decidende? Absit!” For bibliographical detail on the sermon, see *Claudia Heimann*, Nicolaus Eymeric (vor 1320–1399): *praedicator veridicus, inquisitor intrepidus, doctor egregius* (Münster 2001) 184. The passage is cited by *Blumenfeld-Kosinski*, *Poets, Saints, and Visionaries* 57, with the observation: „Historians agree that one of the targets of Eymeric’s sarcastic remarks was fr. Pedro of Aragon.”

would do well to take note of Alfonso's presentation which may come closer to Rankean positivism than the narrative chronicles of his day. Of course conclusions drawn from any presentation of events were what counted most, and there was a limit to how far Alfonso could persuade. No matter what he said, how could he know for certain that the cardinals did not feel intimidated?

Legal judgments almost cry out for citation at this point. Hence Alfonso presents them in his third section. Fortunately he was able to adduce Urbanist rulings by two of the most authoritative canonists of his day, as well as to add an original document in the stunning case of a Frenchman who had changed sides. He could hardly have offered more. Yet in the last analysis politics and armies do the most to win arguments, and his efforts were of no avail. Giangaleazzo knew too well that his best strategy was to maintain formal neutrality while mostly accommodating the French. In 1391, linked by his daughter's marriage to the Clementist cause of Louis of Orléans, he even assured the latter and other French representatives that "according to his conscience Clement was the true pope and the one of Rome an 'intruder'"⁵⁵.

9. Survival

Yet it must not be thought that Alfonso's *Conscriptio* sank without a trace. As we learn from the anonymous English tract written between 1400 and 1402, its contents were known to the court of Charles VI of France. The English author who knew the three main grounds on which Alfonso built his argument probably himself learned of these from a French source of information. Although it is uncertain who brought the tract from Lombardy to Paris, the possibility cannot be excluded that it was Philippe de Mézières. At any rate, the motive would have been to retain a record of the enemy's arguments. If a Clementist indeed brought the *Conscriptio* to France, sufficient evidence indicates that its circulation owed more to adherents of the Roman obedience who brought it to Germany. One, as we have seen, was the chronicler Gobelinus Person. This author specifically named Alfonso as a source for his account of events surrounding the Schism and drew verbatim on some passages of the *Conscriptio*⁵⁶. Given that the modern edition of Person's *Cosmidromius* was published in 1900, before Bliemetzrieder's publication of the *Conscriptio*, it is understandable that its editor took Person to be drawing on Al-

⁵⁵ *Jarry*, *La vie politique* 73, 429.

⁵⁶ Compare *Gobelinus Person*, *Cosmidromius*, ed. *Max Jansen* (Münster 1900) 83, "Alfonsius ... in tractatu suo predicto scribit, quod postquam scisma in ecclesiam introductum erat, cuidam in visione dictum fuit: 'Urbanus est verus papa et sponsus ecclesie, sed in regimine suo tenebit modum sine modo'", with *Conscriptio*, *Bliemetzrieder*, 88. Another verbatim borrowing is *Person*, *Cosmidromius* 74: "ipse efficeretur Iosias incipiens et non perficiens, et non David incipiens et perficiens." (For the model in the *Conscriptio*, *Bliemetzrieder*, 85).

fonso's *Informationes*, and, when he was unable to match quotations, assumed that Person was "elaborating freely" when he really was quoting literally⁵⁷.

Two retrieved manuscript copies fill in the German-Romanist picture of circulation. Bliemetzrieder neglected to discuss the manuscript on which he based his edition, but the subsequent minute research of Hermann Heimpel pinpoints its origins⁵⁸. Although the manuscript came to the University Library of Basel from the Basel Charterhouse, the part containing the *Conscriptio* originated elsewhere. As Heimpel demonstrated, the pertinent first part of the manuscript is a collection of texts pertaining to the Schism, compiled in the Charterhouse of Trier by the prior of that house, one Winand Steinbeck of Dortmund. With near certainty Steinbeck oversaw this project late in 1394; with absolute certainty he did so to propagandize for the Roman obedience in view of the fact that the Carthusian Order was split along the lines of the Schism. Later, in 1406, he joined the newly founded Charterhouse of Basel, where, at least by 1408, the collection was studied and annotated by an adherent of the Roman obedience, the lawyer Nicholas Vener⁵⁹.

The copy I have uncovered in the Prague National Library has Romanist origins as well. On the grounds of a text written immediately after the *Conscriptio* in the same hand it can be dated to between 1398 and 1404, for it knows of the subtraction of obedience from the Avignon pope and refers to Boniface IX as the reigning Roman pope⁶⁰. Given that the same text describes approvingly an illuminated set of pope prophecies exhibiting a pronounced Romanist slant, its politics are clear. Fittingly the orthography is "German" (a term by which paleographers include writing done by Czechs), although one can notice an Italian underlay, thereby strongly suggesting that the Prague copy descended from an Italian

⁵⁷ Jansen, xlvii; 83, n. 1. Use of the *Informationes* is still proposed by Jönsson, 73.

⁵⁸ Hermann Heimpel, *Die Vener von Schwäbisch Gmünd und Strassburg und die Anfänge der Basler Kartause*, in: *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 69 (1969) 85–102, here 99–101.

⁵⁹ Hermann Heimpel, *Die Vener von Gmünd und Strassburg* (Göttingen 1982) 69, 913–916. The Schism collection in question was seen by an anonymous travelling student, probably before 1400, who listed the contents for his own bibliographical record of Schism treatises. The list survives in Vienna Cvp lat. 5064. As indicated by Franz P. Bliemetzrieder, *Literarische Polemik zu Beginn des grossen abendländischen Schismas* (Vienna 1910; reprint New York 1967) 16*–21* the entry for the *Conscriptio* shows that the student, who gave the correct incipit, was confused about the author: "Item scripta longa fratris Petri de Arrogonia ordinis Minorum super corroboracione eleccionis Urbani per informacionem Spiritus sancti, facti eleccionis, et iuris, que incipiunt 'Magnifice domine mi'."

⁶⁰ Prague, Národní knihovna, MS VIII. D. 15, f. 26^v–27^r. I have treated this text in Robert E. Lerner, "Popular Justice": Rupescissa in Hussite Bohemia, in: *Eschatologie und Hussitismus; Internationales Kolloquium Prag 1.–4. September 1993* (Prague 1996) 39–52, here 43–45. A dating of between 1398 and 1404 was already offered by Herbert Grundmann, *Die Papstprophetien des Mittelalters*, in: *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 19 (1928) 77–138, here 127 (reprinted in *Grundmann, Ausgewählte Aufsätze* Bd. 2 [Stuttgart 1977] 1–57, here 46). I follow Grundmann in assuming that the copyist was either the author or a scribe commissioned by the author; if the assumption is false the date of the copy would still have to be before ca. 1415.

exemplar⁶¹. In fact there is good reason to believe that it descended from a copy brought to Prague by the Romanist theologian Matthew of Cracow, for Matthew was in Genoa in 1385 as an envoy of the University of Prague and definitely brought back with him a copy of Alfonso's version of the *Revelationes* of Bridget of Sweden⁶².

Another manuscript witness, now in Uppsala, stands apart from the first two. This is a copy solely of the admonitory letter included in the *Conscriptio* that was sent by Pedro of Aragon to Charles V of France⁶³. While it is true that the same letter was preserved by the Avignon Cardinal Martin of Zalva in the collection of Schism documents that Martin bequeathed to Benedict XIII and is now in the Vatican archives⁶⁴, examination of the Uppsala copy shows that it matches Alfonso's every time. How did a section of the *Conscriptio* become lodged in a Swedish manuscript? The manuscript in question came to Uppsala from the home cloister of the Bridgettine Order, the monastery of Vadstena, and the part of the manuscript, roughly of 1440, that contains Pedro of Aragon's letter is otherwise devoted to materials pertaining to the canonization of Bridget of Sweden. Evidently the *Conscriptio*, which is replete with passages concerning Bridget's sanctity, was part of the Bridgettine dossier in the Vadstena archives, and the scribe of Uppsala manuscript, for whatever reason, decided in this case to excerpt another part of the treatise.

The likelihood that the *Conscriptio* was in the Vadstena archives is confirmed by one more piece of relevant evidence. In 1475 a professed Bridgettine and chaplain of the king of Sweden gave a deposition in favor of the canonization of Bridget's daughter, Catherine, in which he referred to a certain "letter" sent by "Lord Alfonso the hermit, one time bishop of Jaén, of blessed memory" to "Lord Manfred, Marquis of Saluzzo, councilor of the illustrious Lord, the Count of Vertus"⁶⁵. Although the chaplain stated that this work included a revelation of Catherine, which in fact it does not, the language describing "Lord Manfred" matches perfectly the language found in the *Conscriptio* and removes any doubt that the Bridgettine royal chaplain of 1475 had the treatise in his hand. In the last analysis, however, I believe that the Bridgettine fortunes of the *Conscriptio* are incidental. After all, the devotees of Bridget and Catherine were interested only in

⁶¹ German orthography: prominent k for c (as Karolus, catholicus); use of "w" (as f. 23r: Swecia). Italian underlay: doubling of consonants (as f. 22v: elleccionis; f. 23r: opperanti) and "ngn" (as f. 22v: congnoſcebat). I have been informed by Dr. Pavlina Cermanová that another text in this manuscript, *Tractatus de communione infantum*, is definitely of Czech origin.

⁶² *Matthias Nuding*, *Matthäus von Krakau* (Tübingen 2007) 78, 82. I am grateful to Dr. Pavlina Rychterová for having pointed me in the direction of Matthew of Cracow.

⁶³ Uppsala, Universitetsbibliotek, MS C15, f. 136v–137r. See the thorough description of the manuscript in *Margarete Andersson-Schmitt, Monica Hedlund*, *Mittelalterliche Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Uppsala: Katalog über die C-Sammlung*, Bd. I (Stockholm 1988) 151–155.

⁶⁴ Published in *L. Wadding*, *Annales Minorum*, Bd. IX: 1377–1417 (Quaracchi 1734) 46–47.

⁶⁵ *Jönsson*, 77. I disagree with *Colledge*, 35, who believes, to my mind implausibly, that the *Conscriptio* must have been sent to the Swedish court.

revelations that supported their claims for the two women's sanctity, rather than being concerned with Alfonso's treatise as a whole. Otherwise the circulation of the *Conscriptio* related to Schism politics, and apparently above all the view of Romanists that it was a compelling text for routing the opposition. Whether they favored any particular section – revelations, facts, or legal opinions – seems doubtful, and the order itself is probably irrelevant. (The English author gives a different order: via electionis, via juris, via spiritum.) For readers of today Alfonso's reliance on arguments from revelation seem most distant, but for his partisans they were strong, and the motto that "all good things come in three" must have underpinned a sense that Alfonso had written a very good thing.

Summary

This article analyses a widely-neglected treatise on the Great Schism, *Conscriptio bona sub triplici via de electione ... domini Urbani pape sexti*, written by Alfonso Pecha (1327–1389). It reviews the major relevant events of Alfonso's career and proposes a dating for the treatise of 1385 or 1386. The main part of the article reviews Alfonso's arguments in favor of the legitimacy of Urban VI based on 1.) divine revelations; 2.) the events surrounding Urban's election; and 3.) the legality of the election. By means of drawing on a hitherto unknown dedication found in a newly-identified manuscript it then demonstrates that Alfonso wrote his treatise in order to persuade the lord of Milan, Giangaleazzo Visconti, to support the Urbanist cause. Finally it pursues the "afterlife" of the treatise in the arsenal of propaganda in favor of the Roman obedience.