

2 Market Attractiveness

2.1 From the High Middle Ages to the Council of Constance

2.1.1. Papal Revenue

The Curia's need for a money transfer from the south across the Alps was limited to the Curia's payments to the legates and nuncios sent to those regions so that they could pay for their travelling expenses in Germany. In several instances, subsidies were also sent to rulers in the north fighting wars against nonbelievers. For the bankers, these payments never reached a volume large enough to make them significant in the evaluation of the attractiveness of German-Italian monetary transactions.

It was only the flow of money from Germany to the Curia that was of interest to the Italian bankers. The first moneys that came into papal hands were coins carried across the Alps by pilgrims and put into offertory boxes in Rome. These *oblations* could amount to significant sums, especially in jubilee years.¹⁴² Such revenue, however, by no means sufficed to cover the financial needs of the popes when, in the eleventh century, they began to play a larger part in worldly politics. The conflicts with the Staufers, the Crusades, and the territorial expansion and security of the Papal States consumed vast sums of money. Additional funds were needed for the expansion of the civil service and the court household at the – increasingly universally aligned – Curia in Avignon.¹⁴³ The income realized from taxes, custom duties, and other levies of the parishes and estates of the Papal States was insufficient.¹⁴⁴ Undoubtedly, Church money was also misused and squandered through inappropriate management.¹⁴⁵ To cover the growing expenses, a permanent process began in order to open up new sources of income from the whole of Catholic Christendom. The central strategical idea was to systematically draw on the universal Church to pay for the needs of the papacy.¹⁴⁶ Thus, a complex Curial fiscal system of taxes, levies, and duties came to be that led to an extensive flow of money from Germany to the Holy See.¹⁴⁷

142 Johrendt (2018), p. 90.

143 Feine (1964), p. 346.

144 See Gottlob (1892); Schneider (1899); Renouard (1941); Denzel (1991), pp. 30–31 and 84–121; Cassandro (1994a). – There is extensive literature on the levies that clerics and laymen throughout the Catholic world paid over to the Holy See. Therefore, a detailed depiction of their forms and history is not necessary here, and only what is relevant to the money from Germany in the fifteenth century will be described briefly. Lunt (1909); Lunt (1934); Lunt (1962).

145 Plöchl (1962) pp. 377–378.

146 Bauer (1928), p. 473; Dendorfer (2018).

147 On the taxes accrued to the Curia, see Woker (1878); Mayr-Adlwang (1896); Feine (1964), pp. 347–348; Liermann (1976–2007); Ganzer (1979), p. 215. Denzel (1991) gives a detailed survey of papal finances in the fourteenth century.

Peter's Pence (*denarii S. Petri*) were arguably the earliest levy that could be claimed on the basis of legally secured demands outside of the Papal States. These contributions could be enforced on the basis of feudal law in England, Poland, Hungary, and in the Scandinavian countries from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries. In the Holy Roman Empire, however, this payment was never made, so that, in the following remarks, the income from Peter's Pence will only play a role for Scandinavia, Poland, and the territories of the Teutonic Order. Erich Maschke has estimated that the total amount handed over for 150 years by the provinces Kulmerland and Pomerelia – for which the Order made this payment nearly without interruption from 1330 on – was 8,000 silver marks.¹⁴⁸ Between 1318 and 1356, Sweden sent around 7,000 marks of Swedish pence to the Curia.¹⁴⁹ Adolf Gottlob, however, points out that the payments from Scandinavia were of no consequence for the Apostolic Chamber.¹⁵⁰ Revenues resulting from the *Jus Spolii* were also of minor significance for the papal treasury. This is the share claimed by the Curia of the moveable property of deceased clerics on benefices reserved for the popes.

In the last decades of the twelfth century, the Curia was able to take an important step toward the alleviation of their financial distress by establishing a papal tithe on the revenue of the clerics of the Catholic Church.¹⁵¹ At first these moneys were tendered only for the costs of the Crusades. Under Gregory IX (1227–41), they were freed from this specific earmarking, and, after 1298, also levied in general *pro necessitate ecclesiae*. The collection of these moneys in the thirteenth century benefited from a greater willingness on the part of those obliged to pay, who were under the impression that the *Orbis christianus* and the holy sites were under threat. At the time, the papal tithes were the most important source of revenue of the Curial financial administration outside of the Papal States. They are estimated to have been three times the amount of the resources available to the French king.¹⁵² In the two-year period from 1302 to 1303, approximately 60,000 ducats came to Rome from the western German dioceses as tithe revenue; admittedly, this was only 4.38 per cent of the total tithe revenue.¹⁵³ In a first phase, the indulgences were nearly without exception connected to the Crusades. However, at the latest when the general plenary indulgence was decreed by Boniface VIII on the occasion of the jubilee year 1300, this earmark was revoked, and it became part of canon law through the

148 Sprandel (1975), pp. 100–101; Maschke (1979), pp. 176, 279, and 288, et al.

149 Brilioth (1915), tables 1–6.

150 Gottlob (1889), p. 216.

151 For detailed accounts, see Spittler (1827); Hennig (1909); Denzel (1995b); Johrendt/Müller (2012), p. 39. See also Roberg (1980–1999), column 1942; Plöchl (1962), p. 381. – In the literature, the development of the papal financial system has so far been largely focused on the exile in Avignon. Markus Denzel emphasizes the importance of the financial achievements of the popes of the thirteenth century, where he sees the central setting of the course for later changes in the papal financial administration. See Denzel (2018), p. 132.

152 Gottlob (1892); Plöchl (1962), pp. 378–379; Feine (1964), p. 348; Bysted (2015). Denzel (2018), p. 134, describes the tendering of the papal tithe by Innocent III in 1199 “as the first Crusade tax”.

153 Denzel (2018), p. 146.

papal bull *Unigenitus Dei Filius* in 1343. Soon afterward the sale of letters of indulgence began, which could be purchased for the salvation of the deceased as well.¹⁵⁴

Under the pontificate of Clement V (1305–14), the importance of the papal tithe declined significantly, because the resistance of rulers and bishops against this drain of resources in the ecclesiastical provinces grew stronger and stronger.¹⁵⁵ The Curia, therefore, had to acquire other sources of revenue. The benefices, which were at the pope's disposal without a consistory, offered an opportunity. For the provision of low benefices, which were allocated in the chancery or in the pope's secret chamber and were worth at least 24 cameral florins, the beneficiary had a gift sent to the Curia, whence a liability arose. The appointment was connected to a fee that came to, as a rule, half of the first year's proceeds (*fructus medii anni* or *fructus primi anni*).¹⁵⁶ Money also flowed into the papal treasury from the revenue for the uncanonical possession of a benefice (*fructus male percepti*).¹⁵⁷ Such an *annate* was documented for the first time in 1306, when Clement V encumbered all of the benefices in England that were free or would become free with this levy.¹⁵⁸ The revenue from this source became an important component of the Curial budget during the pontificate of John XXII (1316–34).¹⁵⁹

If, according to canonical law, the confirmation of the election of a bishop or an abbot was dependent on the consent of the pope, the candidate first had to pay an involuntary donation. This involuntary donation was changed into a largely fixed obligatory levy in the fourteenth century.¹⁶⁰ As the pope and the cardinals held these confirmations in common in a consistory, this levy was named *servitium commune*. The servitia amounted to a one-time payment of one third of a year's income if it was more than f. 100.¹⁶¹ The pope received half of this payment, and the other half was divided up between the attendant cardinals. Furthermore, there were the *servitia minuta*, which had to be paid to the lower Curial officials by those confirmed or commissioned. The latter also received the consecration servitia for the episcopal consecration or the benediction of the abbot.¹⁶² The *servitium commune* amounted to between f. 100 and

154 Lea (1896); Göller (1923); Paulus (1923); Wall (1964–1998), p. 19; Benrath (1976–2007); Swanson (2006); Doublier (2016); Koch (2017); Jenks (2018).

155 Hennig (1909), pp. 2–13; Denzel (2018), p. 145. Hennig gives a comprehensive description of the territorial and imperial tithes due to rulers. – This resistance is depicted by way of example for the bishopric of Ratzeburg: Petersen (2001). – On the reduction of the revenue draining from the Chamber, see also Sprandel (1975), pp. 100–101.

156 Kirsch (1903); Schmidt (1984), pp. XXII–XXIII; Tewes (2005), p. 209.

157 Denzel (1991), p. 61.

158 Bauer (1928), pp. 468–469. Here, the revenues for the whole first year were claimed.

159 Denzel (2018), p. 137.

160 Göller (1924a), p. 82. For a more detailed account, see Denzel (1991), pp. 64–67 and Denzel (2018), pp. 137–138.

161 Bauer (1928), p. 468; Lunt (1962), p. 169; Balz et al. (1999), pp. 566–567.

162 See Eubel (1913–1935); Hoberg (1944). – Another levy was the *servitia quinquennia*, which had to be paid every 15 years from the incorporated benefices. However, this donation was never made in Germany. See Bäumer (1980–1999), column 1795. Because of the very small amounts involved, the *visitationes* – the payments

f. 12,000 (Cologne, Salzburg), depending on the assets of a bishopric.¹⁶³ For the bishopric of Passau, for example, the amount to be paid added up to f. 2,485: *servitium commune* f. 1,600; *servitia minuta* f. 285; *propina* for the cardinal leading in the consistory f. 500; fees for issuing the official document f. 100.¹⁶⁴ Hoberg has calculated that 40,000 Rhe. fl. would have flowed into the Curia in the fourteenth century if all of the bishoprics had been reappointed at the same time.¹⁶⁵

The annates and servitia, both of which contemporaries frequently called annates without differentiating between them, developed quickly into the most important source of revenue for the Avignon Curia; they were, however, subject to very strong yearly fluctuations.¹⁶⁶ In their annual financial statement for 1309, the servitia – nearly 26,000 Rhe. fl. – amounted to 28 per cent of all revenue.¹⁶⁷ These high amounts already led to protests at the Council of Vienne in 1311. Germany's share was modest, especially in comparison with France. For the period from 1295 to 1314, the payments of bishops from the German territories, along with Bohemia, Poland, and the Baltic States, were around 15 per cent of the total sum, those of abbots and prelates not even 4 per cent.¹⁶⁸ Johann Peter Kirsch and Yves Renouard have found only five invoices from collectors from the years up to 1339¹⁶⁹ and various smaller receipts for payments to the Chamber (1309–32) related to Germany.¹⁷⁰ The fact that – for first half of the fourteenth century – there is so little evidence for the receipt of German funds in Avignon is partly explained by the poor source situation. In addition, the conflict between the popes and King Louis the Bavarian meant that papal moneys from Germany were very sparse for many years and, according to Renouard, were “réduits à peu près à néant”.¹⁷¹ Data on the cash flow can again be determined for the years of the pontificate of Innocent VI (1353–62), when the collectors' revenue in Germany, Bohemia, Poland, and Hungary came to 13 per cent of the total of the collectories' funds of the Church.¹⁷²

A further draining away of money from Germany was caused by supplications and acts of mercy. Document fees were charged for processing them by Curial authorities, chancery, Chamber, Rota, and penitentiary. These fees had been fixed on a tax schedule from the pontificate of

concerning the *visitatio liminum* and the *Zensus* will not be gone into in what follows. See Plöchl (1962), p. 379; Denzel (1991), pp. 52–53.

163 Denzel (2018), p. 142.

164 Frenz (2000).

165 Hoberg (1944); Sprandel (1975), pp. 100–101. For a detailed breakdown of the costs for the bishopric of Passau, see Frenz (2000).

166 See Samaran/Mollat (1905); Esch (1988); Tewes (2005), p. 209.

167 Denzel (2018), p. 145.

168 Denzel (2018), pp. 143–144.

169 Kirsch (1894), pp. 1–157.

170 Kirsch (1894), pp. 381–383, 419, and 421–422; Renouard (1941).

171 Renouard (1941), p. 140.

172 Favier (1966), p. 580; Esch (1969a), pp. 138–139.

John XXII (1316–34) onward.¹⁷³ At the same time, the work of the courts and the drawing up of bills, dispensations, privileges, et cetera, in more and more centralized Catholic Christendom, were charged at rates that more than covered costs.¹⁷⁴

When a German bishop or abbot asked the pope to be allowed to demand an exceptional levy from the clergy and the faithful of his diocese, he would usually pay dearly for its fulfilment. The archbishop of Trier, for example, was given the possibility in 1462 to demand up to 15,000 Rhe. fl. in levies from his priests.¹⁷⁵ The privilege, however, might also be granted as a mark of favour without any fee at all. In 1463, Pope Pius II, who as a young man spent several years as Council secretary in Basel, granted the highly indebted bishop of Basel the right to levy a tax on butter during Lent (*Ankengeld*).¹⁷⁶

2.1.2 Money without a Direct Connection to Papal Finances

In addition to the amounts that were to be transferred on behalf of the Apostolic Chamber, there were a number of German institutions and persons following the papal court that might be interesting as clients for the bankers. The financially strongest group was made up of German clerics who were able to procure appointments in the papal court. They had influential functions as protonotaries, chancery scribes, or abbreviators¹⁷⁷ that gave them access to good salaries and rich monetary sources. Moreover, they frequently came into possession of benefices in Germany whose revenue had to be transferred to Rome. A cleric in the entourage of an ecclesiastical prince as secretary of a cardinal, for instance, had access to similar revenues. The wealthier among these churchmen needed local deposit and credit services, but the financial transactions with Germany could just as well generate revenue. Many of these clerics were dependent on these revenues from German benefices being sent to Rome.¹⁷⁸ Italians and Frenchmen following the papal court who procured benefices in Germany were another group of people needing financial transactions from the north. Thus, the priory of the cathedral in Würzburg – which, with 1,000 Rhe. fl., was one of the richest in Germany – lay mostly in the hands of clerics from southern countries from 1360 onward.¹⁷⁹

173 Bauer (1928), p. 480; Plöchl (1962), p. 381; Feine (1964), p. 349; Johrendt (2018), p. 94.

174 Plöchl (1962), p. 381.

175 Esch (1998), p. 334.

176 See Weissen (1994), p. 428.

177 Weiss (1991).

178 Deutsches Historisches Institut in Rom (1916–); Bauer (1928), p. 466; Sohn (1994). – On benefice hunters, see Schwarz (1991); Schwarz (1997).

179 Engel (1956), p. 17. In 1464 Pius II transferred it to his nephew Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini. See Widder (1995), p. 65; Rehberg (1999), p. 213. Shortly before the Council of Constance began, the Florentine cleric

Among the Curia clerics, the procurators – operating permanently in the offices of the Holy See – constituted a particularly attractive client group. They helped clerics and laymen arriving from Germany with the submission of their supplications,¹⁸⁰ as the complicated and often abstruse papal business practices, as well as their dealings with their chancelleries, posed great difficulties for many applicants. At least from the thirteenth century on, the Curia allowed high clergy (archbishops, bishops, abbots, et cetera), noblemen (kings, dukes, margraves, counts), and ecclesiastical institutions to be represented by authorized assistants.¹⁸¹ They were important partners for the papal bankers, as they arranged credit for the deposit of papal fees and stood surety until the necessary money had arrived from the north.¹⁸² The number of procurators specialized in German applications therefore indicates the intensity of relations between the Curia and the region of origin of the supplicants.

The Teutonic Order (*Ordo fratrum domus hospitalis Sanctae Mariae Teutonicorum Ierosolimitanorum*) did not delegate an envoy every time it had a request to put before the pope, but, rather, it installed a permanent general procurator to represent its interests.¹⁸³ De facto, it could also establish – in longer periods of negotiations – a representative with power of attorney. The city council of the city of Hamburg, for example, maintained an envoy in Avignon from 1338 to 1355 in a conflict with the Hamburg cathedral chapter.¹⁸⁴ The representative – who only briefly travelled to the papal court for a single piece of business – as well as the permanent authorized person generated costs for travelling expenses, sustenance, and often for gifts that might advance and fulfil the petitioner's request, as many documents in the correspondence of the procurators of the Teutonic Order for such tributes show.¹⁸⁵ This money, too, had to be transported across the Alps. The gifts could, of course, also be payment in kind, as an entry in the Hamburg finance department invoice for 1373 documents, in which the purchase of ermine for the pope is credited (*41 lb. vor hermelen domino pape*).¹⁸⁶

Possible clients of financial services might also be merchants, craftsmen, mercenaries, or students from Germany residing in Avignon or Rome.¹⁸⁷ They were undoubtedly more numerous

Gerardus de Boeriis began a years' long lawsuit regarding a benefice of the cathedral in Schwerin. See Schuchard (2000b), p. 77.

180 Weiss (1991), p. 59.

181 Sohn (1997), p. 61.

182 Sohn (1997), p. 63.

183 Sohn (1997), p. 80.

184 Apelbaum (1915); Schrader (1907).

185 Koeppen (2000), p. 29; Johrendt (2018), p. 98.

186 Koppmann (1869–1941), p. 184.

187 German colonies have been thoroughly investigated: Evelt (1877); Doren (1901); Schmidlin (1906); Noack (1927); Maas (1981); Lee (1983); Ait (1987); Schuchard (1987); Ait (1988b); Schulz (1991); Schulz (1994); Maleczek (1995); Schmutge (1995); Schulz (1995); Varanini (1995); Esposito (1998); Esch (1999b); Füssel/Vogel (2001); Schwarz (2001b); Esch (2002); Esch (2004b); Esch (2005a); Esch/Michler (2005); Israel (2005); Schulz/Schuchard (2005); Böninger (2006); Fusaro (2007); Sanfilippo (2009); Ait (2014a).

than the clerics,¹⁸⁸ yet, during the whole period of my research, I was only able to find documentation for students who had money transferred from their home country to Italy with the help of a bank.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, the development of these colonies did not play a role in the revenue expectations of the bankers and can be left out of the following account. The same is true of the pilgrims, who – above all in jubilee years – prayed in large groups at the tomb of the apostle, for the majority of them were not rich and carried the money they needed on them.¹⁹⁰

The earliest traces of a German presence can be found in Campo Santo Teutonico, the German cemetery in the Vatican that goes back to the eighth century.¹⁹¹ Nevertheless, historical figures like Albert Behaim and Alexander von Roes, who influenced papal policies in the thirteenth century,¹⁹² are rare exceptions, for the number of Germans holding office at the Holy See was very small until the outbreak of the Great Western Schism. The reasons for this can be found, on the one hand, in the tensions between the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire, which flared up repeatedly; and, on the other hand, in the preference of the French popes for their fellow-countrymen. Bernard Guillemain has been able to name 4,253 papal officials and determined the origin of 2,224 of them. Of all these persons, he only ascribed sixty-nine to German territories, the majority of whom were from Liège and Toul.¹⁹³ As for the procurators, first Italians, and then Frenchmen dominated. It was only after 1350 that procurators working for German petitioners were increasingly men whose mother tongue was German.¹⁹⁴

2.1.3 Financial Consequences of the Interdict against Florence and the Great Western Schism

On 31 March 1376, the arrangement between the papacy and its Florentine bankers collapsed; a partnership that had worked for decades, and one that both sides profited from was ended abruptly. On that day, Pope Gregory XI, who was waging the War of the Eight Saints against Florence, placed the city under interdict and all of its citizens under banishment. The Apostolic Chamber almost completely froze its connections with Florentine bankers. Many bankers fled Avignon hastily, leaving behind their money, which was then confiscated.¹⁹⁵ Holmes rightly

188 Maas (1981), p. 47.

189 See p. 153.

190 Schmugge (1995).

191 Maas (1981), p. 13.

192 Maas (1981), p. X. – Maas (1981), p. 11: Nonetheless, thirty-nine Germans were employed by cardinals in 1362.

193 Guillemain (1962); Schuchard (1994), p. 53. See also Schäfer (1906).

194 Sohn (1997), p. 67.

195 See Esch (1966), p. 293; Holmes (1968), p. 357; Goldthwaite et al. (1995), pp. XX and XXVII.

describes the consequences of this rupture for the Florentines overall as “severe”.¹⁹⁶ In Germany, however, where Emperor Charles IV echoed the pope on 5 April 1376 and outlawed citizens of Florence,¹⁹⁷ hardly any consequences for German-Florentine economic relations can be determined, as they were not highly developed even before these measures.

Gregory XI returned with his Curia from Avignon to Rome in January 1377 to make the city on the Tiber once again the seat of the papacy. He died, however, on 26 March 1378, leaving behind a deeply estranged College of Cardinals that was unable to agree on a successor. The Great Western Schism of the occidental Church began on 20 September 1378, with the election of a second pope. Pope Urban VI (1378–89) in Rome and Pope Clement VII (1378–94) in Avignon divided up the revenues from the dioceses. At the same time, the expenses of the two competing Curiae rose sharply, as the battle for recognition devoured large amounts of money.

The pope from Avignon, Clement, initially had powerful partisans in Germany, the most famous of whom was Leopold III of the House of Habsburg (whereas Leopold’s brothers sided with Rome). Furthermore, numerous bishops (for example, those of Salzburg, Bressanone, Basel, and Strasbourg), and cities such as Freiburg im Breisgau were on Clement’s side. When Duke Leopold fell in the Battle of Sempach against the Swiss confederates in 1386, this allegiance increasingly lost followers. The evaluation of the supplicant register in Avignon, however, clearly shows that the German territories played scarcely any role in the papal court. The number of Germans following this Curia hence remained very low.¹⁹⁸ Whereas at the beginning of the Great Western Schism 4.5 per cent of the petitions still came from Germany, it was only around 1 per cent in 1388.¹⁹⁹ There was only a modest flow of money between Germany and the Apostolic Chamber in Avignon until the end of the schism, which was without any significance for the bankers of the papal court there.

Other than England, the Curia in Rome had mostly unprofitable territories under its control when Europe was divided up. Germany was one of them.²⁰⁰ Nevertheless, payments from Germany to Rome were not taken for granted, for cleavages in cathedral chapters, such as in the bishopric of Basel, led to double elections to fill episcopal thrones. The payment morale of various prince electors was not very high, either, and they tried to exploit to their own advantage the ambiguous situation at the head of the Church by a policy of either vacillating back and forth or one of neutrality.²⁰¹

Because nearly the complete financial administration of the Curia and all the collectors chose Avignon, a new administration had to be set up in Rome. At the same time, the decade-long

196 Holmes (1968), p. 358.

197 Weizsäcker (1882), I, p. 92. See also ASFi, *Miscellanea Republicana*, 1366–1376, no. 155.

198 Schuchard (1994), p. 53.

199 Müller (2012), pp. 8–9.

200 Esch (1966), p. 278.

201 Jansen (1904), pp. 35–39.

dominance of French clerics necessarily ceased to exist, as the new men now had to come from the Roman allegiance. Under the three Neapolitan popes – Urban VI, Boniface IX, and John XXIII – the Curia was dominated by men from southern Italy.²⁰² Germans could also secure posts in the now somewhat more internationally constituted papal administrative bodies.²⁰³ Clerics from the financially well-off dioceses of Cologne and Mainz, in particular, were able to fill vacancies, though they were exclusively low-level ones. Under Gregory XII, however, a few clerics did manage to move up to higher and more prestigious positions.²⁰⁴ Indeed, Arnold Esch sees ‘a massive presence of Germans at the Roman Curia’.²⁰⁵ Compared to the Apostolic Chamber in Avignon, the one in Rome was – during the first years of the schism – staffed with inexperienced men and, administratively speaking, hardly in a position to understand and collect all the fiscal levies.²⁰⁶

Peter Partner and Hermann Hoberg have tried to calculate the yearly papal revenues in the fifteenth century but come to no precise numbers, as they are characterized by many doubtful factors and considerable yearly fluctuations.²⁰⁷ The estimates of papal revenues from Germany up to the Council of Constance are even vaguer, as the body of sources is much more fragmentary. Therefore, Arnold Esch should be heeded: ‘[...] what is essential may not be quantifiable in numbers, but it can still be measured in words.’²⁰⁸ The few pieces of evidence about these years that can be found in archives leave a great deal of latitude regarding interpretation. According to Jean Favier, the revenues from the papal collectories decreased very strongly during the pontificate of Boniface IX (1389–1404). Esch, however, disputes this thesis; he sees an increasing acceptance of the pope’s claim to power and, therefore, rather an increase in the readiness to pay and, hence, also an increase in income. The lack of clarity regarding this estimation will be apparent with the depiction of the servitia payments. Whereas the French historian underscores the fact that many duties were carried out only with great delay or not complied with at all, the German historian points out that the money arrived much faster than before the schism, especially in the case of the higher levies.²⁰⁹

202 Müller (2012), p. 8.

203 Maas (1981), pp. 48–49; Schuchard (2001), p. 27.

204 Schuchard (1994), p. 53.

205 Esch (1975), p. 137: “[eine] massive Präsenz von Deutschen an der römischen Kurie”.

206 Favier (1966).

207 Partner (1953). – Hofmann (1914), p. 289, calculates the total revenues of John XXIII for the period from March 1413 to September 1414 as f. 226,489 48s. 6d., the total expenses as f. 226,461 32s. 12d. For the year from 1426 to 1427, Partner (1960), pp. 259–260, has calculated income of nearly 170,000 ducats, around half of it from the Papal States. In the “Introitus et Exitus”, however, 114,385 ducats are entered. He found in these books for January to December 1436 59,160 ducats, and for September 1461 to August 1462 471,694 ducats. Hoberg (1977) comes to significantly lower numbers for the years around 1500.

208 Esch (1988), p. 487: “[...] das Wesentliche wird sich vielleicht nicht in Zahlen beziffern, aber doch in Worten erlauben lassen.” – On the sources, see Esch (1966), pp. 278–282.

209 Favier (1966), pp. 514 and 516: “[...] c’est parce que l’époque [...] n’était pas propice: les collecteurs n’envoyaient plus guère d’argent [...]”. – Esch (1969a), p. 149.

2 Market Attractiveness

As far as the payments from Germany are concerned, the actual extent of Boniface IX's money worries is less important than the simple observation that he was forced to borrow money again and again.²¹⁰ His expansion of papal fiscalism was so great that he was criticized for it by his contemporaries.²¹¹ Two of his decisions in particular made bankers hope to have a broader flow of money from Germany. On the first day of his pontificate, he issued a bull in which the lower limit of an annate payment was increased to 24 ducats, and, at the same time, the circle of payers was expanded. The *Annatae Bonifatianae* were expanded even more in the following ten years, so that in the end even those in higher ecclesiastical posts, who were already burdened with the *servitia*, had to fulfil this obligation.²¹² The effects that the bull had for Germany can be seen in the example of St Emmeram Abbey in Regensburg. In 1395, the newly elected abbot paid a *servitium* of 150 Rhe. fl.; in 1403, his successor had to deliver to Rome 200 Rhe. fl. for the *primi fructus* of the abbey in addition to the *servitium*. The levy to the pope had also more than doubled.²¹³ This, however, is one of the few documented encumbrances with the new levy in Germany. Owing to the very poor source situation, a conclusive overall picture cannot be rendered, and it must remain open how much additional German money the new annate ruling actually fetched.

Most historians agree that the 1390 jubilee proclaimed by Urban VI and celebrated by his successor was a gold mine.²¹⁴ For the bankers, it was not the many pilgrims who came to Rome who were of interest, but, rather, the indulgences emanating from this event. Boniface introduced the after-jubilee at the request of kings, princes, and bishops, because many of the faithful were not able to travel to Rome in order to procure their indulgences. The Bavarian dukes were the first, in 1392, to receive such an after-jubilee privilege for the city of Munich, so that the indulgence connected to this Church celebration could be procured if one at least paid the saved travel expenses to the Eternal City. Half of the money collected in this fashion was to be sent to Rome, the other half was allowed to be used for building churches in the city.²¹⁵

This model was followed by many additional papal charters. For example, King Wenceslaus for the city of Prague, the margraves of Meissen, and the city of Cologne received similar favours. Again, these sources of funds cannot in every case be expressed in figures of exactly how many Rhenish florins found their way across the Alps. For Cologne, an amount of 6,000 Rhe. fl. is

210 Esch (1997–1998), p. 284.

211 Esch (1966), p. 277; Esch (1969a), p. 133.

212 Jansen (1904), pp. 201–202.

213 Jansen (1904), pp. 120–121.

214 Hefele (1873–1890), VI, p. 693; Favier (1966), p. 376; Esch (1969a), p. 142.

215 Paulus (1923), vol. 3, p. 156; Neuheuser (1994), p. 26; Esch (1997–1998), p. 283; Kühne (2000), p. 232; Bünz (2017), p. 355. – See Jansen (1904), pp. 145–164, for a comprehensive view of the after jubilees awarded to Germany and the difficulties in transferring the money to Rome.

documented in papal ledgers.²¹⁶ But in Basel, as in all the other places, the Curia had to first overcome fierce resistance. One would have liked to keep those handsome sums. Failure to pay resulted in the pope threatening excommunication and annulment of the indulgence.²¹⁷ Esch calls the sums that poured into the Chamber in spite of all the attempts not to pay ‘spectacular enough’.²¹⁸

The jubilee year 1400 was proclaimed by the Avignon pope, who, indeed, was calling for the pilgrims to visit the tomb of the apostle under the control of his adversary. It would not have made any sense for Boniface to allow after celebrations for this event as well; thus, there was no comparable calling-in of indulgences as there had been a few years earlier.²¹⁹ Germans, however, evidently made their way to Rome in large numbers anyway. There is said to have been a procession of five thousand German pilgrims dressed in white (*bianchi*), following a preacher working miracles through plague-ridden Bologna and causing furious defensive reactions in Rome.²²⁰ This was most definitely not an interesting clientele for the Florentine bankers.

The successors of Boniface IX had increasing difficulty collecting the money owed to them. Gregory XII (1406–17) no longer even managed to get access to the accounts of his collectors. Favier formulates the thesis that, for this pontiff, the nominations of collectors had only a symbolic character after Alexander V was elected by the Council of Pisa in 1409. There were now not only three popes, but three Apostolic Chambers.²²¹

When Alexander died after a pontificate of only ten months, John XXIII succeeded him on St Peter’s throne. He was very experienced in financial affairs and quickly succeeded in finding support for his claim to the tiara, especially compared to Gregory XII. He extended his reach to large parts of Italy, France, England, Poland, and Scandinavia. It was of great importance for the pope and his bankers when, on 21 July 1411, Sigismund of Luxembourg was elected king of the Romans, for the new ruler pledged loyalty to the Pisan allegiance, that is to Pope John XXIII.²²² Most of the German bishops, including the bishop of Bamberg (with

216 Bünz (2017), p. 357.

217 The papal document for the jubilee celebration in Magdeburg states that the jubilee will be cancelled if the collected money is withheld. See Kühne (2000), p. 232.

218 Esch (1969a), p. 152. – The jubilee year in Meissen is said to have been a financial failure. See Bünz (2009), p. 61.

219 Esch (1969a), p. 152; Hrdina (2007).

220 Melis (1985b), pp. 245–246. In apparent contradiction to this report, the same author writes on p. 253: “[...] le popolazioni dell’Europa centrale – Germania, Polonia, Ungheria e Boemia –, che sarebbero scese a Roma esclusivamente per le strade interne (per i passi compresi fra il Gottardo e la Carnia) mancarono quasi del tutto, avendo levato l’obbedienza a Bonifacio IX.”

221 Favier (1966), pp. 99, 108, and 113.

222 Schwerdfeger (1895); Blumenthal (1901), p. 488. – On the ecclesiastical policies of Sigismund, see Göller (1901); Göller (1903). – ASFi, Diplomatico Strozziene Ugucconi, 1412 maggio 13: The efforts of the Pisan pope to get recognition were followed and supported by Florence, as this letter shows. In it, John XXIII requested Cardinal

Nuremberg) and the bishop of Lübeck,²²³ joined Sigismund. Soon, in the Holy Roman Empire, it was only the Palatinate and the archbishop of Trier who pledged allegiance to Gregory XII.²²⁴ Because of this development, payments from the northern ecclesiastical provinces to the Apostolic Chamber of the Pisan pope increased steadily. This circumstance is reflected in documents connected with German benefices in the Medici archives.²²⁵ For Florentine banks, the assessment of the revenues and profits that could be expected in the German market as a consequence of these ecclesiastical changes had to be significantly more positive than it had been only a few years earlier.

2.2 Money for the Coffers of the Pope

The questions regarding tithes and annates were high on the agenda in the meetings of the Council of Constance. Was the pope unilaterally allowed to decide on levies on the entire clergy, or did he need the agreement of a Council? In its twenty-fifth session, the payment of all annates was suspended until the election of a new pope. Soon after Martin V (1417–31) was elected, the Council's nations found solutions for these questions in nation-specific concordats. In *Natio Germanica*, the pope conceded that, apart from the generally reserved benefices, he was only entitled to award half of all the lower benefices. He had to do completely without smaller levies, such as the *Jus Spolii* revenues. These agreements were to be in force for five years, afterwards the pope would have all of the old rights at his disposal again.²²⁶ In a constitutional reform in 1425, he relinquished around one third of the benefices, so that, henceforth, he had the right to award contracts for all higher Church offices and around two thirds of the lower levies.²²⁷ On the basis of the extant Chamber registers, Hans Erich Feine came to the conclusion that Martin V had de facto collected a levy amounting to half a year's income from all benefices directly conferred by him whose annual revenue was estimated at more than

Branda Castiglione to speak with Andrea de' Buondelmonti, *nunzio apostolico*. The latter was to persuade King Sigismund to intervene on John's behalf in Italy.

223 The first official document that John XXIII issued for Lübeck was dated 10 March 1411. Prange (1994), pp. 335–336.

224 Kraus (1950), pp. 19–20; Müller (2012), p. 21. – For example, the archbishop of Trier and the Count Palatine Louis III pledged allegiance to Gregory XII. See Beckmann (1928), p. 623; Kühne (1935), p. V; Jank (1983).

225 E.g., ASFi MAP 86, no. 36, cc. 304–308 (Passau, 22 September 1410); ASFi, Diplomatico, Medici, 13 luglio 1411 (Magdeburg).

226 Mansi (1759–1927), XXVII, columns 1189–1193; Hübler (1867); Boeselager (1999), pp. 42 and 83. For the text on the annates in the concordat, see Hübler, pp. 181–183.

227 Jansen (1904), p. 202; Hennig (1909), pp. 63–64; Weiss (1991), pp. 59–60.

24 ducats.²²⁸ These regulations led to a decline in the pope's power to tax the clergy of the whole of Christendom for his own interests. Consequently, the importance of the revenues from these levies in the overall budget of the Curia decreased, and income from the Papal States became the most important financial source.²²⁹ What was important for the bankers was that money from Germany to the Curia began to flow again, although at a significantly lower level than before the Great Western Schism. Again, this change cannot be expressed in numbers.

The Council of Basel discussed the issue of annates anew even as it was collecting servitia. Bishop Matteo del Carretto, as the chamberlain *sacrosanctae generalis synodi Basiliensis*, confirmed the payment of the servitia on 26 February 1434 to Abbot Bertold of St Stephan's in Würzburg and consigned the coins to the banker Pietro de' Guarienti as a deposit.²³⁰ The promulgation of the reform decree, *De annatis*, on 9 June 1435 was, nevertheless, a radical step that brought about a steep drop in payments to the Curia. The Benedictine Ulrich Stöckel described the reaction of Eugene IV (1431–47) to his abbot in Tegernsee: *Item umb dasselb decret de annatis ist unser heyliger vater papa Eugenius valde amaricatus contra sacrum concilium und sunder wider dominum legatum auf den er alle schuld legt.*²³¹ The conflict between the pope and the Council of Basel escalated further, and, on 18 September 1437, the Council split apart. The conciliarists sat in Basel, the papal party in Ferrara. The German bishops and princes were faced with the issue of allegiance, for they had to choose between the pope and the Council. The number of prelates in the Council session in Germany decreased quickly, for it lost, in particular, clerics from the upper hierarchical ranks. The manager of the Medici bank wrote to Cosimo that there had never been so few prelates and important men there.²³²

The prince electors took a third path by handing in a ceremonial declaration of neutrality on 17 March 1438. Although this body had seldom been so united, it could not place the whole Holy Roman Empire under this obligation.²³³ The Council gained especially many German supporters, who also went along with it when it elected the last anti-pope in ecclesiastical history, Pope Felix V, on 5 November 1439. The majority of the wealthy ecclesiastical princes had left Basel, which meant that the number of clients who were of interest for the banks decreased. This loss of revenue was compensated by the annates that now began to be collected. Just as had happened at the beginning of the century, the Curial flow of money was divided up. The consequences of this schism for the work and turnover of the Curia-based banks cannot be

228 Feine (1964), p. 349.

229 Bauer (1928), pp. 473–480; Plöchl (1962), pp. 378–381; Favier (1966), p. 689; Gardi (1986), pp. 526–527.

230 Bendel et al. (1912–1938), II, p. 344. – On the negotiations over the annate issue in the Council, see Clergeac (1911), p. 229; Zwölfer (1929), pp. 198–247; Kast (2017), p. 125.

231 Zwölfer (1929), p. 233.

232 ASFi, MAP II, no. 618: [...] *non ci fusse mai sì poco numero di prelati e di valenti huomini quanto oggi, intanto che chi lo vedesse se ne maraviglierebbe [...]*.

233 Pückert (1858), pp. 120–122; Bachmann (1889); Freudenberger (1988).

expressed in numbers, as all of the ledgers of the financial administration of the Council and the Felix V's Chamber have been irrevocably lost. Some money will have gone to Basel, a little to the pope, and much will have been paid to neither of the two treasuries with the argument of neutrality. There is evidence that the payments from the north to Eugene's Curia decreased drastically. Graph 1 shows the number of accounting transactions in the Curial ledgers where Esch found bankers mentioned.²³⁴ It goes without saying that the curve here allows no absolute assertion about the development of financial transactions between Germany and the Apostolic Chamber, as it is also possible that there were changes in accounting practices. The number of entries, nevertheless, is an indication that the years before the middle of the century must have been very difficult for Florentine bankers engaged in German business. The numbers from Sweden (see Graph 2) confirm this finding;²³⁵ they also show a marked decrease in instances of money transfers to the Curia.

It was only in March 1448 that a solution was found for the restoration of unity when Pope Nicholas V issued a concordat that had been negotiated a month earlier in Vienna. The concord between king and pope ended the schism, as it led to the abdication of Felix V, even though not all German ecclesiastical provinces joined the Concordat of Vienna immediately. At the core of the agreement were regulations regarding the allocation of benefices and annate payments. It confirmed in principle what had already been in the Concordat of Constance, with the result that Curial moneys flowed again just as they had before.²³⁶ Götz-Rüdiger Tewes has calculated the Chamber's revenues from annates for the year 1461/62 and shows how small Germany's contribution was compared to the total 27,704 Rhe. fl. received. Payments from France amounted to 56.5 per cent, Italy's were 17.5 per cent, Spain's 15.2 per cent, and Germany's only 10.8 per cent.²³⁷ Although these numbers fluctuated heavily and can only be assessed as vague indicators, it can, nevertheless, be put on record that annates from Germany were far less attractive for the bankers' business than those from other Catholic regions.

On several occasions the popes attempted to raise funds through indulgences to support their own undertakings or the warlike actions of secular princes in the fight against threats to the Roman Catholic community. In 1420, Pope Martin V called for a Crusade against the Hussites, and Paul II (1464–71) turned against King George of Poděbrady of Bohemia, who was a follower of this movement. To liberate Byzantium from the Turks and to prevent their further encroachment into Europe, Pope Callixtus III (1455) and Pius II (1463) issued papal bulls with

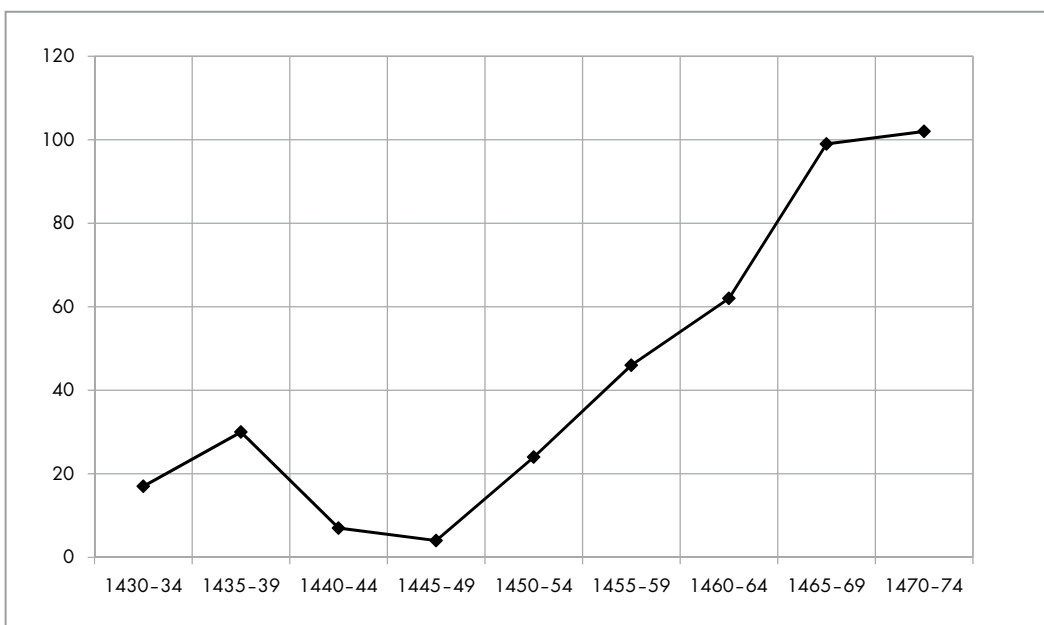
234 Esch (1998).

235 APS.

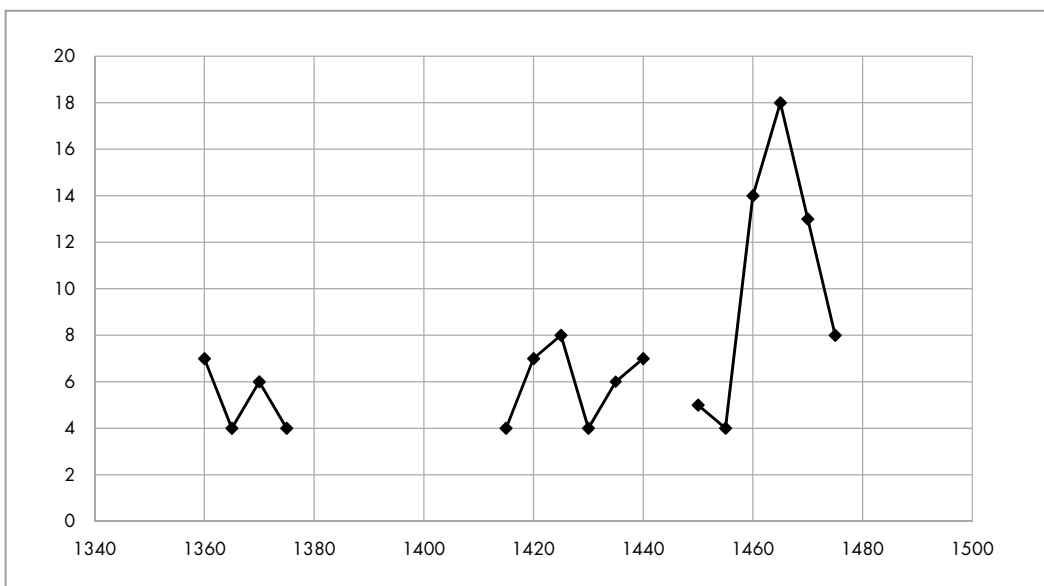
236 Clergeac (1911), pp. 42–43; Toews (1965); Schwaiger (1980–1999), pp. 88–89; Meyer (1986); Boeselager (1999), pp. 63–67. The document is now in the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Abteilung Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv <https://www.archivinformationssystem.at/detail.aspx?ID=12>, UR AUR, 1448 II 17.

237 Tewes (6 to 7 July 2001), p. 16. See Tewes (2001), pp. 127–129, on why England is not included in these calculations.

2.2 Money for the Coffers of the Pope



Graph 1 Servitia and annate payments from Germany for five-year periods that name a banker, 1431-74



Graph 2 Bankers for annate payments from Sweden, 1355-1475

a plenary indulgence that all supporters of this struggle could purchase. A jubilee indulgence would have been possible in 1423, as it would come on schedule thirty-three years after the last jubilee had been celebrated. Although many pilgrims were drawn to the tomb of the apostle in Rome on this occasion, Martin V had refrained from making either an official proclamation of a Holy Year or granting an indulgence. Nicholas V (1447–55) then declared 1450 a jubilee year and decreed that this special year would be celebrated every twenty-five years thenceforward. He had taken in so much money that year that he is said to have had at his disposal cash reserves of over 100,000 ducats.²³⁸ The bankers also profited richly from this Church festival. When Tommaso Spinelli visited his branch in Rome, he could scarcely believe that there was so much money in the coffers and had the account books checked for mistakes.²³⁹

A Council also once gave itself the authority to proclaim a plenary indulgence when the bull *Vox illa jocundatis* was passed in Basel on 14 April 1436. Through the sale of this indulgence money was to be procured that was needed for the negotiations with the Byzantine emperor and the Orthodox patriarch on the unification of the Churches.²⁴⁰ Bankers could expect good profits with all these indulgences if they had at their command the necessary organizational structures for the transfer of the collected moneys to the point of destination, and if their export did not come up against too much resistance. However, there were frequent problems with the business conduct of collectors and princes who did not want the gold to be transferred. How the Curial banks dealt with this will be investigated in the following deliberations on their strategy and their business. There are many sources in the archives, especially ones regarding their operations with the revenues for union with the Greeks and Crusades against the Turks.

Clemens Bauer postulated that the German market lost significance for the Florentines because of the decrease in papal moneys from annates, servitia, and collectories in the second half of the fifteenth century. What is important here is the fact that the princes and local authorities had an increasingly strong grip on the Apostolic Chamber's sources of income, securing 50 per cent of the collectories for themselves. Opposition to the financial policies of the Roman Curia also increased in the German Church, as the *Gravamina* of 31 August 1457 from Martin Mair, the chancellor of the archbishop of Mainz, to Cardinal Enea Silvio Piccolomini show. He wanted to prove in them that the popes had not adhered to the decisions regarding the annates at the Councils of Constance and Basel, and that they had circumvented the Concordat of Vienna as well. Germany had been exploited by the Curia, whereby it had been exposed to hardship and rendered powerless. The cardinal repudiated the recriminations in the document *De ritu*,

238 Miglio (2013), p. 70.

239 YUSA 89, 1662.

240 This is not the place to analyse the extensive literature on these indulgences. A publication of all the important documents can be found in Jenks (2018). See Holmes (1992), p. 23; Kipper (2002), pp. 32–37; Märtl (11.08.2011), p. 20.

situ, moribus et conditione Germaniae descriptio.²⁴¹ That these developments led to a decrease in the flow of money from Germany to the papal coffers cannot be verified by documents in the Vatican archives. Several studies do show that money from the Papal States, as opposed to income from *spiritualia*, increased proportionately to a great degree. However, absolute numbers that prove a decrease of levies from the ecclesiastical provinces are missing.²⁴² It can only be proven for the ensuing period of time, for mentions of Germans or German localities decreased from 15 per cent in the first half of the fifteenth century to only 5 per cent in the first half of the sixteenth century.²⁴³

2.3 The Apostolic Chamber and the Bankers

2.3.1 Depositary General

Among the important bankers operating internationally at the Curia, those who were authorized to call themselves *depositarius pape* or *depositarius Camerae apostolicae* had a particularly prominent position. These titles had been bestowed since the first years of the fifteenth century and designated bankers who were entrusted with the custody of Curial moneys and the execution of the Chamber's orders of payment.²⁴⁴ Until the pontificate of John XXIII, the Apostolic Chamber did not allocate these titles exclusively. Only shortly before the Council of Constance can it clearly be seen that the Chamber had entered into a preferential personal cooperation with a head of one of the large Curia-based banks (*depositarius generalis*). From the pontificate of Martin V onward, the treasurer, the chamberlain, and the depositary general formed a triumvirate reflected in the management of the accounts of the Chamber; for the *libri introitus* and the *libri exitus* were always kept in three versions: a Latin one for each of the two clerics and an Italian one for the banker.

241 Tewes (2005), p. 210.

242 Bauer (1928), pp. 480–482; Partner (1960); Favier (1966).

243 Schuchard (1994), p. 52.

244 Kühne (1935), p. 31. – The source situation does not allow for an exact date for the introduction of this post. The term *depositarius* is used even before the Council of Constance. But it remains unclear whether or not there were several depositaries at the same time. Tewes (6–7 July 2001), p. 3, designates the year 1421 as the beginning, thus taking the date of the appointment of the Medici bank as depositary general by Martin V. – However, these were not the only financial reserves of the Curia, as the pope and the datary always had private coffers, into which flowed the revenues from a variety of taxes, such as dispensations, licenses, and papal acts of mercy. Moreover, the datary was only of minor significance in the international business of the banks. See Tewes (6–7 July 2001).

Not only did the depositary general manage the Chamber's cash deposits and settle payments from the current account, but, if necessary, he had to secure liquidity through loans and hence the solvency of the Curia.²⁴⁵ He had to carry out the assignments of the Chamber but did not have any decision-making power himself. Although there were no duties recorded in writing, it lay in the depositary's own interest that revenues from the remotest Christian areas could be transferred to the Curia safely. Basically, it should be noted that this office was not particularly attractive because of business dealings with the Curia, but because of its reputation for opening doors to many influential people. A network that developed in this way led to many a lucrative deal with wealthy clients.

The popes did not allow their general depositaries to have a monopoly in the transfer of revenues from the far-flung regions of their fiscal sphere of influence in the fifteenth century. For example, the Medici were hardly ever involved in payments from Spain. Raymond de Roover has also noted that it was at times a deliberate policy of the popes always to take competitors of the depositary into account as well.²⁴⁶ Evidently, they worked with different bankers in order to avoid a risk concentration and an all too great dependence on one banking house. And, of course, political considerations might also play a role. The Sienese Pius II and the Venetian Paul II apparently preferred to rely on bankers from their own hometowns, even though the Medici might have been able to secure a deal more quickly and cheaply.²⁴⁷

2.3.2 Collaboration of the Chamber and the Bankers

On 11 November 1417, Cardinal Oddo Colonna was elected pope and gave himself the name Martin V because it happened to be St Martin's Day. The new pontificate was confronted with the enormous challenge of providing for a new order after the years of the Great Western Schism.²⁴⁸ He closed the last session of the Council on 22 April of the following year and left Constance on 16 May. He then took more than two years to travel to Rome. During his journey, he energetically set about trying to solve many problems. Of top priority was the reorganization of the papal financial system; and collaboration with the bankers had to be regulated anew, as there had not been a depositary for four years.²⁴⁹ Martin V did not have much of a choice

245 Bauer (1928), p. 479. – See Holmes (1968), pp. 364–366, for the only contemporary description of the functions and duties of a depositary.

246 Roover (1963), p. 199.

247 See Roover (1963), pp. 284–285.

248 On the reorganization of the ecclesiastical administration and the Papal States under Martin V, see Partner (1958).

249 Fink (1971–1972), p. 628. – Martin V solved the problem of the three chamberlains still holding office diplomatically. At first, he had all three of them continue working and only decided in 1421 on Antonio Casini as the sole head of the Apostolic Chamber. The two other chamberlains were not removed from office, but

regarding his future financial partner, as he had to come to terms with the three existing Florentine houses. On 1 December he appointed Carlo di Geri Bartoli – manager of the bank of Antonio di Jacopo del Vigna and Doffo degli Spini – depositary of the Chamber and the College of Cardinals. Doffo proudly noted this event in his *ricordanze: e la nostra compagnia suoi depositare e cambiatori*.²⁵⁰ Whereas there is hardly any evidence of relations between the Apostolic Chamber and the Curia-based banks in the pope-less years, a dense Curial transmission of records on financial business began immediately after the election of the new pope. They show that the depositary in these transactions once again had taken on a central function at the interface between Chamber and financial business.²⁵¹

The first months of Martin V's pontificate bore the features of an itinerant papacy, for, when he left Constance, it was not at first clear to the European powers where the journey would end. King Sigismund suggested Basel, Mainz, or Strasbourg as the papal residence; the French king insisted on Avignon; and the Italians held out for Rome.²⁵² The new pope always knew where he wanted to go, and tarried with a large entourage via Geneva (11 June – 3 September 1418), Mantua (24 October 1418 – 6 February 1419), Florence (27 February – 9 September 1420), and finally Rome, arriving on 28 September 1420.²⁵³ The bankers followed the court and lived up to their name, *romanam curiam sequentes*.

The relationship between Martin V and the Florentines was never without tension. During his stay in Santa Maria Novella, ragamuffins are said to have sung beneath his window: *Papa Martino non vale un quattrino* ('Pope Martin is not worth a tuppence').²⁵⁴ Further tensions came in November 1420 when the Spini bank failed and stopped doing business, which posed great problems for the Apostolic Chamber. Ten months later, Spini and del Vigna, together with all their employees, were excommunicated.²⁵⁵ In addition to the direct consequences for the failed bankers and the aggrieved clients, this event had profound effects on Martin V's relations with the Republic of Florence. On 29 January 1424, the Signoria sent the master of the

rather held sinecures. See Partner (1958), p. 137; Favier (1966), p. III. – On the other hand, Stefano del Buono, who as John XXIII's loyal receptor was one of the most important contact partners of the bankers, lost his offices. The Signoria of Florence gave its ambassador to Martin V the mandate to support him (ASFi, Signori, Legazioni e commissarie, Elezioni, istruzioni, lettere, 6, 1411–1422, c. 90r). The cleric was only rehabilitated in 1435 under Eugene IV upon the intervention of Cosimo de' Medici and appointed vicar general of Rome.

250 Palermo (2000), pp. 349 and 375: *Item die prima mensis decembris prefatus dominus noster papa recepit in camporem sive depositarium et custodem pecuniarum camere apostolice Carolum de Chieri mercatorem Florentium Romanam curiam sequentem, qui eadem die fidelitatis in forma dicti officii consueta prestitit juramentum*.

251 Baumgarten (1907), p. 254; Baix (1947–1960); Fink (1971–1972), pp. 646–648.

252 See Meuthen (1978), p. 246.

253 Miltenberger (1894a); Moranvillé (1894); Banholzer (1982).

254 Petruccelli della Gattina (1869), p. 48.

255 ASFi, Signori. Missive I Cancelleria, 29, c. 128v, 29 aug. 1421, d. Paulo Iohannis de Roma: Signoria has heard that the pope has excommunicated Antonio di Jacopo del Vigna, Doffo di Nepo Spini, Piero (di Cenni) Bardella, Luigi Corsini, Lorenzo and Giovanni Spini. Reference from Lorenz Böninger.

Order of Preachers as an envoy to the pope, requesting the latter to kindly rescind a new tax on merchants that had to be paid to the Apostolic Chamber. Several Florentines had already been sent to prison. Furthermore, he was to remind the pope that significant loans to the Curia from the years of John XXIII had not been repaid.²⁵⁶ When, in 1425, the claims from the Spini bankruptcy still had not been settled, Martin V demanded that the city see to the compensation of the aggrieved clients and threatened serious reprisals against all Florentine bankers. It was only after long negotiations that they managed to agree to a settlement.²⁵⁷ The carrying out of payments between the Curia and Germany by the Florentines was perhaps made more unfriendly and more strained by the tensions between pope and republic, but revenue did not suffer as a consequence. The Curia could not even put much pressure on the Florentine bankers, as there were no merchants in any other Italian city that were in a position to take over this business in its entirety. However, a gap emerged with the Spini failure that could be filled easily from their own ranks. With Bartolomeo de' Bardi, manager of the Medici bank, a Florentine was once again appointed depositary of the Chamber in March 1421. Thus, the Medici became the great beneficiaries of these events, and their branch managers in Rome were thereafter, with brief interruptions, appointed as depositaries for more than fifty years.²⁵⁸

During the pontificate of Eugene IV, relations between the Republic of Florence and the Curia were decidedly friendlier. In 1434, the pope absconded to the city on the Arno when he had to flee Rome because of the opposition of the Colonna family and other Roman factions. He found support in Florence in his struggle to restore his authority in Rome and in the Papal States, and against the Council of Basel. And it was to Florence, on 16 January 1439, that he relocated the Council, whose important aim was to reunite the Roman and the Greek Churches. All in all, he spent eight of his sixteen pontifical years in Florence.²⁵⁹ Cosimo de' Medici was considered a close friend in the first years, and, through his intercession, the pope helped Cosimo to end his exile to Venice after only one year. After 1440, however, the relationship between the two men deteriorated. The pope allied himself with the Visconti and Venice, and he disapproved

256 ASFi, Signori, Legazioni e commissarie, Elezioni, istruzioni, lettere 7, Missive, istruzioni e lettere a oratori, 1422 guigno 14–1427, c. 17v.

257 One of the contested points was the venue for indemnity claims, as the pope doubted that the Florentine courts would decide in favour of the victims. On 18 November 1426, Cosimo di Giovanni de' Medici was sent as an envoy to the pope. ASFi, Signori, Legazioni e Commissarie, no. 7, cc. 49v and 69v. Further envoys in this matter and because of a compulsory levy on the Florentines in Rome: ASFi8, Signori, Legazioni e Commissarie, no. 5, cc. 19r–20r and 53r. On reactions in Florence to the pope's threats, see Guasti (1867), I, p. 333. See Salutati (1905), p. 10; Tripodi (2013), pp. 57–60. – The effects of these repressive measures are documented in Bernardo Lamberteschi's Catasto of 1427. ASFi, Catasto 68, c. 42v: *E s'è dato sentenza alla Merchatantia contro a creditori d'Antonio d[i] Iachopo e Doffo Spini in favore di merchatanti anno a fare a Roma per quello restano avere delle rapresagl[i]e concedette il Papa contro a fiorentini era creditore di f. 1076 che gliene toccherà a pagare circha di f. 54 – f. 109 17s.*

258 Holmes (1968), pp. 377–378; Palermo (2000), p. 378.

259 Boschetto (2012); Plebani (2012).

of Cosimo's apparent friendship with the condottiere Francesco Sforza. Finally, he dismissed the Medici as general depositaries of the Apostolic Chamber in April 1443 when Cosimo supported the Milanese encroachment into papal territory in the Marche.²⁶⁰ Cosimo's successor in this office was Tommaso Spinelli, another Florentine. After the election of Nicholas V in 1447, the prestigious assignment reverted to the Medici family.²⁶¹

In 1455, two months after his election, Pope Calixtus III deposed Roberto Martelli – manager of the Medici bank in Rome – as his depositary and demanded that he hand over all the account books. With this act, the Florentine monopoly of this central position in the Curial financial system came to an end after nearly thirty-seven years. Namely, the new office-holder was Ambrogio di Nanni Spannocchi, a banker from Siena. He managed a Curia-based bank together with the Neapolitan Alessandro Miraballi, whose good connections with the Spanish-speaking royal court in Naples had certainly played an important role in his appointment. In any case, he did not have a proven and stable base of international correspondents in monetary transactions, as it was limited to Naples, Venice, and the Iberian Peninsula. It was impossible, therefore, to completely do without Florentine banking services.²⁶² For this reason, it is not surprising that at the end of a rather chaotic pontificate – from a fiscal perspective – the Chamber was in debt to the Medici to the tune of more than 20,000 ducats.²⁶³ Consequently, Pius II and his fellow countryman and depositary Spannocchi had to tackle a comprehensive reform of the Curial accounting system.²⁶⁴ The two men from Siena, however, also came up against great resistance regarding their financial conduct, which Paul II tried to resolve by making the Venetian Giovanni Condulmer depositary (1465–71). Condulmer was related both to Paul and to Eugene IV. This depositary general limited himself to merely carrying out orders, whereby the office lost much of its importance.²⁶⁵

260 YUSA 24, 544. The original documents are no longer in the archive; only archival cross references have survived. – On 1 January 1445, Tommaso was also appointed depositary of all revenues of the city of Rome: YUSA 24, 545a. – Roover (1963), pp. 59 and 198; Holmes (1968), p. 247; Caferro (1996), p. 420; Lewin (2003), pp. 211–212.

261 ASFi, Fondo Martelli, no. 303, cc. 60r–62v: Roberto Martelli, as director of the Medici bank in Rome, wrote a vivid report on the relationships between the popes and the Medici from Pope Eugene IV through Pope Pius II. Published in *Weissen* (2021), pp. 513–518. – Esch (1981), p. 47, points out that the return from this office continued to decline.

262 Gottlob (1889), p. 111, mistakenly names one Petrus Clementis as Martelli's first successor. He was, however, a Chamber cleric. On Spannocchi and his appointment, see Ait (1987); Partner (2003), p. 35; Ait (2007a); Ait (2007b); Märkl (11.08.2011), pp. 22–23; Ait (2014b), pp. 268–269.

263 Märkl (11.08.2011), p. 24. The work of the Apostolic Chamber was especially shaken by the machinations of the Venetian Francesco Vernier, as Pius II recounts in his *Commentarii*. Piccolomini (Pius II) (2003–2007). On this, see also Märkl (2005), p. 184.

264 Bauer (1928), p. 491; Ait (2014a), pp. 269–270.

265 Guidi Bruscoli (2000), p. 89; Arcelli (2001), p. 17.

After the death of Nicholas V, the popes came from territories that were not allied to the Republic of Florence: Aragon, Siena, and Venice. Nevertheless, the Florentine banks were able to defend their position as leading banks serving the Curia. With the election of the Ligurian Sixtus IV in 1471, the Florentines hoped for a friendly atmosphere in Rome, which the appointment of Giovanni Tornabuoni, the director of the Rome Medici bank, signalled. However, the office was no longer a pure privilege and mark of status, but, rather, became more and more of a burden. The relations between Lorenzo de' Medici and Sixtus quickly worsened. A dispute about the acquisition of Imola, the appointment of Francesco Salviati as archbishop of Pisa against Lorenzo's will, and, finally, the battle over Città di Castello led to a rupture between them in July 1474.²⁶⁶

2.4 Colony of German Curial Officials and Envoys in Rome

The colony of German clerics provided for an increase in the cash flow from the north to Rome. Their number had increased to about 975 during the pontificate of Martin V, even though the most important offices in the Chamber and the chancellery were held by Italians and Frenchmen.²⁶⁷ In most cases, the German Curial officials did not belong to the inner circle of the papal court, nor did they have any Apostolic functions.²⁶⁸ In addition to clergymen, the number of German artisans also increased greatly, but the latter were not interesting as clients for the Curia-based banks.²⁶⁹ There were fewer German merchants, mercenaries, and students in Rome than in many other Italian cities.²⁷⁰ It is scarcely possible to make definitive statements on the development of the size and financial resources of the German colony at the papal court in the following decades of the fifteenth century, as there are widely divergent details in the literature. Many historians underscore the fact that the German presence was very strong at times. It was most pronounced during the papacy of Pius II. However, the quality of the offices held by Germans continued to decline. After the middle of the century, there are said to have been no German clerics in the service of the Curia at all.²⁷¹ When one compares the popes' individual terms of

266 Frantz (1880).

267 Maas (1981), p. 19; Weiss (1991), p. 60; Schuchard (1994), pp. 53–56; Schuchard (2001), p. 27; Israel (2005), p. 59. On the institutionalization of the College of Procurators, see Sohn (1997), pp. 74–75.

268 Schuchard (1994), p. 55.

269 Schulz (1994); Schuchard (1999); Schulz/Schuchard (2005). In these studies, the significance of the founding of a brotherhood of bakers, the association of journeymen bakers, and the German Church Santa Maria dell'Anima and its institutions are depicted.

270 Weigle (1959); Varanini (1995).

271 Schuchard (1994), p. 56: "Dopo la metà del Quattrocento praticamente non esistono tedeschi presso la Camera apostolica. Chierici camerati e segretari di origine tedesca si ritrovano solamente all'inizio del Cinquecento."

office, small variations can be seen; they do not, however, change the fact that, until the death of Paul II, no striking decline in the number of Germans in Rome can be discerned.²⁷² In 1471, for example, out of forty-nine notaries, three quarters were said to have come from German dioceses.²⁷³ The only statistical values that can be obtained from the evaluation of the notarial records from 1471 to 1484 show the proportion of Germans to be 7.3 per cent. This is, however, only a value for the Rione quarter and cannot be extrapolated for the entire population of Rome.²⁷⁴ In spite of all the uncertainties regarding the extent of potential German clientele in Rome, it can be stated unequivocally that it was too small to be of interest to the Florentine bankers solely for the trade in bills of exchange. It offered possibilities of additional business, but this was concluded more in credit operations than in monetary transactions.

2.5 Trade Impediments

Monetary transactions by means of bills of exchange between Germany and the Curia were only possible when several prerequisites were met, ones that are essential to free and secure trade with money and goods. The municipal regulations on exchange hubs were not allowed to hinder the activities of the bankers. Furthermore, the acquisition of goods and their transport to international banking places, to offset them against money transactions there, had to be secure. During the fifteenth century, possible negative influences can be ascertained again and again, but it is nearly impossible to quantify their effects on the business transactions investigated here. Because no serial sources, such as customs revenue or account books, have survived that make possible conclusions about merchants' revenues, there are only a few passages in deeds and letters that report difficulties caused by these factors. For this reason, there remains only the possibility of describing them briefly and pointing out that they may be responsible for a drop in turnover and were of significance in the strategical decisions of the Florentines. Wolfgang

A few years later she formulated somewhat more cautiously. Schuchard (2001), p. 28: "Man kann davon ausgehen, daß sich also die deutsche Präsenz an der Kurie im Laufe des 15. Jahrhunderts allmählich verringerte. Ich formuliere diese Aussage allerdings so vorsichtig, weil wir für das letzte Jahrhundertviertel den Bereich gesicherter Kenntnisse verlassen und uns auf den schwankenden Boden der Spekulation begeben müssen." ('It can be assumed that the German presence at the Curia gradually declined in the course of the fifteenth century. However, I am formulating this statement so cautiously because, for the last quarter of the century, we leave the field of solid knowledge behind and must repair to the shaky ground of speculation.')

272 Schuchard (1994), pp. 54–56.

273 Noack (1927), p. 9. See Noack (1907); Deutsches Historisches Institut in Rom (1916–); Schuchard (1987); Schwarz (1991); Schuchard (1992). In the fifteenth century, however, the German colony surrounding the papal court was so big that there is still a great deal of research to be done.

274 Schulz/Schuchard (2005), p. 34.

von Stromer was certainly correct to draw attention to the fact that none of these impediments stopped trade in the long term. The risks were, however, so great that only an enterprise that had sufficient resources to get through lean years was able to make a profit.²⁷⁵

The legal guidelines for the work of the Italian banks at the Curia that were issued during the Councils of Constance and Basel were answers to exceptional situations that could not be applied to Florentine-German relations outside of the conciliar framework.²⁷⁶ Other than during these years, no laws are known from Upper or Southern German regions that explicitly opposed exchange transactions to the Curia. Rather, the council of the city of Cologne apparently found these transfers interesting and were under the impression that the Italians' business would go well and one could charge them a sales tax. Thus, in 1401, it decreed: *Item die Walen soelen van eyne yeckligem hondert guelden, die sij oever berck weselen, eynen gulden zo assise geven [...]*.²⁷⁷

To ascribe the sparse presence of Florentines in the Hanseatic region to the fear of strong Italian competition, as Philippe Dollinger surmised, seems somewhat unrealistic, as such a competitive danger cannot be discerned in the sources. But remote threats often seem greater and worse. In 1397, Prussian cities asked the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order to refuse Lombards entry to their country.²⁷⁸ In several gatherings, the Hanse had clearly spoken out against the penetration of Italian merchants into their economic area.²⁷⁹ From 1405 to 1406, local retailers also resisted wholesale merchants from Nuremberg, who also provided exchange transactions.²⁸⁰ However, the implementation of protectionist resolutions was apparently not as strict as their wording: the resolutions of 1406 were not enforced at all.²⁸¹ Moreover, the Hanse had realized that it was actually in their own interest to tolerate at least one or two Italians.²⁸² A decision to expel the Italians was again made at the Hanse Diet in Lüneburg on 10 April 1412. This time, as well, there were no consequences: *dat in den steden bii der see belegghen noch in Pruszen de Lumbarde nene handelinge in kopenschop noch in wesslinge hebben schullen*.²⁸³ Gerhard Fouquet has concluded that 'the Lombards never had an easy position in Hanseatic cities.'²⁸⁴ And Richard Goldthwaite writes: "Only in northern Germany was their penetration

275 Stromer (1970a), p. 67.

276 See below pp. 309 and 319.

277 Stein (1895), vol. 2, p. 137.

278 Schildhauer et al. (1977), p. 146. – On the Dutch attempts to expand into the Hanseatic region, see Spading (1970); Spading (1973).

279 Dollinger (1966), p. 252.

280 On the protests of the retailers in Lübeck against Nuremberg merchants, see Birkner (1929), p. 20; Nordmann (1933b), p. 5.

281 Birkner (1929), p. 23.

282 Nordmann (1933b), p. 25.

283 Koppmann (1870–1893), p. 58; Fouquet (1998), pp. 196–197.

284 Fouquet (1998), pp. 192–193: "die Lombarden in den hansischen Städten [hatten] von jeher keinen leichten Stand." See his remarks there on Hanse restrictions with regard to Italians.

somewhat blunted by the organized resistance of the Hanseatic cities.”²⁸⁵ These views stand in contrast to theories that it was only toward the end of the history of the Hanse that protectionism and a tendency to set up economic barriers played a role. On the contrary, until about 1470, the Hanse were informed by ideas of economic freedom and the extensive liberty of the economic entrepreneur.²⁸⁶ Rolf Hammel-Kiesow has shown that even the prohibitions of the mercantile societies with non-Hanseatic merchants were often temporary measures in trade disputes and were not directed against Florentines.²⁸⁷ The following account of the Florentine presence in Lübeck, which lasted nearly six decades, shows that there was a peaceful collaboration between the merchants from Lübeck and those from Italy. This was based on the fact that the Florentines – with the cashless transfer of funds to the Curia – offered a service that also brought an important benefit to local authorities, one which the local merchants could not provide in this form. There certainly was never any danger that the Italians might want to develop a second Bruges in the north. Thus, they always let a Florentine go about his business undisturbed.²⁸⁸

In the years after the Council, the relations of Florentine bankers and Germany were influenced by events that did not come from the Curia, but, rather, from King Sigismund’s court. In March 1418, a conflict between the Roman king and the Republic of Venice, smouldering for years, broke out again. Sigismund declared a trade boycott and forced the Upper German merchants to join it.²⁸⁹ Genoa and Milan were supposed to take Venice’s place as international marketplaces. The call for a boycott had serious consequences, particularly for the Nuremberg merchants. Wilhelm I Rummel advocated for a diplomatic solution to the conflict and undertook a journey to Venice in November 1418 on behalf of the king.²⁹⁰ Evidently, he did not achieve much, for the trade blockade remained in place until 1433 and reduced German merchants’ revenue considerably. Many patrons of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi withdrew their representatives

285 Goldthwaite (1980), p. 39. See also Roover (1970a), p. 94.

286 Vogel (1937), p. 8. See Koppmann (1870–1893), I. 4., p. 397 § 14; UB Lübeck, V no. 545. – For a long time, historians considered it a *Communis Opinio* that the Hanse were credit adverse and therefore adverse to progress and to Lombards. They concluded from the decisions of the Hanse to prohibit buying and selling on credit. See Dollinger (1966), pp. 267–271. Subsequently, further research has revised this view and depicted a more differentiated picture. More recent research has shown that credit among the Hanse merchants became more and more important and a matter of course, although it remained forbidden in dealings with foreigners. See Schildhauer et al. (1977), p. 148; Jenks (1982); North (1991).

287 Hammel-Kiesow (2004), p. 57.

288 Nordmann (1933b), p. 25; Dollinger (1966), pp. 252 and 268–271.

289 Stieda (1894), pp. 5–36; Klein (1955–1956), p. 318; Stromer (1986); Schmidt (2006).

290 In his diary, the papal secretary Cantelmi quotes from a Venetian’s letter of 3 November to a man from Perugia in Geneva: Io Giovanello Bontempi in Vinezia a messer Rugiero de Perusa: Qui é venuto uno gran mercatante tedesco che ha nome Guielmo Romolo per parte del’imperadore a proferire bon acordo a la Signoria. Et ha portato salvoconducto per anbasadori dela Signoria che sono eletti cioè messer Francesco Foscari, el quale non accepta, di che in suo luoco é stato eletto misser Ruberto Moresino e l’altro si é Fantin Micheli crede se cavalcaranno et in questo mese. Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna, Manoscritto 52, busta I, n. 14, c. 28.

or even became insolvent. However, not all merchants complied; there were frequent arrests of Germans captured by Sigismund's people on the roads to Venice. The Rummels are said to have continued to go about their business in Venice on a regular basis. The Venetians complained about heavy losses in trade with the North, but Sigismund's measures probably inflicted greater damage on his own subjects than on the Venetians.²⁹¹ When the deliveries from Germany failed to appear, it must have been very difficult for the Florentine Curia-based bankers to settle bills of exchange of German origin. Strangely enough, however, not a single remark can be found from the city on the Arno in which these problems are addressed. Nor can anything be reported regarding diplomatic interventions with the king to support the Venetian banking centre. It seems almost impossible that this trade boycott did not burden German-Florentine trade relations, yet its effects on payments transactions can only be documented in a few cases. This observation can be assessed as an expression of the still relative insignificance of financial transactions with Germany via Venice in those years. A failure of the Bruges banking centre would certainly have had far more serious consequences. It is possible that the Florentines gained economic advantages through this trade war that a third party fought against one of their great competitors in the immediate hinterland of Venice and the Adriatic Sea. However, it does not seem to have had any effect on their engagement in Upper Germany. No documents were found in which an increase in their efforts of expansion into this region or an extension of business relations with Upper German traders as a consequence of the trade boycott could be inferred.²⁹²

On the other hand, the repressive measures that King Sigismund authorized against the Florentines on 14 September 1418 did have a significant effect. In this decree, he allowed the papal auditor Friedrich Deys to recoup goods belonging to Florentine merchants being transported through Germany. The cleric's claim resulted from a court case against the heirs of the Florentine Matteo de' Borromei from San Miniato, in which he – according to Sigismund – was unjustifiably fined 1,000 ducats.²⁹³ There is no documentation on the reason for this lawsuit,

291 Stomer (1995a), p. 154; Stomer (1995b); Wirtz (2006), p. 34; Stefanik (2015), pp. 9–11.

292 See also Klein (1955–1956); Stomer (1995b). Stomer (1995a), p. 154, writes: “Das Zusammenspiel zwischen dem Nürnberger Bankhaus der Rummel mit Picoranus als Verbindungsmann zu Venedig und der Medicibank verdichtete sich zu gesellschaftlichen – und landesverräterischen Beziehungen, blieb jedoch bis in die Gegenwart unentdeckt.” (“The interplay between the Nuremberg banking house of the Rummels with Picoranus as a liaison with Venice and the Medici bank into social – and treasonous – relations, remained, however, undetected to the present day.”) No documentation for the cultivation of relations between the Rummel and Medici families mentioned here could be found.

293 Altmann (1896–1900), I, no. 3460. – Friedrich Deys, also known as Theis von Thesingen, occupied various notable positions throughout his career: In 1408, he served as the official and general vicar to the Archbishop of Salzburg, took on the role of auditor at the Council of Constance, acted as an auditor for Martin V, was designated as the Bishop of Lavant from 1422 to 1424, and later assumed the office of Bishop of Chiemsee from 1424 to 1429. See Gatz (2001), pp. 133–134. There are very many sources regarding this enigmatic figure: Remling (1853), pp. 107 and 113; Anthony von Siegenfeld (1883), p. 406; Finke (1890), pp. 347 and 357; Nagl

nor on where it took place. In Chamber files there is an entry on the payment of *servitia* in 1406 by Archbishop Eberhard von Neuhaus from Salzburg. As payers, Deys, procurator of the payer, and *magistri Mathei d. s. Miniatae, d. pape secretarii* are named.²⁹⁴ Thus, Borromei was a Curial cleric and not a merchant. A second indication of the German's more important monetary business comes from his appointment as papal collector in the ecclesiastical provinces of Bremen and Riga, and in the Kamień, Verden, and Schleswig dioceses in the same year.²⁹⁵ In both instances, large amounts of money were transferred from Germany to Rome. In one of these transfers there were probably disputes that did not go before an ecclesiastical court but had to be resolved by a secular one. Evidently, the imposition of repressive measures against the Florentine merchants in Germany impressed them, for – when they went to the Council of Basel – they demanded to be protected from them.²⁹⁶ Concrete and quantifiable consequences of these measures on monetary transactions between Germany and the Curia, however, cannot be proven. The measures were rescinded only on 2 July 1493, by Frederick III.²⁹⁷

After 1429, the trade routes and the procurement markets between the Baltic Sea region and the international trading centres Bruges and Venice were seriously affected by warlike conflicts between the Hanse cities and Denmark. These conflicts were decided in favour of the Hanse in the Treaty of Vordingborg in 1435. The ensuing Dutch-Hanseatic War led, in the Treaty of Copenhagen, to the Hanse having to accept the presence of the Dutch in the Baltic region. The efforts of the Florentines working in Lübeck to procure goods in that region and, as countervalue, for bills of exchange to transport them to the south were disrupted by these events. Evidence of this can be found in 1446, when Gherardo Bueri wrote to Florence that he had heard that a ceasefire agreement in the war between Novgorod, the Hanse, and the Teutonic Order had been reached. Now he hoped he would soon be able to send the ermine furs that had been ordered.²⁹⁸ Farther south, the First Margrave War (1449–50) between the city of Nuremberg and Margrave Albrecht Achilles created dangers on the trade routes to Venice and probably made lengthy detours necessary. Ten years later Nuremberg was once again massively restricted in its trade by a nobleman. Duke William III of Saxony felt cheated by the Paumgartner banking house when, in 1461, he had the bank transfer money to Venice for his pilgrimage to the Holy Land. After his return, he demanded in vain that the bank return part of this money back to

(1899), p. 48; Deutsches Historisches Institut in Rom (1916–) III/IV, pp. 97, 146, and 164; Sulowska-Kurasiowa / Kuraś (1992), p. 46; Holbach (2002), pp. 352–353; Esch (2016), p. 61. – In 1424 Friedrich Deys sued the Mercanzia in Florence, as he still had an outstanding credit balance in the amount of 150 cameral ducats and 32 Rhe. fl. at the insolvent bank del Vigna-Spini. See ASFi, Mercanzia 4359, cc. 175v–177v. Reference from Lorenz Böninger.

294 Göller (1924a), p. 145.

295 Favier (1966), p. 737.

296 See below p. 319.

297 ASFi, Miscellanea Repubblicana, Busta I, no. 22. See also ASFi, Signori, Minutari, 16 (1491–1502), cc. 59r–60v.

298 Weissen (2003), p. 73. On this ceasefire, see Goetz (1922), p. 139.

him. He declared a feud with Nuremberg and confiscated its merchants' goods. Only in 1466 was the city of Erfurt able to broker a peace agreement.²⁹⁹

The trade routes were also regularly disturbed in Italy by wars or threats of war, for they were always also connected to reprisals against the merchants of the powers involved in the conflicts. A Florentine's reports from 1423 have survived and show his efforts to prevent caravans of goods coming from Flanders from entering the territory of Milan, as the merchants there feared they would be confiscated.³⁰⁰ In 1449, Giovanni Talani reported that he had great difficulty in transporting goods from Florence to Lübeck. The only open road was via Geneva and it was now blocked in Lombardy.³⁰¹ The war between Venice and Florence (1467–68) was of major significance for the flow of money between Germany and Italy. Although there were few open hostilities, those few sufficed to completely paralyse the Venetian marketplace for some time. In November 1467, the manager of the Medici bank in Venice complained that business had gone to sleep.³⁰² Nor were the marketplace in Bruges or the roads along the Rhine spared from disruption. The Hundred Years' War (1337–1453) and the Armagnac-Burgundian Civil War (1410–19) made roads and cities unsafe and certainly hindered any trade at times.³⁰³

The merchants from Italy, France, Spain, and Germany cultivated their relationships on a few international marketplaces, where they carried out their business with one another. These markets were of fundamental importance for the functioning of the Europe-wide trade in goods and money. Bruges and Venice were of central importance for the Curia-based banks' German business. Information on international exchange rates, the fluctuations of which were updated daily, could be found there.³⁰⁴ The Italians were also able to establish long-term personal relationships with Germans in these centres and build up the foundations of trust necessary for their collaboration. The prerequisite for successful interaction was the presence of representatives of all the involved trading nations. During the 1450s, there were simultaneous disruptions of this trade between the Germans and the Florentines in Bruges and in Venice. When, in 1451, Cosimo de' Medici managed to get the Republic of Florence to give up its decades' long alliance with Venice and supported Condottiere Francesco Sforza in the latter's acquisition of dominion over Milan, Venice responded on 1 June with the *Proclamatio expulsionis florentinorum*. This banishment of all Florentines did not only affect the merchants in Venice, but also those in the territories. German merchants no longer met their partners in Verona and Padua. Matthieu

299 Krag (1914), p. 23.

300 Weissen (2017).

301 ASFi, MAP 6, no. 67: *Intorno alla tornatta mia di là non vi posso per anchora dare né dire quando si fia e questo per chagione di questo fatto di Lombardia perché non si potendo mandare a Ginevra roba non di quivi partirmi per chagione d'alchuna roba ò a mandare di là, la quale non posso mandare per alltra via.*

302 Roover (1963), pp. 123–124.

303 Stöckly (1995), p. 158.

304 Denzel (2000); Denzel (2008).

2.6 Development of Prospects for Profit in Trade with Bills of Exchange

Scherman has shown on the basis of an analysis of the Salviati account books that the exchange business between London and Venice almost came to a complete standstill until 1454, when the Treaty of Lodi removed the tension and the Florentines were allowed to go back to Venice.³⁰⁵

The fact that no other marketplace was able to take over monetary transactions from northern Europe was caused by a random coincidence, for the possibilities of cooperation between Germans and Florentines simultaneously worsened in Bruges as well. In a conflict with the Duke of Burgundy, the Hanse decided, on 4 July 1451, to discontinue trading in Bruges and to relocate the trading centre to Deventer. This blockade against Flanders lasted six years. The extent of the repercussions for the Italians' business is expressed in the correspondence of associations from Florence, Lucca, Genoa, Catalonia, and Spain working in Bruges in which, in 1457, they beseeched Lübeck to allow the return of the Hanse merchants. The *intercursus communis mercandis*, the *communis omnium nationum mercancia* was existentially endangered if one of the participating merchants stayed away from it.³⁰⁶ Thus, in the middle of the fifteenth century, cashless monetary transactions by means of bills of exchange were massively disrupted for several years. In Bruges a settlement of German cash remittances to Rome through the sale of goods was not even possible; in Venice, it was only possible if it proceeded through non-Florentines. Niccodemo Spinelli, Tommaso's brother, played an important role in all this. He had become a citizen of Venice on 7 September 1432 and did business there as a merchant until 1477.³⁰⁷

2.6 Development of Prospects for Profit in Trade with Bills of Exchange

A Curia-based banker who – during the period of time that this work covers – was seeking to expand and considering whether Germany could be commercially of interest for the establishment of his branch office or the direct collaboration with a correspondent, was looking at a market with highly volatile earnings prospects. The volume of money with which he was able to make bills of exchange grew strongly after 1410, when John XXIII was widely recognized in Germany, and the Curia's coffers, which had dried up during the Great Western Schism, could again count on Rhenish florins. This brief upturn was abruptly ended by the Council of Constance. Although the Council did resolve the schism, the concordat of Martin V with the

305 Mueller (1992); Scherman (2016).

306 Letter of the Florentine printed by Koppmann (1870–1893), pp. 352–355, nos. 491–495; Rörig (1959), p. 377. On the application of the transfer of account by the Hansa as commercial leverage, and, specifically, on the crisis of 1451 to 1457, see Poeck (2000), pp. 51–53; Daenell/Wernicke (2001), pp. 404–410; Hammel-Kiesow (2004), p. 96.

307 Nicodemus de Spinellis qd Leonardi, Cives Veneciarum, <http://www.civesveneciarum.net/detttaglio.php?id=2580>, versione 56/2017–02–01, 02.07.2021.

2 Market Attractiveness

German bishops had a negative effect on the extent of monetary transfers. It was only during the years that the Council of Basel was in session that temporarily lucrative business between a German trading centre and the papal court existed as an exceptional situation. This business largely came to a standstill after five years because of the schism of Felix V. Nor could the Vienna Concordat increase the sum of revenue flowing to Rome. It was only the collection of money from the Crusades from the second half of the 1450s on that again led to a growth in the demand for transactional services. At the same time, however, dissatisfaction grew with furnishing financial benefits for the interests of the Church.

The less than favourable prospects for a growing, or at least stable, market with bills of exchange was further dampened by periodically severe obstructions regarding the procurement of goods in the Baltic region and free trade in Bruges and Venice. The years between 1410 and 1415, and between 1457 and 1466, were, for a Florentine banker, the only periods of time during which Germany would appear attractive for bills of exchange.