



**Oration “Res Bohemicas” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini  
(1455, Rome). Edited and translated by Michael von  
Cotta-Schönberg. 4th version. (Orations of Enea Silvio  
Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 28)**

Michael Cotta-Schönberg

► **To cite this version:**

Michael Cotta-Schönberg. Oration “Res Bohemicas” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini (1455, Rome). Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg. 4th version. (Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 28). 2019. hal-01180832

**HAL Id: hal-01180832**

**<https://hal.science/hal-01180832>**

Submitted on 26 Oct 2019

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

**(Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II; 28)**

**Oration “*Res Bohemicas*” of Enea Silvio Piccolomini  
(1455, Rome). Edited and translated by Michael von  
Cotta-Schönberg**

**4th version**

**2019**

## Abstract

Having presented Emperor Friedrich III's declaration of obedience to the new pope, Calixtus III, in August 1455, the emperor's top diplomat, Bishop Enea Silvio Piccolomini, at some unspecified time laid before the pope a proposal for settling the Hussite issue which posed a serious and permanent religious as well as political problem. The proposal was based on discussions between Piccolomini and George Podiebrad, the Regent of Bohemia. It took the form a memorandum, possibly a draft treaty, presented in the oration "*Res Bohemicas*" which was either delivered directly as an oration to the pope or formed the basis of a written memorandum. The main points of the proposal were to grant communion under both species to the Bohemians, to refuse the recognition of the Hussite cleric Rokycana as Archbishop of Prague, and to appoint someone else instead. The pope was sympathetic towards finding some pragmatic solution to the Hussite issue, but he did not act on the proposal, either because extreme caution was necessary in this rather complicated matter, which would soon become even more so with the death of the young catholic King Ladislaus, or because his brief pontificate was focused on the more important cause of a crusade against the Turks.

## Keywords

Enea Silvio Piccolomini; Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini; Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini; Pope Pius II; Papa Pio II; Emperor Friedrich III (Habsburg); Emperor Frederick III (Habsburg); Pope Calixtus III; Pope Callixtus III; Papa Callisto III; Council of Basel; Bohemian Compacts; Hussites; Hussitism; Ulrich von Rosenberg; Communion under both species; Utraquism; History of Bohemia; 15<sup>th</sup> century; Georg Podiebrad; Prokop von Rabstein; Cardinal Juan Carvajal; Cardinal Nikolaus von Kues; Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa; Renaissance orations; Renaissance oratory; Renaissance rhetorics; Council of Constance; Council of Konstanz; 1455

## Editor / translator

Michael v. Cotta-Schönberg

Mag. Art. (University of Copenhagen)

Bachelier en Philosophie (Université de Louvain)

Deputy Director Emeritus / The Royal Library, Copenhagen

University Librarian Emeritus / University of Copenhagen

ORCID identity: 000-0001-8499-4142

e-mail: [typsita@gmail.com](mailto:typsita@gmail.com)

## Foreword

In 2007, I undertook a project of publishing the Latin texts with English translations of the orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II. Altogether 80<sup>1</sup> orations (including papal responses to ambassadorial addresses) are extant today, though more may still be held, unrecognized, in libraries and archives.

At a later stage the project was expanded to include ambassadors' orations to the pope, of which about 40 are presently known.

I do not, actually, plan to publish further versions of the present volume, but I do reserve the option in case I – during my future studies - come across other manuscripts containing interesting versions of the oration or if important new research data on the subject matter are published, making it appropriate to modify or expand the present text. It will therefore always be useful to check if a later version than the one the reader may have previously found via the Internet is available.

I shall much appreciate to be notified by readers who discover errors and problems in the text and translation or unrecognized quotations.

12 September 2019

MCS

---

<sup>1</sup> 81 orations, if the "*Cum animadverto*" is counted is a Piccolomini-oration, see oration "*Quam laetus*" [18], Appendix

**Table of volumes in *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*. 12 vols. Edited and translated by Michael von Cotta-Schönberg**

1. Introduction
2. 1436-1444 (Orations 1-5)
3. 1445-1449 (Orations 6-13)
4. 1450-1453 (Orations 14-20)
5. 1454-1455 (Orations 21-25)
6. 1455-1457 (Orations 26-28)
7. 1458-1459 (Orations 29-42)
8. 1459-1459 (Orations 43-51)
9. 1459-1461 (Orations 52-63)
10. 1462-1464 (Orations 64-77)
11. 1454, 1459 (Orations 78-80). Orthographical profiles. Indices
12. Appendix: Ambassadors' orations to Pope Pius II

# Table of contents

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. Context
2. Themes
3. Date, place, audience and format
  - 3.1. Date
  - 3.2. Place, audience, and format
4. Text
  - 4.1. Manuscripts
  - 4.2. Editions
  - 4.3. Present edition
5. Sources
6. Bibliography
7. Sigla and abbreviations

## II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

0. Introduction [1-4]
1. Hussite schism [5-13]
  - 1.0. Former glory of Bohemia [5]
  - 1.1. Hussite movement [6-7]
  - 1.2. Council of Konstanz [8]
  - 1.3. Council of Basel [9]
  - 1.4. Negotiations in Prague [10]
  - 1.5. Bohemian Compacts [11]
  - 1.6. Later developments [12]
  - 1.7. Present situation [13]
2. Bohemian demands [14-16]
3. Eight alternatives to granting the Bohemians demands [17-38]
  - 3.0. Introduction [17-20]
  - 3.1. War [21-22]
  - 3.2. Debate [23-24]
  - 3.3. Preaching [25-27]
  - 3.4. Silence [28-30]
  - 3.5. Ecclesiastical censures [31-33]
  - 3.6. Withholding priests [34-35]
  - 3.7. Financial subsidies [36]

- 3.8. New treaties [37]
- 3.9. Conclusion: the eight alternatives will not work [38]
- 4. Proposal for an agreement with the Bohemians on communion under both species [39-63]
  - 4.1. Communion under both species not against the doctrine of the Church [39-42]
  - 4.2. Arguments in favour of an agreement [43]
  - 4.3. Arguments against an agreement [44-46]
  - 4.4. Refutation of the arguments against an agreement [47-63]
    - 4.4.1. Actual situation in the kingdom [47-51]
    - 4.4.2. Issue of Rokycana [52-54]
    - 4.4.3. Other Bohemian errors [55]
    - 4.4.4. Stolen church properties [56-57]
    - 4.4.5. Reactions of Bohemian catholics [58-59]
    - 4.4.6. German Reactions [60-61]
    - 4.4.7. Reactions of other nations [62]
  - 4.5. Diversity of rites [63]
- 5. Conclusion [64-65]



# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## 1. Context<sup>1</sup>

The Hussite movement in Bohemia, based on the teachings of Czech reformer Jan Hus<sup>2</sup>, constituted a permanent religious and political crisis.

It was a religious crisis because it was both a schism from the Roman Church, whose authority the Hussites did not recognize, and a heresy since some of its teachings went against the traditional teachings of the Church.

It was a political crisis because it divided the Bohemian population into two factions, a Hussite faction against a Catholic faction that remained loyal to the Roman Church. The consequences were threefold: civil war in Bohemia, wars with the neighbouring countries remaining loyal to Rome, and problems of government since the kings of Bohemia, Emperor Sigismund, Emperor Elect Albrecht II, and his posthumous son King Ladislaus were all staunch Catholics and thus opposed to the Hussites.

The Council of Basel (1432-1439) negotiated a settlement with the Hussites, the so-called Hussite Compacts (or Compacts of Prague), which allowed the Hussites to have communion under both species – one of the central Hussite tenets – but categorically stated that this form of communion was not a condition for salvation.

By the 1450's, it had become quite clear that communion under both species remained the main claim of the Hussites and that papal confirmation of the Compacts of Prague was a condition for reuniting Bohemia with the Roman Church.<sup>3</sup> The Bohemians also continued to insist on the recognition of Jan Rokycana as Archbishop of Prague.

Moreover, the accession of the young Habsburg king, Ladislaus the Posthumous, to the thrones of Bohemia and Hungary and to the position of Archduke of Austria, and thus the fulfilment of Habsburg ambitions of reuniting the three realms under Habsburg government, made it politically very desirable to end a situation where the King of Bohemia would not be able to govern that country effectively because of problems with the Hussite population.

It was therefore in the interest of all parties, the Papacy, the Habsburg Dynasty, King Ladislaus, Bohemia, and its neighbours to resolve this conflict and to find a *modus vivendi* concerning the religious issues.

---

<sup>1</sup> Letters of Piccolomini to Cardinal Juan Carvajal, one of 9 February 1450, another from 1450 with the *De rebus Basiliae gestis Commentarius*, and a third from 21 August 1451 on a mission to Bohemia (WO, II, pp. 101, 180 ff; III, I, pp. 22 ff.); the works *De usus Communionis ad Bohemos* and *Contra Bohemos* of Nikolaus von Kues; Kaminsky, pp. 297-298; O'Brien, pp. 71-73; Pastor, I, pp. 753-756; Voigt, III, pp. 164 ff. For a summary of the situation in Bohemia at the time, see Heymann: *George*, pp. 3 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Ca. 1369-1415

<sup>3</sup> Heymann: *George*, pp. 6-8

### *Meeting in Beneschau 1451<sup>1</sup>*

In 1451, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, imperial top diplomat and Bishop of Siena, was sent to Bohemia to communicate the emperor's refusal to end his wardship over the then 11-year old boy king, Ladislaus, and send him to Bohemia.<sup>2</sup> In this connection, Piccolomini had talks with the regent of Bohemia, Georg Podiebrad, which were presumably instrumental in establishing an understanding between regent and emperor that turned out to be quite useful to both of them.

Piccolomini also discussed the Hussite issue with Podiebrad with the aim of finding some solution acceptable to all parties. Indeed, he formed a rather positive impression of Podiebrad as

*a man of strength and cleverness, even wisdom, whose personal role within the general structure of Bohemia – with her painful divisions and struggles and the heretical infections of her religious mind – he viewed as, at least potentially, highly promising.<sup>3</sup>*

In a letter to Cardinal Carvajal of 21 August 1451, Piccolomini drew this conclusion from his talk with Podiebrad:

*You see what I discussed with George Podiebrad. It is, I believe, of no small importance. For George has a great name among the Bohemians and great power in the party which communicates under both species. And from the other party,<sup>4</sup> many are his allies in war. If anybody can draw the cities to a reunion,<sup>5</sup> it is George.<sup>6</sup>*

Piccolomini's assessment of Podiebrad's importance was quite correct, but he may have underestimated the strength of Hussite – and Podiebrad's – attachment to communion under both species as well as Hussite support for the top Hussite cleric, Jan Rokycana, whom the Bohemians had promised the Archbishopric of Prague, a promise confirmed both by Emperor Sigismund, by Emperor Elect Albrecht II, and by King Ladislaus. And generally, he may have overestimated Podiebrad's power to effect a reunion between Bohemia and Rome on Rome's conditions.

---

<sup>1</sup> Kaminsky, p. 287-295

<sup>2</sup> See oration "*Petivistis ex Caesare*" [16]

<sup>3</sup> Heymann: *George*, p. 51

<sup>4</sup> i.e. the Catholic party

<sup>5</sup> i.e. with the Roman Church

<sup>6</sup> Quoted after WO, II, p. 36: *Intellexistis, que cum Pogiebratio contuli; non sunt, ut mea fert opinio, parvi ponderis; nam Georgius apud Bohemos magnum nomen habet et potens est illius partis, que sub duplici specie communicat, et multi ex alia parte in rebus bellicis juncti sunt ei. Si quis est, qui civitates ad unionem trahere possit, Georgius est*

As a result of Piccolomini's discussion with Podiebrad and his subsequent report to Rome, Pope Nicolaus wrote a remarkable letter to King Ladislaus which, as reported by Heymann, expressed the pope's conviction that Podiebrad, and Podiebrad alone, could and would lead the Czech people away from their religious errors to true Catholic orthodoxy. It is also remarkable in that it voices none of the strong reservations which the Curia had so often uttered towards the Compacts. The letter shows that Piccolomini's view had prevailed in the highest circles of the Roman hierarchy, a view which was to dominate papal policy for the next nine years, though not always with equal conviction.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Fall of Constantinople, May 1453*

After the Fall of Constantinople to the Turks, in May 1453, both emperor and pope endeavoured to organize a military expedition, a crusade, against the Turks. In this context it became highly desirable to have Bohemia join the war effort and to dispose not only of a strong Bohemian army but also of an experienced military leader in the person of Podiebrad. This development strongly reinforced the imperial and papal interest in settling the Hussite issue.

#### *Accession of Ladislaus Posthumous as King of Bohemia, October 1453*

In the spring of 1452 all parties had officially recognized Podiebrad as regent<sup>2</sup> of Bohemia, and after the coronation of King Ladislaus in Prague, in November 1453, he served as regent appointed by that king. As a condition of Bohemian recognition of his kingship, Ladislaus had – like his father King Albrecht and his grandfather, Emperor Sigismund, before him – to accept Bohemian rights to communion under both species and the promise of the archbishopric of Prague to Rokycana.

#### *Imperial Diet of Frankfurt, October 1454*

In the aftermath of the Fall of Constantinople, three imperial diets were held to organize a European military response to Turkish expansion into Europe. The second of these diets was held in Frankfurt in October 1454.

---

<sup>1</sup> Heymann: *George*, pp. 87-88

<sup>2</sup> "gubernator"

On Podiebrad's instruction, the Bohemian ambassadors to this diet took the opportunity to further discuss with Piccolomini, in his capacity as papal envoy to Bohemia,<sup>1</sup> the possibilities for a reunion of the Bohemians with Rome.

#### *Imperial Diet of Wiener Neustadt, Spring 1455*

Podiebrad in person continued these discussions when he attended the third of the three imperial diets, held at the emperor's residence in Wiener Neustadt in the spring of 1455. In the oration "*Res Bohemicas*" itself, Piccolomini says about this event:

*Therefore, when this year Georg Podiebrad, Regent of the Kingdom of Bohemia, a most intelligent man with a noble soul and mind, came to the emperor, the emperor desired me to speak with him in order to assess his position and see if it gave any hope of reunion. For this man is one that all Bohemians respect. Obeying the emperor's command, I spoke with him twice. Our interpreter was Prokop von Rabstein, Chancellor of the Realm, a man with a loyal soul and a pleasant disposition. We discussed and considered many things that I shall not relate now. In the end, the governor's position was this: the Bohemians want the Apostolic See to confirm their agreements with the Council of Basel. If this is not possible, then they demand that the Roman See should, on its own authority, grant them the same conditions that the synod had conceded, and that it should require of all the community of believers to refrain from speaking evil of the Bohemian people and from avoiding them as a people having gone astray. Moreover, they desire that the Apostolic See should appoint a Bishop of Prague from a list of ten or twelve persons. They will not omit Rokycana from the list of nominees. [Sect. 14]*

*If they are informed that their demands are not in vain, they will immediately send eminent orators to offer obedience to Your Holiness, to nominate persons for the diocese of Prague, and to ask for a legate to come to the kingdom in order to consecrate the archbishop and carry out reforms. This is as much as I was able to get from the regent. On his own initiative, the regent himself had confirmed it to me through orators of the kingdom sent to the emperor before the Diet of Frankurt. He also asked me to write to Pope Nicolaus of blessed memory, but I refused to deal with so great an affair in writing, since then questions could not be answered and objections not be refuted. [Sect. 15]*

In conclusion: In the years 1451 and 1455 Piccolomini had two direct discussions with Georg Podiebrad, Regent of Bohemia. The third participant in these discussions was Prokop von Rabstein, Chancellor of Bohemia, and a close personal friend of Piccolomini. Even though

---

<sup>1</sup> He was appointed papal nuntius to Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and neighbouring regions in a bull dated 18 April 1452, (Voigt, III, p. 55, 164 ff.)

Prokop's main function was to interpret back and forth between Bohemian and Latin, he would undoubtedly have informed Piccolomini of his own views on the Bohemian situation in general and the substance of the Bohemian position as expressed by Podiebrad.

Apart from the two face-to-face discussions with Podiebrad, Piccolomini also had discussions with his envoys to the Diet of Frankfurt.

Finally, his understanding of the Bohemian situation was based on personal experiences and exchanges, including with Hussites, during his embassy to Beneschau in 1451.

His views on the Bohemian situation and the possibilities for a solution of the Hussite problem were thus based on direct, serious and high-level diplomatic negotiations and on personal experiences.

In the matter of the Hussite problem and the Bohemian Compacts he had formed the opinion that

- the central Bohemian claim concerned the right to continue to communicate under both species and that the fulfilment of this claim was a necessary condition for reunion with Rome, and that
- the Bohemian regent was willing to give up the demand for papal appointment of the Hussite prelate Rokycana as Archbishop of Prague, something which had until then been a stumbling block in Roman-Bohemian relations.

On one crucial point, his assessment of Podiebrad's position may have been faulty: the Bohemian Compacts had stipulated that the practice of communion under both species would be restricted to those already following that practice,<sup>1</sup> whereas all others, including those to be born in the future, would not have it. This meant that the practice of communion under both species would effectively die out in one to two generations. The Bohemians, however, had not, in fact, respected this restriction, imposed by the Council of Basel, and for Podiebrad to publicly agree to it would undoubtedly be completely unacceptable to the Hussites and seriously endanger his position as regent. Still, Piccolomini included it in his proposal, either because he had not understood Podiebrad's personal position on the matter or the unacceptable political consequences, or because these two consummate negotiators and politicians had arrived at a common understanding that this issue could somehow be resolved later.

---

<sup>1</sup> *"illi et illae qui talem usum habent, communicabunt sub duplice specie!"* (Voigt, III, p. 169)

After the death of Pope Nicolaus and the end of the Diet of Wiener Neustadt, Piccolomini went to Rome, as the emperor's ambassador, to present the imperial declaration of obedience to the new pope. He also brought with him the conviction – and possibly also a formal proposal – to end the Hussite schism through a papal grant of communion under both species to Bohemia. He did so with the backing – and probably at the express demand – of the two Habsburg sovereigns, Emperor Friedrich III and King Ladislaus of Bohemia and Hungary, Archduke of Austria, and in full understanding with the Bohemian governor, Georg Podiebrad.<sup>1</sup>

In Rome, Piccolomini found that the new pope was amenable to some kind of settlement of the Bohemian question,<sup>2</sup> though orthodox diehards<sup>3</sup> might still be adamantly against any accommodation with the Bohemians.

Under such conditions, it was not without risks for Piccolomini – at least in terms of his career opportunities, viz. his long hoped for appointment to cardinal – to champion a settlement with the Bohemians based on a papal grant of communion under both species.<sup>4</sup>

It is not known exactly when (see below) Piccolomini delivered the oration “*Res Bohemicas*” (either as a speech or as a written text)<sup>5</sup>, and he does not himself mention it in his *Commentarii* nor do his contemporary biographers. This may be due to the fact that, as pope, Piccolomini/Pius in 1462 refused to grant Bohemia the right to communion under both species<sup>6</sup> – circumstances had changed greatly since 1455 – and that it would then have been awkward, to say the least, to relate his earlier arguments for the pope to grant this form of communion.

There is, of course, the possible scenario that the text of the oration as such was not delivered to the pope in any format, but that it only served as a basis for oral arguments in discussions before or with the pope. That it was nonetheless included in the Collected Orations of Pius II from 1462 is not a problem in this respect, since the same happened to the also very

---

<sup>1</sup> In the years before, Piccolomini had actively offered to assist King Ladislaus in the Hussite matter, when he returned to the pope and the curia, cf. his letter to Prokop von Rabstein of 12 December 1453: *illud insuper tue magnificentie notum esse volo, me scilicet post actas dominice nativitatis festivitates intra ipsam octavam epifanie hinc abiturum petiturumque domum et Romanam curiam. Id enim jam mihi cesar indulsit. Eam ob causam, si tibi videtur, quod per me posset aliquid apud sanctissimum dominum nostrum operari in utilitatem incliti regni Bohemie, scribito mihi, inveniens me certe cupidissimum. ... Expediret etiam me tuis scriptis certum fieri, que illa essent, in quibus denique Bohemi quiescere, quid de compactatis, quid de bonis cleri, quid denique de rebus aliis, in quibus nosti contentionem esse. Sic enim clarius ac lucidius ad res procederem.* (WO, III, p. 377)

<sup>2</sup> Palacky, 4.1., pp. 408 ff

<sup>3</sup> Like the quite inflexible Cardinal Juan Carvajal

<sup>4</sup> O'Brien, pp. 73-74

<sup>5</sup> Voigt, III, p. 165: *Er trug dem Papste Calixtus eine ausführliche Denkschrift vor, Pläne, die – so schien es wenigstens – die Möglichkeit eines endlichen Sieges der Kirche in sich trugen.* Heymann and O'Brien seem to believe that the oration was actually delivered as an oration, see Heymann: *George*, p. 165 and O'Brien, p. 73

<sup>6</sup> See oration “*Superioribus diebus*” [66]

important oration “*Sentio*”, which was certainly not delivered as intended, but was nonetheless included in the Collected Orations. However, as no external or internal evidence points to this scenario, it has not been retained for the present edition.

There is also the question whether the text was revised before inclusion in Collected Orations of Pope Pius II, as many of his other orations were. Why the “*Res Bohemicas*” would - for reasons of ecclesiastical policy - have been revised rather than excluded from the collection is not evident.

At any rate, there is no reason to doubt that Piccolomini delivered the “*Res Bohemicas*” to the pope in some form or other, and that it influenced the development of the Hussite issue at the Papal Court, though later events, including the death of the catholic King of Bohemia, Ladislaus the Posthumous, in 1457 would completely change the fundamentals of the whole Bohemian and Hussite situation.

Concerning the oration itself, Voigt called it a “*sehr unterrichtende und anziehende Oratio*”,<sup>1</sup> while according to Kaminsky it was “*a model of rhetorical cogency*”.<sup>2</sup>

Podiebrad’s modern biographer, George Heymann wrote:

*This great speech, in some ways a masterpiece of intelligent persuasion, went farther in recommending concessions to the Czechs than had ever before been considered by the Church of Rome. Having surveyed the many reasons that coercing the Czechs toward full unity had failed and was bound to fail again (how prophetically right Aeneas here argued against his own later policy and that of his successor) he came to the conclusion, with the use of many of the arguments previously employed by the Czechs themselves in defense of the Chalice, that a confirmation of the Compacts was the wisest policy and the one most likely to lead to true reunification...*

*At no time before or after was there so much optimism for a permanent settlement on both sides, in Rome and in Prague, than in the years following the meeting at Wiener-Neustadt and Aeneas’ great speech to Calixtus III, and especially in the years 1457-1458.*<sup>3</sup>

Still, there was no settlement of the Hussite problem under Calixtus III.<sup>4</sup> Though the pope remained sympathetic to a settlement with Bohemia, conditions there developed in such a way that Rome had to be very cautious.

---

<sup>1</sup> Voigt, III, p. 165, n. 4

<sup>2</sup> Kaminsky, p. 297

<sup>3</sup> Heymann: *George*, p. 165. Cf. also Voigt, III, p. 168

<sup>4</sup> Voigt, III, p. 170



Nonetheless, the text of the oration "*Res Bohemicas*" remains as an exquisite testimony not only to Piccolomini's political pragmatism and diplomatic skills, but also to a clear-sighted understanding of the religious issues involved, and a policy of tolerance in matters of rite remarkable for that period.

Some, like Piccolomini's 19<sup>th</sup> century German biographer, Georg Voigt, may believe that Piccolomini's aims were not mainly those of high policy and religious toleration, but rather concerned his own career advancement and the rewards for settling the Bohemian conflict ... mainly in the form of a cardinal's hat. Such motives may indeed not have been absent from Piccolomini's mind, but there is really no evidence that he did not have higher motives, too.

The inclusion of the oration "*Res Bohemicas*" in the Collected Orations of Pius II from 1462 is quite remarkable in view of the fact that when this collection was put together Pius had already, as pope, rejected the proposals presented by him in this oration, on behalf of the emperor and the King of Bohemia. This rejection he announced in his papal oration "*Superioribus diebus*" [66] to the Bohemian ambassadors held on 31 March 1462. The inclusion in the papal collection is even more remarkable when one considers that actually the oration may not have been delivered as a formal oration, or if it was, it may have been to a very limited audience, and afterwards it appears not to have circulated widely, if at all.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Themes

The main subject of the oration is the possibility of an agreement between the Apostolic See and Bohemia, granting communion under both species as a special right to Bohemia.

Apart from a lucid, if somewhat biased account of the Hussite movement and the events leading up to the present day,<sup>2</sup> the focus of the oration is three-fold:

The first major point is to demonstrate that the issue of communion under both species is not a theological issue in itself and that the grant of this form of communion does not go against Faith. This Piccolomini knew this quite well from his days at the Council of Basel where he was close to central persons like the papal legate and president of the Council, Cardinal Giuliano

---

<sup>1</sup> See above

<sup>2</sup> It is probable that Piccolomini did not have a clear conception of the differences between the various branches of the Hussite movement, see Kaminsky (p. 302)

Cesarini, a friend of mentor of his, who had been greatly instrumental in the council's settlement of the Hussite matter.<sup>1</sup> Says Piccolomini in the oration:

*So, consider this: do the Bohemians demand something that is against your faith and apostolic tradition? Absolutely not. For those who take the sacrament of the Eucharist under the species of bread and wine neither go against divine commands nor orthodox faith, if only they do it out of devotion and with permission from the Church, and do not claim that they are obeying any command from Our Lord. [Sect. 40]*

The second one is to demonstrate that all other alternatives had failed and were bound to do so in the future. Piccolomini mentions eight alternatives: war, debates, preaching, silence, ecclesiastical censures, withholding priests, financial subsidies, and new treaties. He argues, very reasonably and persuasively against them all and concludes that none of them *is suitable for bringing back the Bohemians*. [Sect. 38].

The third one is to cautiously recommend an agreement between the two parties on communion under both species, based on his discussions with the Regent of Bohemia, and possibly presented to the pope in the form of a draft treaty. The recommendation took this form:

*If we grant their demands, we draw a powerful people, a large kingdom, and the most ferocious peoples of Europe back to the obedience of the Holy Roman Church, we unite the disunited peoples of Bohemia, we give King Ladislaus a tranquil region, we give the neighbouring peoples peace, we become reconciled with a strongly armed people whom we can mobilize against the Turks. And above all, we open the gates of Paradise to an infinite number of souls, which is what – in my belief – we should strive for most of all, for nothing more pleases the Greatest and Best God, who rules in Heaven, than gaining souls. [Sect. 43]*

A minor issue in the oration, but not unimportant, is Piccolomini's endeavour to show that the rites of the Church had developed variously in various regions and that this situation did not constitute a problem of Faith. He says:

*... ceremonies and solemn holy rites are found to be different in different peoples. The Lord has not told us what rites please him most, though it may be assumed that those which are more common are more pleasing to God. For only with divine approval do ritual ceremonies grow and spread to all the world and are accepted. It is not for us to oppose those forms of devotion that are not contrary to divine law. [Sect. 63]*

---

<sup>1</sup> See oration "Audivi" [1], sect. 82: *Now, I beseech you, benevolent Father and Cardinal of Santa Sabina: take care not to lose in one day the reputation which you have built over many years, with considerable effort and diligence. Whatever happens, you will always be praised for bringing back the Hussites*

Toleration of ritual diversity was somewhat unusual in that age, though men like Ramon Llull and Piccolomini's friends since the Basel period, Cardinal Nikolaus von Kues<sup>1</sup> and Juan de Segovia, had begun to develop this theme. The cardinal had even coined the expression: *Una religio in rituum varietate*.<sup>2</sup>

Actually, Piccolomini's statement may have been directly influenced by the cardinal who had written, in his *De pace fidei* from 1453, that

*Where conformity of mode cannot be had, nations are entitled to their own devotions and ceremonies, provided faith and peace be maintained. Perhaps as a result of a certain diversity devotion will even be increased, since each nation will endeavor with zeal and diligence to make its own rite more splendid, in order that in this respect it may excel some other [nation] and thereby obtain greater merit with God and [greater] praise in the world.*"<sup>3</sup>

This statement should be seen together with Piccolomini's statement on converting peoples by war:

*But, let us assume that the Bohemians will succumb to our military might: would that really be a holy and honourable way of converting Bohemia? The early Church did not draw straying people back to the way by sword or fire, but by kind words and gentle exhortations. It always abhorred bloodshed. Too much blood will colour the earth before Bohemia is subdued by the sword. They will fall, and our people will fall, too. We shall send countless souls to hell before the Bohemians will declare themselves defeated. What is bought by human blood is far too expensive. A mind is not acceptable to God if it only adores the crucified [Lord] because it has been coerced through war. The Bohemians who survive the war may be forced to accept our rites, but they will not do so voluntarily. They will accept our faith through fear alone, and not with their hearts. They will always be thinking about how to escape servitude. [Sect. 22]*

---

<sup>1</sup> Nederman, pp. 85-98: *It is not so much "optimism" as accommodation to thoroughly ingrained forms of group identity that lies beneath his [Cusa's] call for "one religion in a variety of rites". The medieval ideal of the Respublica Christiana is at least tacitly shown to be unworkable in its traditional formulation. In place of this ideal comes a recognition that the unity of faith is not undermined – in fact, may be enhanced by the multiplicity of national practices and identities. In some ways, then, the path to toleration pioneered by De pace fidei has surprising resonance at the end of the twentieth century. In his De usu communionis ad Bohemos, from the early Basel period, Nikolaus von Kues had declared that No one doubts that a different rite could exist without danger and preserving the unity within the same Church. When, however, presumptuous rashness prefers some rite or other to unity and peace, even if that rite should be good, holy and praiseworthy in itself, it is damnable* (Nikolaus von Kues: *De usu* (Izbicki), p. 17)

<sup>2</sup> Watanabe, p. 11

<sup>3</sup> Nikolaus of Kues: *De pace fidei*, XIX, 67 (quoted after the translation of Hopkins): *Ubi non potest conformitas in modo reperiri, permittantur nationes – salva fide et pace – in suis devotionibus et ceremonialibus. Augebitur etiam fortassis devotio ex quadam diversitate, quando quaelibet natio conabitur ritum suum studio et diligentia splendidiorem efficere, ut aliam in hoc vincat et sic meritum maius assequatur apud Deum et laudem in mundo.* See also Moudarres, p. 46

As for Juan de Segovia, he developed his thoughts on peaceful dialogue with Islam in his *De gladio divini spiritus in corda mittendo Saracenorum*, which he sent to Piccolomini personally, though later, in 1457.

Toleration of ritual diversity and rejection of war and violence as means to convert other peoples are the signs of the tolerant humanism – coexisting with rather conservative views on politics and the Church - of a man who stood at the crossroads between the middle ages and the modern age.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that as one of his arguments for accepting communion under both species Piccolomini refers to the fact that this practice was accepted by the Council of Basel – before it was dissolved by the pope in 1438. He says:

*If this form of communion were a heretical crime, then those fathers, learned and filled with the zeal of faith, who assembled from the entire world at the Council of Basel, would never have granted it. It is indeed a fact that communion under both species was granted by the authority of this Council. [Sect. 40]*

Though in another place Piccolomini cautiously states the decision of the council was made before it was dissolved by Pope Eugenius III, the issue of the council's relation to the Papacy was still a very sensitive one. The council, where Piccolomini had later played an important role, systematically endeavoured to limit the power and means of the Papacy, and the Papacy had in its turn systematically endeavoured to counter its ideas, influence and importance. It therefore took some courage for Piccolomini to assert the doctrinal authority of the council, especially in the matter of the Bohemian Compacts which the Roman Curia had so consistently refused to support.

### **3. Date, place, audience and format**

#### **3.1. Date**

The delivery of the *“Res Bohemicas”* – in one form or another - must have occurred during one of Piccolomini's stays in Rome after his return from Germany. He arrived in Rome from Germany in August and stayed for a period before going to Siena. After some months in Siena, he went back to Rome where in January 1456 he obtained the pope's agreement to a Sienese diplomatic mission to King Alfonso in Naples. Piccolomini departed for Naples in April 1456, and returned to Rome in October where he was appointed cardinal in December. So, in 1455-

1456 Piccolomini made three visits to Rome during which he could have delivered the "*Res Bohemicas*".

### The *Post quem*

The *terminus post quem* of the delivery of the oration is the date of the oration "*Solent plerique*" in which Piccolomini declared the emperor's obedience to Pope Calixtus, i.e. 13 August 1455, since he could not formally address the pope in the emperor's name before the declaration of obedience.

### The *Ante quem*

Two pieces of internal evidence are relevant:

- 1) The first one concerns his appointment as cardinal on 18 December 1456. Since the titles of the text in the manuscripts do not refer to him as cardinal, but only as Bishop of Siena, and since he speaks of the Cardinals' College as an outsider, the oration must have been finished and delivered before that date.
- 2) The second one is Piccolomini's praise of Giovanni da Capistrano (sect. 25), where he did not mention Capistrano's heroic achievements and leadership at the important Battle of Belgrave in July 1456. News of the battle would have reached the Papal Court in August/September. Since Piccolomini would presumably, in the context, have mentioned Capistrano's heroic fight for the Faith, the oration must have been finished and delivered before September 1456.

And a piece of external evidence:

- 3) According to the Milanese ambassador in Naples, A. da Trezzo, Piccolomini did not return from Naples (where he had negotiated the peace between Siena and Jacobo Piccinino<sup>1</sup>) before late October 1456. In a letter to the Duke of Milan dated 25 October he wrote about Piccolomini: "(... *piu quanto che'l*) *reverendo vescovo da Siena, el quale ancora è qui*" ...<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> See the oration "*Modestius*"

<sup>2</sup> *Dispacci*, nr. 168. According to Zimolo, Piccolomini stayed in Naples for four months, i.e. from April to August/September, cf. Zimolo p. 26

## Conclusion

Piccolomini must have delivered his oration "*Res Bohemicas*" to the pope either during his stay in Rome August-September 1455 or January-April 1456. As it concerned important imperial and regal business, it is most likely that it was delivered in the aftermath of the declaration of obedience, i.e. in August-September 1455.

This conclusion is supported by a statement in the oration that "*when this year<sup>1</sup> Georg Podiebrad, Regent of the Kingdom of Bohemia ... came to visit the emperor ...*" [sect. 13]. Podiebrad arrived at the Imperial Court in Wiener Neustadt on 18 March 1455.

### **3.2. Place, audience and format**

If the oration was, in fact, delivered orally, the place was the city of Rome, and as the oration is addressed directly to the pope it would have been given before the pope in the Apostolic Palace. Piccolomini does not in the speech refer to the circumstances, and the whole subject matter was so delicate that the oration might not have been given in a meeting of the consistory, but under more private forms.

The format is clearly that of a formal oration addressed to the pope in an errand entrusted to Piccolomini by the two Habsburg monarchs,<sup>2</sup> though he did not in this context style himself as their ambassador.

## **4. Text<sup>3</sup>**

The text is only known in the form in which it was included in the Collected Orations of Pius' II, prepared under his own supervision in 1462. It is not known if or to what extent it was revised in this context.

---

<sup>1</sup> Georg Podiebrad arrived at the Diet of Wiener Neustadt on 18 March 1455, cf. Palacky, *Geschichte*, 4.1

<sup>2</sup> See sect. 16: *rem hanc ad te detuli jussu principum*

<sup>3</sup> Concerning the textual transmission of Pius II's orations, see *Collected orations of Pope Pius*, vol. 1, ch. 5

## 4.1. Manuscripts<sup>1</sup>

The oration is contained in all seven manuscripts containing the Collected Orations:

- **Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana**  
544, ff. 117r-131v **(G)** \*
- **Mantova / Biblioteca Communale**  
100, 198v-228r **(F)** \*
- **Milano / Biblioteca Ambrosiana**  
l. 97 inf., ff. 191v-208r **(E)** \*
- **Rome / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana**  
Chis. J.VI.211, ff. 133r-148v **(D)** \*  
Chis. J.VIII.284, ff. 67v-80r **(A)** \*  
Chis. J. VIII.286, ff. 204r-226r **(C)** \*  
Vat. lat. 1788, ff. 95r-113v **(B)** \*

## 4.2. Editions

- Muratori, Ludovico Antonio: *Anecdota quae ex Ambrosianae Bibliothecae codicibus nunc primum eruit*. 4 vols. Milano/Padua, 1697-1713 / III (1713), pp. 307-341.  
[Reprinted in: Muratori, Ludovico Antonio: *Opere del proposto Luovico Antonio Muratori*. T. XI, Pt. II. Arezzo, 1770, pp. 266-292.  
[Based on the Milan ms., E]
- Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca: Benedini, 1755-1759 // I, pp. 352-385.  
[Based on the Lucca ms., G]

## 4.3. Present edition

For principles of edition (incl. orthography) and translation, see *Collected Orations of Enea Silvio Piccolomini / Pope Pius II*, vol. 1, ch. 9-10

---

<sup>1</sup> Manuscripts for which an orthographical profile is given in *Collected orations of Pope Pius II*, vol. 11, are marked with an asterisk

*Text:*

The present edition is based on all seven manuscripts containing the oration, with the Chis. J.VIII.284 as the lead manuscript.

*Pagination:*

The pagination is from the lead manuscript.

## 5. Sources<sup>1</sup>

In this oration, 27 direct and indirect quotations from various sources have been identified, the large majority from the Bible. Quite possibly, Piccolomini estimated that Pope Calixtus III would not appreciate demonstration of classical culture to the same extent as his predecessor, pope Nicolaus V.

Biblical: 19

Classical: 7

Patristic and medieval: 0

Contemporary: 1

**All: 27**

### **Biblical sources: 19**

#### Old Testament: 14

- Genesis: 1
- Deuteronomy: 1
- Canticle: 1
- 1. Chronicles: 1
- Ezekiel: 2
- Isaiah: 1
- Jeremiah: 2

---

<sup>1</sup> On Piccolomini's use of sources in general, see *Collected orations of Pope Pius II*, ch. 8.



- Psalms: 5

#### New Testament: 5

- Luke: 1
- Matthew: 3
- 2. Timothy: 1

#### **Classical sources: 7**

- Cicero: 1<sup>1</sup>
- Horatius: 1<sup>2</sup>
- Juvenalis: 3
- Plautus: 1<sup>3</sup>
- Vergilius: 1<sup>4</sup>

#### **Patristic and medieval sources: 0**

#### **Contemporary sources: 1**

- Leonardo Bruni: 1<sup>5</sup>

## **6. Bibliography**

Bracciolini, Poggio: *Opera omnia*. A cura di R. Fubini. 4 vols. Torino, 1964-1969. (Monumenta politica et philosophica rariora; II, 4-7)

Brandmüller, Walter: *Das Konzil von Konstanz 1414-1418*. 2 vols. Paderborn, 1991-1997

Bruni, Leonardo: *Laudatio Florentiae urbis*. [1404]

---

<sup>1</sup> Philippica: 1

<sup>2</sup> Carmina: 1

<sup>3</sup> Persa

<sup>4</sup> Aeneis

<sup>5</sup> Laudatio Florentiae urbis

- Bruni, Leonardo: *Laudatio Florentiae urbis*. Cur. S.U. Baldassari. Firenze, 2000

Decembrio, Pier Candido: *De laudibus Mediolanensium urbis panegyricus*. [1436]

- Decembrio, Pier Candido: *De laudibus Mediolanensium urbis panegyricus*. Bologna, 1925-1958. (Rerum Italicarum Scriptores; t. 20, pt. 1). Pp. 1011-1025

*Dispacci sforzeschi da Napoli I (1444 - 2 luglio 1458)*. A cura di Francesco Senatore. Salerno, 1997

*Handbook of Dutch Church History*. Ed. by H. Selderhuis. Göttingen, 2015

Heymann, Frederick G.: *George of Bohemia - King of Heretics*. Princeton, 1965

Heymann, Frederick G.: *John Zizka and the Hussite Revolution*. Princeton, 1955

Juan de Segovia: *De gladio divini spiritus in corda mittendo Saracenorum*. [1457]

- Johannes von Segovia: *De gladio divini spiritus in corda mittendo Saracenorum*. Ed. und deutsche Übersetzung von Ulli Roth. 2 vols. Wiesbaden, 2012. (Corpus Islamo-Christianum; 7)

Kaminsky, Howard: Pius Aeneas among the Taborites. In: *Church History*, 28 (1959) 282-309

Moudarres, Andrea: Crusade and Conversion. Islam as Schism in Pius II and Nicholas of Cusa. In: *MLN* 128, (2013) 50-52

Nederman, Cary J.: *Worlds of Difference. European Discourses of Toleration, c. 1100 - c. 1550*. University Park, PA, 2000. [ch. 6: Nationality and the "Variety of Rites" in Nicholas of Cusa]

Nikolaus von Kues: *Contra Bohemos*. [1452]

- Cusa, Nicholas of: Letter to the Bohemians on Church Unity. In: *Writings on Church and Reform*. Transl. T.M. Izbicki. Cambridge, Ma., 2008. (The I Tatti Renaissance Library; 33), pp. 356-429

Nikolaus von Kues: *De pace fidei*. [1453]

- De pace fidei. In: Nicolai de Cusa *Opera omnia*. Gesamtausgabe der Heidelberger Akademie. Tom. VII. Hamburg, 1959

- Nicholas of Cusa's *De Pace Fidei and Cribratio Alkorani*. Translation and Analysis. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. by Jasper Hopkins. Minneapolis, 1994<sup>1</sup>

Nikolaus von Kues: *De usu communionis ad Bohemos*

- Cusa, Nicholas of: To the Bohemians. On the Use of Communion. In: *Writings on Church and Reform*. Transl. T.M. Izbicki. Cambridge, Ma., 2008. (The I Tatti Renaissance Library; 33), pp. 2-85

O'Brien, Emily: *The Commentaries of Pope Pius II (1458-1464) and the Crisis of the Fifteenth-Century Papacy*. Toronto, 2015

Palacky, Frantisek: *Geschichte von Böhmen, grösstenteils nach Urkunden und Handschriften*. T. IV, Abt. 1. Prag, 1857

Pastor, Ludwig: *Geschichte der Päpste im Zeitalter der Renaissance*. 16 vols. Freiburg i.B., 1886-1933 [and later editions]

Piccolomini, Enea Silvio: *De rebus Basiliae gestis Commentarius* [1450]

- *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*. Hrsg. von Rudolf Wolkan. 3 vols. Wien, 1909-1918 / II, pp. 164-228, nr. 44
- Piccolomini, Enea Silvio: Revised History of the Council. In: *Reject Aeneas, Accept Pius – Selected Letters of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II)*. Washington, DC, 2006, pp. 318-387

Pius II: *Commentarii rerum memorabilium quae suis temporibus contigerunt*. [1464]

- Pius II: *Commentarii rerum memorabilium quae suis temporibus contigerunt*. Ed. A van Heck. 2 vols. Città del Vaticano, 1984 (Studi e testi; 312-313)
- Pius II: *Commentaries*. Ed. M. Meserve and M. Simonetta. Vols. 1 ff. Cambridge, MA, 2003 ff.

Pius II: *Epistolae*

- *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*. Hrsg. Rudolf Wolkan. 3 vols. Wien, 1909-1918 (Fontes Rerum Austriacarum; 61, 67, 68)

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://jasper-hopkins.info/DePace12-2000.pdf>

Pius II: *Orationes*. [1436-1464]

- Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca: Benedini, 1755-1759
- *Collected Orations of Pope Pius II*. Ed. and transl. by Michael v. Cotta-Schönberg. 12 vols. 2019-2020

Smend, Julius: *Kelchversagung und Kelchspendung in der abendländischen Kirche – ein Beitrag zur Kultusgeschichte*. Göttingen, 1898

Smith, Leslie F.: Lodrisio Crivelli of Milan and Aeneas Silvius, 1457-1464. In: *Studies in the Renaissance*, 9 (1962) 31-63

Voigt, Georg: *Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini als Papst Pius der Zweite und sein Zeitalter*. 3 vols. Berlin, 1856-63

Watanabe, Morimichi: Cusanus, Islam and Religious Tolerance. In: *Nicholas of Cusa and Islam – Polemics and Dialogue in the Late Middle Ages*. Ed. by I.C. Levy et al. Leiden, 2014. (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions; 183), pp. 9-20

Welsh, Frank: *The Battle for Christendom. The Council of Constance, the East-West Conflict and the Dawn of Modern Europe*. Woodstock, 2008

Zimolo, Giulio C. (ed.): *Le vite di Pio II di Giovanni Antonio Campano e Bartolomeo Platina*. Bologna: Zanichelli, 1964. (Rerum Italicarum Scriptores; t. III, p. II)

## 7. Sigla and abbreviations

**A** = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis. J.VIII.284

**B** = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Vat. Lat. 1788

**C** = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis. J.VIII.286

**D** = Roma / Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana / Chis. J.VI.211

**E** = Milano / Biblioteca Ambrosiana / 97 inf.

**F** = Mantova / Biblioteca Comunale / 100

**G** = Lucca / Biblioteca Capitolare Feliniana / 544

### Abbreviations

**CO** = Pius II: *Commentarii rerum memorabilium quae suis temporibus contigerunt*. [1464]

**HA** = Eneas Silvius Piccolomini: *Historia Austriacalis*. Teil 1: Einleitung von Martin Wagendorfer. 1. Redaktion ed. von Julia Knödler. Teil 2: 2./3, ed. Martin Wagendorfer. 2 vols. Hannover, 2009. (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum. Nova Series; 24)

**HB** = Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini: *Historia Bohemica*. Herausg. J. Hejnic & H. Rothe. 2 vols. Köln, 2005. (Bausteine zur slavischen Philologie und Kulturgeschichte. Neue Folge. Reihe B; 20)

**MA** = Pius II: *Orationes politicae et ecclesiasticae*. Ed. Giovanni Domenico Mansi. 3 vols. Lucca: Benedini, 1755-1759

**MPL** = Migne, Jacques-Paul: *Patrologia latina*. 217 vols. 1841-1865

**RTA** = Deutsche Reichstagsakten

**WO** = *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*. Hrsg. von Rudolf Wolk. 3 vols. Wien, 1909-1918

**Decretum** = *Decretum magistri Gratiani*. Ed. Lipsiensis secunda. Eds. A.L. Richter & A. Friedberg. 2 vols. Leipzig, 1879

**Epistolarium** = Enee Silvii Piccolominei *Epistolarium Seculare*. Ed. A. van Heck. Città del Vaticano, 2007

**Rainaldus** = *Annales ecclesiastici ab anno MCXCVIII ubi Card. Baronius desinit*. Auct. Odoricus Raynaldus. Tom. XVIII-XIX. Roma: Varesius, 1659-1663

**Reject** = *Reject Aeneas, accept Pius : Selected letters of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II)*. Intr. and transl. by T.M. Izbicki et al. Washington, D.C., 2006

## II. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

## Oratio Aeneae Silvii Piccolominei, episcopi Senensis, qui postea pontificatum maximum adeptus Pius II. appellatus est, habita coram Calixto papa III de compactatis Bohemorum<sup>1</sup>

[1] {68r} Res bohemicas ad te hodie perfero, beatissime pater, res barbaras, res obscuras, ac perplexas nimis, non tamen indignas tuis auribus, siquidem salus animarum in his quaeritur, et maximi principes eas promovent, divus Fridericus, Romanorum imperator, et patruelis ejus, inclytus Hungariae ac Bohemiae rex Ladislaus: imperator quia<sup>2</sup> feudum ejus Bohemia est; Ladislaus<sup>3</sup> qui<sup>4</sup> regnum Bohemicum paterno jure atque avito possidet. Itaque cupiunt ambo regionem illam pacatam esse ac cum sancta Romana ecclesia concordem. Cum enim longo jam aevo seorsum ab ecclesia catholica<sup>5</sup> gens Bohemica vixerit, optat uterque princeps te illum esse pontificem, qui suo tempore nobilissimum atque amplissimum regnum reliquo Christianitatis annectas corpori. Digna profecto res, in qua tua beatitudo nervos intendat suos. Nec fortasse negotium est, quod diligentius isto jam curare<sup>6</sup> oporteat, si quemadmodum ostensio est, contra Turcos arma paramus. Nisi enim res domi quiescant, non est tutum pugnare foris. At regnum Bohemiae in medio nationis Germanicae situm et undique cinctum Theutonibus, quamvis quiescere nunc et pacem cum vicinis habere videatur, non tamen plena securitas est, nisi res ecclesiasticae componantur.

---

<sup>1</sup> Oratio ... Bohemorum : Enee Silvii episcopi Senensis oratio ad Calistum pontificem pro compactatis Bohemorum D, G

<sup>2</sup> qui *corr. ex* quia A; qui F, D

<sup>3</sup> imperator quia ... Ladislaus *omit.* C, B, E

<sup>4</sup> qui *corr. ex* quia A, C

<sup>5</sup> seorsum ab ecclesia catholica : ab ecclesia catholica seorsum G

<sup>6</sup> jam curare : curare jam G



# **Oration of Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Bishop of Siena,<sup>1</sup> who after he became pope was called Pius II, given before Pope Calixtus III, on the Bohemian Compacts**

## **0. Introduction**

[1] Holy father, the Bohemian matter that I lay before you today is barbarian, obscure, and inordinately complex. However, it is not unworthy of your ears since it concerns the salvation of souls and is supported by great princes, Friedrich, Holy Roman Emperor,<sup>2</sup> and his cousin Ladislaus, Illustrious King of Hungary and Bohemia:<sup>3</sup> the emperor because Bohemia is part of his feudal domain, and Ladislaus because he possesses the Kingdom of Bohemia by right of his father and grandfather. They both desire this region to be at peace and in harmony with the Holy Roman Church. But since the Bohemian people has for a long time been separated from the Catholic Church, both princes wish you<sup>4</sup> to be the pontiff who, in his time, reunites this noble and great kingdom with the rest of Christianity.<sup>5</sup> This cause is truly one that merits the full commitment of Your Holiness. Possibly, no other enterprise requires your attention more urgently than this one since we are now evidently preparing for war with the Turks. For if there is no peace at home, it is not safe to fight abroad. The Kingdom of Bohemia is situated in the middle of the German Nation and is surrounded by Germans on all sides. Though it appears to be tranquil for now and to have peace with its neighbours, security cannot be complete unless the ecclesiastical issue is settled.

---

<sup>1</sup> The oration was evidently held before Piccolomini was appointed cardinal, on 18 December 1456

<sup>2</sup> Friedrich III (Habsburg) (1415-1493): Duke of Austria (as Friedrich V) from 1424. Elected King of Germany and Holy Roman Emperor in 1440, crowned in Rome in 1452

<sup>3</sup> Ladislaus the Posthumous (Habsburg) (1440 -1457): Duke of Austria from 1440, King of Hungary from 1444 and King of Bohemia from 1453 to his death

<sup>4</sup> Calixtus III [Alfons de Borja] (1378-1458): Pope from 1455 to his death in 1458. The first Borgia Pope

<sup>5</sup> The Hussites were a Christian movement following the teachings of Czech reformer Jan Hus (ca. 1369-1415) Their main tenets were expressed in the four Articles of Prague, see below. Hussitism was one of the forerunners of the Protestant Reformation

[2] Huc accedit infinitarum paene animarum perditio, quae singulis diebus e corporibus commigrantes catervatim in Gehennae mancipium deferuntur. Est enim maxima pars regni Bohemiae extra tuam oboedientiam, extra ecclesiam Dei, extra arcam domini, extra quam non est salus regnante diluvio. Cogitandum est igitur de tanti regni salute, studendum est, ne filii ecclesiae pereant, ne filia, quae potest esse dilectissima matris, ultra complexus fugiat, ne gens fortissima Bohemorum aberret amplius. Atque hoc est quod imperator quodque Ladislaus ex te summa prece deposcunt.

[3] Quomodo autem et quibus conditionibus quaerenda sit hujus regni reductio, non est eorum tuae sanctitati praescribere. Tu patris es loco et matris, tu magister, tu medicus populi Christiani, dominici gregis pastor. Tuum est cogitare, quibus artibus, quibus promissionibus aberrantes filios ad te revoces. Novit providus pater abeunti filio, quo supercilio sit obviandum; novit pia mater, quo lacte nutriat fastiditum infantem; novit cautus magister, qua mansuetudine retrahat alienatum discipulum; novit eruditus medicus, aegroto quae medicina conveniat; novit bonus pastor, quae suis armentis salubria sint pascua. Nec te fugit, quibus blanditiis, quibus sponsonibus allicienda sit natio Bohemorum. Illud certum est, quia nihil {68v} omittere convenit, propter quod isti populo salubriter consulatur, idque quo pacto peragas, tuo gravissimo iudicio remittunt et Caesar et Ladislaus. Hoc tantum quaerunt, ut tandem Bohemicum regnum Romanae concilietur<sup>1</sup> ecclesiae, et nunc potissime, quando hujus provinciae fortissimis viris contra Turcos egemus.

---

<sup>1</sup> reconcilietur C

[2] Moreover, there is the loss of an almost infinite number of souls that leave their body every day and are brought in great masses to slavery in Hell. For the greater part of Bohemia lives outside your obedience, outside the Church, and outside Noah's Ark, outside which there is no salvation while deluge reigns. Therefore, we must consider the salvation of this great realm. We must avoid that the sons of the Church perish, that she who could be the most beloved daughter of the Church flees her embrace, and that the mighty people of Bohemia persists in its error. This is what the emperor and Ladislaus urgently request of you.

[3] It is not up to them to prescribe to Your Holiness how and on what conditions this realm should be reunited with the Church. You are in the father's and mother's place, you are the teacher, you are the doctor of the Christian people, you are the shepherd of the Lord's flock. It is your task to consider by what means and promises you may bring the erring sons back to you. The caring father knows how to frown at a son who wants to leave. The pious mother knows the milk to use in feeding the squeamish child. The prudent teacher knows how to draw back an estranged pupil through kindness. The learned physician knows what medicine to use with a patient. The good shepherd knows what pastures are good for his herd. You know which blandishments and promises to use to lure back the Bohemian Nation. Certainly, nothing should be left undone that may bring this people to salvation. How you do it, the emperor and Ladislaus leave to your own earnest judgment. They only request that the realm of Bohemia be finally reunited with the Roman Church, and especially now when we need the strong men from this province [in the fight] against the Turks.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> After the Fall of Constantinople and the German failure to mobilize a European military response to Turkish expansion into Europe, the Papacy was preparing to undertake a Christian crusade against the Turks. The participation of the militant and warlike Bohemians might very well be crucial to such a venture

[4] Ceterum, quia de tollenda Bohemiae labe curam gerimus, duo principaliter nobis exponenda sunt. Alterum quomodo regnum hoc labefactum sit; alterum quo pacto purgari et ad pristinam possit reduci sanitatem. Atque in his duobus tota nostra consumetur oratio.

[5] Florentissimum olim hoc regnum fuit, eorum, qui sunt in occidenti, potentatuum nulli cedens. Sub<sup>1</sup> Carolo autem ejus nominis quarto Romanorum imperatore ad summum venerat. Inaestimabiles illic opes erant, incredibiles deliciae, potentissimi nobiles, honoratissimi sacerdotes, urbes munitissimae, palatia nedum magnatum, sed mediocrium<sup>2</sup> civium ad regalem magnificentiam fastigiata, templa et monasteria supra quam dici queat ornata et opulenta, argenti inexhaustae<sup>3</sup> minerae<sup>4</sup>, mercatura praedives, splendida militia, schola philosophiae nobilis, quasi reginarum ita matronarum habitus.

---

<sup>1</sup> Qualis fuit Bohemia sub Carolo IIII *in marg.* D, G

<sup>2</sup> mediocrum C

<sup>3</sup> inexhausto *corr. from* inexhauste E

<sup>4</sup> munere B, E

[4] Since we are dealing with how to end the Bohemian debacle, we must primarily talk about two matters: firstly, how this realm fell into error; and secondly, how it may be cleansed and restored to its former health. My whole oration will deal with these two issues.

## **1. Hussite schism**

### **1.0. Former glory of Bohemia**

[5] There was a time when this kingdom flourished, equalling all the other Western powers. It reached its summit under Karl IV, Emperor of the Romans.<sup>1</sup> Then, its wealth was inestimable, its delights incredible, its nobles powerful, its priests honoured, its cities fortified, the palaces of the magnates and even of ordinary citizens adorned with royal splendour, the temples and monasteries undescribably adorned and opulent, the silver mines inexhaustible, the commerce flourishing, the army splendid, the school of philosophy<sup>2</sup> outstanding, and the apparel of matrons like that of queens.

---

<sup>1</sup> Karl IV of Luxembourg (1316-1378): second King of Bohemia from the House of Luxembourg. Elected King of the Romans and Holy Roman Emperor in 1346. Crowned emperor in Rome in 1355

<sup>2</sup> I.e. the University of Prague, founded by Emperor Karl IV in 1348

[6] Sed caduca sunt omnia sub luna, nulla potentia longa, prona est ignominia sequi gloriam. Cecidit alta Bohemorum superbia. Non tamen externa manu concussa est. Nulli vicinorum datum est has opes evertere. Ipsa sibi manus conscivit Bohemia. Non tulit seipsam gens elevata nimis. Nam cum pax divitias, divitiae superbiam luxumque peperissent, saevire fortuna ac miscere omnia coepit. Sub<sup>1</sup> Venceslao, Caroli filio, rege vinoso et admodum deside, paulo ante Constantiense concilium, surrexerunt in Bohemia viri pestiferi presudoprophetae, qui non ferentes otium regni et florentem rerum statum, summo studio conati sunt apostolicam sedem et omne sacerdotium in commune odium trahere. Neque fefellit eos opinio, nam magistri *prurientibus*<sup>2</sup> facti, cum sacerdotes inique possidere divitias praedicassent, tum crimen illud eis impinxerunt, quia necessariam communionem calicis plebi subtraherent. Populi vero simplices et avari suapte natura, sub spe magni lucri et vana religione decepti, a nitore nostrae religionis et puritate fidei facile recesserunt. Divinum enim eucharistiae sacramentum sub specie panis et vini petentes, cum non obtinerent, in *Christos* domini manus injecere<sup>3</sup>, alios occiderunt, alios mutilarunt, alios in exilium expulerunt, bona ecclesiarum invaserunt, divinas aedes incenderunt, nobilitatem quoque crudeliter persecuti, quae facta eorum abhorrere videbatur. Omne regnum caedibus, rapinis atque incendiis oppleverunt.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sub Venceslao rege *marg. note D*; sub Venceslao rege orta est heresis *in marg. G*

<sup>2</sup> *prurientibus corr. ex prurientes C*

<sup>3</sup> *iniecerunt G*

## 1.1. Hussite movement<sup>1</sup>

[6] However, all things under the moon are fleeting, no power lasts long, and disgrace quickly follows glory. Also, the overweening pride of the Bohemians was brought down, but it was not done by the hands of others. It was not the neighbours who overthrew this wealthy [people], no, Bohemia was brought low by its own hand. Indeed, this great people could not bear itself. For when peace had bred wealth, and wealth had bred pride and soft living, Fortune began to rage against them and confound all. Under Wenceslaus, son of Karl and a bibulous and lazy king,<sup>2</sup> and shortly before the Council of Konstanz,<sup>3</sup> evil men and pseudoprophets rose up in Bohemia. Not tolerating the peace of the kingdom and the flourishing state of things, they strove with all their might to make the Apostolic See and all the priesthood hateful to the people. And public opinion followed them. For these teachers, acquiring *itching ears*,<sup>4</sup> preached that it was bad for priests to possess wealth, and they accused them of the crime of denying the necessary<sup>5</sup> communion of the chalice to the people. The common people, simple and greedy by nature, hoping for great gains, and deceived by the false religion, easily deserted the splendour of our religion and the purity of our Faith. They demanded the divine sacrament of the Eucharist both under the species of bread and wine<sup>6</sup>, and when they did not get it, they laid their hands on the *anointed*<sup>7</sup> of the Lord, killing some and mutilating or exiling others. They invaded ecclesiastical properties, set fire to religious buildings, and cruelly persecuted the nobility that was appalled by their acts. They filled the whole kingdom with murder, pillage and burning.

---

<sup>1</sup> Piccolomini: *De rebus* (Reject), pp. 324-326

<sup>2</sup> Wenceslaus (1361-1419): King of Bohemia (as Wenceslaus IV) from 1363 and by election, German King (formally King of the Romans) from 1376. He was the third Bohemian and third German monarch of the Luxembourg dynasty. Deposed in 1400 as King of the Romans, but continued to rule as Bohemian king until his death

<sup>3</sup> Council of Konstanz (1414-1418): Deposing three rival popes, it restored the unity of the Church

<sup>4</sup> 2. Timothy, 4, 3: *sed ad sua desideria coacervabunt sibi magistros, prurientes auribus*

<sup>5</sup> i.e. necessary for salvation

<sup>6</sup> i.e. bread and wine

<sup>7</sup> 1. Chronicles, 16, 22; Psalms, 104, 15

[7] Princeps autem hujus haeresis ac seductor Bohemici populi habitus est Johannes Hus<sup>1</sup>, qui {69r} Johannes Anser appellari potest, obscuro loco natus, lingua promptus, et astu praeditus, praeter sophismata quaedam dialectica, et lecturam biblicam, ac Johannis Wicleff Anglici damnata volumina paucis imbutus litteris, quem qui secuti sunt, Hussitarum nomen acceperunt. Et in Bohemia quidem civitates et villae universae - paucas adimo - in errorem Hussitarum prolapsae sunt. Nobilitas fere omnis in fide permansit. Contra in Moravia<sup>2</sup> actum est: errantibus nobilibus plebes in sanitate religionis perstitere. Sed horum conditio dura et asperrima fuit, quorum multi pro legibus paternis et<sup>3</sup> integritate religionis periire, inter Christianos facti martyres, cum haereticorum quotidianis urgerentur insultibus.

[8] Interea magna synodus apud Constantiam, Alamannorum urbem, congregata est, ad quam vocati Johannes Hus, de quo paulo ante mentionem fecimus, et Jeronimus, ejus discipulus, vir facundus et doctus, sed spiritu perversitatis imbutus, dum sua tueri<sup>4</sup> pertinaciter<sup>5</sup> ingerere quam humiliter aliena discere volunt, igne cremati sunt. Cinis eorum clanculum raptus et in Bohemiam vectus intra martyrum reliquias venerationem obtinuit. Post haec arma cum Bohemis temptata: saepe Sigismundus imperator, saepe alii Theutoniae principes adversus Bohemos duxere procinctum. Cardinales quoque, ex hac curia missi, numerosas militum copias in Bohemiam<sup>6</sup> duxere. Sed qualis reditus fuerit, pudet dicere. Non<sup>7</sup> tam foeda Xersis ex Graecia refertur fuga, quam turpes atque ignominiosas<sup>8</sup> nostrorum exercituum ex Bohemia regressiones vidimus. Fugerunt nostri nemine persequente, et repleta bonis omnibus castra, quos nusquam<sup>9</sup> viderant, hostibus reliquerunt. Et quamvis aliquando Bohemos quoque belli fortuna deluserit, numquam tamen tanta clades illata Bohemis est, quin recepta major ab his fuerit.

---

<sup>1</sup> Johannes Hus *in marg.* A, D, G

<sup>2</sup> Moravia *in marg.* D, G

<sup>3</sup> ac C

<sup>4</sup> *omit.* B, E

<sup>5</sup> atque *add. in marg.* D; atque *add.* G

<sup>6</sup> Bohemia E

<sup>7</sup> Johanne Chrysostomo hoc cooperante *in marg.* G

<sup>8</sup> ignominiosas A, C; ignominiosas *corr. ex* ignominiosas B; ignominiosa E

<sup>9</sup> nunquam B, E



[7] The leader of this heresy and the seducer of the Bohemian people is considered to be Jan Hus (who may also be called Jan Goose<sup>1</sup>), a talkative and cunning man of lowly origins. He had little learning apart from some dialectical sophisms, readings from the bible, and the condemned books of John Wycliff, the Englishman. His followers were called Hussites. In Bohemia almost all cities and towns fell into the Hussite error, while almost all the nobility remained true to the Faith. The opposite happened in Moravia: there the nobles fell into error, while the people remained true to salutary Faith. But the condition [of the faithful] was hard and bitter: many were killed for the laws of their fathers and the integrity of religion, joining the Christian martyrs while every day having to suffer the attacks of the heretics.

## 1.2. Council of Konstanz

[8] In the meantime a great synod<sup>2</sup> assembled in Konstanz,<sup>3</sup> a German city.<sup>4</sup> To this synod they summoned Jan Hus, whom we have just mentioned, and Jeronimus<sup>5</sup>, his disciple, a man who was learned and eloquent, but full of the spirit of perversity. Because they stubbornly wanted to spread their own tenets rather than humbly learn from others, they were burnt.<sup>6</sup> In secret their ashes were taken and brought to Bohemia where they are now venerated among the relics of the martyrs.<sup>7</sup> After these [events], military measures were tried against the Bohemians. Often did Emperor Sigismund and other German princes lead armies against the Bohemians. Cardinals, too, were sent by this Curia against Bohemia with great forces.<sup>8</sup> But I blush to tell you how they returned. The flight of Xerxes<sup>9</sup> from Greece was not as shameful as the contemptible and disgraceful retreats of our armies from Bohemia we have seen. Our people fled even when nobody was pursuing them, and they left their camps filled with all kinds of goods to enemies they had not even seen. And although the fortune of war did sometimes desert the Bohemians, they never suffered as great a defeat as the ones they inflicted on us.

---

<sup>1</sup> Jan Hus (ca. 1369-1415): Czech priest, philosopher, early Christian reformer and Master at Karl University in Prague. Inspired by the teachings of John Wycliff. "Goose" is a word play connected with his name

<sup>2</sup> i.e. council

<sup>3</sup> Council of Konstanz (1414-1418)

<sup>4</sup> Brandmüller; Welsh

<sup>5</sup> Jeronimus of Prague [Jeroným Pražský] (1379-1416): Bohemian church reformer and one of the chief followers of Jan Hus. Burned for heresy at the Council of Konstanz

<sup>6</sup> On the trial of Jan Hus and Hieronimus of Prague, see Brandmüller, pp. 323-359; Welsh, pp. 149-153

<sup>7</sup> Piccolomini: *De rebus* (Reject), p. 323

<sup>8</sup> Among them Giuliano Cesarini (1398-1444): created cardinal by Pope Martin V in 1426. Papal president of the Council of Basel until 1437. Died at the Battle of Varna against the Turks in 1444. Mentor and friend of Piccolomini

<sup>9</sup> Xerxes I the Great (519–465 BC): fourth of the kings of the Achaemenid Empire. Ruled from 486 BC until his murder in 465 BC. Notable for his invasion of Greece in 480 BC and his subsequent defeat

[9] Intercessit deinde Basiliense concilium. Huc legati Bohemorum accersuntur, oblata facultate, quaecumque voluerint<sup>1</sup>, et dicendi et disputandi; nam querimonia eorum erat, quod inauditi per Constantiense concilium damnati fuissent. Quattuor<sup>2</sup> tunc notissimi articuli per Bohemos recipiuntur, quos regni nomine tueri volunt: de praedicatione verbi Dei, quam nulli prohibendam arbitrabantur; de peccatis publicis, quae nusquam permittenda quamcumque ob causam existimabant; de dominio civili<sup>3</sup> cleri, quod interdictum asserebant; de communione calicis, quam laicis etiam necessariam et de praecepto domini iudicabant. Disputatum est super his quinquaginta diebus, sed noluerunt vinci Bohemi, cum vincerentur. Haereticis enim, etsi mente confundantur, cum tamen verbis res agitur, verba non desunt. Synodus vero, cum nec armis vinci nec disputationibus trahi posse Bohemos animadverteret, ad tertiam, quae restabat, viam confugit: tractatum quasi inter {69v} amicos est.

---

<sup>1</sup> voluerunt B, E

<sup>2</sup> Bohemorum quatuor articuli *in marg.* D, G

<sup>3</sup> *add. in marg.* A; *omit.* C, F

### 1.3. Council of Basel

[9] Later came the Council of Basel.<sup>1</sup> Legates of the Bohemians were summoned and given the liberty to say and discuss anything they wanted, for they complained that they had been condemned by the Council of Konstanz without being heard. The legates presented the four well-known articles<sup>2</sup> which, in the name of their kingdom, they wanted to safeguard. The first concerned preaching the word of God which they thought should be allowed all men; the second concerned public sins which they considered should not be tolerated for any reason whatsoever; the third concerned secular government by priests which they claimed was forbidden; and the fourth concerned the communion of the chalice which they considered to be necessary also for laypeople and to be based on a command of the Lord. These articles were discussed for 50 days, but the Bohemians did not want to admit defeat even when they were in fact defeated. For as long as matters are debated in words, heretics do not lack words even if they are defeated by reason. When the synod saw that the Bohemians could not be defeated by arms or by debates, it took refuge in the third way remaining, that of amicable negotiation.<sup>3 4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Council of Basel (1431-1449)

<sup>2</sup> The Four Articles of Prague: (1) Freedom of preaching; (2) Communion under both species, also for the laity; (3) Poverty and no secular power for priests; (4) Punishment for mortal sins, especially public ones. Note that Piccolomini in this list omits the poverty of priests. (Heymann: *John*, p. 148)

<sup>3</sup> The responsibility for abandoning military means to convert the Hussites fell to Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini, papal legate and president of the Council of Basel. He had previously preached against the Hussites and as cardinal legate accompanied a crusade against them where the crusaders were roundly defeated. Nonetheless, he welcomed the Hussites in Basel with a conciliatory speech and directed the debates and later the negotiations for a compromise on the communion issue. He was praised for his humane attitude to the Hussites by the humanist Iacopo Zeno in his *Oratio in funere cardinalis Iuliani Cesarini* (Rome, 1445), see McManamon, pp. 77-78, 292. Piccolomini greatly admired the cardinal as a mentor and friend, and his attitude to the communion issue was undoubtedly inspired by the cardinal

<sup>4</sup> Piccolomini: *De rebus* (Reject), pp. 337-339

[10] Sed cum res Basileae concludi<sup>1</sup> non posset, missi legati sunt in Bohemiam, viri sapientes, et qui divinae atque humanae legis peritiores habebantur, qui petitionibus Bohemorum ad verum discussis nonnulla cum his capitula confecerunt, quae compactata<sup>2</sup> dicuntur. Horum vigore abdicant ab sese Bohemi quosvis<sup>3</sup> articulos erroneos, illo dempto, qui de communione duplici nuncupatur. Neque enim super hoc legati et Bohemi convenire potuerunt, cum illi ex praecepto salvatoris communionem calicis deberi populo dicerent, nostri negarent. Conventum tamen inter eos est hanc disceptationem ad concilii decisionem remitti, Bohemos autem in omnibus universalis ecclesiae ritum resumere debere, excepta sacramenti communione, quam sub duplici specie<sup>4</sup> his, qui usum haberent, ex auctoritate universalis ecclesiae concedi voluerunt. Intervenerunt et aliae pleraeque pactiones, quarum meminisse non est modo necessum.

[11] Habuit sancta synodus ratum<sup>5</sup>, quod legati fecere<sup>6</sup>, nam quamvis Theutones<sup>7</sup> adversari viderentur, aliis nationibus non placuit infinitas paene animas perditum iri communione negata. Constat enim paucis exceptis, qui mentis inflatione contra patrum instituta surrexerant, Bohemicum populum errare<sup>8</sup> seductum. Declaravit deinde synodus communionem calicis quoad populares non<sup>9</sup> cadere sub praecepto domini, nec licere laicis illam sibi auctoritate propria usurpare, misitque<sup>10</sup> Philibertum<sup>11</sup>, Nortmanicae Constantiae pontificem, eruditum et integrum virum, qui legatione inter Bohemos utens, favente Sigismundo Caesare, qui per hunc modum et Pragam et regnum recuperavit, in usum compactata redegit. Intervenerunt et aliae inter regni communitatem et Sigismundum pactiones, quibus ecclesia Pragensis Johanni de Rokezana promissa est.

---

<sup>1</sup> res Basileae concludi : Basileae concludi res G

<sup>2</sup> Compactata *in marg.* D, G

<sup>3</sup> quovis G

<sup>4</sup> spe F

<sup>5</sup> gratum D, G

<sup>6</sup> fecerunt C, G

<sup>7</sup> Theutones adversi *in marg.* D, G

<sup>8</sup> errore G

<sup>9</sup> omit. D, G

<sup>10</sup> misit F

<sup>11</sup> Promubertum F

## 1.4. Negotiations in Prague

[10] As the matter could not be resolved in Basel, the council sent legates to Bohemia, wise men who were considered to be experts both in divine and human law. After intense discussions about the Bohemian petitions, they worked out the four paragraphs called the Compacts. By virtue of these Compacts, the Bohemians renounced a number of erroneous tenets, except the one concerning the [so-called] double communion. The legates and the Bohemians were unable to agree on this issue since the Bohemians claimed that the communion of the chalice is owed to the laypeople by command of the Lord, whereas ours denied it. They agreed, however, to refer this dispute to the decision of the council. The Bohemians would have to restore all the rites of Universal Church except the sacrament of communion, which they demanded should be granted, by authority of Universal Church, under both species to those who already had this usage. There were several other agreements, but there is no need to mention them here and now.

## 1.5. Bohemian Compacts

[11] The Holy Synod approved the actions of the legates, for though the Germans opposed it, the other nations did not accept that an almost infinite number of souls should perish because communion was denied to them. And it was found that except for some who had resisted the decisions of the Fathers out of arrogance, the Bohemian people had only erred because they had been deceived and seduced. The synod then declared that the Lord had not made the communion of the chalice obligatory for the common people, and that laypeople could not take up that practice on their own authority.<sup>1</sup> With the support of Emperor Sigismund<sup>2</sup>, who would thus recover both Prague and the kingdom, it [then] sent Philibert, Bishop of Coutances<sup>3</sup> in Normandy, a learned and upright man, as its legate to the Bohemians. He wrote a version of the Compacts for general use. There were also agreements between the community of the kingdom and Sigismund by which the diocese of Prague was promised to Jan Rokycana.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> In his *De usu communionis ad Bohemos*, from the early Basel period, Nikolaus von Kues – reflecting the opinion of the council fathers - wrote that ... *it is not appropriate for you Bohemians to restore communion under both species on your own authority for any reason without consent of the Catholic Church* (Nikolaus von Kues: *De usu* (Izbicki), p. 47)

<sup>2</sup> Sigismund of Luxemburg (1368-1437): King of Hungary and Croatia from 1387, King of Bohemia from 1419, and crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1433

<sup>3</sup> Philibert de Montjeu (1374-1439) : Bishop of Coutances from 1424 to his death. Prominent participant in the Council of Basel

<sup>4</sup> Jan Rokycana (ca. 1396-1471): theologian and leading Hussite cleric

[12] Post haec exortae sunt notissimae illae et omni ecclesiae graves inter summum pontificem Eugenium et patres, qui Basileae remanserant, contentiones. Sigismundus viam universae carnis ingressus est. Bohemi de rege discordes, alii Albertum, Sigismundi generum vocavere, alii ad Polonos<sup>1</sup> defecere. Et<sup>2</sup> quamvis superior Albertus regnum obtinere videretur, numquam tamen vel Tapsco vel Thaboritae in ejus potestatem venere. Alberto vitam<sup>3</sup> functo regnum confusius fuit, cum filii ejus Ladislai pupillarem aetatem universi contemnerent<sup>4</sup>. Itaque sicuti res temporales ita<sup>5</sup> et ecclesiasticae neglectae sunt, et in priores errores itum. Petita<sup>6</sup> est tamen<sup>7</sup> aliquoties et ab Eugenio et a Nicolao, tuis antecessoribus, compactatorum confirmatio, sed cum Rokezana simul in archiepiscopum efflagitaretur, anima nigra et pestilens, abhorruit apostolica sedes alterum cum altero simul {70r} admittere. Et licet Johannes Sancti Angeli cardinalis, natione Hispanus, illuminatae mentis et animi rectissimi pater, regni caput Pragae petierit, salutem gentis et unionem quaerens, Nicolaus autem Sancti Petri ejusdem ordinis praelatus, homo Alamannus, et non minus doctrina quam vitae puritate memorabilis, ad metas regni eadem ipsa de<sup>8</sup> causa pervenerit, numquam tamen de concordia verbum audire Bohemi voluerunt, nisi pontifex Rokezana promitteretur.

---

<sup>1</sup> Polones A, D, F; Polonos *corr. ex* Polones C

<sup>2</sup> *omit.* D, G

<sup>3</sup> vita B, E

<sup>4</sup> universi contemnerent : contemnerent universi G

<sup>5</sup> sic G

<sup>6</sup> Petita compactorum confirmatio *in marg.* D, G

<sup>7</sup> est tamen : tamen est C

<sup>8</sup> *omit.* G

## 1.6. Later developments

[12] After these [events] arose those well-known conflicts, harmful to the whole Church, between Pope Eugenius<sup>1</sup> and those Fathers who had remained in Basel. Sigismund went the way of all flesh, and the Bohemians disagreed on who should be king, some electing Albrecht,<sup>2</sup> Sigismund's son-in-law, and others defecting to the Polish. Though Albrecht prevailed in obtaining the kingdom, he never got Tapsco or the Taborites<sup>3</sup> in his power. When Albrecht died, the kingdom was in a state of great confusion as all rejected his son Ladislaus because he was an infant. Ecclesiastical matters were neglected in the same way as the secular, and the Bohemians returned to their former errors. However, under your predecessors Eugenius and Nicolaus,<sup>4</sup> they several times applied for confirmation of the Compacts. But as, at the same time, they begged for Rokycana, that black and pestiferous soul, as their archbishop, the Apostolic See shrank from granting one with the other. Juan, Cardinal of Sant' Angelo,<sup>5</sup> a Spaniard and an insightful man of great integrity, arrived in Prague, the capital of the kingdom, seeking the salvation and the reunification of the people.<sup>6</sup> And Nikolaus of San Pietro,<sup>7</sup> also of the order of cardinals, a German, notable both for his learning and purity of life, arrived at the border of the kingdom in the same cause.<sup>8</sup> Still, the Bohemians did not want to hear any talk of peace before they had been promised Rokycana as bishop.

---

<sup>1</sup> Eugenius IV [Gabriele Condulmer]: 1383-1447): Pope from 1431 to his death

<sup>2</sup> Albrecht II of Habsburg (1397-1439): Duke of Austria. King of Hungary and Croatia from 1437. Uncrowned King of Bohemia. Elected Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in 1438, but died the following year

<sup>3</sup> Taborites: Hussite sect named after their main city, Tabor, a Bohemian city founded in 1420 by the most radical wing of the Hussites, who soon became known as the Taborites

<sup>4</sup> Nicolaus V [Tommaso Parentucelli] (1397-1455): Pope from 6 March 1447 until his death

<sup>5</sup> Juan Carvajal (1399/1400-1469): Appointed Cardinal by Pope Eugenius IV in 1446. His title church in Rome was Sant' Angelo

<sup>6</sup> Cardinal Juan Carvajal's visit to Prague in May 1448 was an "utter fiasco", cf. Heymann: *George*, pp. 36-41: *Carvajal's mission was a major turning point in the development of this phase of Bohemian history. Its failure illuminated more clearly than any event since 1436 the precarious and artificial structure of the peace, or rather armistice, between Czech Hussitism and the Roman Church* (p. 40-41)

<sup>7</sup> Nikolaus of Kues [Nicholas of Cusa] (1401-1464): German philosopher, theologian, and jurist. Appointed cardinal in 1448. His title church in Rome was San Pietro in Vincoli

<sup>8</sup> Also Cardinal Nikolaus of Kues, now papal legate to Germany and Bohemia, tried his hand at a solution of the Bohemian schism, but nothing came of it, partly because he came under criticism from the Franciscan preacher, John of Capistran, cf. Heymann: *George*, p. 65-80

[13] Ladislaus exinde, cum adolevisset, in Bohemiam veniens, quamvis honore summo et incredibili populorum laetitia exciperetur, coronamque regni faventibus cunctorum animis assequeretur, usum tamen communionis et Rokezanae spem pontificatus auferre non potuit. Sed adnitente gubernatore suo, facta est omnis Bohemia quasi unus populus, permissio cuique ritu suo et poena constituta adversus eum, qui super haeresi partem alteram criminetur<sup>1</sup>. Atque in hunc modum lupus cum agno<sup>2</sup> et pardus cum catulo leonis accumbit. Sed *dicunt "Pax", et non est vera pax*, quando cor eorum non est cum Deo rectum, qui suas observantias absque sedis apostolicae permissione sequuntur. Atque ita regnum illud in hanc usque diem suis moribus utens et peregrinis opinionibus consentiens, tantum a veritate remotum quantum ab ecclesia Romana sequestratum remansit. Hoc aegre habet imperatorem et regem, neque enim terra Bohemia est, quae contemnenda sit, neque populus ille est, quem perdere debeamus.

---

<sup>1</sup> criminaretur *corr. from* criminetur D; criminaretur G

<sup>2</sup> magno F



## 1.7. Present situation

[13] Later, when Ladislav had reached adolescence, he came to Bohemia. Though he was received with the highest honours and incredible joy among the people and obtained the crown of Bohemia with the assent of all,<sup>1</sup> he was not able to quash their hopes concerning communion and the appointment of Rokycana as bishop. But due to the efforts of the regent,<sup>2</sup> Bohemia became as one people: all were allowed to follow their own rite, and they decreed that all who accused the other party of heresy should be punished. And in this way the lamb lies with the wolf and the leopard with the lion's pup.<sup>3</sup> But although *they say "Peace", there is no true peace*,<sup>4</sup> for their heart is not sincerely with God as long as they use their own rites without the permission of the Apostolic See. Thus, the kingdom to this day follows its own customs and holds alien opinions. They are as far from the truth as they keep separate from the Roman Church. The emperor and the king do not accept this situation. And the country of Bohemia certainly is not insignificant, and this people is not one that we should lose.

---

<sup>1</sup> November 1453

<sup>2</sup> "gubernator". Georg Podiebrad

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah, 11, 6: *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb: and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: the calf and the lion, and the sheep shall abide together (Habitabit lupus cum agno, et pardus cum haedo accubabit; vitulus, et leo, et ovis, simul morabuntur)*

<sup>4</sup> Jeremiah, 6, 14; 8,11: *Peace, peace: and there was no peace (pax, pax, et non erat pax)*

[14] Eapropter, cum venisset hoc anno ad imperatorem Georgius Pogiebratius, regni Bohemiae gubernator, vir alti animi et ingenii atque consilii altioris, voluit imperator cum eo me verba facere, ut intelligerem hominis mentem, si forte aliquid esset, quod spem porrigeret unionis, nam hic unus est, quem Bohemi cuncti respiciunt. Parui jussioni. Allocutus sum hominem et semel et iterum<sup>1</sup>. Interpres inter nos fuit Procopius de Lapide Corvino, regni cancellarius, homo fidelis animae et amoeni ingenii. Complurima inter nos dicta et ruminata fuere, quae non est modo referendi locus. Gubernatoris haec demum sententia fuit: cupiunt Bohemi, quae cum Basiliensi concilio pacta percusserunt, apostolicae sedis munimine<sup>2</sup> roborari. Quod si hoc alienum censeatur, expetunt auctoritate Romanae sedis, quae synodus concesserat indulgeri mandarique fidelium universitati, ne quis Bohemicae genti maledicat aut eam devitet quasi errantem. Volunt ex decem aut duodecim viris, quos nominabunt, ecclesiae Pragensi unum<sup>3</sup> praefici. Inter nominandos autem<sup>4</sup> Rokezanam non praeteribunt.

[15] Quod si certi reddantur haec non frustra {70v} requiri, mittent evestigio praestantes oratores, qui oboedientiam tuae sanctitati afferant, personas ad Pragensem ecclesiam nominent, et legatum petant, qui regnum ingressurus archiepiscopum consecret et deformata reformat. Haec tantum exculpere<sup>5</sup> summatim ex gubernatore potui. Haec eadem gubernator ipse ante diem Frankfordiae dictam per oratores regni ad Caesarem<sup>6</sup> missos suoapte<sup>7</sup> ingenio mihi denuntiaverat, petens ut ea sanctae memoriae Nicolao papae rescriberem. Sed<sup>8</sup> recusavi tantum negotium litteris agitare, quae nec interrogatae respondent, nec confutatae repugnant. At cum statuisssem Frankfordia reversus domum petere, decreveram coram eadem apostolicae pietati proponere<sup>9</sup>. Quod cum modo datum sit, plenius de his agam.

---

<sup>1</sup> *omit.* F

<sup>2</sup> munime B, E

<sup>3</sup> *omit.* C

<sup>4</sup> aut E

<sup>5</sup> exculpare E

<sup>6</sup> imperatorem C

<sup>7</sup> suapte A; sua pre F

<sup>8</sup> Littere interrogatae minime respondent *in marg.* D, G

<sup>9</sup> proponere C

## 2. Bohemian demands

[14] Therefore, when this year<sup>1</sup> Georg Podiebrad,<sup>2</sup> Regent of the Kingdom of Bohemia, a most intelligent man with a noble soul and mind, came to the emperor, the emperor desired me to speak with him in order to assess his position and see if it gave any hope of reunion. For this man is one that all Bohemians respect.<sup>3</sup> Obeying the emperor's command, I spoke with him twice. Our interpreter was Prokop von Rabstein,<sup>4</sup> chancellor of the realm, a man with a loyal soul and a pleasant disposition. We discussed and considered many things that I shall not relate now. Ultimately, the governor's position was this: the Bohemians want the Apostolic See to confirm their agreements with the Council of Basel. If this is not possible, then they petition for the Roman See - on its own authority – to grant them the same conditions that the synod had conceded and require of all the community of believers to refrain from speaking evil of the Bohemian people and from avoiding them as a people having gone astray. Moreover, they desire that the Apostolic See should appoint a Bishop of Prague from a list of ten or twelve men, and they will not omit Rokycana from the list of nominees.<sup>5</sup>

[15] If they are informed that their demands are not in vain, they will immediately send eminent orators to offer obedience to Your Holiness, to nominate persons for the diocese of Prague, and to ask for a legate to come to the kingdom in order to consecrate the archbishop and carry out reforms. This is as much as I was able to get from the regent. On his own initiative, the regent himself had confirmed it to me through orators of the kingdom sent to the emperor before the Diet of Frankurt. He also asked me to write to Pope Nicolaus of blessed memory, but I refused to deal with so great an affair in writing, since then questions could not be answered and objections not be refuted. But when I had returned from Frankfurt and decided to go home,<sup>6</sup> I resolved to put this matter to Your Apostolic Piety. Since this has now been granted, I shall expound on the matter fully.

---

<sup>1</sup> Georg Podiebrad arrived at the Diet of Wiener Neustadt on 18 March 1455, cf. Palacky, *Geschichte*, 4.1. This information indicates that the text was written in 1455

<sup>2</sup> Georg Podiebrad (1420-1471): Regent of Bohemia during the minority of Kings Ladislaus the Posthumous. King of Bohemia from 1458 to his death

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Heymann: *George*, p. 27: ... *if some historians have tried to characterize him [Podiebrad] as a man without any real religious feelings and ties, they were clearly mistaken. Indeed, it is his greatest antagonist among the Catholic clergy, Aeneas Sylvius, who impressively testifies to the contrary*

<sup>4</sup> Prokop von Rabstein [Rabenstein] (ca. 1420-1472): Bohemian noble. From 1453 to 1468 Chancellor of Bohemia. Piccolomini and Prokop were colleagues in the Imperial Chancery in their younger years and became friends

<sup>5</sup> This compromise formula had been proposed by Piccolomini himself to Podiebrad, at their meeting in Beneschau in 1451, cf. Piccolomini's letter to Cardinal Carval of 21 August: *In my opinion, you should nominate not just one man to the pope, but several, among whom he may choose one who has given proof of his learning and manner of life (Mea tamen sententia est ne unum solum sed pape viros plures nominetis, ex quibus unum doctrina et vita probatum posit eligere)* (WO, II, p. 23)

<sup>6</sup> i.e. return to Italy

[16] Intellexisti, beatissime praesul, quae pestis ab ecclesia nostra regnum Bohemiae separaverit, et, quid illa gens cupiat ad unionem reversura, tenes. Nunc diligenter examinandum est, an concedenda sint, quae Bohemia petunt. Quod si requiras opinionem meam, dicam - et vere dicam<sup>1</sup> - me non esse tanti acuminis, ut de rebus tam altis tamque profundis opinari praesumam. Namque si summa cardinalium ingenia in hoc negotio titubant, quid agam ego stupidae mentis asellus? Sed quoniam rem hanc ad te detuli jussu principum, non debeo, sicut<sup>2</sup> mihi videtur, indiscusso negotio quasi mutus atque elinguis abire. Dicam ergo non quod ego sentio, sum enim ipse admodum incertus, sed quod magnos viros sentire didici, quos in hunc modum ratiocinatos<sup>3</sup> memini. Si quaerimus, inquiunt illi, an Bohemis permittenda sit, quam sitiunt, communicandi libertas, pensitandum est, an alio modo magis expedienti ad nos trahi Bohemia possit. Si potest, non est indulgendum, quod petitur. At si alio modo reduci Bohemi nequeunt, rursus aliter ratiocinantur: aut potest admitti postulatio Bohemorum salva fide majorum, aut non potest. Si violatur fides, neganda petitio est. Sin fides integra perseverat, iterum considerandum est, quae commoda secum<sup>4</sup> quaeve incommoda concessio, et quae rursum negatio secum afferat. Si negatio utilior est, negetur; si praestat concedere, concedatur. Et nos igitur hunc<sup>5</sup> sequamur ordinem, si tamen audire vacat, quae nos ex prudentibus viris mutuati sumus.

---

<sup>1</sup> et vere dicam *omit.* G

<sup>2</sup> ut G

<sup>3</sup> rationatos G

<sup>4</sup> ~~secum~~ D, G

<sup>5</sup> igitur hunc : hunc igitur F

[16] Now you understand, Holy Bishop, what plague has separated the Kingdom of Bohemia from our Church, and you know the desires of that people regarding a return to [church] union. We must now examine carefully whether the demands of Bohemia should be granted. If you ask for my opinion, I will say – indeed rightly so – that I am not clever enough to presume to have an opinion on such great and profound matters. For if the great intellects of the cardinals are uncertain about this issue,<sup>1</sup> what can I do, having the silly mind of an ass? But since, on the command of the princes,<sup>2</sup> I have raised this matter before you, I believe that I should not depart, mute and dumb, without having discussed the matter. So I shall say not what I myself think, for I am really much in doubt, but what I have learnt from great men whom I remember reasoning about the matter as follows: if we ask, they say, whether the Bohemians should be granted the freedom of communion which they desire, it must be considered whether or not Bohemia may be brought back to us in any other and more expedient way. If that is possible, their demands should not be granted. But if there can no reunion with the Bohemians in any other way, then another path of reasoning must be followed: either the demands of the Bohemians can be granted [as] fully compatible with the Faith of our forefathers, or they cannot. If their petition is incompatible with that Faith, it must be denied. But if Faith is respected entirely, then the advantages and disadvantages of granting the petition must be considered. If the advantage of denying the petition is greater, it should be denied. If the advantage of granting the petition is greater, it should be granted. So, let us follow this way of reasoning, if you have time to hear what we have borrowed from wise men.

---

<sup>1</sup> The oration was evidently held before Piccolomini's appointment as cardinal, on 18 December 1456

<sup>2</sup> I.e. Emperor Friedrich and King Ladislaus

[17] At quoniam audire paratam tuam pietatem intueor, illud ante omnia discutiendum assumo, an lucrificare Bohemos commodiori<sup>1</sup> via possimus quam communionem calicis indulgendo. Et<sup>2</sup> sunt octo viae, quae praeferuntur. Nam primi ferro certandum potius arbitrantur, quoniam si coacto exercitu magnis viribus contra Bohemos eatur, parta victoria supplices ante pedes nostros Hussitae cadent<sup>3</sup>, et quas dabimus leges, quos praescribemus ritus {71r} accipient. Principes haeresis aut igne comburentur aut gladio ferientur, neque posthac tam facile reperientur, qui contra sedem apostolicam cornua erigant. Resecanda est enim ferro quaecumque adversus ecclesiam Dei sese attollit<sup>4</sup> impietas, cum majores nostros hoc ipsum factitasse non sit obscurum. Secundi<sup>5</sup> existimant, si vocentur in disputationem magistri Bohemorum cum nostris, errores eorum facile posse convinci, ita ut ad sanitatem reversi, qui populum seducunt, contraria prioribus de communione praedicent. Nam et Origenis, et Basilii et aliquorum sanctorum patrum disputationibus diversas haereses evulsas novimus.

---

<sup>1</sup> commoditori E

<sup>2</sup> Octo sunt viae ad Bohemos reducendum *in marg.* D; Octo viae sunt ad reducendum Bohemos *in marg.* G

<sup>3</sup> Armis *in marg.* D, G

<sup>4</sup> attullit E

<sup>5</sup> Disputatione *in marg.* D, G

### 3. Eight alternatives to granting the Bohemian demands

#### 3.0. Introduction

[17] Seeing that Your Holiness is prepared to listen, I consider that first of all we should consider whether we can assist the Bohemians in better ways than by granting them the communion of the chalice. Eight different ways have been proposed.

A first group prefer military action: if an army is gathered and the Bohemians are fought with all our strength, the defeated Hussites will fall begging at our feet and accept the conditions we impose and the rites we ordain. The leaders of the heresy will be burnt or killed by sword, and thereafter it will not be so easy to find men who will raise their horns against the Apostolic See. For whatever impiety arises against the Church of God, it must be cut off with the sword as our forefathers are clearly known to have done.

The second group thinks that if the Bohemian teachers are invited to debate with ours, they will easily be persuaded that they are in error. And when those who seduce the people come to their senses, they will start to preach the opposite of what they preached formerly concerning communion. For we know that Origenes<sup>1</sup> and Basil<sup>2</sup> and some of the holy fathers put an end to various heresies through debate.

---

<sup>1</sup> Origen [Origenes] (184/185-253/254): scholar and early Christian theologian who was born and spent the first half of his career in Alexandria

<sup>2</sup> Basil of Caesarea (ca. 329-379): Greek bishop of Caesarea Mazaca in Cappadocia, Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). Doctor of the Church. Saint

[18] Tertii<sup>1</sup>, praedicatores in Bohemiam mittendos censeant, non solum eloquentia, sed vitae sanctimonia, et divinae legis peritia memorabiles, qui communionis usurpationem condemnantes, in quanto periculo Bohemi sint, vivis edoceant<sup>2</sup> rationibus. Namque si colentes idola gentes ad praedicationem apostolorum conversae sunt et Christo manus dederunt, quis dubitet Bohemiam quoque bonis praedicatoribus auditis ad nostrum<sup>3</sup> dogma converti? Quarti<sup>4</sup> opinantur, si taceat catholica ecclesia neque concordiam Bohemorum ultra perquirat, recognituros illos, dum se contemni viderint, suam inscitiam, venturosque supplices ac sine pacto<sup>5</sup>, sine conditione Romanae ecclesiae parituros. Neque enim dulce illis est ab omni Christianismo<sup>6</sup> seorsum vivere. Quinti putant innovandas censuras esse<sup>7</sup> mandandumque vicinis, ne quod habeant cum Bohemis commercium<sup>8</sup>. Nam vitati per circuitum resipiscere compellentur, qui et vino, et sale et aromatibus utuntur importatis.

---

<sup>1</sup> Praedicatoribus *in marg.* D, G

<sup>2</sup> edoceant *corr. ex edocent* D; edocent G

<sup>3</sup> Bohema *add.* F

<sup>4</sup> Taciturnitas et dissimulatio... *in marg.* D; Taciturnitate et dissimulatione *in marg.* G

<sup>5</sup> pacato E

<sup>6</sup> Christianissimo F, E

<sup>7</sup> Innovatio censurarum *in marg.* D, G

<sup>8</sup> commercium B, E



[18] The third group thinks that preachers should be sent to Bohemia, men who are notable not only for their eloquence, but also for their holy life and their knowledge of divine law. Condemning the abuse of the communion [under both species], they will with compelling arguments show how great is the peril of the Bohemians. For if the worshippers of heathen idols were converted and went over to Christ by the preaching of the apostles, then who may doubt that Bohemia, too, will be converted to our teachings by hearing good preachers.

The fourth group considers that the Catholic Church should remain silent and no longer seek an understanding with the Bohemians. When they see how they are despised, they will understand how ignorant they are and come begging and obey the Roman Church without any treaties and conditions. For it is not pleasant for them to live in isolation from all Christianity.

The fifth group proposes to renew the [ecclesiastical] censures and to order their neighbours not to trade with the Bohemians. If they are shunned by all their neighbours, they will be forced to recant since they depend on imported wine, salt, and spices.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> This solution amounts to a trade boycott

[19] Sextis<sup>1</sup> persuasum est, si prohibeatur presbyterorum consecratio, qui sectae<sup>2</sup> illorum sunt, communionem calicis brevi desituram, deficientibus, qui eam ministrent, presbyteris. Septimi<sup>3</sup> consulunt dandam esse pecuniam his, qui populum ducunt. Nihil est enim, quod in auribus eorum argento dulcius aut auro sonet. Octavi<sup>4</sup> suadent tractatus iterum atque iterum alios cum Bohemis habendos, donec sequestrato communionis articulo melioribus pactis unionem amplectantur. Quaelibet autem harum viarum, ut istis videtur, ad reducendos Bohemos et honestior est ecclesiae et Christianae plebi salubrior, quam communionis, ut petitur, indultum.

---

<sup>1</sup> Presbyterorum consecratio *in marg.* D, G

<sup>2</sup> sanctae E

<sup>3</sup> Pecunia *in marg.* D; pecunia agendum *in marg.* G

<sup>4</sup> Novos tractatus habendos *in marg.* D, G

[19] The sixth group is convinced that if the consecration of priests from their own sect is forbidden, the communion of the chalice will soon disappear, since there will no longer be priests to administer it.

The seventh group recommends giving money to the leaders of the people. For nothing sounds sweeter in their ears than silver or gold.

The eighth group argues that we should conclude treaty after treaty with the Bohemians: eventually the article concerning communion may be dropped and the Bohemians will accept reunion on better terms.

All these [people] believe that their own preferred way is more honourable for the Church and more beneficial to the Christian people than granting the communion [under both species] which the [Bohemians] request.

[20] At<sup>1</sup> qui periti rerum sunt, et quos ego saepenumero de hoc<sup>2</sup> ipso negotio<sup>3</sup> conferentes audiui, neque salubres hujuscemodi vias neque idoneas, quae Bohemos acquirant Christo, dijudicant.

[21] Et de bello quidem ita loquuntur: pugnatum est cum Bohemis frequenter, numerosi adversus eos exercitus iere; legati apostolici, duces, reges, imperatores in castris nostris militavere. Omnis Alamaniae virtus, omne vicinarum gentium robur in Bohemos prodiit. Sed quis belli exitus? {71v} Quis pugnae fructus? Pudet referre gentis nostrae dedecus! Erubesco dicere numerosas saepe nostrorum militum copias parva Bohemorum<sup>4</sup> manu fugatas. Ad Rhenum, ad Danubium, ad mare Baltheum, ad Hungariam Hussitarum victores exercitus percurrerunt. Adversus hostem, qui nos caedere<sup>5</sup> consuevit, victoriam praesumere non solemus. Victos timor, victores audacia comitatur<sup>6</sup>. Temerarii est, non cauti ducis victorem hostem saepius provocare. Quamvis *caeca nube futurum occulit Deus*, venturi tamen rationem quae praeterierunt tempora non parvam<sup>7</sup> exhibent. Adsit autem spes pulchra vincendi. Nil tamen certum erit, *dubius est belli eventus*. Modicus error exercitus maximam cladem parere potest. Fortunam, quae proeliorum rectrix et moderatrix habetur, non sine causa caecam finxere poetae. Stultum est sub caeco contendere iudice.

---

<sup>1</sup> Confutatio precedentium *in marg.* D, G

<sup>2</sup> *omit.* G

<sup>3</sup> communionis *add.* F

<sup>4</sup> saepe ... Bohemorum *add. in marg.* A

<sup>5</sup> credere F

<sup>6</sup> comittatur E

<sup>7</sup> parva E

[20] But the specialists, whom I have often heard speaking about this matter, consider that these ways are neither beneficial nor suitable for bringing the Bohemians back to Christ.

### 3.1. War

[21] Concerning the way of war they have this to say: Often we have fought the Bohemians. Numerous armies have been sent against them. Apostolic legates as well as dukes, kings and emperors took part in our expeditions. All the force<sup>1</sup> of Germany, all the strength of the neighbouring peoples marched against the Bohemians. And what was the outcome of that war? What was the result of the battles? It embarasses me to talk about the shame of our people! I blush to tell you how our large forces were often put to flight by small Bohemian bands of soldiers. The victorious Hussite armies dashed through to the Rhine, to the Danube, to the Baltic Sea and to Hungary. We should not count on winning over an enemy who habitually slaughters our [armies]. Fear accompanies the losers, audacity the winners. It is a reckless, not a prudent general who repeatedly challenges a victorious enemy. Though *God hides the future in an impenetrable cloud*,<sup>2</sup> past times to a great extent reveal the pattern of things to come. Even if there be high hopes for a victory, nothing is certain, and *doubtful is the outcome of war*.<sup>3</sup> Even a small error may cause the total defeat of an army. Fortune is considered to be the ruler and governor of battles, and not without reason have the poets imagined her to be blind. It is foolish to fight before a blind judge.

---

<sup>1</sup> "virtus"

<sup>2</sup> Horatius: *Carmina*, 3.29.29-30: *God in his providence hides future events in murky darkness (prudens futuri temporis exitum caliginosa nocte premit deus)*

<sup>3</sup> Latin proverb

[22] Sed dicamus, quod verissimum est: fortunam nihil esse<sup>1</sup>, bellorum exitus<sup>2</sup> ex Deo pendere. Cur hodie victoriam magis quam pridem sperare licet? Neque meliores sumus, neque prophetam habemus, qui victoriae quasi Dei nuntius<sup>3</sup> expromissor adsit. Credamus tamen ruituros Marte nostro Bohemos. Siccine sanctum et decorum putabimus converti Bohemiam? Prisca ecclesia non ferro aut igne, sed amicis verbis et suavis adhortationibus exorbitantes homines in semitam retrahebat, sanguinem semper abhorrens. Nimius cruor tinget<sup>4</sup> agros, antequam Bohemia ferro subigatur. Cadent illi, cadent nostri, infinitas animas ad inferos emittemus, priusquam victos Bohemi sese fateantur. Carum est nimis quidquid humano sanguine comparatur. Non est insuper accepta Deo voluntas, quae bello coacta crucifixum adorat. Compulsi Bohemi, qui bello supererunt, non voluntarii ritum nostrum accipient; metu non animo fidei nostrae consentient, intentique semper erunt, quo pacto se subtrahant servituti. *Metus* enim, ut oratoris utamur verbis, *non est diuturnus magister officii*. Deus autem noster spontanea servitia, non violenta requirit. Corda, non opera respicit. Non est igitur via belli, quae res Bohemicas utiliter componere possit.

---

<sup>1</sup> est B, E

<sup>2</sup> ex pondere *add.* F

<sup>3</sup> Dei nuntius : nuntius Dei F

<sup>4</sup> tingit C

[22] But let us state the truth as it is: Fortune is nothing, and the outcome of war depends on God. Why should we hope for victory today more than yesterday? We are neither better men, nor do we have a prophet who will be there as God's messenger to promise victory.

But, let us assume that the Bohemians will succumb to our military might<sup>1</sup>: would that really be a holy and honourable way of converting Bohemia? The Early Church did not draw straying people back to the way by sword or fire, but by kind words and gentle exhortations, always abhorring bloodshed. Too much blood will colour the earth before Bohemia is subdued by the sword. They will fall, and our people will fall, too. We shall send countless souls to Hell before the Bohemians will declare themselves defeated. What is bought by human blood is far too expensive. A mind<sup>2</sup> is not acceptable to God if it only adores the crucified [Lord] because it has been coerced through war. The Bohemians who survive the war may be forced to accept our rites, but they will not do so voluntarily. They will accept our faith through fear alone, and not with their hearts. They will always be thinking about how to escape servitude. To use the words of the orator: *Fear as the counselor of duty is short-lived.*<sup>3</sup>

But our God wants free obedience, not forced. He looks into the hearts of men, and not on their works. Therefore, war is not the means to settle the Bohemian matter.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Mars"

<sup>2</sup> "voluntas"

<sup>3</sup> Cicero: *Philippica*, 2.36.90: *Quamquam bonum te timor faciebat, non diuturnus magister officii*

[23] Minus secunda disputationis via, quae cum Johanne ac Jeronimo in Constantiensi concilio et in Basiliensi cum Rokezana Cibram et aliis plerisque frustra temptata est. Nisi iudex adsit, quem partes ambae suscipiant<sup>1</sup>, numquam disputando vincas haereticos. At illi<sup>2</sup> iudicem solum Deum recipiunt, cujus diffinitionem sine miraculo non<sup>3</sup> reperimus. Testis est Ariana perfidia, quae multis reprobata conciliis numquam caruit defensoribus. Nestoriana quoque, et Eutychetis<sup>4</sup> Dioscorique vesania saepius condemnata, numquam {72r} tamen deserta est, habentque adhuc hodie Nestoriani inter Saracenos monasteria. Nam Mahumetus, cum animadvertisset horum temerariam sectam suae insaniae proximam, Nestorianis inter suos pacem esse mandavit. Hussitae vero, si quaeras ab eis disputationis campum, nihil est, quod magis affectare se decant, garrula est enim gens et disputationis avida. At si roges stante controversia, quem sequi iudicem velint, neque Romanum pontificem, neque generale concilium, neque mortalium quempiam acceptabunt<sup>5</sup>. Solius novi et veteris testamenti sese diffinitioni submittent, cumque ad id ventum fuerit, ut sacrarum litterarum testimonio sit utendum, nullas doctorum nostrorum interpretationes admittent. Habent et ipsi suos sensus, quibus inhaerent. Inter sensum vero et sensum, inter interpretationem et interpretationem solius Dei arbitrium asserunt audiendum, atque ita vim omnem disputationis eludunt.

---

<sup>1</sup> suscipiatur E

<sup>2</sup> at illi : et alii F

<sup>3</sup> omit. B, E

<sup>4</sup> em.; Uticetis codd.

<sup>5</sup> acceptabant F



### 3.2. Debate

[23] The way of debate is unsuitable, too. It was tried in vain with Jan<sup>1</sup> and Jeronimus<sup>2</sup> at the Council of Konstanz, and with Rokycana, Pribram<sup>3</sup> and several others at the Council of Basel.<sup>4</sup> In the absence of a judge whom both parties accept, you will never overcome these heretics by debate. But they only accept God as judge, and God's ruling<sup>5</sup> we only get to know about through a miracle. This is witnessed by the Arian perfidy: though it was rejected by many councils, it never lacked defenders. Also, the insane views of Nestorius,<sup>6</sup> Eutyches<sup>7</sup> and Dioscorus<sup>8</sup> were often condemned, but never abandoned: even today the Nestorians have monasteries among the Saracens. For when Muhammad realized that their reckless sect was very close to his own insanity, he ordered that there should be peace between Nestorians and his own people.

If you ask the Hussites to arrange a debate, they say that they desire nothing more than a debate,<sup>9</sup> for this is a garrulous people, avid for debate. And when, at the debate, you ask what judge they will follow, they accept neither the Roman Pontiff, nor a General Council, nor any man. They will only submit to the pronouncements of the Old and the New Testament. And when you reach the point where you must use the witness of Holy Scriptures, they will accept none of the interpretations of our teachers, for they have their own interpretations to which they cling. And they insist that only God's judgment between meaning and meaning, between interpretation and interpretation should be heard, and thus they rob the debate of any meaning.

---

<sup>1</sup> Jan Hus

<sup>2</sup> Jerome of Prague

<sup>3</sup> Jan Pribram (ca. 1387-1448): Bohemian priest. Hussite theologian

<sup>4</sup> During his visit to Bohemia in 1451, Piccolomini had personally participated in such a debate, cf. his description in a letter to Cardinal Juan Carvajal of 21 August 1451, WO, III, pp. 37-56

<sup>5</sup> "diffinitio"

<sup>6</sup> Nestorius (ca. 386-450): Archbishop of Constantinople from 428 until August 431, when he was condemned by the Council of Ephesus

<sup>7</sup> Eutyches (ca. 380-ca. 456): priest and archimandrite at Constantinople. In 431, at the First Council of Ephesus, he vehemently opposed the teachings of Nestorius. His condemnation of Nestorianism as heresy led him to an equally extreme, although opposite view, for which he was denounced as a heretic himself

<sup>8</sup> Probably Pope Dioscorus I of Alexandria (d. 454): Deposed by the Council of Chalcedon in 451, but recognized as Patriarch by the Coptic Church until his death

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Piccolomini's first-hand report on Hussites debates in connection with his visit to Tabor in 1451. See his letter to Juan Carvajal (above: Introduction / Context)

[24] Cum verba disputando faciunt, indoctae plebis praesentiam requirunt, brachia in diversas partes extendunt, manus complodunt, nunc hoc, nunc illud digitis ostendunt, cervices erigunt, oculos in partes varias<sup>1</sup> contorquent, inspicientes an circumstantes sententias et argutias suas demirentur, sublatisque vocibus ignavi populi plausum extorquere conantur, et quasi pulcherrime ac suavissime perorent, ipsi suum sonum patulis auribus auscultant. Origenes autem et reliqui errores, qui disputando destruxere, apud eos locuti sunt, qui doceri cupiebant. Praeceptores vero Bohemorum numquam inducas, ut discipuli formam induant. Dulcissimum iis<sup>2</sup> est magistri nomen, *et vocari* in<sup>3</sup> turbis "*Rabbi*", et *cathedram pestilentiae* regere. Nihil turpius quam discere putant. Non est igitur, quod disputatio ad salutem Bohemiae<sup>4</sup> conferat, cum pertinacia<sup>5</sup> magistros teneat, plebes autem suis tantum<sup>6</sup> praeceptoribus credant.

---

<sup>1</sup> partes varias : diversas partes D, G

<sup>2</sup> his E

<sup>3</sup> omit. F

<sup>4</sup> ad salutem Bohemiae : Bohemiae ad salutem G

<sup>5</sup> cum pertinacia : compertinacia E

<sup>6</sup> tanto E

[24] When they debate, they require the presence of the ignorant people, they gesture, they clap their hands, they point now here now there, they raise their heads, they roll their eyes, they keep glancing around to see if the audience is impressed by their maxims and arguments, they try to gain the applause of the dullards by raising their voices, and they listen avidly to their own voice as if they were speaking beautifully and pleasantly. When Origen and others demolished errors through debate, they spoke to people who wanted to learn. But never will you bring the Bohemian teachers to become pupils. To them the name of teacher is the sweetest of all, and to be called "Rabbi" by the crowd,<sup>1</sup> and to rule<sup>2</sup> *the chair of pestilence*.<sup>3</sup> They think that nothing is worse than to learn.

Bohemia cannot be saved by debate, since its teachers are stubborn and the people only believes its own teachers.

---

<sup>1</sup> Matthew, 23, 6-7: *And they love the first places at feasts, and the first chairs in the synagogues, And salutations in the market place, and to be called by men, Rabbi* (*Amant autem primos recubitus in coenis, et primas cathedras in synagogis et salutationes in foro et vocari ab hominibus Rabbi*)

<sup>2</sup> "regere"

<sup>3</sup> Psalms, 1, 1: *Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilence.* (*Beatus vir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum, et in via peccatorum non stetit, et in cathedra pestilentiae non sedit*)

[25] De praedicatione vero, quae tertio loco putatur idonea ad convertendum Bohemos via, non est cur multa dicamus, nam et ipsa incassum temptata est. Praedicaverunt saepe nostri et in Bohemia et in Moravia. Praedicaverunt et adversarii. Quae nostri confirmaverunt, illi rursus impugnaverunt. Imbutae mentes malis erroribus non facile sententiam deserunt. Credunt suis doctoribus, alienos quasi ex invidia loquentes respuunt. Sed ait fortasse quispiam praedicatorum culpa id accidisse, ne Bohemi nostris crederent, quia vel facundia defuit, vel doctrina, vel munditia vitae. Nihil horum nostris defuit. Omitto reliquos: Johannes de Capistrano, meo iudicio vir Deo plenus, majorem Bohemiae ac Moraviae {72v} partem praedicando lustravit, non tamen haeresim potuit extirpare, quamvis nonnulli ejus praedicationi credentes Hussitarum stultitiae renuntiaverint, quos pro multitudine desipientium<sup>1</sup> nullius esse numeri dicere possumus. Nihil tamen habuerunt Bohemi, quod Johanni possent objicere, homini eloquenti et hac doctrina, quam pontificalem utilioreque dicimus, inter omnes eminenti<sup>2</sup>, qui mundi pompas abiecit, carnem domuit, avaritiam penitus conculcavit, solius Christi et apostolorum vestigia sequens.

---

<sup>1</sup> de sapientum E

<sup>2</sup> et hac doctrina ... eminenti *omit.* F

### 3.3. Preaching

[25] Preaching is believed to be a third way suitable for converting the Bohemians. We do not have much to say about it except that this way, too, has been tried in vain. Often did our own people preach in Bohemia and Moravia, but our adversaries preached, too, and what our people asserted, they afterwards denied. Minds imbued with evil errors do not easily abandon their point of view. The Bohemians believe their own teachers, and they scorn others as speaking out of envy. Maybe someone will say that it was the fault of our preachers themselves that the Bohemians did not believe them, because they lacked eloquence, learning, or purity of life. But ours lacked none of these. Leaving aside the others, [I shall only speak of] Giovanni da Capistrano,<sup>1</sup> in my opinion a man full of God. Traveling through a large part of Bohemia and Moravia he preached [everywhere], but he was unable to uproot their heresy.<sup>2</sup> Actually, some people did believe his preaching and renounced the Hussite absurdities – but in view of the great number of foolish people, their number is insignificant.<sup>3</sup> The Bohemians had absolutely nothing for which they could blame Giovanni who is an eloquent and learned man and an eminent specialist in the discipline that we call the pontifical discipline and the more useful one.<sup>4</sup> He despised the splendour of this world, he had tamed the flesh, and he had conquered greed, following only in the footsteps of Christ and his apostles.

---

<sup>1</sup> Giovanni da Capistrano (1386-1456): Franciscan friar and priest from the Italian town of Capestrano, Abruzzo. Famous as a preacher, theologian, and inquisitor. Led the defense at the siege of Belgrade in 1456 together with the Hungarian military commander John Hunyadi. Saint. The siege and battle of Belgrade took place in July, and news of it would have reached the Papal Court in August/September. Capistrano died in a nearby city a month afterwards, on 23 October, of the plague. Since Piccolomini would presumably, in this context, have mentioned Capistrano's heroic fight for the Faith, September would be a terminus ante quem for the composition of the *"Res Bohemicas"*

<sup>2</sup> Actually, Piccolomini's general assessment of Giovanni da Capistrano's saintliness was remarkably cool

<sup>3</sup> In 1451/1452, Giovanni da Capistrano had been sent by the pope on a mission to preach in Bohemia and prepare Bohemian minds for a reunion with Rome, but his fiery intolerance of Hussitism made the mission an unmitigated and counterproductive disaster (Heymann: *George*, p. 65-80)

<sup>4</sup> Canon law

[26] Nimis diu praedicare oportebit, antequam Bohemia nobis consentiat. Impar est nostri et<sup>1</sup> apostolorum temporis conditio: licet enim difficile fuerit daemones ostendere, qui pro diis colebantur, quia tamen vitam suillam sine doctrinae fundamento gentiles ducebant, apostoli autem domini nitidos mores summa cum ratione praedicabant, naturale quoddammodo fuit, qui erant<sup>2</sup> homines ad se reverti et relictam bestiali consuetudine modestiam et honestatem humano generi convenientem, sicut evangelium Christi docebat, induere. Inter nos autem et Bohemos non est de moribus contentio. Quae nos vitia fugimus, illi saltem vituperant. De sensu evangelii disceptatio est, quod illi non minus intelligi a seipsis quam a nobis existimant. Difficillima profecto et inextricabilis contentio, ubi non est cui partes credant arbitrium boni viri.

[27] Nec apostoli sola praedicatione mundum illuminassent, nisi signa intercessissent, quae divinitus fieri populi crediderunt. At cum caecis<sup>3</sup> visum, leprosis munditiam, mortuis vitam in nomine Jesu apostoli restituerent, multitudinis fidem facile consequerentur. Hodie autem non est ita nobiscum domini manus, ut mirabilia per nos operari velit. Immo vero non sunt opera nostra, quae signa mereantur ostendere. Fuit tamen de Johanne Capistrano suisque miraculis ingens rumor, de quibus nihil me attinet disputare. Ego veri periculum in alios transferam, qui novarum rerum curiosiores habentur. Illud notissimum est, quia post praedicationem Johannis remansit Bohemia eadem, quae prius fuerat. Neque, qui sapiunt, verisimile ducunt aevo nostro cujuspian praedicatione Bohemiae ad nos redire populos.

---

<sup>1</sup> omit. F

<sup>2</sup> qui erant : querant F

<sup>3</sup> caeci E

[26] It would take far too much preaching before Bohemia would agree with us.

Our situation is different from that of the apostles. It may have been difficult, then, to show that those who were worshipped as gods were really demons. But since [morally] the gentiles lived as pigs, without the foundation of doctrine, whereas the apostles preached, with superior reasoning, the splendid morals of Our Lord, it was somehow natural that men of that time would come to their senses, abandon their debased lifestyle, and welcome the modesty and decency that befits the human race, as taught in the gospel of Christ.

But between us and the Bohemians there is no disagreement as to morals. The vices that we avoid, they actually condemn. Our controversy concerns the meaning of the Gospel which they believe they understand as well as we do. This controversy is really difficult and unsoluble since there is no good man whose arbitration both parties will accept.

[27] And the apostles would not have illuminated the world with their preaching if there had not been signs<sup>1</sup> that people believed to have come from God. When in the name of Jesus the apostles restored sight to the blind, health to the lepers and life to the dead, they easily won the faith of the multitude. Today, however, the Lord does not favour us to the extent of letting us perform miracles. And, indeed, our own acts do not merit such signs.

Actually, there were many rumours about Giovanni di Capistrano and his miracles that I am not prepared to discuss. In this matter I leave the discernment of truth<sup>2</sup> to others who may be more interested in novel things. But it is quite clear that after Giovanni's preaching Bohemia remained unchanged. And those who are knowledgeable about such matters consider it unlikely that the people of Bohemia will return to us in our time because of anyone's preaching.

---

<sup>1</sup> I.e. miracles

<sup>2</sup> "Veri periculum": an expression Piccolomini might have picked up from Solinus

[28] De silentio vero, quod quarto loco commendatum est, haec sententia sapientum<sup>1</sup> est. Si tacemus nihilque de Bohemis agimus, minime illi se spretos, sed nos desperasse iudicabunt. Comfortabunt seipsos et gloriabuntur quasi victores. Praedicatores eorum, sicut eis mos est, diebus singulis plebes instruunt, et pestifero lacte nutriendos populum laetabundi sese jactabunt, quia jam silentium de suis erroribus factum sit. Ridiculum est, si tum putes hostem victum, cum ille pro sua voluntate quiescit. Nihil est, quod Rokezana magis {73r} cupiat, quam ut sinamus Bohemos suis legibus vivere<sup>2</sup>, neque ritum impediamus eorum. Sic enim gloriosus ille in pingui populo pacem nactus. Inter suas mulierculas sermocinabit secures. Quocumque voluerit, plebes impellet, nec exagitatas diversis tractatibus populi mentes moliri adversus se quidquam<sup>3</sup> timebit. Rem divinam pro suo arbitro faciet: in altari<sup>4</sup> ministrabit ut agnus, in ambone praedicabit ut leo, in mensa vorabit ut lupo.

[29] Fietque Bohemia altera Bosnia, quam cum invasissent olim Manichaei, qui nefanda de Christo sentientes primatum ecclesiae Romanae<sup>5</sup> inficiantur<sup>6</sup>. Conati sunt majores nostri armis extinguere surgentem haeresim, quod cum parum succederet, quieverunt. Ac silentio facto Bosnienses pro suis desideriis ambulare siverunt. Sed quid profuit silentium? Quid secutum est, obsecro? Quis audivit eos de reditu<sup>7</sup> cogitasse? Fortificati sunt nobis tacentibus et aucti numero, jamque arcem erexerunt, ad quam omnes confugiunt, qui sedis apostolicae mucronem timent, et, quod pessimum est, Turcorum unitate laetantur.

[30] Nec secus Bohemi facient, nisi dum tempus est, remedia perquirimus. Adde, quod medio tempore, dum silemus, omnes, qui moriuntur, praeda sunt diaboli, culpaque nostra spiritibus infinitis caelum privatur, quorum voces ante tribunal domini assidue clamant apostolicae sedis negligentiam accusantes. Non est facile, sanctissime pontifex, tantae jacturae rationem reddere. Gravis est tua conditio, quae totius orbis curam gerit. Speculatoris officio fungeris: nisi venientem gladium indicas, quae pereunt animarum, Ezechielis testimonio de tuis manibus sanguis exquiritur. Plus dico: nisi saluti cujusvis pro tua potestate consulis, tam es in culpa, quam si pereuntes ipse perdas. Cum tuo damno Bohemi cadent, cum tuo lucro stabunt. Abjicienda est igitur horum consultatio, quibus silentium placet, neque Deo grata neque apud homines honorificata.

---

<sup>1</sup> sapientium D, G

<sup>2</sup> vincere G

<sup>3</sup> quisquam D, G

<sup>4</sup> altare D, G

<sup>5</sup> ecclesiae Romanae : Romanae ecclesiae G

<sup>6</sup> inficiabantur B, E; inficiatur D, G

<sup>7</sup> ritu B, E



### 3.4. Silence

[28] Concerning the silence recommended as the fourth way, this is the view of wise men: if we remain silent and ignore the Bohemians, they will not at all consider themselves to have been rejected, but rather believe that we have given up. They will congratulate themselves and boast like victors. As is their wont, their preachers will instruct the people daily, and nourishing the people on poisonous milk they will be happy and conceited because there is silence concerning their errors. It is ridiculous to consider an enemy to have been vanquished if he lives tranquilly as he wants to. Indeed, Rokycana would like nothing more than that we should allow the Bohemians to live according to their own laws and not interfere with their rites. For having won peace, he will be the pride of a flourishing people, he will preach among his women, he will push the people wherever he wishes, and he will not fear that the people would be stirred in various ways and plot against him. He will conduct services as he pleases, at the altar he will serve like a lamb, in the pulpit he will preach like a lion, and at the table he will eat like a wolf.

[29] Bohemia would become another Bosnia. That country was once invaded by the Manichees who have abominable notions about Christ and reject the primacy of the Roman Church.<sup>1</sup> Our forefathers tried to stop that rising heresy with weapons, but when they had little success they kept their peace. They remained silent and let the Bosnians live as they pleased. But how useful was that silence? What happened afterwards, I ask? Whoever heard those people speak about returning to us? While we remained silent, they grew stronger and more numerous, and now they have built a fortress where all take refuge who fear the sword of the Apostolic See. And what is worse: they are happily united with the Turks.

[30] The Bohemians will do the same unless we find the proper remedies in time. It should be added that in the meantime, while we remain silent, all who die are the prey of the Devil through our fault, and Heaven is denied to an infinite number of souls. Their voices constantly cry out before the tribunal of the Lord, accusing the Apostolic See of negligence. It is not easy, Holy Pontiff, to justify so great a calamity. Grave is your situation as you are responsible for the whole world. Your office is that of a watchman: unless you warn them of the coming sword, the blood of those who perish will be required from your hands, as Ezekiel says.<sup>2</sup> I insist: unless you provide for the salvation of everyone with all your might, you are as much at fault as if you had personally destroyed those who perish. If the Bohemians fall, it will be to your detriment; if they stand, it will be to your benefit. Therefore, the advice of those who prefer silence must be rejected. It is neither pleasing to God nor honourable among men.

---

<sup>1</sup> The medieval Church in Bosnia was possibly related to Bogomils, a stridently dualist sect of gnostic Christians heavily influenced by the Manichaean Paulician movement. The Church was considered as heretic by Rome

<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel, 33, 6

[31] Sed quid illud existimabimus, quod quinto loco de processibus innovandis contra Bohemos suasum est? Ridiculum consilium, ne dicam insulsum. Facile dicimus: anathematiza, excommunica, percutere, caedere, subtrahere sacramenta, interdicere loca, sed quis est praesto parere? Praecaria est oboedientia nostra. Quantum quisque vult, tantum mandatis nostris obtemperat. Regna olim et maximi principatus censuras ecclesiae formidabant. Nunc vel minimae civitates summi praesulis mandata contemnunt. Mortua est in pectore nostro fides, caritas omnis abest, fex hominum sumus, impii, scelerati<sup>1</sup>, in quos fines saeculorum devenerunt.

---

<sup>1</sup> sceleritati A; scelerati *corr. from* sceleritati D

### 3.5. Ecclesiastical censures

[31] But what shall we think of the arguments of those who propose, in the fifth place, to renew the ecclesiastical processes against the Bohemians? This advice is ridiculous, not to say stupid. It is easy to say: condemn, excommunicate, strike, kill, withdraw sacraments, put places under interdict – but who is willing to obey? [People's] obedience towards us is precarious. Everyone obeys our decrees only as far as he wishes to. Formerly, kingdoms and great princedoms feared the censures of the Church. Now, even the smallest cities spurn the commands of the Supreme Bishop. Faith has died in our heart; all charity is gone; we have become the dregs of humanity and impious criminals, and the end of times is upon us.

[32] Possem commemorare multa exempla civitatum Italiae, quae censuras ecclesiasticas quasi deliramenta putarunt<sup>1</sup>. Sed malo Germanica facta referre, quando et Bohemi Germani sunt, de quibus agimus. Quid profuit {73v} excommunicasse Trajectenses, qui septem annis adversus ecclesiam militantes, quem cupiebant, episcopum obtinere? Quid Monasterienses? Quod nunc apud illos excommunicatio pondus habet? Quid Pruteni? Numquid adversus censuras ecclesiasticas suis dominis rebellarunt? Quid Austriales? Quanti apud eos momenti Romani pontificis mandata fuerunt, qui jussi Caesarem revereri, persecuti sunt? Non terret quempiam spiritualis mucro, nisi materiali juvetur gladio. Non timentur verba, nisi praesto adsint verbera. Jacturam futuri regni pauci ponderant, praesentia cuncti respiciunt. Non insulse scripsit ille:

*Esse aliquos manes, et subterranea regna ...  
Nec pueri credunt, nisi qui nondum aere lavantur.*

Sed quid vagamur? Temptata sunt et in Bohemos ecclesiastica tela. Maledicti, damnati, excommunicati, in manus Satanae dati fuerunt. Et quod formidabilissimum credebatur, armis simul temporalibus et spiritualibus sagittis impugnata est saepius<sup>2</sup> audacia Bohemorum, expugnata numquam. Et iterum ad excommunicationem recurremus? Non timuerunt Bohemi censuras armatas, et nunc formidabunt inermes? Irridebitur Romana ecclesia, et quasi ludibrio habebitur, si rursus contra Bohemos sententiam fulminet.

---

<sup>1</sup> putarant G

<sup>2</sup> omit. G

[32] I could remind you of many examples of Italian cities that considered ecclesiastical censures as the products of a deranged mind, but I prefer to relate events from Germany, since the Bohemians we are talking about are [like] the Germans. How useful was it to excommunicate the people of Utrecht who fought the Church for seven years and then still got the bishop they wanted?<sup>1</sup> And what about the people of Münster? Do they attach any importance whatsoever to an excommunication now?<sup>2</sup> What about the Prussians? Did they not rebel against their lords in spite of ecclesiastical censures?<sup>3</sup> And what about the Austrians?<sup>4</sup> How much did they care about the injunctions of the Roman Pontiff when they were ordered to honour the emperor and molested him instead? Nobody fears the spiritual sword unless it is reinforced by the physical sword.<sup>5</sup> Words are not feared if whips are not at hand.<sup>6</sup> Few are worried about a calamity threatening the kingdom in the future. Everybody only cares about the present. Not stupidly did someone write:

*The existence of ghosts and the underworld realms ...  
not even boys believe in that, except those not yet old enough to pay admission at the  
baths.*<sup>7</sup>

But why not come directly to the matter? Also the ecclesiastical weapons have been directed at the Bohemians. They have been cursed, condemned, excommunicated and given into the hands of Satan. And what was thought to be the most fearsome of all: the reckless Bohemians were attacked with temporal weapons and spiritual arrows conjointly, but they were never vanquished. So, should we now return to excommunications? If the Bohemians did not fear armed censures, would they now be scared of unarmed ones? The Roman Church will be ridiculed and become a laughing stock if once again it proclaims a condemnation of the Bohemians.

---

<sup>1</sup> In 1424 the Cathedral Chapter of Utrecht elected Rudolf of Diepholt as Bishop of Utrecht. He was the preferred candidate of the town council of Utrecht. The pope, Martin V, appointed another bishop and excommunicated the citizens in 1425 and the region was put under interdict. In 1433, Rudolf of Diepholt was appointed bishop of Utrecht by Martin's successor, Pope Eugenius IV (*Handbook of Dutch*, pp. 108-109)

<sup>2</sup> In the *Münsterische Stiftsfehde* from 1450 to 1457 two candidates fought to become Bishop of Münster, Walram von Moers und Erich von Hoya. Pope Nicolaus V intervened in the conflict, excommunicating the opponents of his own candidate/s and putting the district under interdict. The University of Erfurt pronounced against the papal censures which were then ignored by the concerned parties

<sup>3</sup> In spite of being declared illegal by Emperor Friedrich III, in 1453 (Piccolomini himself participated in the trial the Imperial Court), and in spite of ecclesiastical censures, the *Preussische Bund* (an association of Prussian estates) in 1454 – with Polish aid – rebelled against the Teutonic Order and started a thirteen-year war in which they were, in the end, victorious

<sup>4</sup> On the Austrian insurrection against the emperor in 1452 and their rejection of a papal monitorium supporting the emperor, see Piccolomini's oration "*Sentio*" [21]

<sup>5</sup> See Piccolomini's letter to Piero da Noceto of 3 September 1453: *Credo consultum esse, ne festinetur in processu contra civitates Prussie, qui modo apud vos agitandus dicitur, ne censure apostolice, sicut in Austria factum est, contempnantur; nisi enim spiritualem gladium materialis sequatur, parum est quod populi formident.* (WO, III, p. 244)

<sup>6</sup> Play on the words "*verba*" (words) and "*verbera*" (whips)

<sup>7</sup> Juvenalis: *Satirae*, 2.149 and 152

[33] Neque enim vicini parebunt<sup>1</sup>, qui sciunt bellum<sup>2</sup> necessario futurum quamprimum Bohemos quasi praecisos ab ecclesia devitaverint. Recens est apud eos praeteritarum memoria pugnarum. Stant adhuc ante oculos rapinae, incendia, caedes Bohemici belli, nec sine terrore<sup>3</sup> tantorum malorum meminerunt: nactique tandem pacem et<sup>4</sup> otii dulcedinem experti quamvis occasionem oderint, quae belli fomitem ministrare possit. Scimus praeterea Bohemos, qui sunt Hussitarum infecti lepra, alienos ab ecclesia esse: excommunicatus est enim<sup>5</sup> omnis<sup>6</sup> haereticus. Non tamen vitantur Hussitae, cum veniunt ad nostros. Ingrediuntur pacifice civitates nostras, emunt, vendunt, pro libito negotiantur, visitant ecclesias, intersunt divinis officiis, foedera cum nostris principibus percutiunt, matrimonia contrahunt. Inter Hussitas et nostros discrimen nullum. Et nos putabimus jam novis censuris utendum? Vana est et prorsus inepta eorum cogitatio, qui censuras ecclesiae aut Bohemos timere, aut circumjacentes populos tenere censent.

---

<sup>1</sup> parabunt E

<sup>2</sup> bello E

<sup>3</sup> errore F

<sup>4</sup> omit. G

<sup>5</sup> est enim : enim est G

<sup>6</sup> enim omnis : omnis enim E

[33] Nor will the neighbours obey for they know that war will necessarily follow as soon as they begin to avoid the Bohemians as being cut off from the Church. The memory of past fights is still fresh. In their mind they still see the plunderings, the burnings and the killings in the Bohemian war, and they remember these great calamities with terror. Having finally obtained peace and tasted the sweetness of peace and quiet, they will hate everything that provides a reason for war. Moreover, we know that the Bohemians, being infected with the Hussite plague, are already estranged from the Church for everyone who is a heretic is an excommunicate. Nonetheless, the Hussites are not being shunned when they come to our people. They enter our cities in peace, they buy, they sell, they trade as they wish, they visit our churches, they attend our religious services, they make treaties with our princes, they intermarry.<sup>1</sup> There is no difference between the Hussites and our people. So, should we now think of employing new ecclesiastical censures? The thinking of those who believe that the Bohemians fear ecclesiastical censures and that the neighbouring peoples will respect them is vain and absurd.

---

<sup>1</sup> This even applied to Catholic princes: five years afterwards, the Congress of Eger (Cheb), which opened on 7 April 1459, resulted in an agreement between the Bohemian and Saxon/Brandenburg parties, to be confirmed by a double marriage between George of Podiebrad's daughter, Zdenka, with Albrecht, son of Duke Friedrich II of Sachsen, and between Podiebrad's youngest son, Hyněk, and Duke William's daughter Katherina, see orations "*Eruditissime*" [47] and "*Dilectissime*" [48]

[34] Ad sextos illos nunc transeundum est, qui presbyteros Hussitarum consecrandos negant; sic enim, ut illis videtur, deficientibus, qui calicem ministrent, sacerdotibus, et ipsa duplex communio deficiet. Bella sane cogitatio, bella inventio, ne dicam, deliratio! Et quis erit, obsecro, qui mentes hominum videat<sup>1</sup>, et cujus sit hic aut ille sectae cognoscat? Homine<sup>2</sup> nullum est versutius {74r} animal, nullum magis fallax, aliud in ore, aliud in corde gerit. Clausum est cor hominis homini et inscrutabile, Deo soli apertum, mille in eo latebrae, mille receptacula; simulare ac dissimulare novit. Deo similes nos esse oportebit, si dogmatis Hussitarum qui sequaces habeantur, nosse voluerimus. Johannes, Gurensis episcopus anno ante hunc quinto decem presbyteros ex Bohemia consecravit, qui se fideles affirmaverunt. At ex his septem comperti sunt, qui postmodum ad Rokezanam<sup>3</sup> defecerunt. Dicat hic fortasse quispiam Pragense capitulum, quod apud Pilznam moram trahit, in fide solidum esse, nullumque consecrari debere nisi cum litteris capituli. Sed neque capitulum Deus est, qui mentes hominum introspiciat. Falsificantur deinde litterae atque sigilla, et quod una via negatur, altera impetratur. Sunt praeterea nonnulli<sup>4</sup> episcopi, qui pecuniae causa clericos undecumque<sup>5</sup> venientes consecrant, neque Deum verentes, neque canones.

---

<sup>1</sup> videatur E

<sup>2</sup> hominum E

<sup>3</sup> postmodum ad Rokezanam : ad Rochezanam postmodum G

<sup>4</sup> quidam G

<sup>5</sup> undecimque F



### 3.6. Withholding priests

[34] We must now pass on to the sixth group, those who would refuse to consecrate Hussite priests,<sup>1</sup> believing that if there are no more priests to administer the chalice, there will be no more communion under both species. Oh, what beautiful reasoning, what beautiful device, or should I say delusion? Who, I ask, may see into the minds of men and know who belongs to what sect? No animal is more cunning than man, none more deceitful who says one thing and means another. The heart of man is inscrutable and closed to another man, it is only open to God. In a man there are a thousand subterfuges, and a thousand places of refuge. He knows how to simulate and dissimulate. We must be like God himself if we wish to know who follows the Hussite teachings. Five years ago, Johann, Bishop of Gurk, consecrated ten priests from Bohemia who declared that they were loyal to us, but afterwards it was heard that seven of them defected to Rokycana. Here, someone may say that the Cathedral Chapter of Prague, now residing in Pilzen, remains steadfast in the Faith and that nobody should be ordained without letters from that Chapter. But the Chapter is not God either, who can look into the hearts of men. And letters and seals may be faked so that what cannot be achieved in one way is achieved in another. Moreover, there are some bishops who for the sake of money will consecrate clerics coming from anywhere, fearing neither God nor the canons<sup>2</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> In his *De usu communionis ad Bohemos*, from the early Basel days, Nikolaus von Kues had written: *This [the Catholic] priesthood, so begun by its Head [Christ], stretches by succession even down to us; nor shall such a legitimate succession of the priesthood ever fail, since the whole Church would then necessarily fail. And therefore a church which has a priest who does not descend in this succession from Christ and Peter does not belong to the Catholic Church, since it cannot truly be governed nor have true sacraments [from such a priest]* (Nikolaus von Kues: *De usu* [Izbicki], p. 17). Apparently, and interestingly, the Hussites shared this view, and therefore it was important to them to have legitimately consecrated priests, i.e. sharing the apostolic succession, something the later Lutheran reformers would reject

<sup>2</sup> I.e. Church Law. The matter of the ordination was indeed a problem for the Hussites, but not insoluble, see Heymann: *George*, p. 67: *During the thirty-three years of his [Rokycana] administration his church suffered increasingly from the lack of ordained priests (despite the fact the Utraquist clerics frequently succeeded in receiving ordination outside Bohemia, from bishops in Poland, Hungary, and especially in Italy)*

[35] Polonia quoque, si cetera desint, satis presbyterorum Bohemiae subministrabit. Subnectam hic unum, quamvis turpe ac foedissimum, ad rem tamen, quam tractamus, accomdatum: Polonus quidam in Bohemia plures annos rurali parochiae quasi sacerdos praefuit, atque pro subditorum desiderio communionem praebuit. Huic concubina fuit, quae peccato demum renuntians, misceri ultra Polono recusavit. Interrogata cur sese redderet alienam, "Quia damnatae sunt," inquit, "sacerdotum nuptiae; poenitet me tui concubitus, neque posthac in oscula presbyteri aut amplexus veniam." Tum Polonus, "Tace," inquit, "femina, nihil est, cur me horreas, qui neque sum presbyter, neque sacris initiatus ullis." Hoc<sup>1</sup> mulier magis abhominata facinus: "Abi," inquit, "*in malam crucem pessime*"<sup>2</sup>, qui non sacer sacra ministras." Et a Polono digressa profanatorem divini sacramenti ad contribulos detulit. Illi commoti tam insueto atque inaudito scelere, Polonum repente in crucem sustulissent, nisi furore cognito veterator ille salutem pedibus quaesivisset. Similes huic forsitan multos in Bohemia reperias. Illud exploratum est, quia venientes ex Polonia presbyteri, quemadmodum plebes volunt, sacramenta ministrant, nam domi pauperes, victus causa foris nihil abhorrent. Ego quidem, cum essem in Bohemia, offendi nonnullos ecclesiarum rectores natione Polonos, qui rogati, cur prohibitam ab ecclesia communionem exercerent, ajebant, quia non possent alio modo vivere, cum *fodere non valerent, mendicare autem erubescerent*. Itaque novi Bohemiam non posse carere presbyteris, quando semper inveniuntur, qui fide malunt quam plebe carere.

---

<sup>1</sup> hic C

<sup>2</sup> omit. B, E

[35] Should all these means fail, Poland would provide enough priests for Bohemia. Here I shall add an [episode] that is shameful and disgusting, but relevant to the matter at hand: for several years, a certain Pole served as pastor of a rural parish in Bohemia and gave communion to his parishioners according to their wish<sup>1</sup>. The Pole had a concubine who in the end repented of her sin and refused to have intercourse with the Pole any more. When he asked her why she would break with him, she answered: "Because marriages of priests are condemned. I regret having intercourse with you, and in the future I shall never kiss or embrace a priest." Then the Pole said: "Be silent, woman, there is no reason to avoid me for I am not a priest and have never received Holy Orders." But this crime was even more abhorrent to the woman who said: "You administer the sacraments, but you have not been consecrated. *Go to hell!*"<sup>2</sup> And leaving the Pole, she denounced his profanation of the divine sacrament to their fellow villagers.<sup>3</sup> They were shocked by this extraordinary and unheard of crime and would quickly have crucified the swindler if he had not learnt of their fury and saved himself by running away. You might find many similar cases in Bohemia. What we know is that priests from Poland administer the sacraments according to the wishes of the people, for being poor at home they will do anything to earn a living abroad. When I was in Bohemia,<sup>4</sup> I met several parish priests who were from Poland. I asked them why they administered communion in a form prohibited by the Church, and they answered that otherwise they could not have a living since *they were not able to dig and were ashamed to beg*.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, I know that Bohemia will not lack priests, for you will always be able to find priests who would rather be without faith than without parishioners.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> i.e. under both species

<sup>2</sup> "Abi in malam crucem". Classical expression, see Plautus: *Persa*, 2.4.17. Also used by Poggio Bracciolini, e.g. in *Invectiva in Nicolaum Perottum* (Poggio Bracciolini: *Opera*, II, p. 815)

<sup>3</sup> "contribulos"

<sup>4</sup> On an imperial mission, in 1451, see the oration "*Petivistis ex Caesare*" [16]

<sup>5</sup> Luke, 16, 3

<sup>6</sup> "plebe"

[36] De pecunia vero, quam septimi Bohemos inter erogandam putant, quid aliud existimem, nisi quia<sup>1</sup> male temptatur pecunia<sup>2</sup>, quod virtute effici debet. Sed {74v} judicemus aurum dandum: ubi tantus thesaurus inveniatur, qui Bohemorum voracitatem expleat, insatiabile genus hominum? Quanto plus dederis, tanto amplius requiret. Non Pactolus, non omnis *harena Thagi*, non litus Arabicum tantum auri<sup>3</sup> ministrabit<sup>4</sup>, quantum absumet<sup>5</sup> Bohemia. Unum, si dones, mille donare oportebit; neque<sup>6</sup> semel tantum, sed quotannis stipendia requirent. Ubi cessaveris, mox ad priora redibunt. Aut tributariam regni Bohemiae sedem apostolicam perpetuo facies, aut emptam reditionem brevi tenebis.

[37] Octava et ultima est illorum opinio, qui novos tractatus cum Bohemis existimant<sup>7</sup> inchoandos, si forte melior inveniri<sup>8</sup> conditio possit. Sed fluminis cursum, qui suapte natura deorsum est, facilius sursum revolvat, quam Bohemis communionem calicis subtrahas. Duo concilia generalia, Constantiense et Basiliense, cum hoc summo studio quaererent, in vanum laboraverunt. Nicolaus sancti Petri et Johannes Sancti Angeli cardinales, quorum ante meminimus, complures ecclesiastici et saeculares principes saepe Bohemos ad unionem reducere conati, nullam umquam concordiam invenire potuerunt, nisi communionem calicis indulta<sup>9</sup>. Quid ergo totiens frustra instabimus? Cur totiens denegata petemus? Stulte quaeras<sup>10</sup>, quod invenire non speres<sup>11</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> qui F

<sup>2</sup> male temptatur pecunia *in marg.* D; male tentatur quod virtute effici debet *in marg.* G

<sup>3</sup> aurum B, E

<sup>4</sup> ministrabit B, E

<sup>5</sup> absumet F, E

<sup>6</sup> nec D, G

<sup>7</sup> existimant G

<sup>8</sup> melior inveniri : inveniri melior B, E

<sup>9</sup> nisi communionem calicis indulta *in marg.* D

<sup>10</sup> quaeres G

<sup>11</sup> nisi communionem ... speres *omit.* F

### 3.7. Financial subsidies

[36] The seventh group proposes to pay money to the Bohemians, concerning which I just think that it is not good to try to procure with money what ought to be achieved by virtue.

But, still, let us consider this solution: where can you find a treasure great enough to satisfy the voracious appetites of the Bohemians, that unsatiable people? The more you give, the more they will demand. Neither the river Pactolus<sup>1</sup>, nor all *the sands of Tagus*<sup>2</sup>, nor the coast of Arabia will yield as much gold as Bohemia will take. If you give to one, you must give to a thousand. And they will demand payment not only once, but every year. And when you stop, they will return to their former state immediately. So, either you will make the Apostolic See a permanent tributary to the Kingdom of Bohemia, or the reunion with them that you buy will only last for a short time.

### 3.8. New treaties

[37] The eighth and last group thinks that we should go on making new treaties with the Bohemians so that, if possible, better conditions may eventually be obtained. But it is the way of nature that rivers flow from higher places to lower, and it would be easier to make a river flow backwards than withdraw the communion of the chalice from the Bohemians. Two general councils, the Council of Konstanz and the Council of Basel, tried strenuously to do this, but they laboured in vain. The cardinals Nikolaus of San Pietro and Juan of Sant' Angelo, whom I mentioned earlier, as well as many ecclesiastical and secular princes have repeatedly endeavoured to effect a reunion with the Bohemians. But they could only reach agreement if the communion of the chalice was granted. So, why should we insist in vain, again and again? Why should we ask for what is refused, again and again? It is stupid to seek what you cannot hope to find.

---

<sup>1</sup> Pactolus: a river near the Aegean coast of Turkey. In ancient times, it contained electrum that was the basis of the economy of the state of Lydia

<sup>2</sup> The longest river on the Iberian peninsula. In classical poetry, the Tagus was famous for its gold-bearing sands, see Catullus, 29.19; Ovidius: *Amores*, 1.15.34; Juvenalis: *Satirae*, 3.55 and 14.298-299: *non suffecerat aurum, quod Tagus er rutilo volvit Pactolus harena*. See also Smith, p. 48: *That the Pactolus and the Tagus were gold-bearing was a common-place in the classics*

[38] Atque ita ex his octo, quas retulimus, opinionibus, nulla est ad reductionem Bohemorum satis idonea, neque praeferenda<sup>1</sup> tractatui<sup>2</sup>, quem cum gubernatore habitum recensuimus. Utrum autem tractatum<sup>3</sup> ipsum admittere atque amplecti conveniat, sequenti oratione monstrabimus, si modo sufficientia fuerint, quae nos ex prudentibus audita viris explicabimus.

[39] Diximus supra negandam esse Bohemorum petitionem, si ex concessione communionis violatur integritas nostrae fidei<sup>4</sup>. Non est hic lippis oculis aut conniventibus incedendum<sup>5</sup>. Non est Christianus, qui fidei praejudicium infert. Salus nostra in puritate fidei consistit, nihil ex ea mutandum<sup>6</sup>, nihil detrahendum est. Mori satius est quam divinae legi contraire. Custodiendum est summa cum diligentia salvatoris nostri testamentum. Quid ergo? Petemusne quidquam ordinationi divinae et statuto Christi adversum? Stultus est et amens, qui ex tuo solio, beatissime pater, injustum aut<sup>7</sup> impium aliquid optat. *Hortus<sup>8</sup> conclusus est tua sedes et fons signatus*, ex quo nihil potest manare non purum. Decocta sunt et admodum digesta tui pectoris decreta. Obrisum aurum hinc sumitur et *argentum septies defecatum*. Salutaria sunt, et nihil habent immundum, quae abs te prodeunt, oracula.

---

<sup>1</sup> perferenda E

<sup>2</sup> tractaui E

<sup>3</sup> tractum E

<sup>4</sup> nostrae fidei : fidei nostrae B, E

<sup>5</sup> incendendum E

<sup>6</sup> nutandum E

<sup>7</sup> omit. A; aut *suprascr.* C

<sup>8</sup> *em.*; ortus codd.

### 3.9. Conclusion: the eight alternatives will not work

[38] So, of the eight proposals presented here none is suitable for bringing back the Bohemians and none is preferable to the solution negotiated<sup>1</sup> with the regent<sup>2</sup> that we have told You about. Whether it is expedient to approve and accept such an agreement, we shall show in the next part of the oration – if only those arguments that we have heard from wise men and shall now be setting forth are convincing.

## 4. Proposal for an agreement with the Bohemians on communion under both species

### 4.1. Communion under both species not against the doctrine of the Church

[39] We have already said that the Bohemian petition should be denied if the grant of communion<sup>3</sup> violates the integrity of our Faith. Here we should not proceed blindly or with closed eyes. No Christian wants to cause prejudice to the Faith. Our salvation depends on the purity of our Faith, nothing in it must be changed nor subtracted. It is better to die than to oppose Divine Law. The testament of Our Saviour must be safeguarded with all possible care. So what? Do we petition for something that is against divine dispensation or the command of Christ? Only a foolish and insane person, Holy Father, asks for something from your throne that is either unjust or impious. Your See is *a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up*,<sup>4</sup> from where nothing impure can come. The decisions of your heart<sup>5</sup> are mature and well-considered. From there one can only get pure gold and *silver seven times refined*.<sup>6</sup> The pronouncements<sup>7</sup> coming from you are salubrious and have nothing impure.

---

<sup>1</sup> "tractatus". The word may refer to Piccolomini's negotiations with Podiebrad in general, but other uses of the word in this context may indicate that Piccolomini was presenting a proper draft agreement for the pope's approval

<sup>2</sup> Georg Podiebrad

<sup>3</sup> i.e. the communion under both species

<sup>4</sup> Canticle, 4, 12

<sup>5</sup> "pectus"

<sup>6</sup> Psalms, 11, 17

<sup>7</sup> "oracula"

[40] Age igitur: exiguntne Bohemi, quod tuae fidei sit alienum aut apostolicae traditioni contrarium? Minime quidem. Neque enim {75r} divinissimum eucharistiae sacramentum sub specie panis et vini sumentes <sup>1</sup> divinas sanctiones impugnant aut fidei adversantur orthodoxae, si modo ex devotione aut indulto ecclesiae id agunt, sequestrata praecepti necessitate. Quod si crimen hic fuisset haereticae labis, numquam patres illi, et doctissimi et zelo fidei succensi, qui ex omni Christianitate in Basiliensi concilio convenere, hujusmodi communionem indulgissent. Constat autem ex auctoritate illius concilii sub duplici specie concessam communionem fuisse. Non est igitur adversa fidei postulatio, neque enim aut inventor ipse tanti sacramenti Christus dominus aut ejus discipuli <sup>2</sup> communionem hanc prohibuerunt. Immo vero ritus ille et nascentis et proficientis <sup>3</sup> ecclesiae fuit, ut de calice non solum viri, sed mulieres etiam biberent. Quod in hanc usque diem orientalis ecclesia servat, neque tamen propterea de violata fide coarguitur.

---

<sup>1</sup> submentes E

<sup>2</sup> ejus discipuli : discipuli ejus D, G

<sup>3</sup> *corr. from* proficiscentis A, C



[40] So consider this: do the Bohemians demand something that is against your faith and apostolic tradition? Absolutely not. For those who take the sacrament of the Eucharist under the species of bread and wine neither go against divine commands nor orthodox faith, if only they do it out of devotion and with permission from the Church, and do not claim that they are obeying a command from Our Lord. If this form of communion were a heretical crime, then those fathers, learned and filled with the zeal of faith, who assembled from the entire world at the Council of Basel, would never have granted it. It is indeed a fact that communion under both species was granted by the authority of this council. So, demanding it does not go against the Faith, and neither the creator of this great sacrament, Christ Our Lord, nor his disciples forbade this form of communion. Indeed, at the time of the birth and early development of the Church it was the [accepted] rite that not only men, but also women should drink from the chalice. The Eastern Church still observes this rite and is not - for that reason - accused of violating Faith.

[41] Latini vero nitidius Christi sacramenta tractantes et intelligentes, quantus honor<sup>1</sup>, quanta reverentia salvatoris nostri altitonantis et summi Dei filii corpori et sanguini debeatur, et cum<sup>2</sup> quanto timore divinissima illa caro et supercaelestis sanguis tractari conveniat, paulatim ex communione calicis populum subtrahere, veriti, ne sacratissimus sanguis domini in turbas participatus et incautius aliquando tractatus effunderetur in terram. Atque ita successu temporis introductum est<sup>3</sup>, ne quis apud Latinos laicus calicem domini postulare praesumeret. Scit enim Latina ecclesia sub una specie confecto sacramento Christum totum et integrum contineri, neque opus esse ad salutem duplici specie cibari laicos. Sed quis auctor fuerit hujus consuetudinis, et quando introducta sit prohibitio calicis in populo, neque legi hactenus neque audivi<sup>4</sup>. Illud vero manifestum est, quod ante Constantiense concilium neque Romani pontifices neque universales synodi de hac prohibitionem quidquam sanxisse reperiuntur. Veterum autem extant non pauca decreta, quae communionem calicis mandare videntur<sup>5</sup>. In Constantia primum canon promulgatus est eos damnans, qui auctoritate propria a consuetudine patrum recedentes, communicandum sub duplici specie censent. In Basilea vero declaratum ac sancitum est, communionem calicis quoad laicos sub praecepto necessitatis minime cadere; qui secus sapiant, errare, neque tolerandos esse, qui absque permissione<sup>6</sup> ecclesiae ea communione utantur.

---

<sup>1</sup> causa subtracti calicis *in marg.* D, G

<sup>2</sup> *omit.* G

<sup>3</sup> *omit.* F

<sup>4</sup> Non legit quis auctor fuerit *in marg.* D, G

<sup>5</sup> Multa decreta communionem calicis *in marg.* D

<sup>6</sup> promissione C

[41] The Latins, however, treated the sacraments of Christ with greater reverence, understanding how much we should honour and revere the body and blood of Our Saviour, the son of God supreme, who thunders from on high.<sup>1</sup> They also understood that the divine flesh and heavenly<sup>2</sup> blood must be treated with awe. Fearing that the Holy blood would sometimes be treated uncautiously and spilt on the earth when distributed to the masses, they gradually abolished the communion of the chalice for the people. And thus, with the passing of time, it became the normal practice<sup>3</sup> in the Latin [Church] that no layman might presume to demand the chalice of the Lord. For the Latin Church knows that the whole and complete body of Christ is contained in the sacrament administered under one species, and that laymen do not need to take communion under both species in order to be saved. But I have never read nor heard who initiated this custom and when the prohibition of the chalice for the people was introduced.<sup>4</sup>

It is clear, however, that before the Council of Konstanz neither the Roman Pontiffs nor the Universal Synods<sup>5</sup> are found to have authorized this prohibition. And from older times many decrees are extant that appear to mandate the communion of the chalice. It was in Konstanz<sup>6</sup> that, for the first time, a canon was promulgated condemning those who on their own authority disregard the custom of our fathers and claim that communion must be under both species. And in Basel<sup>7</sup> it was declared and decreed that that communion of the chalice is not an obligation based on a divine command. People who believe differently are in error, and those who use this form of communion without the permission of the Church should not be tolerated.

---

<sup>1</sup> Classical epithet of Jupiter, also used by Piccolomini in the oration *"Audiui"*

<sup>2</sup> "supercaelestis"

<sup>3</sup> "introductum est"

<sup>4</sup> Communion under both species was the normal practice in the Church for more than 1.000 years. In the High Middle Ages it gradually gave way to the communion under the species of bread alone. Piccolomini was correct in maintaining that no ecumenical council and no pope had forbidden the communion under both species before the Council of Konstanz, see Smend, p. 29 ff.

<sup>5</sup> i.e. General Council

<sup>6</sup> The Council of Konstanz, 1414-1418

<sup>7</sup> The Council of Basel, 1431-1439

[42] At Bohemi etsi aliquando praedicaverunt sine communione calicis salvari neminem; postea tamen hoc errore dimisso, seu fecte seu vere - neque enim corda hominum possumus introspicere - putantes se aliquid gratiae sub calice recipere, hanc communionem ex auctoritate Romanae sedis expostulant. Quae res licet magna est et rustice magis quam docte {75v} petitur, nihil tamen ab evangelica lege aut apostolica traditione dissentit. Non est igitur, cur timore fidei dissolvere tractatum oporteat. Sed mali fortasse plus quam boni pariet indulta Bohemis communio. Quod si ita fuerit, abnuenda sunt postulata<sup>1</sup>. Intueamur igitur, quid mali quidve boni vel concessio communionis vel negatio secum importet, eamque partem amplectamur, quae plus commodi, minus incommodi videtur afferre.

---

<sup>1</sup> postulanda E

[42] But although the Bohemians at some time preached that nobody can be saved without the communion of the chalice, they have later abandoned this error - whether sincerely or as a pretense (for we cannot look into the hearts of men). Still they believe that they receive some kind of grace with the chalice, and therefore they demand this form of communion [to be granted] by authority of the Roman See. Though the matter is important and their demand primitive and uninformed, it does not go against the law of the Gospel nor apostolic tradition. Therefore, there is no reason to disregard the agreement<sup>1</sup> for fear of violating Faith.

Still, granting this form of communion to the Bohemians may have more bad consequences than good. If this is so, their demands should be denied. So, let us examine the good and bad consequences of granting or refusing this form of communion, and let us accept that solution which brings greater advantages than disadvantages.

---

<sup>1</sup> The agreement with the Regent of Bohemia, Georg Podiebrad, referred to earlier

[43] Si concedimus<sup>1</sup>, quae petuntur, potentissimum populum, amplissimum regnum, ferocissimas Europae gentes ad oboedientiam sanctae Romanae ecclesiae convocamus; discordes inter se Bohemiae plebes unimus; Ladislao regi provinciam quietam reddimus; Theutonibus in circuitu pacem praebemus; militiam fortissimam, quam contra Turcos armare possimus, nobis conciliamus; et - quod rebus omnibus praestat - infinitis animabus paradisi portas aperiemus<sup>2</sup>. Atque hoc potissime quaeritandum censeo, quando nihil est, quod illi maximo atque optimo Deo caelum regenti animarum lucro fiat acceptius. In Bohemia vero ac Moravia difficile dictu est, ne dicam cogitatu, quanta populi multitudo succreverit, quae si petita concedimus, Christo acquiritur; si negamus, Diabolo. Et ajo confidenter ex auctoritate prudentum, quia lucrificiemus in hoc tractatu innumerabiles animas et quae nullo pacto circumscribi valeant plebes. Nam etsi duces populi fortasse<sup>3</sup> fraudulenter agant, multitudo tamen sincera est et ignorantia, non pertinacia peccat. Quae postquam semel didicerit se deceptam et unioni consenserit, cautior in posterum fraudibus obviabit, et bibens, te permittente, de calice fiet aeternae vitae particeps. Parumne hoc cuiquam videri potest, tot populos, quot Bohemia atque Moravia nutrit, lucrificare? Tam numerosis gentibus Christi regnum aperire? Non est argenti aut auri lucrum, sed animarum, quae omne metallum et omnes gemmas antecellunt. Haec sunt bona, pater sancte, quae viri sapientes ex hoc tractatu<sup>4</sup> arbitrantur emergere, magna quidem, et pro quibus Romanus pontifex, omnium Christo credentium rector et pastor, usque ad sanguinem et animam contendere debeat.

---

<sup>1</sup> si concedimus *in marg.* D

<sup>2</sup> aperimus B, E

<sup>3</sup> omit. B, E

<sup>4</sup> tractu G

## 4.2. Arguments in favour of an agreement

[43] If we grant their demands, we bring a powerful people, a large kingdom, and the most warlike peoples of Europe into the obedience of the Holy Roman Church, we unite the divided peoples of Bohemia, we give King Ladislaus a tranquil region, we give the neighbouring peoples peace, we become reconciled with a strongly armed people whom we can mobilize against the Turks. And above all, we open the gates of Paradise to an infinite number of souls, which is what – in my belief – we should strive for most of all, for nothing more pleases the Greatest and Best God, who rules in Heaven, than gaining souls. It is difficult to say or even to imagine, how much the population of Bohemia and Moravia has grown. If we grant their demands, this people will be gained for Christ; if we deny them, it will be gained for the Devil. This I say, confidently and on the authority of the [aformentioned] wise men, that with this agreement we shall benefit countless souls and innumerable peoples. For though the leaders of the people may perhaps be acting deceitfully, the multitude is sincere and sins out of ignorance, not out of defiance. When once they realize that they have been deceived, and agree to a union, they will meet deception more cautiously in the future, and as – with your permission - they drink from the chalice, they will become participants in eternal life. Can anybody think that it is a small thing to benefit the many peoples living in Bohemia and Moravia? To open the Kingdom of Christ to so many peoples? We shall be gaining not gold and silver, but souls which far surpass all metals and jewels.

These are the advantages, Holy Father, that wise men think will result from this agreement. They are certainly great and something for which the Roman Pontiff, the governor and shepherd of all believers in Christ, should strive for with all his might.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> "usque ad sanguinem at animam"

[44] Sed audi modo, quae contra obijciuntur<sup>1</sup>. “Indulsit Basiliense concilium, quae petivere Bohemi. Legatos ad eos misit, pacta cum regno percussit. Quid inde? An non iidem Bohemi<sup>2</sup> sunt, qui ante fuerunt? Et cur nunc magis fidem servabunt? Ficta eorum reditio est et plena fraudis. Quod si aliunde non liquet, hinc patet, quia Rokezanam praesulem quaerunt, hominem ante descriptum. Volunt enim ex duodecim viris, qui ad Pragensem ecclesiam nominandi {76r} sunt, unum hunc esse. Quid ergo? Sane talis erit aliorum nominatio, ut necesse sit illum assumere, si modo minus ineptum recipiendum judicabis. Tunc homo pestilens, propositi victor, cathedram sortitus, quam supra triginta annos ambivit, omnem Bohemiam ad suam sententiam reformabit, neque presbyterum patietur in regno suae sectae<sup>3</sup> contrarium, potenti manu clero et populo imperabit, compactata deridebit, nolentes de calice bibere ab ecclesia separabit, atque in hunc modum apostolica sede prorsus irrita, ad priores insanias regnum Bohemiae revocabit. Quod si eo neglecto alium quemvis Pragensi ecclesiae praefeceris, extra civitatem suam illi manendum<sup>4</sup> erit: pauper, inops exulabit archiepiscopus.

[45] Scimus insuper Bohemorum quammultos errores esse, nec de illis mentionem audimus; et quomodo<sup>5</sup> salvabuntur permissa<sup>6</sup> communione, nisi universam haeresim abdicaverint? Quid de bonis ecclesiarum dicemus, quae isti rapuerunt? Lora haec et cathenae sunt, quibus colla<sup>7</sup> raptorum in aeterna praecipitia trahuntur, nisi restituantur. De restitutione autem verbum nullum. Dulce sapiunt laicis bona nostra; nimis eis abundare videmur. In opes nostras ore aperto inhiant. Quod si pacem Bohemis damus ecclesiastica bona tenentibus, omnium gentium avaritiam adversus ecclesiam provocabimus. Nihil est enim, quod humanae cupiditati majores flammis adjiciat<sup>8</sup>, quam malo exemplo impunita rapacitas. Sit tamen vera reditio, facessat haeresis, nihil obstent ecclesiarum rapinae, quid tum: an communionem indulgebimus?

---

<sup>1</sup> hec contra obijciuntur *in marg.* D; obiecta contra *in marg.* G

<sup>2</sup> legatos ad eos ... Bohemi *omit.* F

<sup>3</sup> sancte E

<sup>4</sup> illi manendum : manendum illi G

<sup>5</sup> et *add.* F

<sup>6</sup> promissa E

<sup>7</sup> *omit.* B, E

<sup>8</sup> adjicias E



### 4.3. Arguments against an agreement

[44] But hear now the objections:

“The Council of Basel granted the Bohemian demands, sent legates to them, and made a pact with the kingdom. And what happened? Did not the Bohemians remain as before? So, why would they better keep faith now? Their surrender was a deceitful sham. This is patently clear if not for other reasons then at least from the fact that they ask for Rokycana as bishop, the man described earlier. For they want him to be one of the twelve men whom they are going to nominate for the Church of Prague. And what [will happen] then? [Surely,] the other nominees will be such<sup>1</sup> that it will be necessary to appoint Rokycana if you consider him to be the least unsuitable. Thus, this terrible man will achieve his aims and be rewarded with a see that he has desired for more than 30 years. He will reform all of Bohemia as he pleases, and he will not tolerate any priest in the kingdom who is against his sect. He will rule the people and the clergy with a strong hand. He will scorn the Compacts. He will expel those who do not want to drink from the chalice from the Church, and when he has thus made the Apostolic See a laughing stock, he will take the Kingdom of Bohemia back to its former mad errors. But if you bypass him and put somebody else in charge of the Church of Prague, then this other man will have to remain outside the city, and he will be a poor and destitute archbishop in exile.

[45] Moreover, we know that the other Bohemian errors are numerous, and we do not hear any mention of them at all. How will they be saved, if they get the desired communion but do not renounce their entire heresy?

And what shall we say about the church properties they have stolen? These properties are like reins and chains around the necks of the robbers that will pull them straight into eternal perdition<sup>2</sup> unless they are returned. But there is not one word about restitution. Our properties smell good to laymen: they think that we have far too many. They are salivating for our properties with open mouths. If we grant peace to the Bohemians holding church properties, we encourage the greed of all peoples for such, for nothing enflames human greed more than the bad example of unpunished rapacity.”

But let us presume that there is a true surrender, that the heresy ends, and that the plunder of churches is no longer an obstacle: should we then grant the desired form of communion?

---

<sup>1</sup> i.e. unsuitable

<sup>2</sup> "praecipitia"

[46] Quibusdam scandalosa concessio videtur, namque si roges Austriales, Baioarios, Francones, Saxones, Slesitas, et quidquid superat Theutonici nominis, dicent omnes uno ore negandum esse, quod Bohemi petunt. “Quomodo,” enim inquier, “communionem calicis permittemus, quae ne per laicos iret, et patres nostros et fratres, et nos ipsos tot maximis atque asperrimis bellis implicuit? Nonne urbes nostras exuri, agros vastari, filios et uxores in servitutem eripi tolerabilius iudicavimus, quam novum communionis ritum in Bohemia permitti?” Cumque his sentient ex Bohemis, quicumque persecutionis saeviente procella Romanam ecclesiam sunt secuti. Turbabitur itaque tota Germania et quasi contumeliam patiatur, apostolicam sedem incusabit, quae post tanti sanguinis effusionem, post amissionem tot illustrium animarum, post rapinas atque incendia, post omnia flagitia, quae bella parturiunt, calicis participium ad plebem transmiserit, quod ante damna fuerat transmittendum. Non videtur igitur, cum tantarum gentium injuria consentiendum esse Bohemis. Huc accedit, quia si ferant Bohemi, quod optant, non deerunt, qui similia quaerant, sive Galli, sive Hispani, sive alii {276v} populi, neque fas erit magnis nominibus denegare, quod Bohemis constabit esse concessum, atque ita duo incidemus mala: alterum quia plus sapuisse Bohemi, quam Romana ecclesia videbuntur, cum illorum sententia manserit, nostra ceciderit. Alterum quia remeabit ad nostros periculum effusionis in sacramento, et parvipensio dominici sanguinis, cujus evitandi causa majores nostri calicem populo subtraxerunt.” Adversus concessionem igitur haec fere dicuntur<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> actenus contra concessionem *in marg.* D; hactenus contra concessionem *in marg.* G

[46] To some this concession will seem scandalous: if you ask the Austrians, the Bavarians, the Franks, the Saxons, the Silesians and all the other Germans, they will say as with one mouth that the Bohemian demands should be rejected: “How can we allow the communion of the chalice,” they will say, “when our fathers, and brothers, and we ourselves fought so many and bitter wars to prevent laymen from having it? Would we not want our cities to burn, our fields to be wasted, our sons and wives to be carried off to slavery rather than allow this new communion rite in Bohemia?” And those Bohemians will agree who remained loyal to the Roman Church during the storm of persecution. Thus, the whole of Germany will be outraged and offended, and it will revile the Apostolic See for granting to that people the communion of the chalice to the people which it was formerly considered harmful to grant – and after so great an effusion of blood, after the loss of so many illustrious men, after the plunderings and fires, and after all the calamities caused by wars. Thus, it is not possible to accommodate the Bohemians without injury to many great peoples.

To this should be added that if the Bohemians get their way, many people will want the same, whether the French the Spanish, or other peoples. And it will not be just to deny these great peoples what had been granted to the Bohemians.

Thus, we shall fall into two evils: firstly, the Bohemians will appear to have been wiser than the Roman Church since it is their position which is victorious whereas ours fails. And secondly, we shall again risk spilling and showing disrespect to the Lord’s blood<sup>1</sup> which was the reason our forefathers took away the chalice from the people.”

This is how the opponents reason.

---

<sup>1</sup> I.e. when administering communion

[47] At qui eam tuentur - ut infra subnectam - respondere solent: Quod neglexere Bohemi, quae Basiliensi concilio promiserunt, inde fuit, quia post compactata mox subortum est in ecclesia Dei grave discidium<sup>1</sup>, cum Eugenius, antecessor tuus, patres in Basilea congregatos damnaret, illi autem Eugenium multifarie persequerentur. Sigismundus imperator, qui turbida regni negotia compositurus erat, rebus excessit humanis. Filibertus synodalis legatus non diu post eum animam exalavit. Albertus Caesar, quamvis attritis regis Poloniae partibus universam paene Bohemiam in potestatem redegerit, prius tamen obiit, quam regnum reformare potuerit. Sub Ladislao diu neglecta pupillaris aetas provinciam inquietam habuit. Principes igitur haeresis, qui Basiliensis concilii leges inviti susceperant, nequitiae suae tempus idoneum nacti, ad priores blasphemias redierunt, errantemque sine pastore gregem<sup>2</sup> in abrupta quaeque devia pepulerunt. Nunc alia regni facies est. Rex adultus<sup>3</sup> et sapiens curiosusque nostrae religionis a Deo datus est. Georgius gubernator, quamvis de calice bibat, vir tamen solidus est, promissi tenax et<sup>4</sup> servantissimus<sup>5</sup> aequi. Optimates reliqui nostrum paene omnes ritum observant. Civitates, etsi calicem sitiunt, sub imperio tamen baronum et regis viventes legem ferent, quam illi dabunt.

[48] Utque de mente regni latius loquamur, quattuor in Bohemia sunt hominum genera: sacerdotes, nobiles, cives et ruricolae. Sacerdotes<sup>6</sup> neque olim optavere concordiam neque modo quaerunt, sunt enim homines ignobiles, obscuro loco nati, neque virtute praediti neque litteris, quamvis argutiolas quasdam ac fallacias nonnullas ex dialecticis didicisse videantur. Quod si componantur res Bohemicae, verentur illud, quod futurum est. Ingredientur enim regnum viri sanguine clari, probitate insignes, ac doctrina praestantes, quibus illi nulla ratione possunt<sup>7</sup> aequari, tumque relinquentur haeretici, et orthodoxi in cultu erunt. Hoc timentes presbyteri Bohemorum, nec olim concordiae<sup>8</sup> manus dedissent, neque hodie darent, si libertas aut fuisset aut esset, quae vellent, agendi. Sed stante concilio Basiliensi populi pacem petentis furorem expavere. Nunc et barones et populum reformidant, si, quae sunt honesta, quovis modo recusent, atque haec quidem sacerdotii mens est perversa quidem et pessima.

---

<sup>1</sup> dissidium D, G

<sup>2</sup> regem F

<sup>3</sup> est *add.* F

<sup>4</sup> *omit.* D, G

<sup>5</sup> ferventissimus E

<sup>6</sup> Sacerdotes *in marg.* D

<sup>7</sup> possint D, G

<sup>8</sup> *omit.* B, E

## **4.4. Refutation of the arguments against an agreement**

### **4.4.1. Actual situation of the kingdom**

[47] But those who are in favour of the concession, usually reply as follows: the Bohemians failed to do what they had promised the Council of Basel because after the [agreement on the] Compacts there arose in God's Church a serious conflict, when Eugenius, your predecessor, condemned the Fathers gathered in Basel, whereas those Fathers molested Eugenius in many ways. Emperor Sigismund, who was about to settle the turbulent affairs of the kingdom, left this world. Philibert, the conciliar legate, gave up the spirit shortly afterwards. Emperor-elect Albrecht had laid waste to parts of the Kingdom of Poland and gotten almost all of Bohemia into his power, but he died before he could reform the kingdom. Ladislaus was ignored during his minority which left the region in a state of turmoil. Therefore, the leaders of the heresy, who had only unwillingly accepted the conditions laid down by the Council of Basel and now had a situation ripe for their evildoings, returned to their blasphemous practices and drove the flock without a pastor headlong into deviance.

But now the situation of the kingdom is quite different. God has given us an adult and wise king who is concerned about our religion. And though Regent Georg drinks from the chalice, he is a solid man who keeps his word and is a staunch defender of justice. Almost all the other nobles observe our rites. And the cities, though eager for the chalice, live under the commands of the barons and the king and will accept whatever law they pass.

[48] And to say something more about the mood in the kingdom, there are four kinds of people in Bohemia: the priests, the nobles, the citizens and the peasants.

The priests have never wanted unity in the past, and they do not desire it now. They are low-born plebeians, without virtues and education, though they seem to have learnt a number of sophisms and tricks of argumentation from logicians. If the affairs of Bohemia are settled, they fear for their future, for then men of noble birth will come to the kingdom, men of great personal integrity and eminent learning with whom they cannot compare at all. Then the heretics will be abandoned, and the orthodox will have the upper hand. Fearing this, the Bohemian priests who never supported unity in the past will not do so today if they can have their way. During the Council of Basel, they feared the anger of the people seeking peace. Now they fear both the barons and the people, if they reject the honest course. So, you see that the mentality of the clergy is wicked and dreadful.

[49] At barones et {77r} optimates longe diversa sententia tenet. Fuerunt enim extra Bohemiam, inspexerunt nitorem nostri cultus, animadverterunt inter nostros et eorum sacerdotes quantum interest; intellexerunt contemptui esse cerimonias suas; puduit eos ineptiarum suarum; utile putaverunt pacem jam tandem cum finitimis nationibus colere vitamque suis vicinis non abhorrentem vivere, ecclesias ornatas habere, sacerdotes honoratos apud se esse, rem divinam non sine apparatu facere. Sed quoniam de calice longo tempore biberant, ac pro eo cum ceteris gentibus saepe ferro<sup>1</sup> contenderant, veriti sunt, ne ritu mutato convicti haeresis viderentur, dicentibus populis eos alioquin salvos fieri non potuisse. Etsi enim non ignorant optimates Bohemiae sacramentum sub una specie plebi sufficere, rumore tamen populi reformidant et murmura vulgi. Sunt namque Bohemi honoris hujus mundani et popularis aurae justo cupidiores, et mortem facilius ferant, quam turpiter egisse quidquam videri velint. Fragiles sunt, ut homines<sup>2</sup> aegroti. Colorem quaerunt, qui apud doctos nullius momenti est, apud ignaros videri aliquid potest. Nostrum est compati fratribus, et imbecillae mentis subvenire fragilitati, si dum eos quaerimus, non amittimus alios.

[50] Civitates autem, etsi tantum de sacramento sentiunt, quantum sacerdotum assidua praedicatione docentur, pacem tamen cum vicinis cupiunt, et unionem recta mente suscipiunt. Quod si semel intelligant haustum calicis non esse plebibus<sup>3</sup> necessarium, suorum sacerdotum hypocrisi<sup>4</sup> perpetuo insectabuntur odio. Ruricolae vero ita circa communionem se habent, quemadmodum eorum domini.

[51] Quod si mentem cujusque Bohemi rimari possimus, inveniemus praeter sacerdotes ad concordiam totum regnum bono animo rectoque vadere. Ceterum cum sacerdotibus in Bohemia nulla reipublicae cura committatur<sup>5</sup>, cives solum inter sese jus dicere possint, agricolae et qui rus incolunt<sup>6</sup> loco servorum habeantur, barones autem cuncta disponant, quis non intelligit admissam semel ex imperio nobilitatis unionem stabilem atque inconstantem esse mansuram? De bello namque, de pace, de legibus, de vectigalibus, de totius regni gubernatione solius regis est cum baronibus dispositio. Non est itaque nunc formidandum, quod prius accidit, ut accepta capitula rescindantur, et sicut Basiliense concilium ita et Romana ecclesia contemptui fiat, quamvis animarum lucrum sub periculo derisionis<sup>7</sup> libentius quaeram, quam jacturam sub spe laudis admittam.

---

<sup>1</sup> fero A, F; ferro *corr.* ex fero C

<sup>2</sup> ut homines : homines ut F

<sup>3</sup> non esse plebibus : plebibus non esse G

<sup>4</sup> hypocrisis A, F, D, G; hypocrisis *corr.* ex hypocrisis C

<sup>5</sup> comitatur B, E

<sup>6</sup> colunt B, E

<sup>7</sup> derisionibus F

[49] But the view of the barons and the nobles is completely different. They have been outside Bohemia. They have seen the splendour of our services. They have noted how great is the difference between our priests and theirs. They have seen how their ceremonies are held in contempt and are ashamed of their boorishness. They want to have peace with the neighbouring nations and a life that is not abhorrent to them. They want ornate churches. They want priests who are esteemed, and a solemn liturgy. But they have been drinking from the chalice for a long time and often fought for it against the other peoples. Therefore, they fear that if their rite is changed, they will be seen as proven heretics and that the other peoples will say they could not be saved otherwise. Although the Bohemian nobles know that the sacrament under one species is enough for the people, they do fear popular rumour and the murmurings of the common people. For the Bohemians are inordinately fond of mundane honour and popularity, and they would rather die than appear to have done something shameful. In that way they are as sensitive as sick persons and they are highly concerned about appearance – something which does not count for much among educated people, but may seem important to ignorant people. But we should have compassion with our brethren and aid their sensitive and the weak mind, so that we do not lose some people while seeking to win over others.

[50] As for people in the cities, they only believe about the sacrament what they are being taught in the assiduous preaching of the priests, but they do want peace with their neighbours and they accept unity in a willing spirit. Once they understand that drinking from the chalice is not necessary for laymen, they will forever hate their priests for their hypocrisy.

The peasants hold the same beliefs about communion as their lords.

[51] If we could probe the mind of all Bohemians, we would find that excepting the priests the whole realm is minded to accept unity. Moreover, in Bohemia, no public charges are entrusted to priests, only the citizens themselves administer the law between them, farmers and peasants are considered as servants, it is the barons who decide everything. Therefore, all will understand that once unity has been established by command of the nobility, it will remain stable and unshaken. For all dispositions concerning war, peace, laws, taxes, and the rule of the whole kingdom belong to the king and the barons alone. Therefore, although it has happened once, we need not now fear that an accepted agreement will be rescinded and that the Roman Church will be scorned, as was the Council of Basel. At any rate I would rather seek the gain of souls at the risk of scorn than accept their loss in the hope of praise.

[52] Quod praeterea de Pragensi pontifice objectum<sup>1</sup> est, a vero longe recedit. Namque si delegerit tua pietas ex duodecim viris, quos illi nominaverint, unum, etiam Rokezana praetermisso, hunc Bohemi archiepiscopum amplectentur. Servabunt enim, quod promittent, decretoque <sup>2</sup> {77v} tuo satisficient. Neque enim Bohemi <sup>3</sup> sunt, qui facile promissa contemnant, graves enim sunt, et dicti sui tenaces. Nam et Theutones, quamvis odio vetusto in Bohemos ardent, hanc tamen his laudem sine contentione concedunt, quia promissionibus suis diligenter intendunt. Atque hoc est, cur Rokezana tantopere in archiepiscopum petitur. Extant<sup>4</sup> enim et baronum et civitatum litterae, quibus Pragensis ecclesia Rokezanae promissa est, quibus et<sup>5</sup> Sigismundus olim, et Albertus post eum, et Ladislaus denique consensum praebuit. Quod si peterentur hodie hujusmodi litterae, non darentur, datas autem infringere non praesumunt. Sed cum<sup>6</sup> neque regis neque populi sit archiepiscopum assumere, ad tuam pietatem recurrunt. Verentur uno tantum nominato apostolicam sedem offendere.

[53] XII nominare proponunt, inter quos, veluti satisfacturi promisso, Rokezanam<sup>7</sup> insertum cupiunt. Neque formidandum est, quod supra<sup>8</sup> suspicari aliquos diximus, omnes scilicet, qui nominabuntur, de communione calicis esse et Rokezana peiores. Est enim communi baronum et civitatum consilio facienda nominatio, quemadmodum mihi regni legati apud Novam Austriae Civitatem affirmarunt. Itaque nominabuntur pariter ex utraque parte, qui videbuntur pontificali culmine digniores. Georgius autem gubernator, cum saepius ex me percontatus esset, an Romanus praesul ad id flecti posset, ut Rokezanam<sup>9</sup> ecclesiae Pragensi<sup>10</sup> praeficeret, egoque<sup>11</sup> multis rationibus id negassem: "Vah<sup>12</sup>," inquit tandem, "non erit Rokezana, qui nobis perpetuo<sup>13</sup> Romanam ecclesiam reddat infestam." De statu quoque archiepiscopi provisurum regnum gubernator asseveravit. Ait enim maximam esse dignitatem illam, neque decorum videri baronibus eorum mendicare pontificem, qui sicut ceteris regibus suum esse aequalem volunt, ita et archiepiscopum regni reliquis pontificibus parem cupiunt, neque enim honoratus videri potest populus, cujus inglorius est praelatus.

---

<sup>1</sup> de Pragensi ... objectum *omit.* F

<sup>2</sup> decretoque : decertoque C

<sup>3</sup> enim Bohemi : Bohemi enim F

<sup>4</sup> extant *corr. from* estant A

<sup>5</sup> *omit.* G

<sup>6</sup> cumque F

<sup>7</sup> Rokezana E

<sup>8</sup> *omit.* G

<sup>9</sup> Rokezana E

<sup>10</sup> Pragensem E

<sup>11</sup> ego quoque G

<sup>12</sup> vel F

<sup>13</sup> *omit.* B, E



#### 4.4.2. Issue of Rokycana

[52] Concerning the archbishop of Prague, their objection is far from the truth. For if Your Piety chooses one among the twelve men nominated by the Bohemians, they will accept him as archbishop even if Rokycana is bypassed: they will keep their promise and comply with your decision. For the Bohemians do not take their promises lightly, being serious people who always keep their word. Even the Germans who have hated the Bohemians intensely for many years unanimously praise them for keeping their promises diligently. And this is actually why they insist on Rokycana for archbishop, for there is a letter from the barons and the cities in which the Church of Prague is promised to Rokycana. This letter was confirmed by Sigismund, later by Albrecht, and finally by Ladislaus. If such a letter was requested today, it would not be issued, but they will not take it upon themselves to go against a letter that has already been issued. But as neither the king nor the people have the right to appoint the archbishop, they are having recourse to Your Holiness, and they will refrain from offending the Apostolic See by nominating one person only.

[53] So they propose to nominate twelve men, and they will insert Rokycana among their nominees as a way of keeping their word to him. And there is no reason to fear what some - as we have said before - suspect, namely that all the nominees will be supporters of the communion of the chalice and worse than Rokycana. For the nomination will be made by the barons and cities jointly, as the legates of the kingdom told me in Neustadt<sup>1</sup> in Austria.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, there will be an equal number of nominees from each party, and they will be men worthy of high episcopal office. The regent, Georg, several times asked me whether the Bishop of Rome could be persuaded to appoint Rokycana to the Church of Prague, and when I had given him many reasons why this was impossible, he said: "Well, then we shall no longer have Rokycana to always poison our relations with the Roman Church."<sup>3</sup> The regent also confirmed that the kingdom would provide for the state of the archbishop. He said that this office is a very great one, and that the barons would consider it unseemly that their archbishop should go begging. For just as they want their king to be the equal of other kings, they want the archbishop of the kingdom to be the equal of other archbishops. And moreover, a people does not seem respectable if the leader of its church is an undistinguished person.

---

<sup>1</sup> Wiener Neustadt

<sup>2</sup> Presumably the regent, Georg Podiebrad, and the chancellor, Prokop von Rabstein

<sup>3</sup> Piccolomini was probably correct in believing that, by this time, the Bohemian leadership was indeed quite aware – and had accepted - that Rome would never accept Rokycana as archbishop of Prague, cf. Heymann: *George*, p. 107-108: ... *It seems obvious that among the people holding the important positions in the country's government no one seriously believed any longer that Rokycana would ever be confirmed by the Curia (quite apart from the fact that the more zealous Catholics, among them the King, did not truly want him, though they did not dare to say so openly)*

[54] Sed quid hic moramur? Non ego meis verbis exigo, si libet amplecti tractatum. Expetantur litterae regis ac baronum et civitatum, si expedire putatur, quibus certa reddatur apostolica sublimitas, ex XII nominandis si unus assumatur, regnum illi pariturum, et usque ad praescribendam<sup>1</sup> aliquam summam de certis redditibus annuis intra praemonstrandum tempus provisurum. Tua vero pietas his polliceatur, quia ex XII nominandis, si modo inter eos idoneus<sup>2</sup> reperietur, unum Pragensi ecclesiae pastorem dabit. Communionem calicis ea conditione indulgebit, ne putent illam quoad laicos necessariam, sed praedicantes talia coerceant, et omnem {78r} haeresim ex regno propulsent. Aut enim ad haec suis litteris sese Bohemi<sup>3</sup> constringent, et implebunt proculdubio, quod promittent, aut recusantes, sinistram ostendent se mentem habuisse, et apostolica sedes in honore manebit, quae tractatus fraude plenos abjecerit.

[55] De reliquis autem erroribus, quibus ajunt Bohemos esse infectos, non intelligo cur magnopere disputemus. Diximus enim supra, ex omnibus articulis errorem sapientibus quattuor dumtaxat Bohemos<sup>4</sup> elegisse, quos in concilio defenderent. Denique vero per compactata tribus rejectis, ad unum tantum se reduxisse de communione calicis, et hunc post multa utrimque dicta ad discussionem concilii remisisse. Quod si volunt hodie Bohemi compactatis locum esse, et integram unionem, quovis errore seposito, volunt, aut enim necesse est Bohemos omnem haeresim abdicare, aut quae percusserunt compactata rescindere.

---

<sup>1</sup> scribendam E

<sup>2</sup> inter eos idoneus : idoneus inter eos G

<sup>3</sup> Bohemum D, G

<sup>4</sup> dumtaxat Bohemos : Bohemos dumtaxat B, E

[54] But why prolong this discussion? The treaty should not be accepted on the strength of my words alone. No, if it seems expedient, we should await the letters from the king and the barons and the cities informing Your Apostolic Highness that the kingdom will obey the one appointed from among the twelve nominees, and that they will, within a specified time, provide a sum<sup>1</sup> from secure annual incomes. On your side, Your Piety should promise them to give a pastor to the Church of Prague if at least one of the twelve nominees is found suitable. The communion of the chalice should be granted them on the conditions that they do not hold it to be necessary for laymen, that they will coerce those men who preach such [error], and finally, that they will cast all heresy out of the kingdom. Either the Bohemians will commit themselves to do this in writing, and then they will certainly fulfil their promises. Or they will decline to do so, thus showing that they have been in bad faith, and then the honour of the Apostolic See will be safeguarded since it rejected a treaty full of deceit.

#### **4.4.3. Other Bohemian errors**

[55] Concerning the other errors with which the Bohemians are reportedly infected, I do not see the need for much discussion, either. We have already mentioned that at the council<sup>2</sup> the Bohemians chose to defend only four of all their erroneous theses<sup>3</sup>. When three of them had been discarded in connection with the Compacts, there was only the one concerning communion of the chalice left, and after much had been said on both sides, this one was referred to the council's discussion. If now the Bohemians want the Compacts to be confirmed<sup>4</sup>, and to renounce all errors, and to have a complete union, they must necessarily abjure all heresy or they must rescind the Compacts that they had agreed to.

---

<sup>1</sup> i.e. they will settle a secure income on the archbishop

<sup>2</sup> i.e. the Council of Basel

<sup>3</sup> "articulis"

<sup>4</sup> "locum esse"

[56] "At vero de bonis ecclesiarum quodnam," inquit aliquis, "responsum dabis? Maximus hic articulus est, et qui regnum perdere possit, nisi restituantur ablata." Viri docti, quos de his rebus ratiocinantes audivimus, aliter sentiunt. Nemo est enim in regno, qui asserat ecclesiarum bona, quae rapta sunt, non debere restitui. Immo vero publice hoc scelus accusatur, quin et occupantes ipsi occulto conscientiae verbere quatiuntur. Sed quia vincit eos avaritia et sunt domi potentes, neque ipsi suapte restituunt, neque restituere compelluntur. Sed quid multitudini, si decem aut viginti praedia sibi ecclesiarum usurpant? Propter decem bonos salvaturus erat dominus Sodomam<sup>1</sup>, et nos propter decem malos Bohemiam perire putabimus? Et nos in civitatibus nostris fures habemus, et praedones, et usurarios, et adulteros, et sacrilegos. *Nulla civitas malorum hominum omnino vacua est.* Non tamen perit proximus ex peccato proximi, cujus non est iste particeps: "*Anima, quae peccaverit, ipsa morietur,*" inquit scriptura. Non est regni universitas, quae res ecclesiarum hodie detinet. Ad privatos quosdam potentes haec bona devenere, quos sine scandalo nequeat regnum ad restitutionem compellere. Non est igitur, cur hac de causa concordiam cum Bohemis devitemus, nam et Basiliense concilium hoc articulo de bonis ecclesiarum sequestrato regnum Bohemiae in unionem accepit. Et nos Ulrico de Rosis, quamvis duorum monasteriorum praedia occupet, quia<sup>2</sup> non defecit ad Hussitas, usque hodie communicamus. Est igitur de hoc articulo seorsum tractatus habendus.

---

<sup>1</sup> *em.*; Sogdomam codd.

<sup>2</sup> qui F

#### 4.4.4. Stolen church properties

[56] "But what will you answer," somebody asks, "concerning the properties of the Church? This is a very important issue, and it may destroy the kingdom if the stolen properties are not given back." The learned men whom we have heard reasoning about these matters think otherwise. Nobody in the kingdom says that the stolen church properties should not be returned. This crime is even denounced publicly, and those who are occupying such properties are secretly suffering pangs of conscience. But they have been overcome by their own greed and are powerful at home, so neither do they make restitution on their own initiative, nor are they forced to do so by others. But why should it affect the large majority of people that ten or twenty persons have appropriated church estates? The Lord would keep Sodom safe for the sake of ten good men.<sup>1</sup> So, do we think that Bohemia should be destroyed because of ten evil men? We, too, have thieves in our cities, and robbers, and usurers, and adulterers, and blasphemers. *No city is completely free of evil people.*<sup>2</sup> But a man should not be destroyed because of the crime of a neighbour in which he has no part. *The soul that sinneth, the same shall die*, says scripture.<sup>3</sup> It is not the kingdom as a whole that holds these church properties today. They have come into the hands of some powerful private persons, and the kingdom cannot force them to return these properties without a great uproar. Therefore, we should not reject union with the Bohemians for this reason. The Council of Basel put that whole issue aside when it received the Kingdom of Bohemia back into the unity of Church. And in spite of the fact that Ulrich of Rosenberg<sup>45</sup> is occupying the estates of two monasteries, we still consider him as a catholic<sup>6</sup> simply because he did not defect to the Hussites.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, this issue should be negotiated separately.

---

<sup>1</sup> Genesis, 18-19

<sup>2</sup> Quote from Leonardo Bruni: *Laudatio Florentiae Urbis* (ca. 1403-1404, recirculated 1434), ch. 51: *Nulla unquam civitas adeo bene morata aut instituta fuerit ut malorum hominum esset omnino vacua*; Pier Candido Decembrio: *De laudibus Urbis Mediolanensis* (1436), p. 1021: *Verum tamen nulla civitas adeo bene morata aut instituta fuerit quae malorum hominum, ut ipse [L. Bruni] professus es, omnino careret*

<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel, 18, 20

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Piccolomini's letter to Cardinal Carvajal of 3 September 1453: *Exinde rex iturus in Bohemiam fertur, coronam suscepturus. Multa de bonis ecclesie restituendis dicuntur, que similia somnio videntur; durum est veteres possessores expellere.* (WO, III, p. 244)

<sup>5</sup> Ulrich II von Rosenberg (1403-1462): Bohemian magnate, one of the leaders of the Catholic party. Governor of Bohemia from 1438 to 1444

<sup>6</sup> "communicamus"

<sup>7</sup> See Heymann: George, p. 17: *Of the leaders of the Catholic magnates, Rosenberg was the greatest, the richest, in some ways the cleverest, and by all odds the most unscrupulous. His changeover from the Hussitism of his adolescent years to sharp antagonism against all Hussite groups had no strong religious foundation. His main motive was the wish for material gains. No other man profited as abundantly and relentlessly from the chance to appropriate the landed estates which the Church had lost as a result of the revolution.* See also p. 27

[57] Et fortasse non est eorum opinio mala, qui relinquendum quemlibet in sua conscientia putant. Redeunt enim homines aliquando ad cor, et stimulis acti conscientiae, si non sani, saltem aegroti cum Deo in rationem veniunt, cumque voluntatis ultimae {78v} sententiam scribunt, complura ecclesiis legata relinquunt. Quod si concordia facta suae conscientiae relinquantur, qui res ecclesiasticas invasere, existimatio non paucorum, neque indoctorum est, brevi tempore ditissimas apud Bohemos ecclesias fieri. Morientibus namque baronibus aliisque divitibus, semper in partem haereditatis ecclesia vel testamenti vel codicilli jure vocabitur. Neque timendum est exinde hoc in alios derivari, neque enim impunita sunt Bohemorum spolia, qui per annos quadraginta et amplius sub anathemate viventes, dum vicinos ipsi vexant, et ab ipsis vexantur, adeo attenuati sunt, ut non modo quae rapuerunt ecclesiis bona, sed patrimonia quoque exhauserint, regnumque illud opulentissimum ad inopiam redegerint. Itaque sequatur audacter Bohemorum vestigia, spoliet ecclesias, fidem abneget quisquis aut ex divite pauper, aut ex paupere miser effici cupit. Atque ita de bonis ecclesiarum ex doctis plerique fabulantur

[57] And, as some people think, it may not be so foolish to leave this matter to the conscience of the persons concerned. For people sometimes come to their senses and are troubled by their conscience: when they come to terms with God (maybe not when they are in good health, but towards the end when they fall ill) and write their last will, they leave many legacies to the churches. If, when unity is established, those who have appropriated church properties are left to their own consciences, many - and knowledgeable - people think that the Bohemian churches will become rich in a very short time. For when the barons and other rich people die, they will always leave some inheritance to the Church through testamentary or other legal disposition.<sup>1</sup> And we need not fear that these properties will then go to other people: indeed, robberies do not go unpunished in Bohemia. For more than 40 years they have lived in a state of excommunication, and while raiding their neighbours and being raided by them in turn they have become so weakened that they have exhausted not only the robbed church properties, but also their own inherited properties, and have brought this very prosperous kingdom to poverty. Therefore, anyone who wishes to become poor instead of rich, or destitute instead of merely poor, should boldly follow in the footsteps of the Bohemians, rob the churches, and reject our Faith.

This is what many learned people say concerning the church properties.

---

<sup>1</sup> "testamenti vel codicilli jure"

[58] Verum quia supra objectum est, si concedatur plebibus in Bohemia participium calicis, Bohemos<sup>1</sup>, qui cum Romana ecclesia manserunt, et omnes Theutones scandalizatum iri, huic quoque parti obviandum est, ne forte credatur illic vulnus esse, ubi jam est obducta cicatrix. Et de Bohemis quidem facilis responsio est, nam et ipsi, quos timemus, cum toto regno consentiunt, et compactata requirunt. At clam aliquis litteras et nuntios ad curiam mittit, magnopereque dissuadet, ne<sup>2</sup> compactata firmentur. Fecit hoc olim Mainardus de Nova Domo et Ulricus de Rosis, quibus discordia frugi fuit. Erant enim alterius factionis principes, et putantes Romanam ecclesiam manus adjutrices praebere, et argenti quantum vellent ministrare, maximas opes cumulare et Bohemiae dominatum adipisci sperabant<sup>3</sup>. Sed nemo est hodie hujus animi. Quinimmo Procopius Cancellarius et alii plerique nostrarum partium barones rogati per me saepius, quinam modi<sup>4</sup> sint ad componendam Bohemiam aptissimi, compactata semper ante oculos habuere, asserentes hanc unam esse viam, quae tandem ad formam aliarum provinciarum Bohemiam redigere possit<sup>5</sup>. Compactata namque solum habentibus usum potionem calicis indulgent, necessitatemque negant.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bohemis E

<sup>2</sup> nec F

<sup>3</sup> sperant F

<sup>4</sup> mundi E

<sup>5</sup> compactata semper ... possit *omit.* F



#### 4.4.5. Reactions of Bohemian catholics

[58] The objection was made that if sharing the chalice is granted to the peoples in Bohemia, those Bohemians who remained loyal to the Roman Church will be scandalized, as will the Germans. We must therefore present our counterarguments on this issue, too, so that nobody will think that the wound is still open where only a scar remains.

As for the Bohemians, the answer is easy, for the very people whose reaction we fear agree with the whole kingdom in demanding the Compacts. [It is true that] some have secretly sent letters and messengers to the Curia to argue strongly against a confirmation of the Compacts. This was done by Meinhard of Neuhaus<sup>1</sup> and Ulrich of Rosenberg who have actually been benefiting from the conflict: as leaders of the other party,<sup>2</sup> they thought that the Roman Church would assist them and provide as much money as they liked, and they hoped to gather large fortunes, and to gain lordship over Bohemia.<sup>3</sup>

But today nobody feels this way and especially not Chancellor Prokop and many other barons on our side. I often asked them about the best ways to settle the Bohemian matter, and they always pointed to the Compacts, claiming that these provide the only way to finally give Bohemia the same status as the other lands.<sup>4</sup> For the Compacts only grant the drinking from the chalice to those who already have this usage while at the same time denying that this practice is necessary.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Heymann: George, p. 17: *The first among the magnates were three men: Ulrich of Rosenberg, Menhart of Hradec, and Ptacek of Pirkstein.* On Menhart see also p. 19

<sup>2</sup> I.e. the catholic party

<sup>3</sup> Heymann: George, p. 18: *Ulrich's main goal thereby was to prevent the establishment of a stable and effective government inside Bohemia which might have limited or stopped the steady aggrandizement of his possessions, his wealth, and his power. It might also, on the basis of a compromise with Rome have returned to the Church at least some of the rich properties acquired by, among many others, the Rosenbergs. It is for this rather than for religious reasons that he regularly warned the Holy See against the any concessions to the Utraquists, especially against the confirmation of the Compacts and of Rokycana's archiepiscopal position*

<sup>4</sup> Heymann: George, p. 7: *No other issue could, in the minds of the Bohemians, compare in importance with the question of the Eucharist*

<sup>5</sup> I.e. by virtue of a precept from Jesus

[59] Quod si regnum ea suscipiat, post quinquaginta annos vix aliquis vivet de calice bibens. Neque timendum est, ne patres imbuant filios, quando id prohibent pactiones, et rex est, qui a calice abstinet, idque fere barones agunt omnes. Populus autem plerumque suos mores ad vitam principis reformat, neque enim sese gratum existimat, nisi domino quam simillimus appareat. Presbyteri vero pro pactionibus praedicare cogentur, plebes praedicata sequentur. Atque ita paulatim et plebes et nobiles {79r} unum in ritu corpus efficientur, salvique omnes fient. Malos autem presbyteros male perdet Deus, quibus in dies morientibus sufficientur<sup>1</sup> alii, qui vias istorum nescient, atque successu temporis tota Bohemia salva fiet. Sic Bohemi sentiunt, qui mecum in hos sermones inciderunt.

[60] Theutones autem, qui vicini<sup>2</sup> Bohemis existunt cumque his crebra bella<sup>3</sup> gesserunt, fatemur invitos audire concessionem calicis. Sed hos odium magis quam ratio ducit. Non intuetur ira, quae caeca est, verum. Oculis omnis inimicitia caret. Non tam grave his videtur, si centum milia pereant<sup>4</sup> animarum, quam si dicatur in populis: "Justi fuerunt Bohemi, quibus relicta communio est; injusti Theutones, qui eam armis prohibere conati sunt." At viri boni non ponunt rumores ante salutem. Vir bonus vel cum suae famae detrimento animam proximi studebit salvam facere. Nicolaus cardinalis sancti Petri, quem saepe ac libenter in medium adduco – est enim pater auctoritate dignissimus – quamvis Theutonici sanguinis est, non tamen hujus communionis causa perdendos esse Bohemos existimat. Intelligit enim vir sapiens communionem concessa non propterea justificari, quae bella gesserunt Bohemi, sed damnari magis.

---

<sup>1</sup> sufficienter A, B, E; sufficientur *corr. from* sufficienter C, F, D

<sup>2</sup> vici E

<sup>3</sup> crebra bella : bella crebra B, E

<sup>4</sup> pareant F

[59] If the kingdom accepts to observe the Compacts, then after 50 years there will be no one left who drinks from the chalice. It need not be feared that fathers pass this practice on to their sons if the agreements forbid it.<sup>1</sup>

The king<sup>2</sup> himself abstains from the chalice as almost all the barons. The majority of the people will change their customs to fit their king's, since people only feel acceptable if they appear to be just like their king. The priests will be forced to preach in favour of the Compacts, and the people will follow their preachings. Thus, gradually the people and the nobles will form one community of rite, and all will be saved. The wicked priests will be destroyed by God, and as they gradually die out, they will be replaced by others who do not know their ways. Thus, in time, all of Bohemia will be saved.

This is what those Bohemians feel with whom I have discussed the matter.

#### **4.4.6. German reactions**

[60] As for the Germans, who are the neighbours of the Bohemians and have often fought against them, they will not be happy to hear that the Bohemians are granted the chalice. But in this they are led by hate rather than by reason: anger is blind and does not see things as they are: enmity is without eyes.<sup>3</sup> So the Germans will consider the loss of 100.000 Bohemian souls as less serious than that people should say: "The Bohemians were right and have now gotten their communion; and the Germans were wrong when they fought to prevent it." But good men do not set reputation above salvation. The good man works to save the soul of his neighbour, even if it hurts his own reputation.

Take Nikolaus, Cardinal of San Pietro,<sup>4</sup> whom I often and gladly refer to, for he is a Father of great authority: though he is a German by blood, he does not think that the Bohemians should perish because of this matter of communion. For as a wise man he understands that the grant of communion does not justify the wars which the Bohemians have conducted, but rather condemns them.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> If Piccolomini really believed this, it is an instance of uncharacteristic naivety on his part. He may, however, have considered that this issue was better left to future negotiations and developments

<sup>2</sup> The young Ladislaus the Posthumous, a staunch catholic

<sup>3</sup> Piccolomini means that the eyes, as a sensory organ, see things objectively and that their function is in itself not influenced by emotions

<sup>4</sup> Nikolaus of Kues

<sup>5</sup> An interesting observation which is probably true since otherwise Piccolomini would not have dared make it at the Papal Court

[61] Non enim idcirco pugnatum est, quia sub utraque specie sacramentum susciperent, sed quia ritum ecclesiae propria temeritate mutaverant et salvari neminem asseverabant, qui non participaret de calice. At cum decretum sit communionem calicis non cadere sub praecepto domini Bohemique loco gratiae ab ecclesia Romana permissionem calicis expetant<sup>1</sup>, nos justos, illos iniquos, nos victores, illos victos, ipsius concordiae tenor ac decretum manifestabit. Quod si secus esset, non Theutones tantum, sed ipsam Romanam ecclesiam, cujus imperio pugnatum est, compactata deturparent. At quamvis abhorrent Alamani – seu Theutones – hujuscemodi concessionem, non tamen irritantur, neque sinistri machinantur aliquid. Intelligunt enim aut pugnandum esse cum Bohemis iterum, aut quem tenent ritum eis permittendum<sup>2</sup>. Et cum malum utrumque reputent, ritum illis indulgendum potius censent, quam cum periculo libertatis et vitae totiens dimicandum. Eam ob causam<sup>3</sup> cum Basiliensis concilii concordia intercessit, murmuraverunt et oblocuti sunt, ut in re assolet nova, Theutones, sed cognita causa et intellecto fructu quieverunt<sup>4</sup>. Idem quoque et nunc facient, verosimile est, neque enim confirmatione pacti male commovebuntur Theutones, quos prima concessione non vidimus irritatos.

[62] Postremo timent nonnulli, ne concesso Bohemis calice reliqua Occidentis regna similem facultatem expostulent. Sed ridiculum est, quod isti formidant, neque enim sibi postulant homines, quod in proximo damnant. {79v} Scientes alii<sup>5</sup> fideles populi sub una specie sacramenti Christum totum et integrum contineri, Bohemos<sup>6</sup> quasi delirantes putavere calicem sibi ministrari petentes, et quomodo ipsi nunc errorem imbuent, quem in aliis damnaverunt? Non sunt reges ac principes nostri tam pauca de se<sup>7</sup> ipsis praesumentes, ut imitari Bohemos quasi magistros velint. In tantum praeterea nostrae gentis imminutum videmus religionis fervorem, ut formidabilius sit plebes nostras utramque sacramenti speciem<sup>8</sup> fugere, quam requirere. Theutones autem et qui vicini sunt regno Bohemiae adeo nomen Bohemicum horrent, adeoque illi genti sunt infesti, ut nedum mala, sed nec bona illorum opera imitari velint. Non est itaque credibile orbis nostri reges aut civitates quovis modo communionem Bohemicam affectare, nisi dexterarum Dei mutatio intercesserit.

---

<sup>1</sup> expectant F

<sup>2</sup> esse cum ... permittendum *omit.* F

<sup>3</sup> cum periculo ... ob causam *omit.* F

<sup>4</sup> et inquieverunt F

<sup>5</sup> alii *corr. from* aliqui A, C, D; aliqui F; *omit.* B, E

<sup>6</sup> *omit.* B, E

<sup>7</sup> *omit.* G

<sup>8</sup> spem F

[61] Indeed, the Germans did not fight because the Bohemians received communion under both species, but because they had dared to change the rites of the Church on their own initiative, and because they claimed that nobody could be saved who did not share the chalice. But since it has been decreed<sup>1</sup> that the communion of the chalice does not fall under the precept of the Lord, and since the Bohemians are [now] asking the Roman Church to allow the chalice as an act of grace, the substance of the agreement and the decree itself will show that we are in the right and they are in the wrong, and that we are the victors and they the vanquished. If it was otherwise, then not only the Germans, but the Roman Church at whose command they fought would revile these Compacts.

Although the Germans (or the Teutons) do not like this concession, they will not be exasperated nor plot any evil. For they understand that either they will have to fight again with the Bohemians, or these will have to be granted the rites they are already using. They will consider either alternative as bad, but they will prefer the Bohemians receiving the grant of communion to having to fight, again and again, at the risk of losing their freedom and life. This is why, when the agreement was made by the Council of Basel, the Germans grumbled and protested, as is often the case when something new occurs, but when they were informed about the matter more thoroughly and understood the advantages, they calmed down. This they will most likely do now, too: the Germans will not be greatly upset by the confirmation of the Compacts just like they were not greatly upset when they were first granted.<sup>2</sup>

#### **4.4.7. Reactions of other nations**

[62] Finally, many fear that if the chalice is granted to the Bohemians, then the other Western kingdoms will ask for the same. What they fear is ridiculous, for men do not wish to have what they condemn in their neighbour. Knowing that the whole and complete [body of] Christ is contained in one species of the sacrament, they thought that the Bohemians were insane when they demanded the chalice to be served to them. So why should they themselves now want to adopt the error they formerly condemned in others? Our kings and princes do not think so little of themselves that they would wish to imitate the Bohemians as if those were their teachers. The religious fervour of our race has decreased so much that it is really more to be feared that our peoples would rather flee communion than demand it under both species!<sup>3</sup>

The Germans and the other neighbours of Bohemia loathe the Bohemian name and resent that people so much that they would imitate neither their bad nor their good deeds! Therefore, it is not believable that the kings and cities of our world would in any way desire the Bohemian communion – unless the right hand of God should intervene.

---

<sup>1</sup> At the Council of Basel

<sup>2</sup> In Basel

<sup>3</sup> On the indifference of laypeople towards communion, see Smend, pp. 38-39

[63] Quod si voluntas spiritus sancti fuerit, neque debemus, neque poterimus resistere. *Heu, nihil invitis fas quemquam fidere divis*, inquit ille. Deus nobis et fidem et ritum cerimoniarum dedit. Quae sunt fidei, non variantur. Quae nunc veritas est, in aeternum veritas erit. *Eloquia domini eloquia casta et argentum examinatum septuplum*. Quod de fide verum est Indis, idem et Hispanis est verum. Cerimoniarum autem et sacrorum solemnium ritus apud diversas gentes diverse reperiuntur, nec nobis<sup>1</sup> divina pietas indicavit, qua magis observatione laetetur, nisi quia credibile est, quae communiora sunt, ea Deo magis accepta esse, neque enim absque nutu divino paulatim crescere et in omnem terram exire ac recipi cerimoniarum observationes possunt, neque nos pertinaces esse decet adversus devotiones hominum, quae non sunt divinae legi contrariae. Quod si contingat ad omnes gentes calicis participium divulgari, putandum erit Dei decretum id esse, cui credere omnes tenemur, neque Bohemia, sed Deus ipse nos superabit<sup>2</sup>, et ipse sibi, quo pacto reverenter et caute ministretur, abunde providebit. Cum ergo fratres nostri Bohemi sint et baptismi nostri participes, quem nos veneramus Christum colentes, compati eorum ignorantiae, non indignari debemus. Tam pro illis quam pro nobis passus est Christus. Quaerenda est omnibus artibus eorum salus. Quod si dominus et Deus noster pro redemptione nostra, ne diaboli mancipium essemus, ex summa caeli arce in terram descendere, carnem assumere, humana incommoda ferre, capi, ligari, caedi, ac demum in ligno crucis cum summa<sup>3</sup> turpitudine mortem subire non recusavit, quonam<sup>4</sup> pacto existimare possumus clementiam ejus Bohemos malle<sup>5</sup> perire, quam suum his sanguinem potandum concedere, quem passim inter homines ecclesiae primitivae distribuit?

---

<sup>1</sup> vobis D, G

<sup>2</sup> *corr. ex* separabit A, C

<sup>3</sup> cum summa : summa cum G

<sup>4</sup> quoniam E

<sup>5</sup> male B, E

## 4.5. Diversity of rites

[63] But if that should turn out to be the will of the Holy Spirit,<sup>1</sup> then we should neither want to nor be able to resist. *Alas, it is wrong for man to rely on the gods for anything against their will!* says [the poet].<sup>2</sup> It is God who has given us the Faith and our rites and ceremonies. What is of the Faith will not change, and what is the Truth now, will always be the Truth. *The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver refined seven times.*<sup>3</sup> What is true Faith for the Indians, is also true Faith for the Spaniards.

But ceremonies and solemn holy rites are found to be different in different peoples, and the Divine Piety has not told us which rites please him most, though it may be assumed that those which are more common are more pleasing to God. For only with divine approval do ritual ceremonies grow and spread to all the world and are accepted by it. It is not for us to oppose those forms of devotion that are not contrary to divine law.

So, should it happen that the sharing of the chalice spreads to other peoples, we must believe that this is God's will. We are all bound to believe in him, and then it will be God himself who overcomes us, not be Bohemia. He himself will largely provide the ways in which he will be served reverently and with due caution.<sup>4</sup>

Since the Bohemians are our brothers and share the baptism that we as Christians revere, we should show compassion and not anger at their ignorance. Christ has suffered both for them and for us, and we should use all means to save them. For us to be saved and not become servants of the Devil, Our Lord and God accepted to descend from the summit of Heaven to Earth, to take on flesh, to suffer the human condition, to be arrested, to be bound, to be scourged, and finally to die horribly on the tree of the cross. So how can we think that he would, in his mercy, rather let the Bohemians perish than grant them the drinking of his blood which he actually gave to the men of the early Church?

---

<sup>1</sup> I.e. that all peoples want the communion under both species

<sup>2</sup> Vergilius: *Aeneis*, 2.402

<sup>3</sup> Psalms, 11, 7: *The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried by the fire, purged from the earth, refined seven times (eloquia Domini eloquia munda argentum igne probatum separatum a terra colatum septuplum)*

<sup>4</sup> The reference to caution addresses the risk of spilling Christ's blood from the chalice that was supposedly the reason for abolishing the communion of the chalice from the laypeople

[64] Haec sunt quae de rebus Bohemicis ex aliorum fontibus hausimus. Non tamen his omnino accedimus, neque enim nostri visus acies tam profunda intueri potest. Nimis *profundae* {80r} *sunt* hae<sup>1</sup> *cogitationes* mihi. Caligant oculi mei, cum solis respiciunt radios. Tuae sanctitatis est haec discernere, tuae sedis est *inter causam et causam, inter sanguinem et sanguinem, inter lepram et lepram dijudicare*. Habes in circuitu sacrum senatum, qui falli non potest. Nihil est quod tuus thronus ignoret. Utrumque reconditum est in tuo pectore testamentum veteris et novae legis. Tu solus interpret<sup>2</sup> habetis, quae Bohemi requirunt. An concessu digna sint<sup>3</sup>, tuae pietati est arbitrari. Nos quantum capimus, tantum sapimus. Sed quia vidimus patres in Basilea residentes, antequam concilium auctoritate apostolica solveretur, genti Bohemiae potum calicis indulsisse, ratione pari et nunc indulgendum opinamur magis quam credimus. Nec nos movent, qui propterea negant cum Bohemis denuo paciscendum, quia priora non sint ab his pacta rite custodita. Habent namque Bohemi multa, quae objiciant, ne fidei fractores videri queant.

[65] Sed ignoscendum est etiam frangenti fidem, dicente ad Petrum domino: "Non tantum septies, sed septuagesies<sup>4</sup> septies peccanti<sup>5</sup> in se fratri remittendum." Admonendi<sup>6</sup> et revocandi sunt cum summa caritate Bohemi tamquam fratres et cohaeredes nostri in regno domini nostri Jesu Christi. Quod<sup>7</sup> si recipiunt admonitiones et in<sup>8</sup> pactis perseverant, lucrati sumus animas fratrum. Si minus, non est pejor nostra conditio quam ante fuit. Nihil nobis perit, immo vero coram<sup>9</sup> justissimo Deo et apud mortales commendabitur tua pietas, quae pro reductione gregis errantis nihil omiserit. Durities illorum probro, tua facilitas laudi dabitur.

---

<sup>1</sup> *em.*; hec A, C, F, D, G; hee B, E

<sup>2</sup> interpretes E

<sup>3</sup> habetis ... digna sint *omit.* E

<sup>4</sup> septuagies B, E

<sup>5</sup> peccati E

<sup>6</sup> amonendi D, G

<sup>7</sup> qui D, G

<sup>8</sup> nec *corr. ex* in F

<sup>9</sup> vero coram : coram vero E



## 5. Conclusion

[64] This is what we have drawn from other sources. We do not agree with them unreservedly, for our sight cannot penetrate so profound a matter. These *thoughts are too deep* for me.<sup>1</sup> My sight grows dim when I look at the rays of the sun.

It is Your Holiness' responsibility to examine this matter, it is the responsibility of your See to judge between *between cause and cause, blood and blood, leprosy and leprosy*.<sup>2</sup> You are surrounded by the Holy Senate<sup>3</sup> that cannot fail. Your throne knows all. In your breast reposes the Testament of the Old and the New Law. You are the only one who may decide upon the Bohemian demands. Only Your Piety may judge whether they merit to be granted.

For our part, we only know as much as we understand. But since we have seen the Fathers in Basel grant the Bohemians the right to drink from the chalice – before the council was dissolved by virtue of apostolic authority<sup>4</sup> – we think, rather than believe that it should be granted to them again and for the same reason. And we are not moved by the arguments of those who refuse to finally come to terms with the Bohemians because they have not observed the earlier agreements properly. For on their side, the Bohemians can bring up many reasons why they should not be considered as having broken their word.

[65] But even if they had broken their word, they should be forgiven, for the Lord said to Peter that a brother who sinned against him should be forgiven *not just seven times, but seventy time seven times*.<sup>5</sup> The Bohemians should be admonished and invited back with great love, as brothers and joint heirs to the kingdom of Our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup>

If they accept our admonishments and observe the agreements, we shall have gained the souls of brothers.

If they do not, then our situation is not worse than before. We lose nothing. But Your Piety will be praised before the just God and among men since you did all you could to bring back the wayward flock. All will scorn their stubbornness and praise your spirit of accommodation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Psalms, 91, 6

<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy, 17, 8: *inter sanguinem et sanguinem, causam et causam, lepram et non lepram*

<sup>3</sup> I.e. the College of Cardinals

<sup>4</sup> In 1438

<sup>5</sup> Matthew, 18, 22: *Then came Peter unto him and said: Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? Jesus saith to him: I say not to thee, till seven times; but till seventy times seven times. (Tunc accedens Petrus ad eum dixit Domine quotiens peccabit in me frater meus et dimittam ei usque septies. Dicit illi Iesus non dico tibi usque septies sed usque septuagies septies)*

<sup>6</sup> Matthew, 8, 17