

# *Obediencia, reformatio* and *veritas*: Ecclesiological Debates during the Western Great Schism (1378-1417)

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The following is a brief presentation of the polemical strategies of textual discourses during the Great Schism. Our aim is to think of the history of the Great Schism as the history of the symbolic violence shaping the debates. The paper suggests joining the recent movement of what Jean-Pascal Gay calls »a cultural history of the controversial fact« to better grasp the ecclesiological advances of this late medieval period.

*Keywords:* Great Schism; ecclesiology; polemics; theology; violence; universities; Paris; Jean Gerson

*Quid est igitur quod innuis mihi quasi non liceat de potentia Petri disputare? Nonne de omnipotentia Dei quotidie perquirimus?*<sup>1</sup> With these words, delivered during a famous sermon in front of the Avignonesse Pontiff Benedict XIII, Jean Gerson expounded an idea dear to him: the right of discussion concerning papal authority, a sort of *jus disputandi*, already sketched by John of Paris during the years 1302-1303.<sup>2</sup> With this claim, Gerson demonstrated that it was possible to discuss Peter's power, *de potentia Petri disputare*, within the framework of rules set up by the scholastic art. Such a discussion was, literally speaking, to be an investigation (*inquirere, perquirimus*). Indeed, if theologians spent all day long discussing God's *omnipotentia*, why would they not also discuss Peter's power?<sup>3</sup>

Exploring this attempt to re-shape controversy within the late medieval Latin church, the following is a brief analysis of the polemical strategies of textual discourses during the Great Western Schism.<sup>4</sup> The article aims to rethink the history of the Great Schism as a history of symbolic violence shaping specific cultures of debate. With this aim, the article joins the enterprise of what Jean-Pascal Gay calls »a cultural history of the controversial fact« to provide a better understanding of the ecclesiological advances of the late medieval period<sup>5</sup>.

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1 Jean Gerson, *Sermo habitus Tarascone coram Benedicto XIII*, ed. Glorieux, V, § 212, 72.

2 See the *quaestio* of Jean Quidort, *De potestate regia et papali*, ed. Bleienstein, c. 22, 192-196: *An licitum sit de huiusmodi pertinentibus ad papam disputare et iudicare*. Cf. also the later insistence: *Tanto magis in talibus est veritatem inquirere, quanto periculosius esset in hoc non cognoscere veritatem*. On this topic, see Briguglia, *Inquirere veritatem*, 13-14.

3 Jean Gerson, *Sermo habitus Tarascone coram Benedicto XIII*, ed. Glorieux, V, § 212, 72.

4 See Sère, *Débats d'opinion*.

5 Gay, *Lettres de controverses*, 10-11.

At the outset, a brief review of the historical context of the Great Schism, in force from 1378 to 1418, can serve a double purpose: it can offer a compressed background and present the complexity of different cultures of conflict resolution coming into play. In April 1378, the Archbishop of Bari, Bartolomeo Prignano, was elected pope and called himself Urban VI, but the election was contested by the French part of the Sacred College, the College of Cardinals, who decided in September 1378 to elect a different pope, Robert of Genève, who called himself Clement VII, thus beginning the Great Schism. As a consequence of the Schism, all Christendom split into two obediences, an ›Urbanist‹ and a ›Clementist‹ one. The geopolitic map of the period aligned itself with the map of these two obediences: while France, Castille and Scotland were Clementist, England and Aragon were Urbanist. The Schism has been divided into two phases by historians like H el ene Millet. During the first period (1378-1394), the contestants followed a ›path of winning‹, in which each camp tried to impose the rights of its own pope. During the second phase, from 1394 onwards, each camp saw union of the church as the paramount goal. Yet the proposed methods of resolution varied. From the 1390s, for example, the University of Paris proposed the *via cessionis*, that is to say the double abdication of the popes in order to reelect a new one. In 1398, a third assembly of the French clergy passed a vote entailing a formal subtraction of obedience in order to force the pope to resign. An alternative solution, the *via concilii*, saw a council as the preferred instrument of union, resulting in the councils of Pisa in 1409, of Rome in 1412, and finally the Council of Constance in 1414-1418. As is known, the Council of Constance elected a new sole pope, Martin V, ending the Great Schism on November 11th, 1417.

Let us, secondly, turn to a methodological consideration. Rather than writing a ›history of ideas‹, it seems more meaningful for a history of controversy today to reconstitute the intertextuality of the period, to observe the way in which texts echo each other. Polemical texts, understood broadly here as texts setting out opposing positions, necessarily become more understandable when these contexts are made clear. As Marie-Dominique Chenu did in his work on Thomas Aquinas, or Philippe B uttgen in his work on Luther, we need to establish the ›doctrinal conjuncture‹ of the Gersonian period, to use the broad panorama of a relatively brief historical experience which also allows us to articulate long-term trends.<sup>6</sup>

Methodological impulses can be taken from Michel Foucault (followed by Alain de Libera), who stated that texts make sense only in conceptual networks and, especially, in networks of particular historical corpora.<sup>7</sup> Debates on specific issues are, after all, not isolated but take place within much wider discussions, and this polemicity of discursive practices is fully apparent in the field of ecclesiology, which cannot be separated from questions of power and symbolic violence. As medievalists, we can also take up impulses from the research field we might call the ›history of controversies‹,<sup>8</sup> which, deriving from the history of science, has mostly been suggested by historians of the modern period.<sup>9</sup>

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6 See Chenu, *Introduction   l' tude de saint Thomas d'Aquin*; B uttgen, *Luther et philosophie*. See also Piron, *Contexte, situation, conjuncture*.

7 Foucault, *Arch ologie du savoir*; de Libera, *Analyses du vocabulaire*.

8 For instance, see Fabiani, *Dispute, pol miques et controverses*.

9 Among many, see Lilti, *Querelles et controverses*; Gay, *Morales en conflit*; Gay, *Lettres de controverse*; de Franceschi, *Crise th ologique-politique*; Bernat and Bost, * noncer/d noncer l'autre*; Postel, *Trait  des invectives*; Nagy et al., *Controverses religieuses*; Jouhaud, *Pouvoirs de litt rature*, or Burnand and Paschoud, *Espaces de la controverse*; Broggio, *Teologia et la politica*.

The period of the Great Schism, a brief but dense historical constellation, allows us to bring the heuristic tools suggested by these perspectives to bear: we can not only study polemical exchanges and their links to socio-historic realities, but also inquire about the cultural productivity of the debates themselves, the practices they engendered or pushed aside, and the way they produced redistributions or new balances of power. As such an approach can uncover, debates themselves can become objects of history, appropriating the issues of a conflict and bringing the basis of political and factual dynamics to light.

To put it differently, debates are not just interesting because of their content and arguments, but also as historical objects in themselves – and indeed even as historical actors or forces, which may very well effect specific transformations. We may thus engage in an approach which aims to establish a ›polemology‹, though this does not necessarily mean that polemical discourses or their contents should be central for their own sake. Rather, the issue at stake is the ›culture of conflict‹, and the goal is to write a ›cultural history of controversies‹.

To break this down to concrete methodical concerns, we can depart from the assumption that debates occur in a precise context of production with bases, sources and textual networks. Such backgrounds enable us to construct a framework of the debates within the temporal context of the events. As a next step, we can describe the practices of the debates in a phenomenological approach providing a thorough description. Further questions may concern the genres of the debate, its rhythm, the circulation of the debates, the strategies of engagement, the resulting networks, their solidarities, affiliations and allegiances as well as the issues of the debates. The function of such a narrative and phenomenological approach is to situate the roots of the specific genre of debate in its context, its conditions of possibilities as well as in its practices, in order to observe the production of intellectual or doctrinal content at work.

To provide an example illustrating this approach, the following pages will develop the central issue of the period set out by Gerson in the opening quotation above – that is, the concept of *obedientia*, or rather, its inversion, the *jus resistendi*. This example can help us to follow the interpenetration of doctrinal issues and debates, documenting how debates produce doctrines. The discussion of this issue began with preliminary works in the years 1395-1396. A seminal text in which everything was concentrated was then produced with the well-known Simon of Cramaud's *De substraccione obedience*, also called *Nunc reges intelligite!* The issues raised at this point then continued to be debated until 1418. Particular texts throughout this development allow us to follow the reception of the idea of a *jus resistendi*, in the form of rejections, reluctances or adhesions. A particular thread which can be highlighted as a coherent development concerns the frequent use of the exegesis of Galatians 2. 11, an episode in which Paul resists Peter. The later episodes of the debate played on controversial exegesis, with texts responding to each other and establishing deeper connections. The following discussion will remain close to the exegesis of Galatians 2. 11 to keep the argumentation focused.

*Paul in front of Peter: the exegesis of a model of resistance (Galatians 2. 11)*

The polemical literature of the Great Schism abundantly drew its models of behavior and its rhetorical justifications from biblical figures. Biblical history showed that it was not unusual for inferiors to correct or reprimand (*reprehendere*) their immediate superiors. The examples quoted were all the more convincing as the inferiors addressed the political elders even if these were Moses, David, Achaz, Sedecias, Herod or Peter. The most developed biblical example is that of Paul who resisted Peter, *qui in facie restitit*.<sup>10</sup>

One might say that a veritable chain of reflection spread around Galatians 2. 11 during the period under consideration, to the point of constituting an exegetic thread in which Paul was set up as a model of resistance to the Petrinian authority. He offered himself as the patron of Subtractionists, who subscribed to an attitude of resistance to their pope.

In Antioch, Paul blamed Peter for not having discerned the impropriety of an obligation of the Jewish Law concerning the converted heathen.<sup>11</sup> He summoned Peter for this error and confronted him. From the time of the Fathers of the Church and particularly the Latin Fathers onwards, exegetical efforts were directed to this verse.<sup>12</sup> Medieval people might especially be familiar with the well-known contradictory interpretations advanced by Augustine and Jerome. While this caused no offense before the thirteenth century, the tone changed in the context of the Great Schism.

During the 1380s, Henry of Langenstein and Honoré Bouvet both quoted the verse in order to appeal to the council as a forum of dispute settlement, in the style of the early stages of the Church.<sup>13</sup> In 1395, a main text of the time, the Epistle of the University of Paris, then made Paul a figure representing the *jus resistendi* in front of Peter.<sup>14</sup> In the same sphere of influence, Simon of Cramaud in 1397 affirmed that there could be no doubt: Paul was the patron of the Subtractionists: *Faisons comme fit saint Paul à saint Pierre, ne resista-t-il pas in facie? Autrefois a esté preschée et pratiquée cette voye de sustraxion*.<sup>15</sup> The verbal adjectives selected refer to the imperative of a *jus resistendi*: *Si papa faciat aliquid quod scandalizet Ecclesiam [...], resistendum esset sibi in facie sicut Paulus resistit Petro*.<sup>16</sup>

10 On the same topic, see Izbicki, Authority of Peter and Paul; Posthumus Meyjes, *Controverse tussen Petrus en Paulus*; Posthumus Meyjes, *Jean Gerson et l'assemblée de Vincennes*; Posthumus Meyjes, *Iconografie en Primaat; Froehlich, Fallibility Instead of Infallibility?*; Froehlich, *Biblical Interpretation*. See also the old work of Overbeck, *Über die Auffassung des Streits*. For the Lutheran exegesis, see Lönning, *Paulus und Petrus*; Feld, *Christus Diener der Sünde*.

11 Galatians 2, 11: »But when Cephas came to Antioch, I made a protest against him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong.« The Bible version is *Biblia sacra juxta vulgatam Clementinam*, Rome-Tournai-Paris, 1938.

12 See Fédou, Jérôme, *lecteur de l'épître aux Galates*, 583.

13 Henry of Langenstein, *Consilium pacis de unione et reformatione ecclesiae*, ed. Du Pin, c. 830.; Honoré Bouvet, *Somnium super materia schismatis*, ed. Arnold, 89: *Pape [...] ad instar Pauli qui Petrum in verecunde reprehendit?*

14 *Epistola Parisiensis (secunda)*, inc.: *Sanctissimo in Christo Patri D. Benedicto divina providentia sancte romane ecclesie [...]*, Paris, BNF lat. 14643, fol. 49r-52r, fol. 49v (14 April 1395, edited 25 August 1395).

15 Simon of Cramaud, *1<sup>er</sup> Discours à l'assemblée du clergé*, ed. Bourgeois du Chastenot, 123.

16 Simon of Cramaud, *De substraccione obediencie*, ed. Kaminsky, 90-91. See Pierre Bertrand, *Apparatus*, on *Ne Romani*, Clem. 1.3.2., quoted *ibid.*, 179 (from the manuscript Washington D. C., Catholic University, 195, fol. 152va): *Unde si papa vellet totum thesaurum Ecclesie dare parentibus suis, aut Ecclesiam Sancti Petri destruere et facere palacium parentibus suis, aut eis dare patrimonium beati Petri, quod non licet, vel aliquid huiusmodi – non esset permittendum, sed esset ei resistendum et non obediendum, sine omni ipsius deposicione*.

At the heart of this attitude of resistance was one simple question: *Cur ita facis?*, a biblical reference to the Book of Job (9. 12). Few authors evoked the sapiential origin of the question sent to the very God who announces in the Book of Job: *Quis dicere potest: Cur ita facis?* ›Who can say to Him: ›What are you doing?‹ *What are you doing* is to be understood as a condemnation of the will of the superior, which presupposes some courage. *Cur ita facis?* could thus become a syntagm for a refusal of the omnipotence of the prince, as much as a criticism of the discretionary and despotic power of the universal pontiff.<sup>17</sup> The academics and other Subtractionists seized on it to justify a limitation of the *plenitudo potestatis* of the pope. Their gesture was all the more confrontational as the *Dictatus papae*, and later on the Decretum Gratiani and various theocratic arguments, had always asserted the opposite: the pope was indebted to nobody concerning his actions, he was accountable only to God, he was above discussion and could not be judged by anyone.<sup>18</sup> We know the assertions of the theory elaborated by Boniface VIII in 1302, according to which »the pope is above any judgement, above any disapproval and above any criticism: *Cui non est qui dicat ›Cur ita faciat?‹*«. <sup>19</sup> Thus, the question extended beyond the simple interrogation to become a more general posture, that of the resistance to arbitrary absolute power.

#### *From jus resistendi to jus appellandi*

Through the course of the debates, the exegesis of the Paulinian verse demonstrated the importance of a doctrinal construction which was gradually refined: from the *jus resistendi* of the years 1395-1396, the theorists deduced a *jus appellandi*, a right of appeal which had been prepared by a sort of *jus disputandi* dealing with papal power and the precept of fraternal correction.

In 1404, Jean Gerson, then chancellor of the University of Paris, harangued Benedict XIII at Tarascon by giving a virulent sermon.<sup>20</sup> This text signaled the break, or at least the estrangement, of the chancellor with regard to the Avignonese Pope. The scene took place on January 1st of that year. The restoration or restitution of obedience had only been attained a few months before. Now, the pope had to work firmly on the union, and everyone expected him to act. In this situation, Gerson evoked the controversy of Antioch between Peter and Paul in his long sermon, formulating questions in a unique and unprecedented manner. Three doctrinal questions were elaborated around the *jus resistendi*:

17 Cf. Congar, « Réception » comme réalité ecclésiologique, 374.

18 Among many examples, see Tancred, (1235), *Gloss ad Comp.* III, 1, 5, 3, quoted by Tierney, *Foundations of the Conciliar Theory*, 147: *Nec est quid dicat ei, cur ita facis?*; or Alvarez Pelayo († 1353), quoted by Jung, *Un franciscain*, 107: *Successor Petri vicarius Jesu Christi vicem non puri hominis sed veri Dei gerens in terris [...] in omnibus et per omnia potest facere et dicere quicquid placet, auferendo etiam jus suum qui vult, quia non est qui dicit ei Cur ita facis?*

19 *Epistola Parisiensis* (as n. 10), fol. 51r: *Nam cum secundum doctrinam plurimorum jurisconsultorum, quod sepe nobis alias argutum est, papa sit supremus iudex Ecclesie, qui omnia dijudicat et a nemine iudicatur et cui non est quid dicat cur ita faciat.*

20 Jean Gerson, *Sermo habitus Tarascone coram Benedicto XIII*, ed. Glorieux, § 212, 64-90.

Sed auget questionis admirationem (1) cur propter observationem circumcisionis et aliorum legalium Paulus restitit Petro in facie, cum tamen ipse quosdam circumciderit; (2) igitur quo pacto reprehendit ipse quod agebat, et praesertim superiorem in auctoritate, apostolatu seniore et in gratia confirmatum die Pentecostes; (3) qualiter inculpat Paulus eum et jura non recte ambulasse ad veritatem evangelii?<sup>21</sup>

(1) Why, because of the observance of the circumcision and the other Jewish laws, does Paul frontally resist Peter, while he, himself, had nevertheless circumcised some? (2) By what pact does he blame what he had carried out himself, and, especially, why does he face a hierarchical superior, his elder in apostolic terms, a man confirmed in the day grace of Pentecost? (3) How does Paul charge him and assert that Peter didn't walk in the evangelical way of the truth?

Gerson explained the resolution of the conflict: he thought that Peter had welcomed the reprimand with all humility and that neither had, therefore, sinned.<sup>22</sup> But Gerson then argued for a fictional history: if Peter had resisted Paul to his face, refusing to agree, would Paul have withdrawn his obedience to Peter? Wouldn't he have obeyed? Would he have appealed to the Church council? Would this council have been above Peter or the opposite? Would Paul have resisted as his cardinal or as his equal? If Peter had excommunicated him, would he have been afraid? If Peter had persisted in his error, would he have lost the pontificate? Would he have been able to be deposed? By whom? How? Would a council have been able to be celebrated? And what would have happened if Peter had wanted to defend himself by armed force?<sup>23</sup>

Through this series of historical fictions, Gerson widened the reflection on a *jus resistendi*, suggesting that the pope's stubbornness and pertinacity appealed to higher authorities. To put it another way, the right of appeal intervened when the resources of fraternal correction were exhausted. It is broadly apparent that, in spite of its use of exegesis, the subject was rooted in the most ardent questions of contemporary current events. All the themes of the moment were gathered here: the pope's stubbornness, his potential deposition, the authority of the council, the use of strength, the charge of heresy, the just reprimand and so on. In this debate, Gerson showed a lot of courage because, let us remember, the context is a sermon at Tarascon, in front of Pope Benedict XIII, just after the restitution of obedience.

21 Jean Gerson, *Sermo habitus Tarascone coram Benedicto XIII*, ed. Glorieux, 71.

22 Jean Gerson, *Sermo habitus Tarascone coram Benedicto XIII*, ed. Glorieux, 71: *Qui tota sibi humilitate paruit; et ita neuter peccavit, saltem mortaliter*. See also Pierre Plaoul, *Discours de clôture des débats avant le vote*, ed. Du Boulay, IV, 835, 836-843. Pierre Plaoul, *Discours de clôture des débats avant le vote*, ed. Du Boulay, IV, 843: *Ideo Paulus Petrum reprehendit; nec propter hoc indignatus fuit Petrus*.

23 Jean Gerson, *Sermo habitus Tarascone coram Benedicto XIII*, ed. Glorieux, § 212, 71-72: *Quod si Petrus versa vice Paulo restitisset in faciem, nolens acquiescere, an Paulus se ab eo substrahere, an non obedire, an ad Ecclesiae concilium appellare potuerat? Si concilium in hoc superius erat Petro vel e contra? Si Paulus restitit Petro ut ejus cardinalis existens vel ut aequalem se deputans et nihil a Petro auctoritatis, sicut nec Evangelium suum recipiens? Quid, si de facto in Paulum excommunicationis sententias promulgasset, an eas Paulus timuisset? Quid si Petrus perstitisset in hoc errore, numquid eo facto papatum periderat? Quod si non, numquid deponendus tamen erat, et per quos et quomodo? An concilium sine eo potuisset in hoc casu celebrari? Quid si Petrus vi armata errorem suum defendere voluisset, numquid ipso etiam manente papa, vim vi licuisset repellere, aut verbis aut carceribus aut ipsa denique morte? Hieronymus praeterea et Augustinus, doctores eximii, cum discordent in hac materia, numquid alter eorum dicendus sit haereticus? Ille Paulum dispensative mentitum, hic Petrum juste reprehensum fuisse defendit. Porro cur in concilio de cessatione circumcisionis Petrus summus pontifex non tulit sententiam sed Jacobus.*

Yet by delivering this multiplicity of questions to the public sphere of the audience – and so to public debate – including Benedict XIII, Jean Gerson enabled a right of discussion concerning papal authority.<sup>24</sup> He demonstrated how one could go about discussing Peter's power, *de potentia Petri disputare* and, as quoted at the outset of this article, reminded his listeners of the fact that theologians were used to debating divine truth.<sup>25</sup> What Gerson thus denounced was the censorship, or self-censorship, of a reverential theology that discussed only in panegyric words. Furthermore, by speaking of an ›investigation‹ (*inquirere, perquirimus*), he placed the ecclesiological and political debate on the footing of a theological search of a scientific type. It was not a question of being involved in controversy but of looking together, even if the appearances flirted with impropriety and with the transgression of certain tacit limits.<sup>26</sup> Gerson encouraged the pursuit of an inquiry, increasingly asserting that nobody could know the truth of the moment nor the truth of the pope. He encouraged this inquiry not for speculative pleasure but for the sake of practical (that is to say a moral) edification: *Non est disputationis speculativae actus sed aedificationis practicae*.<sup>27</sup>

In his own way, by advocating the right of discussion and by encouraging the debate – albeit a serene and specialized debate – Gerson thus did nothing but spread the Paulinian question to Peter: *Cur ita facis?* He defended the right of criticism by reflection. He defended the right to mature or thoughtful obedience, as opposed to blind obedience. In his interpretation, this right to discussion was attached to the right to resistance, a resistance to arbitrary power and omnipotence by way of reasoned criticism.

The words used by contemporaries thus managed to acquire a doctrine of appeal against the pope – an appeal to the council against the pope – and a critical resistance to power. I would go so far as to say that this doctrine implied the hypothesis of a double magisterium, that of Peter and that of Paul:<sup>28</sup> Paul was seen to assure the doctrinal succession alongside Peter, who embodied the hierarchical succession.<sup>29</sup> Paul's doctrinal arbitration was used to set him up as a paradigm of the theologian, the antonomasia of which paving the way for all other theologians. In this sense, theologians – including Gerson – as spiritual followers of the doctors, apostles and evangelists, were responsible for correcting the pope, as they were

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24 See the *quaestio* of Jean Quidort, *De potestate regia et papali*, ed. Bleienstein, c. 22, 192-196: *An licitum sit de huiusmodi pertinentibus ad papam disputare et iudicare*. Cf. also the later insistence: *Tanto magis in talibus est veritatem inquirere, quanto periculosius esset in hoc non cognoscere veritatem*. On this topic, see Briguglia, *Inquirere veritatem*, 13-14.

25 Jean Gerson, *Sermo habitus Tarascone coram Benedicto XIII*, ed. Glorieux, V, § 212, 72: *Quid est igitur quod innuis mihi quasi non liceat de potentia Petri disputare? Nonne de omnipotentia Dei quotidie perquirimus?*

26 Jean Gerson, *Sermo habitus Tarascone coram Benedicto XIII*, ed. Glorieux, V, § 212, 73: *Quaestiones huiusmodi multiplicare magis et magis satagebat importune nimis studiositas speculatrix in meditatione mea*.

27 Jean Gerson, *Sermo habitus Tarascone coram Benedicto XIII*, ed. Glorieux, V, § 212, 73.

28 On the semantics of ›magisterium‹, see Congar, *Pour une histoire sémantique du terme magisterium*; Congar, *Bref historique des formes du «magistère» et de ses relations avec les docteurs*, 103-104; Congar, *Saint Paul et l'autorité de l'Église romaine*.

29 See Marmursztejn, *Autorité et vérité*.

responsible for the truth of the office of preaching: *summus pontifex qui succedit Petro in apostolatu reprehendi potest publice per doctorem theologum qui in officio praedicationis succedit Paulo*.<sup>30</sup>

We cannot draw the history of the exegesis of Galatians 2. 11 during the Great Schism to a close without including the refutations provoked by this new line of argument. In the pontificalist camp, from very early on Paul's resistance to Peter was seen as an irreverent (*irrevecunde*) resistance.<sup>31</sup> From the beginning of its history, the Subtractionist exegesis of the Paulinian resistance had its detractors: the pope's advocates and the anti-Subtractionists. Not least among them, Nicolas Eymerich, for example, strove to refute the *jus resistendi* based on the premises of its elaboration in 1395. Seen in context, it was a question of re-affirming that Peter was positioned above Paul because of the delegations of mission he had received from Christ himself.<sup>32</sup> As Nicholas argued, the papal statute was apart, that is to say beyond, the law. He defended the sacrosanct non-justiciability of the pope by anyone.<sup>33</sup> Then followed the canonical and implacable argument: whoever resisted the established power resisted God, *qui huic potestati a Deo ordinate resistit, Dei ordinationi resistit*.<sup>34</sup>

To sum up, the exegesis of the verse Galatians 2. 11 provided an occasion to spread and to specify the doctrine of the right of resistance against the supreme pontiff of the Roman Church, which was expressed in different ways: the right to discussion and *disputatio*, the right to criticism, the right to fraternal correction (law of fraternal correction), the right of reprimand, the right of appeal. About the ecclesiological constructions, then as in the time of the early Christians and again during the Gregorian period and the Investiture Contest, the rate of advance of the one was determined by the other.

#### *Debating about reformatio*

In the course of the debates, the reflections about the right to resistance against pontifical power became closely linked to reflections on the theme of *reformatio*, which also acquired the function of a check on absolute power. To contemporary thinkers, *reformatio* started to be seen as a way of building a *limitatio* of the pontifical *plenitudo potestatis*. Stimulated by the sphere of controversies, each of the ecclesiological positions within the debates, traditional or more innovative, then worked to establish an understanding of *reformatio* which corresponded its own doctrinal constructions.

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30 Jean Gerson, *Pro licentiandis in decretis*, ed. Glorieux, V, 223: *Ac perinde constituti sunt apostoli, discipuli et evangelistae tamquam doctores hujus legis, et ceteri successores eorum quos theologos nominamus, non secundum corticem litterae quae occidit, sed secundum interiorem spiritum qui vivificat*; Jean Gerson, *Sermon pour la fête des saints apôtres*, ed. Glorieux VII/2, 722: *Petrus praest principatu, Paulus pollet magistratu totius Ecclesiae*.

31 Honoret Bouvet, *Somnium super materia schismatis*, ed. Arnold, 89.

32 Nicolas Eymerich, *Contra emissum in Conclavi per papam promissorum juramentum*, Grenoble, Bibliothèque Municipale, 988, fol. 103r-117v, ici fol. 111v: *Respondetur eis quod non Paulo sed Petro Christus claves dedit quod promisit cum ei dixit: »tibi dabo claves regni celorum et quodcumque ligaveris etc«, et Ecclesia clamittat non de Paulo sed de Petro »tibi tradidit Deus claves regni celorum«. Et non Paulo sed Petro dixit Christus: »Pasce oves meas«. Petrus ergo non fuit subditus Paulo, sed Paulus Petro.*

33 Nicolas Eymerich, *Contra emissum in Conclavi per papam promissorum juramentum*, Grenoble, Bibliothèque Municipale, 988, fol. 112r: *Sic nec aliquis de Ecclesia potest sibi papam subdere et judicare.*

34 Nicolas Eymerich, *Contra emissum in Conclavi per papam promissorum juramentum*, Grenoble, Bibliothèque Municipale, 988, fol. 112r.

Carried by the debates, the long-term theme of *reformatio* acquired a new doctrinal and political status during the years of the council of Constance. In the years 1414-1418, and in particular from 1415 until 1417, the theme of reform was refocused. It regained the upper hand over other themes, such as union, peace, obedience or the truth of the pope. Treatises expressed this refocusing in their titles. Dietrich of Nieheim for example drafted a *Super reformationem Ecclesie* from the very opening of the council of Constance in December, 1414.<sup>35</sup> Pierre d'Ailly announced his treatise *De reformatione Ecclesiae* in November, 1416.<sup>36</sup> The former developed three themes which would gain particular prominence: the denunciation of vices in the papal system (tax system, exactions, reserves, benefits and curia customs); the election of an appropriate pope and the spiritual reform. Pierre d'Ailly, by contrast, intended to assign to the council a triple purpose regarding the past, the present, and the future.<sup>37</sup> Its first task was to reform the deformation of the clerks (*ad correctionem et reformationem ecclesiasticae deformitatis, quoad praeterita*); then to aim for union (*secundo, ad ordinationem et integrationem pacificae unionis, quoad praesentia*) and thirdly, it should avoid future abuses and troubles (*tertio, ad provisionem et evitacionem maleficae pravitatis, quoad futura*).<sup>38</sup>

That this program re-used extant formulations, for example authored in 1378 by Henry of Langenstein or Conrad of Gelnhausen, is known.<sup>39</sup> Yet this re-use at the very heart of the Council of Constance transformed them into a real political program, and lent them a new breath and a new amplitude. Now based on a maturation of the minds, this program found its natural bed in Constance. Decades of debates and polemics on surrounding themes had been needed, but eventually the issue of reform emerged in 1414-1415, and became a center polarizing neighboring debates. Yet, for many, it was the council itself that brought reform. Many expectations and plans for a better future revolved closely around the reform-by-council. Altogether, we can note that the interpretation of *reformatio* as *limitatio* and its polarization of all aspirations were remarkable and ecclesiologically bold. By aiming to be *limitatio*, the reform authorized theorists to think of ecclesiological forms for notable counter-powers facing papal authority: the council, of course, but also the bishops, the cardinals, and, last but not least, the king.

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35 Dietrich of Nieheim, *Dialog aus der Kirchenreform*, ed. Miethke and Weinrich, 296-305.

36 Pierre d'Ailly, *Tractatus de emendatione Ecclesiae*, ed. Miethke and Weinrich, 338-377.

37 Pierre d'Ailly, *Tractatus de emendatione Ecclesiae*, ed. Miethke and Weinrich, c. 922.

38 Pierre d'Ailly, *Tractatus de emendatione Ecclesiae*, ed. Miethke and Weinrich, c. 922.

39 Among many examples, cf. Conrad of Gelnhausen, *Epistola Concordiae*, inc.: *Incipit Epistola ad dominum Karolum Regem Francorum in tractatum sequentem...* (mai 1380), Paris, BnF, 14643, fol. 88r-101r et fol. 244r-253v (second copy), ed. Bliemetzrieder, 116: *Pro reformatione unitatis et pacis sacrosancte universalis Ecclesie expedit, potest et debet concilium generale convocari*; *ibid.*, 117: *Est autem conclusio principalis ista, quod pro remediando et de medio auferendo scismate moderno expedit potest et debet concilium generale convocari ou encore Ergo forcius pro discussione moderni scismatis potest, expedit et debet concilium generale convocari*; *ibid.*, 119: *Si ergo licuit et expediebat pro rebus temporalibus tunc curiam imperialem generalem convocari, longe forcius nunc debet concilium generale pro salute animarum et reformatione pacis totius Ecclesie catholice convocari*. See especially *ibid.*, 138: *Assumitur in argumento scilicet quod concilium generale absque auctoritate pape non debet congregari, est verum regulariter, potest tamen casualiter absque eius auctoritate convocari, et talis est casus noster [...]; Quod vero subditur papam esse maiorem concilio, dicitur quod in casu concilium est superius pape*.

The question raised by this development of diverging positions was, inevitably, that of *veritas*. Together with *obedientia* and *reformatio*, the word *veritas* saturated texts of the second phase of the Schism, and indeed helps to identify the affiliations and the camps. It was the signature of the ideological positions and informed about the identical allegiances. From the outset, *veritas* was seized by the pontifical rhetoric and, more profoundly, by the pontifical episteme. This regime of the truth, that is to say of a particular construction and meaning of the term, was developed by the pope and his jurists, who, fundamentally, thought of the Schism in terms of the truth or falsehood of one or both popes. This overarching logic governed their reactions, their discourses, their speeches, and their thoughts. Yet, the truth so understood remained a weapon of battle – the battle of the previous generation. It was, specifically, a battle without discussion. The *episteme* of a discourse of truth excluded all debate because of its dogmatism.

Very quickly, truth was set up as dogmatism on the papal side: there was the truth of the pope. This meaning drew its desire for inquiry and its desire for conformity from the inquisitorial customs. Moreover, it precluded legitimate discussion. The dogmatism of the truth necessarily neutralized debates. Some scholars still tried hard to remind readers of the uncertainty and unreachable nature of truth in this period of doubt, and encouraged them to avoid the stumbling block of blindness or sectarianism. It should also be noted that dogmatism was not the privilege of one camp – in this particular case the pontificalist camp – though it was, to be sure, more visible there. Yet the dogmatic attitude was diffusely present everywhere; it harked back to extremism in all camps, among the Parisian academics and among the papal canonists, among the theologians and among the jurists, both within the Roman obedience and within the obedience of Avignon.

This atmosphere must be explained by latent, symbolic and ambient violence, and – having studied intellectual and discursive practices and the doctrinal contents inferred by these discursive practices – we may now attempt to grasp this atmosphere of the time by investigating its traces in the debates. Though the study of textual debates cannot tell us all about its contexts, debates are revealing of ambient violence as much as they are responsible for it. The atmosphere indeed seems to have been one of symbolic violence – of instances of unspoken censorship and intimidation. But this violence was also the subject of the debates, and could be denounced or channeled. We can grasp some of the dynamic of forms of symbolic violence in the discourse surrounding the University of Paris, which exhibited a considerable thirst for power and even for intellectual monopoly. Precisely because it was symbolic, the ambient violence became visible in silences in this situation, yet its furtive presence is not easily unmasked. The authors kept silent about it especially when it was heavy upon them. When they spoke about it, this means it was already mastered. We spot indications in the scruples, the confusion of the consciousness, the remorse, and the fears – in particular, the fear of reprisals and score-settling, the climate of distrust and suspicion, criticism and slander, the calls for respect. The atmosphere was heavy with the unspoken, with censorship and intimidation.

In 1402, when the so-called Epistle of Toulouse was published, for example, it denounced the climate of terror provoked by the Subtractionists. Historians have gone so far as to speak about an »intellectual terrorism« imposed by the Parisian doctors.<sup>40</sup> The Epistle of Toulouse, possibly drafted by Guigon Flandrin, in fact insisted on denouncing the com-

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40 See Ourliac, »Epistola tholosana« 2, 563-578.

pulsory, ever-present silence, the bringing-to-heel of the opposition after the vote of July, 1398 (that is to say the very important moment of the vote of Subtraction during the Third Assembly of the French Clergy): *Tacuit enim post subtractionis communiter non acceptae conceptum facta velut attonita [...]*. The seal of silence reigned, *sub sigillo silentii*.<sup>41</sup> From the beginning, the opponents were not able to make themselves heard.<sup>42</sup> Worse, they were afraid for their own person and their own life, so that they left Paris – as we know to be the case for Gerson himself.<sup>43</sup>

What one can take away from the sources is the idea that this violence was the sign of an ongoing transformation, of a kind of growth crisis of the Parisian university world – a crisis of authority and of confidence. Violence thus related closely to the re-defining of a university identity, which was defined by three characteristics: first, access to a doctrinal autonomy; second, the will to participate in the supreme power; and third, the ambition of attaining a monopoly of control over public opinion.

The claim of doctrinal autonomy was to be formulated in the magisterium of Paul, the theologian, next to that of Peter, the institutional leader, as discussed above. Concerning the will to participate in the supreme power, the University gradually drew up a real political program to overcome the ecclesial crisis from the beginning of the 1390s onwards. With the multiplicity of the texts that it published – letters, prescriptions, requests, gravamina etc. – it intended to occupy the center stage in the critical hours from August, 1392 – critical for the pope, but also for King Charles VI. What it moved forward as an incomparable trump was the strength of its expertise. This expertise allowed the university to aspire to participation with considerable legitimacy. Its role was greatly transformed with this shift: the University would no longer be the authority of determination, as traditionally, but the authority of *consilium*. Pierre d'Ailly intended to exercise this expert role fully at the Council of Constance. The expertise of the prelates and the academics was not to be seen as interference in the respective others' sphere of influence, but as part of the free game of the debates. A proof of this was d'Ailly's indignation when, during the council of Constance, Maurice of Prague was forbidden to argue during a debate. D'Ailly rebelled against this; the role of the doctors and the theologians was not to silence *disputationes* but to highlight them.<sup>44</sup> In a sense, the

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41 *Epistola tholosana*, ed. Du Boulay, V, 5: *Tacuit enim post subtractionis communiter non acceptae conceptum facta velut attonita, afflictionem nedum sentiens, quasi praegnans verba sub sigillo silentii retinere voluit, ex subtractione unionem pro partu promissam suspiriis inanibus multiplicatis expectans.*

42 *Epistola tholosana*, ed. Du Boulay, V, 5: *Praeterea quid loqui praefatae filiae vestrae profuisset cum a principio penitus audientia a contrarium opinantibus turbaretur.*

43 *Epistola tholosana*, ed. Du Boulay, V, 5-6: *Absque eo quod quidam ex illis qui per vos fuere ad concilium Parisiense evocati et qui habentes respectum ad Deum, bonum Ecclesiae, honorem vestrum et regni et qui vestrae majestati regiae secundum conscientiam et justitiam consulebant, non esse substrahendam obedientiam vero papae, Parisius esse non poterant, nec adhuc esse possent forsitan sine eorum maximo timore personarum et periculo.*

44 Pierre d'Ailly, *Tractatus de potestate ecclesiastica*, ed. Du Pin, II, 950: *Ad hanc conclusionem se sua humilitate responsurum exhibuerat venerabilis pater et egregius sacrae scripturae doctor, magister Mauricius de Praga et posuit tres conclusiones. [...] sed quidam veritatis adversarii, timentes ne per ipsum et deinde per quosdam alios sacrae theologiae doctores in disputationibus, aut determinationibus impugnantur aliqui errores in hoc sacro concilio delati, conspicerent et procuraverunt dictam disputationem impediri. Contra quos publico verbo et scripto, ob reverentiam fidei protestatus sum, quod doctoribus sacrae theologiae maxime in concilio generali, ubi agitur de erroribus extirpandis, non debet inhiberi disputatio, aut scholastica determinatio, pro declaratione veritatis catholicae et reprobatione contrariorum errorum. Alioquin, qui de facto secus facerent, redderent se suspectos de fautoria haereticae pravitatis. Quia ergo dictus magister sic impeditus fuit ab hac responsione, ego hujus conclusionis nodum breviter explicabo.*

professional theologian was thus installed as a natural counselor of the powerful and a safeguard against abuse.<sup>45</sup> The theologian was meant to be an expert and therefore a careful man. He was portrayed as a wise person, the one that the councils have to summon, in brief the *epieikeas*.<sup>46</sup>

Finally, in the redefinition of its identity and its self-awareness, the University aspired, without saying this explicitly, to the monopoly over control of public opinion. This ambition towards a monopoly can be felt subtly in the debates. It accounts for some of the virulence of the violence, masked or admitted. One stake in all the debates, throughout the course of the emergence of the Schism, and in particular, during the course of Constance, was that of control over public opinion. The known forms of constraints and pressures would, on a certain level, not only have aimed at imposing the ›University line‹ onto the politics of the kingdom, but also onto the listening public, which now exceeded the sphere of the masters and was that of ambient opinion, hence the care taken by the speakers to convince, and to convince by using all the tricks of rhetoric and logic, pathos and ethos. Masters became public figures, intellectuals in the public sphere, or to quote Daniel Hobbins's term, »public Intellectuals«.<sup>47</sup>

Nevertheless, the outcome reconstructed by the historian uncovers the failure of this ambition, the missed dream of monopoly. The academics clearly lost their grasp on power within the period under discussion. Several signs betray this failure of their monopoly: the tension, the papers outside of the university which multiplied, the faintness of the university in general, its anger. As has been shown, the honor of the academics became so sensitive as to demand reparation for insults – for example, Jean Hayton had confronted the scholars in 1395.<sup>48</sup>

*Conclusion: the polemical approach to a new history of the Great Schism*

The discussion of the Great Schism presented here has envisaged the debates as events of history, and even as decisive actors. It seems possible to investigate the debates in such a way as to bring light to the structural realities they shaped, showing the Great Schism in a new light.

First of all, the debates proved to be engines of discursive production, and built doctrines. Through the examples of the discussions surrounding *jus resistendi*, or *reformatio*, or *veritas*, it also emerges clearly that debates produced doctrinal discursivity. Words became markers, and these markers signaled respective positions. We might say that words acquired additional meaning, which might stabilize. To contribute to a new history of the production of knowledge at the time of the Great Schism, such processes can be reconstructed in a slow and patient historical reconstruction, one text at a time, one argument at a time, within a vast intertextual constellation.

45 On Gerson, see Lusignan, «*Vérité garde le roy*», 261 ff.

46 Jean Gerson, *Tractatus de unitate Ecclesiae*, ed. Glorieux, VI, § 272, 144-145.

47 Hobbins, *Authorship and Publicity before Print*, esp. 128-151 (ch. 5: The Schoolman as Public Intellectual). See also, for a later time, Small, *Public Intellectual*, especially Copeland, *Pre-modern Intellectual Biography*. See also Copeland, *Pedagogy, Intellectuals and Dissent*.

48 *Requête Universitatis facte Regi Francie [...]*, Paris, BnF, lat. 14643, fol. 52v., fol. 52v (sixth request): *Sexta, quod scribat ad curiam romanam, ut magister Johannes Haconis ordinis Jacobitarum detineatur in carceribus donec errores suos correxerit, et injuriam regi, ducibus et universitati illatam reparaverit*. See Destemberg, *Honneur des universitaires au Moyen Âge*, in particular ch. 9 (Emouvoir a justice: défense et restauration de l'honneur blessé); Destemberg and Kouamé, *Aux origines de l'homo academicus*, 45-55.

Secondly, reconstructing debates in this way helps to unmask ecclesiological and institutional games. The time of the Great Schism was indeed one of vast ecclesiological possibilities. The experiment of a subtraction of obedience became not only thinkable, but was officially applied. The ecclesiological alternatives to the monarchic government of the pope were thought through with unprecedented excitement. Everywhere, ideas about the forces of opposition, proposals of limitations to papal power, and incentives for a resistance to the full powers emerged. This period of debate was also a time of hopes for change. The uncertainties of the Great Schism also encouraged expectations of new openings and new solutions. Against this background, debates were able to set conditions for the actors of time. People were caught up in the disorder of this polemical atmosphere, and the debates decided on certain personal trajectories, and vice versa, as the great debaters of the time played their own games.

The proposed approach, which situates the history of the Great Schism in a perspective focused on its polemical culture, is a challenging one. Discourses and their textual practices are revealed as much, if not more, by the open controversies as by the silences hidden in the sources. Behind the debates, we must assume passions. By scrutinizing the sources, we can partly reconstitute them – the fears, the hatreds, the vindications, the surprises, the violence, the desires, the ambitions and the frustrations.<sup>49</sup> Such emotions and feelings fed an atmosphere of factions and their convictions; the hour was, indeed, one of excess and extremism, of crises and emergency. Allegiances tightened. Camps hardened. Networks came to light. During the scope of one generation (1395-1418), the historian observes an ascent of sectarianism, fed by an amalgamation of the human passions with the polemism of circumstance. Far from being the privilege of one camp, the tension between dogmatism and resistance found its way into both factions. Hence the violence of this time of crisis, which remains to be researched further within the contexts of a historic anthropology of the intellectual violence of the medieval scholarly world. So far, the historicization of the ecclesiological debates of the time of the Great Schism seems to validate the hypothesis that ecclesiology and polemology remain intrinsically linked, and should be studied in the context of each other.

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49 Sère, *Débats d'opinion*.

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