

*Pro venia plenissima impetranda
ac remedio oportuno implorando:*
**The Renaissance Jubilees from the Perspective of the
Apostolic Penitentiary (1450–1525)**

Pro venia plenissima impetranda ac remedio oportuno implorando.
Jubileusze czasu Renesansu w optyce Penitencjarii Apostolskiej
(1450–1525)

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Abstract: This article examines the registers of supplications addressed to the Apostolic Penitentiary (*Registra Matrimonialium et Diversorum*) to assess the insights they offer regarding the Renaissance Jubilees—the four Holy Years celebrated at 25-year intervals between 1450 and 1525. The first part provides a statistical analysis of the petitions submitted, yielding valuable data on the number, seasonal distribution, and geographical origins of pilgrims. The second part presents a selection of compelling personal narratives drawn from the registers, illustrating the spiritual motivations, vows, hardships, and occasional moral failures of the petitioners. The article concludes with a critical edition of a representative group of these petitions.

Keywords: Apostolic Penitentiary, jubilee, canon law, pilgrimage, Rome

Abstrakt: Artykuł analizuje rejestry prośb kierowanych do Penitencjarii Apostolskiej (*Registra Matrimonialium et Diversorum*) w celu określenia informacji, jakich mogą one dostarczyć odnośnie do jubileuszy czasu renesansu — czterech lat świętych obchodzonych w odstępach 25-letnich w latach 1450–1525. Pierwsza część zawiera analizę statystyczną złożonych prośb, oferując cenny wgląd w ich liczbę, czas złożenia i pochodzenie geograficzne pielgrzymów. Druga część studium przedstawia serię intrygujących historii osobistych zaczerpniętych z rejestrów, ilustrujących duchowo-

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we motywacje, śluby, trudności, a nawet moralne porażki poszczególnych pielgrzymów. W zakończeniu ukazano rozstrzygnięcia owych prośb.

Słowa kluczowe: Penitencjaria Apostolska, jubileusz, prawo kanoniczne, pielgrzymka, Rzym

‘In the later Middle Ages the papal penitentiary was one of the most significant institutions of the central government of the Roman Church.’ With this sentence, Charles Homer Haskins (1870–1937) opened his pioneering study on the sources for the history of the Apostolic Penitentiary.²

The American scholar did not exaggerate. By papal delegation, the Cardinal Penitentiary and his office exercised a wide range of competencies, and their jurisdiction extended to almost every field of canon law. Beginning in the thirteenth century, petitioners from across Christendom turned to the Penitentiary to obtain one of the various forms of apostolic grace—either because they had come into conflict with ecclesiastical law, or because they wished to avoid violating it by the acts they were about to perform.³ Depending on the case, the Penitentiary could grant several types of grace:

- Absolutions in cases reserved to the Pope (e.g. simony, sacrilege, murder, violence against clerics, abortion, bigamy, heresy, apostasy, forgery of documents, commerce with the Turks, etc.);
- Dispensations from matrimonial impediments;

² C.H. Haskins, *The Sources for the History of the Papal Penitentiary*, ‘The American Journal of Theology’ 9 (1905), p. 421. The author continues: ‘Originally simply the means for the administration of penance for the pilgrims and penitents who came to Rome, the office of the penitentiary was greatly extended in the course of the thirteenth century by the various decretals which reserved to the Pope the power of absolution and dispensation in the case of a large number of violations of ecclesiastical law, and thus drew to Rome an ever-growing stream of offenders from every part of Catholic Christendom. To most of these petitions for relief it was quite impossible, and indeed unnecessary, for the Pope to give personal attention; the greater part of his jurisdiction was delegated to various officials, and finally to a cardinal major penitentiary, who had under him various minor penitentiaries, an expert doctor of canon law, and a whole body of clerical subordinates—*procuratores*, *scriptores*, *correctores*, *sigillatores*, *distributores*, etc.—the whole forming by the beginning of the fourteenth century a distinct and well-organized bureau of the papal administration. Down to the year 1569, when it was forced to give up its jurisdiction over the *forum externum* and confine itself to the *forum conscientiae*, this bureau was a very busy body, and it deserves study not only as a branch of the papal government, but also as an influence of the first importance upon the moral life of Europe’ (ibid.).

³ For two recent overviews with further bibliography, see P.D. Clarke, *The Papal Penitentiary in the Later Middle Ages*, in: *A Companion to the History of the Roman Curia*, ed. by D.S. Prudlo, (Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition 107), Leiden–Boston 2025, pp. 175–190; K. Salonen, *The Curia: The Apostolic Penitentiary*, in: *A Companion to the Medieval Papacy*, ed. by K. Sisson, A.A. Larson, (Brill’s Companions to the Christian Tradition 70), Leiden–Boston 2016, pp. 259–275.

- Dispensations from impediments to the reception of holy orders and ecclesiastical benefices (*defectus natalium, defectus etatis, defectus corporis*, etc.);
- Dispensation from irregularities impeding the exercise of the holy orders;
- Licenses for the appointment of a personal confessor (*litterae confessionales*);
- Licenses to undertake a pilgrimage *in partibus infidelium*;
- Commutation or dispensation from vows and oaths;
- For members of religious orders, licenses to leave the convent or transfer to another institute;
- Declaratory letters—official attestations stating, for example, that the petitioner has not committed a canonical offence, or is not a member of a religious order.⁴

Such a broad jurisdiction rendered the Cardinal Penitentiary one of the most influential figures within the Roman Curia. In this regard, the image employed in a memorandum Church reform, dating from 1433 is particularly noteworthy. The document survives among a collection of materials likely compiled during the Council of Basel by Nicholas of Cusa.⁵ The anonymous author refers to the three principal departments of the Roman Curia: the Chancery, the Penitentiary, and the Chamber, respectively headed by the Cardinal Vice Chancellor, the Cardinal Major Penitentiary, and the Cardinal Chamberlain. These three individuals are described as the pillars of the Curia, around whom the entire papal bureaucracy revolves. For this reason, the author asserts, the Pope should appoint to these offices only those whom he considers most suitable and worthy.⁶

⁴ For comprehensive discussions of these types of graces granted by the Apostolic Penitentiary, see, for example, K. Salonen, *The Penitentiary as a Well of Grace in the Late Middle Ages: The Example of the Province of Uppsala 1448–1527*, (Suomalaisen tiedeakatemia toimituksia 313), Helsinki 2001; K. Salonen, L. Schmugge, *A Sip from the 'Well of Grace': Medieval Texts from the Apostolic Penitentiary*, (Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Canon Law 7), Washington D.C. 2009.

⁵ Bernkastel-Kues, St. Nikolaus-Hospital. Bibliothek, Ms. 168, ff. 166–177. For a detailed discussion of the manuscript, see C. Fasolt, *The Manuscripts and Editions of William Durant the Younger's Tractatus de modo generalis concilii celebrandi: Revised*, in: id., *Past Sense: Studies in Medieval and Early Modern European History*, (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions 182), Leiden–Boston 2014, pp. 123–126.

⁶ *Ad que avisatur tria principalia a summo pontifice immediate officia dependere: cancellarie penitenciarie et camere, tribus principalibus officialibus ut columnis curie: vicecancellario, penitenciarario videlicet et camerario, assignari solita, in quorum regimine et voluntate voluitur ipsa curia, qui omnem potestatem asserunt vive vocis oraculo a papa pro tempore sibi factam, ad que officia exercenda tales ordinentur, quales meliores et sanctiores apud papam esse videantur cardinales* (Concilium Basiliense. Studien und Quellen zur Geschichte des Concils von Basel, vol. 8: *Acten, Rechnungen und Protokolle*, hrsg. v. H. Dannenbauer, A. Hartmann, H.G. Wackernagel, G. Pérouse, Basel 1936, p. 85, no. 5).

Various sources illuminate the activity of the Penitentiary in the later Middle Ages. Chief among them are the registers of supplications (*Registra Matrimonialium et Diversorum*), a collection of 163 volumes containing the extant petitions granted by the Penitentiary in the external forum from 1410 to 1569.⁷

For historians, the significance of this source is considerable. The supplications give voice to men and women from all walks of life, including individuals from social groups that are rarely represented in other types of historical documentation. Above all, these records provide a highly original perspective—often rich in unexpected detail—on various aspects of everyday life in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. This is largely due to the nature of the procedure: petitioners were required to include in their supplications all the information necessary to clarify the circumstances of their case, enabling the Penitentiary to make a fully informed judgement and grant the requested pardon.⁸

The following analysis examines the petitions addressed to the Apostolic Penitentiary in order to determine what insights they provide into the Renaissance Jubilees—that is, the four Holy Years celebrated at 25-year intervals between 1450 and 1525. The following registers have been consulted for this study:

- Registers 3 and 4 for the Jubilee of 1450;⁹
- Registers 23 and 24 for the Jubilee of 1475;¹⁰
- Registers 48 and 49 for the Jubilee of 1500;¹¹
- Register 73 for the Jubilee of 1525.¹²

⁷ Studies on the Penitentiary's registers have increased considerably in recent decades. For an introductory overview, see K. Salonen, *La documentazione della Penitenzieria Apostolica nella storiografia*, in: *L'Archivio della Penitenzieria Apostolica. Stato attuale e prospettive future*, a cura di K. Nykiel, U. Taraborrelli, Città del Vaticano 2016, pp. 29–37.

⁸ See, for example, the numerous essays on various aspects of everyday life published by Arnold Esch, including: A. Esch, *Wahre Geschichten aus dem Mittelalter. Kleine Schicksale selbst erzählt in Schreiben an den Papst*, München 2010; id., *Il riflesso della grande storia nelle piccole vite: le suppliche alla Penitenzieria*, in: *Europa e Italia. Studi in onore di Giorgio Chittolini*, Firenze 2011, pp. 181–193; id., *I registri antichi della Penitenzieria Apostolica come fonte della storia sociale ed economica del XV secolo*, in: *La Penitenzieria Apostolica e il suo archivio*, a cura di A. Saraco, Città del Vaticano 2012, pp. 73–85; id., *Die Lebenswelt des europäischen Spätmittelalters. Kleine Schicksale selbst erzählt in Schreiben an den Papst*, München 2014.

⁹ Città del Vaticano, Archivio della Penitenzieria Apostolica [further: APA], Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 3: *De diversis formis* supplications from 1449/02 to 1453/03; APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 4: *Super defectu natalium* and *De uberiori* supplications from 1449/02 to 1455/03.

¹⁰ APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 23: the complete collection of petitions for the period from 1474/08 to 1475/08; APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 24: the complete collection of petitions for period from 1475/08 to 1476/09.

¹¹ APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 48: the complete collection of petitions for the period from 1499/08 to 1500/08; APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 49: the complete collection of petitions for the period from 1500/08 to 1501/08.

¹² APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 73: *De diversis formis* supplications from 1524/11 to 1525/11. No additional entries have survived from the Holy Year of 1525.

1. Indications Regarding the Number of Pilgrims

The analysis of Penitentiary's registers facilitates the acquisition of information concerning both the number of individuals in contact with the Apostolic Penitentiary during the Holy Years and their geographical origin.¹³

A preliminary clarification is, however, necessary. Can all petitioners recorded in the aforementioned registers automatically be automatically identified as pilgrims? The answer is no. Only a minority of entries explicitly state that the petitioner was present in person at the Roman Curia in person to plead their case. In most instances, petitions were presented by professional proctors—individuals specialized in the drafting and submission of supplications—who were commissioned and remunerated for their services.¹⁴

Nevertheless, the overall number of supplications approved by the Penitentiary remains a significant indicator of the intensity of communication with the Roman Curia during the Holy Years. For many pilgrims travelling to Rome, considered the principal source of grace in Christendom—the Jubilee represented a unique opportunity to seek absolutions, dispensations, licenses, or other provisions, either for themselves or on behalf of others. On the basis of the data preserved in the registers, it is therefore possible to make informed assumptions regarding the volume of pilgrimage to Rome during the Renaissance Jubilees. Moreover, while we possess limited information about most individual Jubilee pilgrims, the frequent mention of the petitioners' dioceses in the Penitentiary records allows us to identify their geographical origins with a high degree of precision.

¹³ This section is based primarily on the statistical data presented in L. Schmutge, *Die Jubiläen von 1450 und 1475 im Spiegel des Archivs der Pönitentiarie*, in: *I giubilei nella storia della Chiesa. Atti del Congresso internazionale in collaborazione con l'École Française de Rome sotto il patrocinio del Comitato Centrale per il Giubileo del 2000*, (Pontificio Comitato di Scienze Storiche. Atti e Documenti 10), Città del Vaticano 2001, pp. 359–375, and now reprinted in: A. Esch, L. Schmutge, *Menschen in ihrer Gegenwart. Die Fülle spätmittelalterlichen Lebens im Spiegel der Apostolischen Pönitentiarie*, Online-Schriften des DHI Rom. Neue Reihe Bd. 10, Heidelberg 2024, pp. 173–187, <https://doi.org/10.17885/> [accessed 21 June 2025]. For information on the participation of pilgrims from Poland, see specifically H.D. Wojtyska, *La partecipazione polacca agli Anni Santi del Quattro e Cinquecento*, in: *I giubilei nella storia della Chiesa. Atti del Congresso internazionale in collaborazione con l'École Française de Rome sotto il patrocinio del Comitato Centrale per il Giubileo del 2000*, (Pontificio Comitato di Scienze Storiche. Atti e Documenti 10), Città del Vaticano 2001, pp. 443–465.

¹⁴ L. Schmutge, *I procuratori della Penitenzieria Apostolica: la cerniera fra Roma e le partes*, in: *L'Archivio della Penitenzieria Apostolica. Stato attuale e prospettive future*, a cura di K. Nykiel, U. Taraborrelli, Città del Vaticano 2016, pp. 57–82.

1.1. Number of Pilgrims

According to Ludwig Schmugge, approximately 38,000 supplications concerning illegitimacy (*de defectu natalium*) are recorded in the registers of the Apostolic Penitentiary between 1449 and 1533.¹⁵ These entries involve dispensations requested by individuals born out of wedlock in order to receive holy orders or to be eligible for an ecclesiastical benefices involving the cure of soul (*cura animarum*).

When examining the distribution of these petitions by year, it becomes evident that the number of supplications increases significantly during the Holy Years of 1450, 1475, and 1500, in comparison to adjacent years.¹⁶ These peaks can be reasonably interpreted as reflecting a rise in the number of pilgrims to Rome during these Jubilee years. Moreover, the statistical analysis reveals a noteworthy pattern: the number of petitions submitted by illegitimate children submitted in 1450 (2,139 entries) is approximately double that recorded for the Jubilees of 1475 and 1500 (1,031 and 1,030 entries, respectively).¹⁷

A material examination of the Penitentiary's registers further confirms the large number of petitioners (and, by extension, pilgrims) recorded in 1450. Consider, for example, two pages from register no. 4 relating to *de defectu natalium* dispensations: folio 37v (for the year 1450) and folio 105r (for the year 1453). The entries for 1450 are written in notably hasty handwriting. Only the strictly necessary information is recorded: the name of the petitioner, the status of his parents, and his home diocese. The remainder of the standard formulary is omitted. Additionally, the approval formula (*Fiat de speciali, Dominicus Sancte Crucis*) appears only once in the margin, applying collectively to all dispensations on the page. By contrast, the entries for 1453 are far more regular in appearance: the handwriting is neater, the formulary is more complete, and the approval formula is recorded individually at the end of each entry, as was customary.

The overwhelming number of supplications associated with the Nicholas V's Jubilee of 1450 likely accounts for the abbreviated format and the 'hasty scrawl' in which some entries are rendered—so much so that they are 'virtually incomprehensible in some instances.'¹⁸ The unexpected influx of pilgrims appears to have placed an exceptional burden on the Penitentiary staff.

These considerations therefore support the trend indicated by other sources, which suggest that the highest number of pilgrims was recorded during the Jubi-

¹⁵ Id., *Einleitung*, in: *Illegitimität im Spätmittelalter*, hrsg. v. L. Schmugge, (Schriften des Historischen Kollegs. Kolloquien 29), München 1994, p. 5.

¹⁶ See graph n. 1 in L. Schmugge, *Die Jubiläen...*, p. 182.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ *Supplications from England and Wales in the Registers of the Apostolic Penitentiary 1410–1503*, vol. 1: 1410–1464, ed. by P.D. Clarke, P.N.R. Zutshi, (The Canterbury and York Society 103), Woodbridge 2012, p. xxiii.

lee of 1450, while the subsequent Holy Years saw a lower-than-anticipated level of attendance.¹⁹

Unfortunately, no petitions relating to dispensations for illegitimacy have been preserved for the Jubilee of 1525.

1.2. Seasonal Variation in the Flow of Pilgrims

Contemporary Roman chroniclers noted that the flow of pilgrims during the Holy Years was not uniform throughout the year but fluctuated significantly from month to month. Attendance typically peaked around the Easter celebrations, declined during the summer months—often associated with disease outbreaks and agricultural labour—and increased again in the autumn and toward the close of the Jubilee.²⁰

The registers of the Apostolic Penitentiary corroborate this pattern. In the Holy Years of 1450, 1475, and 1500, the majority of petitioners are recorded during the periods from February to April and from September to November.

¹⁹ Regarding the Jubilee of 1450, see M. Miglio, *Il giubileo di Nicolò V (1450)*, in: *La storia dei giubilei*, vol. 2: 1450–1575, Firenze 1998, pp. 56–73; L. von Pastor, *The History of the Popes, from the Close of the Middle Ages*, vol. 2, ed. by F.I. Antrobus, London 1891, pp. 74–103. Enea Silvio Piccolomini reports approximately 40,000 pilgrims per day in Rome, while the notary Angelo de Tummullillis, a chronicler from southern Italy, records the widely circulated—and likely exaggerated—estimate of three million pilgrims. However, the subsequent Holy Year fell short of expectations, at least in terms of attendance: A. Esch, *Il giubileo di Sisto IV (1475)*, in *La storia dei giubilei*, vol. 2: 1450–1575, Firenze 1998, pp. 119–122. The same can be said of the Jubilee of Alexander VI: the influx was significant, yet it did not reach the numbers recorded in 1450 (see P. Brezzi, *Storia degli Anni Santi. Da Bonifacio VIII al Giubileo del 2000*, Milano 1997, pp. 83–84). According to the chronicles, approximately 200,000 faithful attended the Easter Pontifical (L. von Pastor, *The History of the Popes, from the Close of the Middle Ages*, vol. 6, ed. F.I. Antrobus, London 1901², p. 149). The Holy Year of 1525 was celebrated amid intense friction between the papacy and Martin Luther, who criticized the practice of indulgences as a central issue of the Reformation. Additionally, the political situation, ongoing wars, and plagues contributed to the muted nature of the event, which was observed quietly and attracted far fewer pilgrims than usual (G. Palumbo, *I giubilei del Cinquecento tra Riforma e Controriforma*, in: *La storia dei giubilei*, vol. 2: 1450–1575, Firenze 1998, pp. 198–205; G. Alberigo, *Il giubileo del 1525*, in: *I giubilei. Viaggio e incontro dei pellegrini*, a cura di D. Sterpos, Roma 1975, pp. 57–72).

²⁰ With regard to the Jubilee of 1450, the chronicle of Paolo dello Mastro records the arrival of the first crowd of pilgrims at the opening of the Jubilee in December, and remained steady until January, after which there was a decline. The number of pilgrims increased again at Easter and continued to rise until Ascension Day. From the end of May, attendance sharply decreased, partly due to a severe plague that forced even Pope Nicholas V to leave Rome. Finally, at the end of October, the influx resumed and continued until the close of the Jubilee (see M. Miglio, *Il giubileo...*, p. 57). A similar pattern is observable during the Jubilee of 1475 (A. Esch, *Il giubileo...*, pp. 116–120).

The distribution of the petitions contemporary appears to reflect the rhythms of pilgrimage activity described in contemporary sources.

In contrast, the flow of petitioners in 1525 seems to have been more evenly distributed throughout the year, with the exception of a marked increase in May, coinciding with the Easter celebrations.²¹ This more consistent pattern may be attributable to the fact that, in that year, approximately 84% of petitioners originated from the Mediterranean region—namely France, the Iberian Peninsula, and Italy—while the number of pilgrims from northern Europeans had significantly declined. The relative proximity of these regions to Rome may have facilitated more flexible travel, less constrained by seasonal factors.

1.3. Geographical Origin of Pilgrims

Although little is known about the majority of Jubilee pilgrims, the records of those who submitted petitions to the Apostolic Penitentiary provide valuable data regarding their geographical origins.

For the period 1455–1521, the Penitentiary's registers document over 230,000 petitioners. Their places of origin can be grouped into the following macro-regions:²² 33.4% from Italy; 22% from France; 18.6% from the Iberian Peninsula; 16.8% from the Holy Roman Empire; 6% from the British Isles; 2.3% from Eastern Europe; 0.5% from Northern Europe.

For the Jubilee of 1525, the Penitentiary registers preserve only 2,626 supplications, all recorded under the *De diversis formis* category. Their geographical distribution is as follows:²³ 44.7% from Italy; 25.1% from France; 22.8% from the Iberian Peninsula; 4.1% from the Holy Roman Empire; 1.9% from the British Isles; 1.3% from Eastern Europe; 0.1% from Northern Europe.

Although the surviving documentation is incomplete due to gaps in the registers, it is nevertheless possible to observe a notable shift in the geographic origin of petitioners. In particular, the number of entries from the Holy Roman Empire, the British Isles, Eastern Europe, and Northern Europe declines markedly, amounting to only 7% of the total. This decline can plausibly be attributed to a range of contemporary political and religious disruptions, including the spread of the Lutheran Reformation, the German Peasants' War, and ongoing military conflicts in the Italian peninsula. By the time of the 1525 Jubilee, Rome had effectively lost contact with significant parts of northern and eastern Christendom.

²¹ L. Schmutge, *L'anno santo 1525 visto dalla Penitenzieria*, public lecture delivered in Rome on 22 January 2025. I am grateful to Professor Schmutge for kindly providing me with the text in advance of its publication.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

2. Pilgrim Stories

In this second part, a selection of cases is presented from the registers of the Apostolic Penitentiary concerning men and women who were in some way associated with the celebration of the Jubilee. For this analysis, only those entries in which reference to the Holy Year is made explicitly have been considered.

The starting point of many pilgrimages was the decision to travel to Rome for the Jubilee. In certain instances, this decision stemmed from a vow—namely, a deliberate and freely made promise to God.

One such case involves a woman named Barbara from the diocese of Cambrai, which today lies across parts of northern France and Belgium. As a young girl, Barbara had vowed to make a pilgrimage to Rome should she live to see the Jubilee Year. Nevertheless, when the Holy Year of 1450 arrived, she was seriously ill and petitioned the Penitentiary for release from her obligation.²⁴

The Genoese merchant Daniele Lomellini made a similar vow while residing in Lisbon, where his family maintained a significant trading and banking presence.²⁵ During an outbreak of plague in the city, he vowed that should he be spared from infection, he would undertake a pilgrimage to Rome for the Holy Year of 1450. Although he survived the epidemic, he ultimately failed to fulfil his vow by visiting the tombs of the Apostles. Fourteen years later, he petitioned the Apostolic Penitentiary for absolution from this unfulfilled obligation.²⁶

More complex than the previous examples is the case of Matteo, a priest from the diocese of Cassano all'Jonio in southern Italy.²⁷ At the age of forty-six, he found himself imprisoned—unjustly, in his view. Upon hearing of Bernardine of Siena,²⁸ he addressed the saint with the vow: 'O blessed Bernardine, melt the heart of the tyrant who imprisons me, and I will visit the churches of Rome in this Jubilee Year, travel to the Holy Sepulchre, and become a Friar Minor.' He later added a condition: 'I will do this if I am released within ten days.' As it happened,

²⁴ APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 3, f. 161r (13 Oct. 1450)—see above, Appendix, doc. no. 3.

²⁵ See V. Rau, *Uma família de mercadores italianos em Portugal no século XV: os Lomellini*, 'Revista da Faculdade de Letras' 22 (1956), pp. 56–83 = ead., *A family of Italian merchants in Portugal in the XVth century: the Lomellini*, in: *Studi in onore di Armando Saponi*, vol. 1, Milano 1957, pp. 715–726.

²⁶ APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 13, f. 149v (12 Apr. 1464)—see above, Appendix, doc. no. 8. On the same day, Daniele also received absolution for having sold a certain quantity of wheat to the Saracens (APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 13, f. 149v), and just a few days earlier he had obtained the dissolution of his vow to enter the Carthusians—made for the same reason (salvation from the plague) and also never fulfilled (*ibid.*, f. 150rv).

²⁷ APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 3, f. 254r (26 Oct. 1451)—see above, Appendix, doc. no. 5.

²⁸ The famous Franciscan preacher Bernardino of Siena (1380–1444) was canonized by Nicholas V on 24 May 1450, during the Jubilee Year. See *Il processo di canonizzazione di Bernardino da Siena (1445–1450)*, a cura di L. Pellegrini, (Analecta Franciscana 16), Grottaferrata 2009.

Matteo was indeed released, but not within the timeframe he had stipulated. This raised a question of conscience: was he still bound by the vow? Seeking clarity, Matteo consulted several eminent clerics of his time. The Franciscan preacher Antonio da Bitonto²⁹ advised that he should remain a secular priest, while the renowned Friar Giovanni da Capestrano³⁰ and the prior of the Dominican convent of St Anastasia in Verona, Antonio da San Germano,³¹ counselled him to appeal directly to the Pope to avoid any lingering scruples. In his supplication, Matteo entrusted himself to the paternal charity and benevolence of the Holy Father, noting his frail health and his responsibility for a sister who was poor sister and had eight unmarried daughters. He therefore requested release from this and other previously taken vows in order to continue his ministry as a secular priest. The petition was approved by Cardinal Domenico Capranica with the formula *Fiat de speciali et expresse*, indicating the Pope's direct intervention, and with the condition that the vow be commuted into another work of piety.

Once the decision to undertake the pilgrimage had been made, travellers faced numerous hardships and dangers: from the physical exhaustion caused by long journeys in often uncomfortable conditions to the real threat posed by thieves and bandits. The documents of the Apostolic Penitentiary also bear witness to these challenges.

One such case is that of Beatriz, a hermit who lived with another woman in a suburb of Seville. Although abandoned by her companion, Beatriz renewed her vow to God, the Virgin Mary, and Saint Lucy to remain in her house until death. Later, however, she changed her mind and resolved to travel to Rome for the Jubilee of 1450 in order to seek formal dissolution of her vows, intending to enter a convent if she did not obtain release. Her journey was interrupted in Guadalupe, in the diocese of Toledo, where the physical fatigue proved overwhelming. Unable to continue to Rome, she chose instead to remain there and devote herself to God in a secluded house, away from worldly distractions.³²

Another example is that of Filippa, a sixty-year-old Benedictine nun from Ivrea in northern Italy. With the permission of her abbess, she travelled to Rome and successfully obtain the indulgences associated with the Jubilee of 1450. However, although she expressed a desire to return to her convent, her advanced

²⁹ R. Pratesi, *Antonio da Bitonto*, in: *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 3, Roma 1961, p. 539.

³⁰ Giovanni da Capestrano (1386–1456), canonized by Pope Alexander VIII in 1690, is a well-known figure throughout Europe. For a first introduction, see H. Angiolini, *Giovanni da Capestrano*, in: *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 55, Roma 2001, pp. 744–759.

³¹ See G. Barone, *Della Chiesa, Antonio*, in: *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 36, Roma 1988, pp. 740–742, for information on Antonio da San Germano (born Antonio Della Chiesa, 1394–1459), whose cult as a blessed was recognised by Pius VII in 1819.

³² APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 3, 358v–358^{bis}r (27 Feb. 1453)—see above, Appendix, doc. no. 6.

age and the fatigue of the journey ultimately prevented her from making the return trip, and she remained in Rome.³³

In addition to the physical hardships of the journey, the greatest danger faced by pilgrims was the threat of brigandage.³⁴ The registers of the Apostolic Penitentiary include numerous petitions from individuals who had attacked pilgrims and later sought absolution from the Holy See.

One such case concerns a certain Georgius Vretscheperdt, a citizen of Marburg and castellan in the territory of Salzburg. During the Jubilee of 1475, he received absolution for having plundered several pilgrims, including a priest, and for having participated with accomplices in the drowning of an enemy who was travelling under imperial safe conduct.³⁵

Similarly, Bartholomeus Hileker, also from Salzburg, confessed to acts of violence against several pilgrims, including members of the clergy. According to his own account, these actions were committed under the influence of his mistress.³⁶

Particularly unfortunate was a priest from Würzburg, Iohannes Prerosz, who was serving as a chaplain in Bohemia. Intending to visit the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul in Rome, he arranged for two laymen to accompany him on for safety, *quia in illis partibus peregrinorum depredatores reperiuntur* ('because in those regions, robbers of pilgrims are found'). Believing he could trust his companions—who were also his spiritual charges—he embarked on the journey. However, even before their departure, while dining in the house of another priest, a violent quarrel broke out between the two laymen. The dispute escalated rapidly: first to insults, then to the drawing of knives, and finally to the fatal stabbing of one man by the other. Iohannes, in attempting to intervene and restore peace, accidentally wounded one of the men with his own knife. For this reason, he later sought and was granted an official declaration of innocence, ensuring that he would not incur any canonical irregularity or excommunication as a result of the incident.³⁷

After enduring a long and perilous journey, the pilgrims ultimately reached Rome—the *Urbs sancta*—where they could fulfil their devotions, visit the an-

³³ APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 5, 35v–36r (16 Apr. 1455)—see above, Appendix, doc. no. 7.

³⁴ In preparation for the Jubilee of 1475, Pope Sixtus IV sent letters to several Italian states urging them to ensure the maintenance and safety of the roads. In the Papal States, he ordered the roads leading to Rome be inspected and widened to improve security, particularly where they passed through wooded areas, including the removal of undergrowth that could conceal brigands—A. Esch, *Il giubileo...*, p. 108.

³⁵ APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 23, 133r (5 May 1475)—see above, Appendix, doc. no. 9.

³⁶ APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 3, 113v (5 Mar. 1450)—see above, Appendix, doc. no. 1.

³⁷ APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 48, 680rv (16 Jun. 1500)—see above, Appendix, doc. no. 10.

cient basilicas, venerate the countless relics, and thereby obtain the indulgences promised for the Jubilee.

An extraordinary episode illustrates the profound devotion of medieval pilgrims to the holy sites of Rome and to objects associated with them, often treated as relics. The protagonist is a squire from Mainz, Macteus Mactei, who, in an excess of piety, committed an act of sacrilege. During the Jubilee of 1450, he did not hesitate to remove part of the iron gates from the Basilicas of St Peter and St Paul, presumably intending to take the pieces as devotional souvenirs. He was subsequently granted absolution for the sacrilegious theft but on the condition that he return what he had unlawfully taken.³⁸ This episode finds a parallel in the account of the Florentine merchant Giovanni di Paolo Rucellai, who, describing the opening of the Holy Door at Christmas 1449, observed: ‘...et è tanta la divozione che le persone àno ne’ mattoni e calcinacci, che subito come è smurata, a furia di popolo sono portati via, et gli oltramontani se ne gli portavano a casa come relliquie sancte’ (‘...and such is the devotion that people have for the bricks and rubble, that as soon as the wall is broken, they are immediately seized in a rush by the crowd, and the ultramontanes take them home as holy relics’).³⁹

Especially during the Jubilee, Rome was regarded as the natural destinations for those seeking to make peace with their conscience and to be reconciled with God and the Church in relation to serious sins or transgressions. A particularly striking expression of this intention appears in the petition of a former Dominican friar from Zaragoza. Having abandoned the religious habit and left his convent, he spent six years living a secular life before professing anew among the Canons Regular of St Augustine. Moved by repentance, he travelled to Rome for the Jubilee of 1500 in order to obtain full pardon for his actions. As the petition states, he *ad Romanam curiam pro huius sacri iubilaei anno venia plenissima impetranda ac remedio super premissis oportuno implorando se contulit* (‘set out for the Roman Curia during this holy Jubilee year to obtain full pardon and to seek an appropriate remedy for the aforementioned matters’).⁴⁰

The poignant story of a French offers a compelling example of the many instances of spiritual ‘return’ that took place in Rome.⁴¹ Jean Basin, a Benedictine monk from Saint-Éloi de Noyon in northern France, had for some time maintained a sexual relationship with a woman whom he kept as a concubine. Aware that his superiors were likely to uncover the affair, he devised a pretext. Feigning the intention to travel to Rome to obtain the indulgences associated with the Jubilee of 1450, he easily secured permission from his abbot to leave the monastery. Rather than

³⁸ APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 3, 146r (3 Apr. 1450)—see above, Appendix, doc. no. 2.

³⁹ M. Miglio, *Il giubileo...*, p. 66.

⁴⁰ APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 49, 336v–337r (22 Dec. 1500)—see above, Appendix, doc. no. 11.

⁴¹ APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 3, 244v (16 Aug. 1451)—see above, Appendix, doc. no. 4.

undertaking a pilgrimage, however, he absconded with the woman, convincing her that, far from their homeland, he would treat her as his lawful wife. He lived with her for some time—according to the petition, she later died of natural causes—concealing his monastic identity by wearing his habit beneath secular clothing, and supporting himself by working as a glazier! Eventually, however, he experienced remorse and returned to his monastic community. In a twist of irony, the prior of the monastery ordered him to make a penitential pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul, which he duly completed. Once in Rome, he petitioned for absolution for apostasy, fornication, concubinage, and violation of his vow of chastity. Furthermore, as he no longer wished to return to his former monastery—where he had become the object of scorn and hostility among his fellow monks—he requested to be transferred to another house of the same or stricter observance. Cardinal Domenico Capranica granted the request and, in light of the petitioner’s poverty and ill health, remitted any associated fees.

The story of Jean Basin inevitably recalls the parable of the prodigal son recounted in the Gospel of Luke (Lk 15:11–32). In Rome, at the See of St Peter, following a prolonged period of estrangement, he obtained forgiveness for his sins, absolution from ecclesiastical censures, and the spiritual graces necessary to live out the remainder of his life *cum sui animi quiete et sana conscientia* (‘with peace of mind and a sound conscience’). A similar experience of mercy was shared by countless pilgrims during the Holy Years, as well as by the thousands of faithful whose supplications are preserved in the archives of the Apostolic Penitentiary.

It is in this shared pursuit of reconciliation that the close relationship between the institution of the Jubilee and the Apostolic Penitentiary becomes evident. The establishment of a permanent curial office *in quo morum censura et animarum salus praecipue vertitur*⁴² (‘in which the correction of morals and the salvation of souls is chiefly concerned’)—namely, the Penitentiary—and the institution of the solemn plenary indulgence of the Jubilee represent two of the principal means devised by the Roman Pontiffs to promote the reconciliation of the faithful with their infinitely merciful Father.

Appendix

The following section provides the editions of the documents referenced above.

In accordance with the formulary style of the Apostolic Penitentiary, the supplications were formally addressed to the Pope, although they were in fact appro-

⁴² Leo X, Bull *Pastoralis officii* (13 Dec. 1513), in: *Bullarum diplomatum et privilegiorum sanctorum Romanorum pontificum. Taurinensis editio*, vol. 5, Augustae Taurinorum 1860, p. 579, § 14.

ved and signed by the Cardinal Penitentiary or, in his absence, by his deputy, the *Regens Poenitentiariae*.

Below is the list of officials who subscribed to the supplications considered in this study:

- Domenico Capranica (1400–1458), Cardinal Priest of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme and Major Penitentiary from 1449 until his death;⁴³
- Bernardo Erolì (1409–1479), Bishop of Spoleto and Regent of the Penitentiary;⁴⁴
- Filippo Calandrini (1403–1476), Cardinal Priest of San Lorenzo in Lucina and Major Penitentiary from 1468 until his death;⁴⁵
- Antonio Maria Parentucelli (died 1485), Bishop of Luni-Sarzana and Regent of the Penitentiary;⁴⁶
- Giuliano Maffei, or Mattei (1434–1510), Bishop of Bertinoro and Regent of the Penitentiary from 1477 to 1503.⁴⁷

In document no. 2, the petitioner is referred for absolution to the minor penitentiary Nicholas de Alexandria, while in document no. 9, Domenico Jacovacci appears ad *auditor Poenitentiariae*.⁴⁸

⁴³ A.A. Strnad, *Capranica, Domenico*, in: *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 19, Roma 1976, pp. 147–153; F. Tamburini, *Per la storia dei Cardinali Penitenzieri Maggiori e dell'Archivio della Penitenzieria Apostolica. Il trattato De antiquitate Cardinalis Poenitentiarii Maioris di G.B. Coccino (†1641)*, 'Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia' 36 (1982), pp. 370–371; *Le suppliche alla Sacra Penitenzieria Apostolica provenienti dalla diocesi di Como (1438–1484)*, a cura di P. Ostinelli, (Materiali di storia ecclesiastica lombarda [secoli XIV–XVI] 5), Milano 2003, p. 62.

⁴⁴ A. Esposito, *Erolì (Erulì), Berardo*, in: *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 43, Roma 1993, pp. 228–232; *Repertorium Poenitentiariae Germanicum. Verzeichnis der in den Supplikenregistern der Pönitentiaria vorkommenden Personen, Kirchen und Orte des Deutschen Reiches* [further: RPG], Bd. 2: *Nikolaus V. (1447–1455)*, hrsg. v. L. Schmugge et alii, Tübingen 1999, p. xvii.

⁴⁵ F. Luzzati Laganà, *Calandrini, Filippo*, in: *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 16, Roma 1973, pp. 452–453; RPG, Bd. 5: *Paul II. 1464–1471*, hrsg. v. L. Schmugge et alii, Tübingen 2002, p. xviii; RPG, Bd. 6/1: *Sixtus IV. 1471–1484*, hrsg. v. L. Schmugge et alii, Tübingen 2005, p. xxv; A. Manfredi, *La Penitenzieria Apostolica nel Quattrocento attraverso i Cardinali Penitenzieri e le bolle dei Giubilei*, in: *La Penitenzieria Apostolica e il Sacramento della Penitenza. Percorsi storici-giuridici-teologici e prospettive pastorali*, a cura di M. Sodi, J. Ickx, (Monumenta Studia Instrumenta Liturgica 55), Città del Vaticano 2009, pp. 63–87.

⁴⁶ RPG, Bd. 6/1, p. xxvi; *Le suppliche...*, p. 67; A. Manfredi, *La Penitenzieria...*, p. 86.

⁴⁷ M. Ceresa, *Maffei, Giuliano (Giuliano da Volterra)*, in: *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 67, Roma 2006, pp. 235–237; *Le suppliche...*, pp. 67–68 fn. 81.

⁴⁸ R. Becker, *Jacovacci, Domenico*, in: *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 62, Roma 2004, pp. 111–116; RPG, Bd. 8/1: *Alexander VI. 1492–1503*, hrsg. v. L. Schmugge, A. Mosciatti, Berlin–Boston 2012, p. xxiii.

1.

Rome, 5 March 1450.

Bartholomeus Hileker, a layman from the diocese of Salzburg, obtained absolution for having wounded several pilgrims traveling to Rome, including clergymen, allegedly at the instigation of his mistress.

APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 3, 113v.

Ed. in: RPG, Bd. 2, p. 25, no. 230.

Rome, III non. martii anno 3 [Nicolai pape v^{ti}].

Absolutio pro Bartholomeo Hileker, Salzburgensis diocesis, quia de mandato sue domine cum aliis complicibus peregrinos verberavit romipetas, inter quos fuerunt ecclesiastice persone. Fiat de speciali, Dominicus Sancte Crucis.

2.

Rome, 3 April 1450.

Macteus Mactei, a squire from the diocese of Mainz, obtained absolution for having removed part of the iron gates from the Basilicas of St Peter and St Paul. The absolution was granted on the condition that he return the objects unlawfully taken.

APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 3, 146r.

Ed. in: RPG, Bd. 2, p. 35, no. 362.

Rome, III non. aprilis anno quarto [Nicolai pape v^{ti}].

Absolutio pro Macteus Mactei, Maguntine diocesis, armigero sacrilego, quia abstulit de Sancto Petro et Paulo de Urbe quodam cancellatum ferri, cum dispositione restituendi. Fiat de speciali et expresso, Dominicus Sancte Crucis. Et committatur Nicholao de Alexandria. Fiat, Dominicus Sancte Crucis.

3.

Rome, 13 October 1450.

Barbara, the wife of Johannes Husmans from the diocese of Cambrai, had vowed in her youth to undertake a pilgrimage to Rome should she live to see the Jubilee of 1450. As she is now afflicted by illness, she petitions to be released from this obligation.

APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 3, 161r.

Rome, III id. octobris anno III^{to} [Nicolai pape v^{ti}].

Exponit devota vestra Barbara uxor Iohannis Husmans, Cameracensis diocesis, quod ipsa olim, sue iuventutis tempore promisit sic, scilicet quod si supervivere possit usque ad iubileum annum visitare personaliter limina apostolorum Petri et Pauli, sed iam infirmitate gravata suum desiderium in hac parte adimplere non potest. Supplicat igitur misericorditer ut ipsam super huiusmodi votum absolvi de gratia speciali.

4.

[Rome], 16 August [1451].

Jean Basin, a Benedictine monk from the abbey of Saint-Éloi in Noyon, obtained permission from his abbot to travel to Rome for the Jubilee. However, he seized the opportunity to flee with his concubine, to whom he had promised marriage. For a time, he lived in the secular world, concealing his monastic habit beneath lay clothing, and earning his livelihood as a glazier. Following the woman's death, Jean returned to his monastery and sought absolution from the abbot, who imposed upon him a penitential pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul. Now in Rome, he petitions for absolution from excommunication and other related offences. Furthermore, as he does not wish to return to his monastery—where he is the object of hatred among his brethren—he requests a transfer to another monastic house of equal or stricter observance. Cardinal Penitentiary Domenico Capranica grants the petition and remits the associated fees, in view of the petitioner's poverty and ill health.

APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 3, 244v.

Ed. in: L. Schmutge, *Der falsche Pilger*, in: *Fälschungen im Mittelalter. Internationaler Kongreß der Monumenta Germaniae Historica, München, 16.–19. September 1986*, vol. 5: *Fingierte Briefe — Frömmigkeit und Fälschung — Realienfälschungen*, (Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Schriften 33/5), Hannover 1988, pp. 482–483 no. I.

[Rome], xvii kl. septembris [anno quarto Nicolai pape v^{ti}].

Beatissime pater, exponit sanctitati vestre devotus orator vester frater Iohannes Basin, presbiter monachus expresse professus monasterii Sancti Eligii Noviomensis ordinis Sancti Benedicti, quod postquam ipse olim contra votum castitatis ardore libidinis accensus quandam mulierem solutam actu fornicario pluries carnaliter cognoverat ac cum ipsa propterea per aliquot tempus eam quasi in suam concubinam tenendo conversatus fuerat, tandem videns idem exponens quod hoc eciam apud suos maiores iam divulgatum esset et quod ipse voluntatem suam adimplere et in peccato huiusmodi perseverare commode non poterat sicut voluisset, promisit dicte mulieri quod si ipsa secum ex patriam <sic> ire vellet quod ipsam gubernaret et tanquam uxorem legitimam tractaret, et ut commodius hoc absque scandala <sic> facere posset, fingens se anno iubileo ultimo preterito almam Urbem et illius ecclesias ordinatas pro indulgentiis dicti anni iubilei acquirendis visitare velle, super hoc abbate dicti monasterii superiore suo licentiam petiit et obtinuit, quam licentiam dictus abbas sibi libenter concessit credens quod ipse prout affirmabat pro indulgentiis huiusmodi dictam Urbem visitare vellet ut prefertur; sed exponens ipse, tunc sue salutis amemor et de propria salute non recogitans, non ad ipsam Urbem venit, sed cum dicta muliere ad partes alienas descensit et cum ea in concubinam per aliquot tempus et donec ipsa, sicut Domino placuit, morte naturali defuncta est stetit et permansit, habitum religionis non in aperto sed in occulto et subtus alias vestes suas ne videretur et pro mona-

cho cognosceretur deferendo et fenestras vitrias interim pro victu sub acquirendo, operando et faciendo. Cum autem, pater sancte, dictus exponens tandem postmodum fit ad cor Domino faciente reversus et de hiis dolens ab intimis ad ovileque redire cupiens, ad monasterium predictum pro absolutione a suo superiore super premissis impetranda et obtinenda reversus fuisset et a suo abbate predicto absolutionem huiusmodi humiliter postulasset, idem abbas super hoc eum ad priorem claustralem ibidem remisit, qui quidem prior sibi iniunxit quod pro penitentia peragenda limina apostolorum Petri et Pauli loco anni iubilei visitaret, quod et fecit idem exponens et modo in dicta Urbe presens extitit. Supplicat igitur sanctitati vestre humiliter ipse exponens quatenus anime sue saluti in premissis oportune providendo ipsum a sententia excommunicationis et reatu apostasie, si quam propterea incurrit, necnon a fornicatione et concubinato predictis et ipsius voti transgressione et effractione ac peccatis suis aliis absolvi mandare et secum super irregularitate, si quam exinde contraxit, dispensare. Et nichilominus cum ipse exponens propter premissa ab aliquibus aliis monachis dicti monasterii in odium et derisionem habeatur et propterea cum eis in dicto monasterio absque scandalo ac cum sui animi quiete et para <recte sana> conscientia remanere ulterius non valeat, sibi ipse de dicto monasterio ad alium monasterium eiusdem ordinis paris vel acrioris observancie regularis, in quo benivolos invenerit receptores, se transferre et in eo sub illius regulari habitu perpetuo Altissimo familiari <recte famulari> libere et licite valeat concedere et indulgere misericorditer dignemini, ipsum ab observanciis dicti monasterii Sancti Eligii propterea penitus absolvendo de gratia speciali. Dominicus Sancte Crucis Ierusalem.

Et cum dictus exponens pauper sit et pro victu sibi acquirendo hostiam mendicare cogatur propter graves infirmitates quas in vitium veniendo passus est, quod littere super premissis conficiende gratis pro Deo ubique expediantur. Fiat si iurat, Dominicus Sancte Crucis Ierusalem.

5.

Rome, 26 October 1451.

Matteo, a priest from the diocese of Cassano all'Jonio, found himself in prison at the age of 46. In his distress, he made a vow to Saint Bernardine, declaring that if he were released within ten days, he would undertake a pilgrimage to Rome during the Jubilee Year, continue on to the Holy Sepulchre, and enter the Order of Friars Minor. Although he was eventually released, it was not within the ten-day period he had stipulated. Consequently, he was uncertain whether he remained bound by the vow. In seeking clarity, Matteo consulted several respected clerics. Friar Antonio da Bitonto advised that he should remain a secular priest. However, Friar Giovanni da Capestrano and Friar Antonio da San Germano, the Prior of the Dominican Convent of St Anastasia in Verona, both prudently recommended that he appeal directly to the Pope to resolve any doubts of conscience. The petitioner

therefore submitted his case to the Holy Father, explaining his poor health and his responsibility for a sister who was destitute and had eight unmarried daughters. He requested to be released from this and other previously made vows. Cardinal Domenico Capranica approved the petition, stipulating that the vow be commuted to another pious work.

APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 3, 254r.

Ed. in: F. Tamburini, *Santi e peccatori. Confessioni e suppliche dai Registri della Penitenzieria dell'Archivio Segreto Vaticano (1451-1586)*, Milano 1995, pp. 116-118 no. 2.

Rome, vii kl. novembris anno quinto [Nicolai pape v^{ti}].

Beatissime pater, sicut plerumque captivis et in angustia constitutis consuevit accidere, humilis et devotus orator vester Matheus, presbiter Cassaurensis <recte Cassanensis> diocesis, iam in 46 etatis anno etc. cum captivus post diversa penarum genera licet iniuste detineretur et de vita et statu suo secum una tractaret, statuit in mente comodo in posterum victurum quo tres venerabiles et religiose persone bone vite et regularis observantie disponderent eorumque consilio et deliberationi se penitus subicere si libertati quiete redderetur, et post hec licet plura vota emisisset tandem audito celebri nomine sancti Bernardini devotione motus protulit hec verba: 'O beate Bernardine, mitiga cor istius tyranni qui me detinet captivatum et visitabo alme Urbis ecclesias presenti anno iubilei et tuum sepulchrum efficiarque frater observantie regularis ordinis fratrum minorum', ac post aliquot dies addidit: 'si infra decem dierum spatium tuis meritis et intercessione liberari merear, ad premissa tenebor et aliter non'. Cum autem, pater sancte, idem exponens infra x dies libertati restitutus non fuerit et a nonnullis asseratur votum seu vota huiusmodi non tenere, ab aliis vero sanctitatis vestre iudicium intuendum, ea propter humiliter recurrit ad pedes eiusdem sanctitatis idem exponens quatenus suis statui et saluti paterna caritate et benivolentia consulentes quod magis sibi expediat de ipso statuere misericorditer dignemini de gratia speciali. Attento, pater sancte, quod frater Antonius de Bitonto magnus predicator ordinis memorati sibi respondit auditis premissis ut remaneret presbiter secularis, frater Iohannes de Capristano et prior monasterii Sancti Anastacii <recte Sancte Anastacie> Veronensis ordinis fratrum predicatorum eum ad sanctitatem vestram ad evitandum scrupulum conscientiae remiserunt, tam pro eisdem quam aliis per ipsum tempore iuventutis infirmitate oppressus emissis votis, videlicet quod efficeretur heremita si ab ea qua detinebatur egritudine curaretur seu canonicus regularis; et quoniam, pater sancte, idem Matheus infirmus est et sororem habet pauperem octo filiabus nubilibus oneratam, cuperet secum pro exoneratis conscientie quod in statu presbiteri secularis posset remanere ex causis premissis per sanctitatem vestram misericorditer dispensari de gratia speciali, mandatis litterarum loco presentis petitionis sibi sufficere absque illarum confectione. Fiat de speciali et expresso et quod in alia opera pietatis etc., Dominicus Sancte Crucis Ierusalem.

6.

Rome, 27 February 1453.

Beatriz de Subilia, a hermit who lived with another woman in a suburb of Seville, renewed her vow to God, the Virgin Mary, and Saint Lucy to remain in her house until death after her companion departed. However, she subsequently changed her mind and resolved to travel to Rome for the Jubilee of 1450 in order to seek a dispensation from her vows. Upon reaching Guadalupe, in the Diocese of Toledo, she became so physically exhausted from the journey that she was unable to proceed further. She therefore chose to remain there in a house that would allow her to live a secluded life dedicated to God. In light of this, she petitions that the monastic prior of Saint Mary of Guadalupe be authorised to hear her confession absolve her from the violation of her vow, and declare that she is no longer obliged to return to her former residence.

APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 3, 358v–358^{bis}r.

Rome, III^o kl. martii anno sexto [Nicolai pape v^{ti}].

Beatrice de Subilia muliere. Quod cum alias ipsa et alia mulier eius consotia essent incluse in domo quadam in loco de Triana suburbio civitatis Yspalensis vitam anachoriticam ducentes, dicta consotia nescitur quo spiritu ducta pistabat et suadebat eidem exponenti ut exiret de dicta domo et locum illum desereret; quod quidem ipsa exponens, credens illud sue saluti non expedire, facere neglexit, ymmo ut improbam instantiam et molestias dicte consotie declinaret, ante quoddam altare ubi sacrosancta Eucharistia manebat fecit votum Deo ac beate Marie virgini sancteque Lucie se semper manere in predicta domo ibique mori, eciam si multos labores se in eadem domo subire contingeret. Verum postmodum mutato proposito de dicta domo exivit et in anno transacti iubilei Romani ut absolucionem voti huiusmodi ab sanctissimo domino nostro papa obtineret usque Romam iter arripuit, cum intentione et proposito videlicet quod si forsan propter labores vel forsan aliam causam iter huiusmodi adimplere non posset, de intrando aliquod monasterium ubi stricte Domino posset servire. Quod quidem iter continuando pervenit ad locum de Guadalupe, Toletane diocesis, ubi adeo fracta et attrita labore itineris se sensit quod ad ultra procedendum vires ei defecerunt et deliberavit in dicto opido Guadalupe manere ac Deo militare et servire in quadam domo secrestata a mundi implicacionibus, ex qua quidem domo cum licentia cuiusdam patris sui spiritualis et confessoris exit. Quare priori monasterii Beate Marie de Guadalupe ordinis Sancti Ieronimi petit conmitti, qui eius confessione audita ipsam exponentem a transgressione voti huiusmodi ac proposito predicto poterit absolvere secumque dispensare, quamque domi predictae ubi vitam anachoriticam primo ducebat minime obligatur etiam si propter propositum huiusmodi aliquod monasterium ingredi forsan tenetur declarari. Fiat ut infra, Dominicus Sancte Crucis Jerusalem. Signetur per fiat de speciali de absolucione et conmutatione, Bernardus Spoletanus.

7.

[Rome], 16 April 1455.

Philippa Philippi Pilimat, a Benedictine nun from the Diocese of Ivrea, travelled to Rome with the permission of her abbess to visit the tombs of the Apostles and obtain the indulgences associated with the Jubilee of 1450. However, due to her advanced age (being sixty years old) and the fatigue caused by the journey, she was unable to return to her monastery as intended. Lacking further permission, she remained for a year in a hermitage, after which she returned to Rome, where she continues to reside. She is said to lead an honourable life, attending church regularly. She now petitions for absolution from any excommunication and from the charge of apostasy, should she have incurred such censures.

APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 5, 35v–36r.

[Rome], xvi kl. maii anno primo [Calixti pape iii].

Exponit sanctitati vestre soror Philippa Philippi Pilimat monialis expresse professa monasterii *de lo Monte* ordinis Sancti Benedicti Yporegiensis diocesis quod ipsa, que saxagenaria vel circa sue etatis extitit, i[a]m maximo devotionis fervore accensa, anno iubiley elapso de licentia sue abbatisse ad almam Urbem et limina beatorum Petri et Pauli apostolorum venit visitavitque ut indulgentiis omnibus que in Romana curia erant consequeretur; postremo, volens [i]re ad dictum monasterium suum, non potuit attingere propter labores et antiquitatem; ideo stetit in aliquo heremitorio absque tamen licentia sue abbatisse per annum et ultra, laudabiliter tamen; postmodum venit ad huc absque licentia sed magna devotione ad limina beatorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli, et ibidem remansit usque ad presentem diem, singulo die eundo ad ecclesias devotionis causa, minime vero propter alicuius monitionem dubita [*recte* dubitando] excommunicationis sententiam et apostasiam incurrisse, et cum animum eundi ad monasterium suum habeat. Supplicat igitur sanctitati vestre dicta exponens quatenus ipsam ab excommunicationis sententia et apostasia huiusmodi, si incurrerit, ac omnibus aliis suis peccatis etc. absolvere sive absolvi mandare dignemini ut in forma. Fiat in forma, Dominicus Sancte Crucis. Et gratis pro Deo.

8.

Petriolo, 12 April 1464.

Daniele Lomellini, a Genoese citizen living in Lisbon, vowed to undertake a pilgrimage to Rome for the Jubilee of 1450 if he survived an outbreak of plague afflicting the city. Having failed to fulfil this vow, he petitions for absolution from the transgression of that promise. His petition is ultimately granted by Cardinal Filippo Calandrini, subject to the condition that he pays a composition to the Datary.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ For further analysis on this clause, see L. Schmugge, 'Et componat cum datario.' *Norma e prassi*, in: *Penitenza e penitenzieria tra Umanesimo e Rinascimento. Dottrine e prassi dal Tre-*

APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 13, 149v.

Petreoli, Senensis diocesis, 11 id. aprilis [anno sexto Pii pape Secundi].

Item idem [*i.e.* Daniel Lomelinus, civis Ianuensis *as in the preceding entry*], dum in civitate Ulixbonensis moram traheret et pestis inibi vigeret, vovit quod si ab eadem persevereretur anno iubilei Romam visitaret, quod deinde minime fecit. Quare petit absolvi a transgressione huiusmodi voti. Fiat de speciali et expresso in utroque casu et componat cum datario, Philippus Sancti Laurentii in Lucina.

9.

Rome, 5 May 1475.

Georgius Vretscheperdt, a Marburg citizen and castellan in the service of a local lord in the Diocese of Salzburg, was responsible for plundering several pilgrims traveling to Rome, including a priest. He also participated in the drowning of an enemy, despite the latter being under imperial safe conduct. He petitions for absolution from the excommunications incurred as a result of these actions.

APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 23, 133r.

Ed. in: RPG, Bd. 6/1, p. 318, no. 2510.

Rome, 111 non. maii anno 4° domini Sixti pape Quarti.

Georgius Vretscheperdt civis Marpurgensis Saltzeburgensis diocesis olim, cum esset castaldus cuiusdam domini temporalis dicte diocesis, unacum certis complicitibus suis quendam laicum inimicum suum tunc salvumconductum ab imperatore habentem in huiusmodi salvoconducto cepit et in aqua submersit, necnon quosdam romipetas, inter quos unus presbiter erat, cepit ac rebus et bonis suis quas secum habebant spoliavit. Quatenus ipsum a sententiis et censuris quas propter premissa incurrit absolvi mandare dignemini. Fiat de speciali, Antonius episcopus Lunensis regens.

10.

Rome, 16 June 1500.

Iohannes Prerosz, a priest from the Diocese of Würzburg serving as a chaplain in Bohemia, resolved to undertake a pilgrimage to the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul in Rome. For reasons of safety, he arranged for two laymen—his spiritual charges—to accompany him. However, before their departure, a violent altercation erupted between the two while they were dining at another priest's house. The conflict escalated from verbal insults to physical violence, culminating in one of the laymen fatally stabbing the other. In an attempt to intervene and restore peace, Iohannes knife drew his knife and inadvertently inflicted a minor

cento agli inizi dell'Età moderna (1300–1517), a cura di A. Manfredi, R. Rusconi, M. Sodi, (Monumenta studia instrumenta liturgica 75), Città del Vaticano 2014, pp. 139–150.

wound on one of the men. He therefore petitions for an official declaration of innocence with regard to the killing, and that he may continue to exercise his ministry within his order without impediment.

APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 48, 680rv.

Ed. in: RPG, Bd. 8/1, pp. 558–559, no. 3434.

Rome, xvi kl. iulii anno octavo domini Alexandri pape vi.

Iohannes Prerosz, presbiter Herbipolensis diocesis, exponit quod cum de partibus Bohemie, in quibus per nonnullos annos capellanus servivit, iter arripuisset ad Romanam curiam visitaturus limina apostolorum secumque pro ipsius securitate duos socios conduxisset, quia in illis partibus peregrinorum depredatores reperiuntur, amboque socii ipsius oratoris filii spirituales forent quia eos in confessione audiverat, accessitque simul cum illis ad habitationem eiusdem [*recte* cuiusdam] sacerdotis sibi noti causa secum hospitandi, contigit quod sumpta cena isti duo socii sui ambo laici ad invicem post verba altercatoria ad manus devenerunt et unus de illis alterum cum quodam cultello graviter vulneravit, qui vulneratus clamans rogavit socium vulnerantem ne illum vellet interficere, dictus vero vulneratus [*recte* vulnerans] non desistebat dictum eius socium vulnerare; quod videns, dictus orator surrexit non causa aliquem ex eis offendendi vel defendendi sed inter illos potius pacem ponendi, et videns quod illos aliter separare non posset, quendam parvum cultellum suum extraxit non animo vulnerandi et cum illo percussit illum socium qui alium socium prius vulneraverat cum aliquali sanguinis effusione, ut credit, licet sanguinem exire non viderit, quod quidem vulnus letale minime fuit; postquam ille socius sic a presbitero vulneratus magis exorsit in iram et iterum rixare cepit cum alio socio ab ipso primitus vulnerato, qui socius primo loco vulneratus cum quodam cultello sive ense dictum alium socium a quo prius vulneratus fuerat octo vulneribus et ultra percussit, ex quibus vulneribus seu percussionibus dicta die sicut Domino placuit ex hac vita migravit. Cum autem dictus orator in morte dicti defuncti aliter quam ut premictitur culpabilis non fuerit et de ipsius morte ab intimis doluerit prout dolet de presenti et vulnus predictum per dictum oratorem illatum letale minime fuerit ut prefertur cupiatque dictus orator in suis ordinibus et altaris ministerio ministrare, a nonnullis tamen simplicibus et iuris ignaris et ipsius oratoris forsitan emulis asseritur dictum oratorem propter premissa homicidii reatum incurrisse ac irregularitatis et inhabilitatis notam seu infamiam [*recte* infamie] maculam contraxisse et propterea in suis susceptis ordinibus non posse, ad ora igitur etc. obstruenda supplicat sanctitati vestre dictus exponens quatenus eundem oratorem propter premissa nullum homicidii reatum incurrisse nullamque irregularitatem contraxisse et propterea in suis susceptis ordinibus etiam in altaris ministerio ministrare posse nullamque inhabilitatis notam sive infamie | maculam contraxisse ac quecumque beneficia ecclesiastica sibi in futurum conferenda libere et licite retinere posse declarari

mandare dignemini prout in forma. Fiat ut infra, Iulianus episcopus Brictonorien-sis regens.

Et committatur episcopo Pragensi vel eius vicario, in cuius diocesi delictum hoc perpetratum fuit. Fiat, Iulianus.

Videat eam dominum Dominicus de Iacobatiis, Iulianus.

Committatur ordinario ut vocatis vocandis constito de assertis declaret ut petitur.

11.

Rome, 22 December 1500.

Bartolomé Gilabert, having previously professed as a Dominican friar, subsequently abandoned the religious habit and left the convent. After six years spent living in a secular world, he entered the Order of Canons Regular of St Augustine in Zaragoza and made a new religious profession, without disclosing his earlier affiliation with the Dominicans. Later, he received permission from his abbot to travel to Rome for the Jubilee. He now petitions for absolution from the excommunication incurred due to apostasy and other transgressions, as well as a dispensation for any canonical irregularity, so that he may lawfully remain in the Order of Canons Regular of St Augustine.

APA, Reg. Matrim. et Divers. 49, 336v–337r.

Rome, xi kl. ianuarii anno nono domini Alexandri pape vi.

Frater Bartholomeus Gilabert, professus monasterii Sancte Marie de Montefort ordinis Sancti Augustini canonicorum regularium Cesaraugustensis diocesis, exponit quod postquam alias ipse non posset cum sui animi quiete et sana conscientia in ordine Predicatorum in quo prius professus extiterat permanere, habitu et ordine huiusmodi derelictis ad seculum est reversus, in quo postquam per sex annos vel circa dampnabiliter evagaverat ad cor Domino faciente reversus et cupiens sub regulari habitu virtutum Domino famulari, ad dictum monasterium Beate Marie de Montefort in habitu seculari se contulit et inibi, tacito quod huiusmodi ordinis predicatorum professor extiteret, habitum per fratres dicti monasterii gestari solitum ac [*recte a*] manibus cuiusdam abbatis assumpsit ac professionem emisit, in quo quidem monasterio postquam per aliquot menses permanserat illius superioris licentia obtenta ad Romanam curiam pro huius sacri iubilei anno venia plenissima impetranda ac remedio super premissis oportuno implorando se contulit, in qua residenti [*recte residet*] de presenti. Cum autem, pater sancte, ipse exponens dubitet mutationem habitus ac professionis emissionem viribus non subsistere et ipsum propterea excommunicationis incurrisse sententiam in tales generaliter promulgatam ac quia sic ligatus missas et alia divina officia celebravit irregularitatem contraxisse, idemque exponens animum suum ad redditum dicti ordinis predicatorum propter premissa nullatenus inclinare possit cupiatque in monasterio predicto, ad quod et illius ordinem singularem gerit devotionis affec-

tum, remanere, supplicat etc. quatenus ipsum a dicta sententia apostasie et reatu et huiusmodi excessibus absolvi, demum cum eo super irregularitate ex premissis contracta, quodque premissis non obstantibus in predicto seu quocumque alio monasterio dicti ordinis Sancti Augustini canonicorum regularium huiusmodi remanere libere et licite possit dispensari, omnemque inhabilitatis maculam sive irregularitatis notam ex premissis insurgentem circa eum penitus aboleri misericorditer mandare dignemini, non obstantibus constitutionibus et ordinibus apostolicis ac ordinis predicatorum huiusmodi consuetudinibus et statutis ceterisque contrariis quibuscumque de gratia speciali et expresse. Fiat de speciali et expresse, Iulianus episcopus Brictonoriensis regens.

Et committatur episcopo Asculano ad presens in Romana curia residenti. Fiat, Iulianus.

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