THE PENITENTIARY UNDER POPE PIUS II
THE SUPPLICATIONS AND THEIR PROVENANCE

Kirsi Salonen

The pontificate of Pope Pius II, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, lasted from August 1458 until August 1464. Because it is impossible to present an all-encompassing study about the Penitentiary during this period in one contribution, I have chosen some of the main themes and questions.[1]

My first aim is to study all the petitions registered in the Penitentiary during these years, to see what kind of cases the office handled, and how many there were. This may reveal why Christians turned to the Penitentiary and which were the most important groups of petitions.

Another problem to be treated is the provenience of the petitions: first, how many petitions in general came from each diocese or territory and, second, which kind of cases came from each diocese? This will allow a comparison of the 'activities' of different territories.

The answers to these two basic questions will then lead to the third, most interesting and also most important problem: Why did differences exist in the needs for graces, even though canon law in theory was equal for all Christians? Such a question no longer refers to how the Penitentiary functioned, but to the significance of the office for individual Christians, and how canon law was differently understood or respected in different parts of Christendom.[2]

The registers: new boss – new technique

There are two main reasons why I have chosen the pontificate of Pius II as the period of this study. On the one hand, it is long enough to allow some quantitative study; but, on the other hand, it is also short enough so that the number of cases is not too large for a detailed study of them. The second, and in fact more important, reason for the choice of the pontificate of Pius II as the period of study is that during these years important developments took place in the Penitentiary as well as in the registration of cases.

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[1] I would like to thank the Academy of Finland for financing my research project "The Papal Penitentiary and the Local Church", of which the first results are published here.

[2] In this article I will not yet be able to give any final results concerning the third question, but will concentrate on the first two.

The person who was mainly responsible for all the changes and innovations that took place in the Penitentiary during these years was not the Pope Pius II himself, but the Cardinal Penitentiary, the so-called *poenitentiarius maior*, Philippus Calandrini, Cardinal Priest of *Sancti Laurentii in Lucina*. Calandrini was nominated as Cardinal Penitentiary in October 1458, that is, very soon after the election of Pius II, and he stayed in charge until June or July 1476. It was actually he who took the initiative for all the new developments.[3]

One of the first activities that Philippus Calandrini seems to have undertaken was to renew the registration system. One can recognise this clearly when comparing the registers of the Penitentiary from the six pontifical years of Pius II (volumes 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 13) to the previous ones.[4] While the earlier registers of the Penitentiary were quite badly written and not very logically organised, the registers under Philippus Calandrini look very different.

The earlier volumes contained petitions from several years. Instead, the volumes from Calandrini's period are, for the first time, organised so that in each volume those petitions were registered that the Penitentiary handled and approved during one year. Thus, concerning the pontificate of Pius II, volume 7 contains petitions from the year 1459, volume 8 from 1460, volume 9 from 1461, volume 10 from 1462, volume 11 from 1463, and volume 13 from 1464.[5]

Since the first volume from the papacy of Pius II begins with 1459, the petitions (apart from a few cases that are registered in volume 7) from the year 1458 are missing. As volume 7 also contains only few entries from January and February 1459, one can say that the systematic registration of the cases actually started only in March 1459.[6]

Apart from the new technique of one volume for each year, the internal organisation of the volumes also changed from volume 7 onwards. Earlier, the entries were put into the registers in quite a disordered way, but from then onwards the petitions are neatly divided into several categories, each of which is placed under a different title. This division is mainly respected in the later reg-

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[3] Concerning Calandrini as the Cardinal Penitentiary, see Emil Göller, *Die päpstliche Pönitentiarie von ihrem Ursprung bis zu ihrer Umgestaltung unter Pius V.*, 2: *Die päpstliche Pönitentiarie von Eugen IV. bis Pius V.*, I: *Darstellung*, Bibliothek des Kg. Preuss. Historischen Instituts in Rom 7 (Rome: Loescher, 1907), 9-10.

[4] A description of these volumes (with old foliation numbers – the folios have been renumbered after publishing the edition) can be found, e.g., in *Repertorium Poenitentiariae Germanicum* IV, ed. Ludwig Schmugge et al. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1996), xv-xxii.

[5] Actually, in volume 13, which covers the calendar year 1464, there are entries both from the last months of the pontificate of Pius II (January – August) and from the first months of the pontificate of Paul II (August – December), while volume 12 in between contains petitions from the year 1465, which was partly the first and partly the second pontifical year of Paul II.

[6] Volume 7 contains one case from September 1458, one case from November 1458, three cases from December 1458, four cases from January 1459, and 56 entries from February 1459, while from March 1459 there are 233 entries.

isters also. During the pontificate of Pius II there were nine categories: *de matrimonialibus*, *de diversis formis*, *de declaratoriis*, *de defectu natalium*, *de uberiori*, *de promotis et promovendis*, *de sententiis generalibus*, *de confessionalibus in forma 'Cupientes'*, and *de confessionalibus perpetuis*.[7]

In practice, this division means that the register volumes were divided into 'chapters', of which each contained petitions concerning one and the same issue, named in the title. In addition, the scribes of the Penitentiary began to register the petitions in chronological order within each chapter. In my opinion, these new registration techniques were not introduced casually. By organising the entries chronologically under several categories, the officials could find the supplications more easily. Finding an entry was important, for the Penitentiary, as every other papal office, needed to consult the earlier records now and then. It happened that someone had lost the letter of grace, for example through fire, and wanted a new copy, etc. In these cases it was necessary to consult the old registers in order to find the previous decision.

Which kind of cases did the Penitentiary handle?

Table 1: Number of cases in each supplication category during Pius' II pontificate

Category	Total	%
De matrimonialibus	4195	28 %
De diversis formis	3650	23 %
De declaratoriis	334	2 %
De defectu natalium	2698	17 %
De uberiori	483	3 %
De promotis et promovendis	1008	6 %
De confessionalibus perpetuis	2750	17 %
De confessionalibus in forma 'Cupientes'	179	1 %
De sententiis generalibus	432	3 %
Total	15729[8]	100 %

Source: ASV, *Penitenzieria Ap., Reg. Matrim. et Div.*, vol. 7-11, 13.

[7] Later the categories of *de diversis formis* and *de declaratoriis* were united under the title *de diversis materiis* and the categories of *de defectu natalium* and *de uberiori* were put together under the title *de illegitimiis*. Also the different categories containing petitions related to confession were united under the rubric *de confessionalibus*.

[8] I have to warn that my numbers do not correspond totally to the ones in Ludwig Schmugge, Patrick Hersperger and Béatrice Wiggenhauser, *Die Supplikenregister der päpstlichen Pönitentiarie aus der Zeit Pius' II. (1458–1464)*, Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom 84 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1996) (hereafter Schmugge, Hersperger and Wiggenhauser, *Supplikenregister*). Counting the cases is not easy; because of the registration technique it is sometimes difficult to decide whether to consider an entry as one petition or two petitions. Especially problematic was counting the supplications for receiving a letter of confession, as the registration in this category is less systematic than in the others. I decided to count each supplicant person (or family, if husband and wife applied together) as one unit.

Table 1 gives the list of categories to be found in the registers as well as the number of petitions registered in each category. It shows which kind of cases the Penitentiary handled during the pontificate of Pius II, and how many cases of each type.

From these numbers it is easy to distinguish the most common reasons were for turning to the Penitentiary.[9] There are four petition categories that contain a high number of cases, while the other groups remain relatively small. The most common reason was the need to have a dispensation or/and absolution in marriage matters (almost 4200 cases).[10]

The second biggest category is the *de diversis formis* group, with 3650 cases. It is, however, different from the other categories, for it contains various types of petitions and, as such, does not refer to the need for a certain kind of grace.[11] Another large petition category is the group *de defectu natalium*, with nearly 2700 petitions. It contains petitions for receiving a dispensation from illegitimacy and the right to hold an ecclesiastical benefice despite the supplicant's illegitimacy.[12] The *de confessionalibus perpetuis* group contains supplications for getting a letter of confession that allowed the holder to choose bis own confessor; 2750 such petitions are copied into the registers of the Penitentiary.[13]

The other five petition categories remain quite small, meaning that these kinds of graces were not needed very often. The *de promotis et promovendis* category that contains dispensation petitions related to promotion or ordination matters, consists of about 1000 entries.[14] The *de uberiori* category that offers petitions from illegitimate children for having a dispensation that allowed them to be ordained to the priesthood or to hold an additional benefice, consists of 483 cases.[15] The *de sententiis generalibus* group that contains petitions from priests for the authorisation to absolve their parishioners from sins that normally

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[9] Actually, this result can also be generalised for the subsequent pontificates.

[10] Concerning the petitions in the *De matrimonialibus* category, see Schmugge, Hersperger and Wiggenhauser, *Supplikenregister*, 68-74; Kirsi Salonen, *The Penitentiary as a Well of Grace in the Late Middle Ages. The Example of the Province of Uppsala 1448–1527*, Suomalaisen Tiedeakatemian Toimituksia – Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae 313 (Saarijärvi: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2001), 103-119 (hereafter Salonen, *The Penitentiary*).

[11] Concerning the petitions in the *de diversis formis* category, see Schmugge, Hersperger and Wiggenhauser, *Supplikenregister*, 96-162; Salonen, *The Penitentiary*, 119-175.

[12] With regard to the petitions in the *de defectu natalium* category, see Ludwig Schmugge, *Kirche, Kinder, Karrieren. Päpstliche Dispense von der unehelichen Geburt im Spätmittelalter*. (Zurich: Artemis & Winkler, 1995); Schmugge, Hersperger and Wiggenhauser, *Supplikenregister*, 186-189; Salonen, *The Penitentiary*, 192-203.

[13] For the petitions in the *de confessionalibus perpetuis* category, see Schmugge, Hersperger and Wiggenhauser, *Supplikenregister*, 207-208; Salonen, *The Penitentiary*, 203-210.

[14] Concerning this category, see Schmugge, Hersperger and Wiggenhauser, *Supplikenregister*, 196-198; Salonen, *The Penitentiary*, 178-192.

[15] With regard to the petitions in the *de uberiori* category, see Schmugge, Hersperger and Wiggenhauser, *Supplikenregister*, 186-189; Salonen, *The Penitentiary*, 192-203.

were reserved to papal decision has 432 entries.[16] The *de declaratoriis* group contains petitions for receiving a declaratory letter that freed the supplicant from murder accusations, illegal matrimony or a forced monastic career. Under this title 334 cases are registered.[17] In the *de confessionalibus in forma 'Cupientes'* category petitions were copied for being able to absolve from more serious sins than priests could normally do. This small group consists of only 179 registered supplications.[18]

This kind of division of the cases into different groups was quite typical for the Penitentiary. The groups containing many petitions during the pontificate of Pius II tend to be numerous also during the other pontificates. Until now, quantitative information has been received from the beginning of the pontificate of Nicholas IV (1455) until the end of the pontificate of Alexander VI (1503), and the trend is more or less the same: marriage, illegitimacy cases, and different kinds of petitions concerning breaking the rules of canon law are very common, while the other groups occur less frequently.[19]

Who turned to the Penitentiary?

For the study of the provenance of the petitions, I have divided Christendom into 12 larger territories[20] (see Table 2): *Anglia* means England and Wales, Eastern Europe consists of all dioceses east of the German territory and Italy (including also the almost-non-existent titular dioceses in the East and the Greek islands), *Gallia* means present-day France, *Germania* is the territory of the Empire – meaning actually the old German-speaking areas, *Hibernia* is Ireland, *Hispania* Spain, *Italia inferiore* means all of southern Italy and Sicily, *Italia media* stands for central Italy and Sardinia, *Italia superiore* refers to northern Italy including Corsica, *Lusitania* covers the area of present Portugal, *Scandinavia* refers to the territories of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, also including Greenland and the Hebrides that, after 1472, were joined to the Scottish isles; *Scotia* means Scotland.

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[16] For the petitions in the *de sententiis generalibus* category, see Schmugge, Hersperger and Wiggenhauser, *Supplikenregister*, 214; Salonen, *The Penitentiary*, 203-210.

[17] Concerning this group, see Salonen, *The Penitentiary*, 119-175.

[18] Referring to the petitions in the *de confessionalibus in forma 'Cupientes'* category, see Schmugge, Hersperger and Wiggenhauser, *Supplikenregister*, 214; Salonen, *The Penitentiary*, 203-210.

[19] I thank Ludwig Schmugge for allowing me to use these still unpublished results.

[20] In this division, I have followed the indications given in Konrad Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica Medii Aevi sive Summorum Pontificum S.R.E. Cardinalium, Ecclesiarum Antistitum Series ab anno 1198 usque ad annum 1431 perducta e documentis tabularii praesertim vaticani* (Münster: Regensberg, 1901). The same division has also been used by Götz-Rüdiger Tewes in his recently published study of the connections between the papal curia and different territories in the later Middle Ages; see: Götz-Rüdiger Tewes, *Die römische Kurie und die europäischen Länder am Vorabend der Reformation*, Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom 95 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2001).

Table 2: The provenance of the cases handled by the Penitentiary during the pontificate of Pius II

Provenance	*matr.*[21]	*div. f.*	*decl.*	*def. n.*	*uber.*	*prom.*	*conf.*	*cup.*	*sent.*	Total
Anglia	27.5	49	3	75	2	22	35	5	2	220.5
East. Europe	74.5	200	72	48	2	55	124	6	8	589.5
Gallia	745.5	1015	43	423	146	180	1649	75	136	4412.5
Germania	710.0	752	64	992	202	165	583	52	78	3598.0
Hibernia	355.0	36	2	216	7	3	10	0	21	650.0
Hispania	565.5	465	72	488	76	84	78	8	61	1897.5
Italia inf.	293.0	207	16	53	5	72	11	1	16	674.0
Italia med.	392.0	287	23	51	1	85	17	7	21	884.0
Italia sup.	817.5	442	16	128	19	290	80	22	54	1868.5
Lusitania	19.0	72	10	50	9	16	20	1	21	218.0
Scandinavia	10.0	13	5	49	1	1	19	0	3	101.0
Scotia	123.5	9	1	100	8	6	93	0	2	342.5
?	62.0	103	7	25	5	29	31	2	9	273.0
Total	4195.0	3650	334	2698	483	1008	2750	179	432	15,729.0

Source: ASV, *Penitenzieria Ap., Reg. Matrim. et Div.*, vol. 7-11, 13.

Sometimes there is a problem in studying the provenance of the petitions; it concerns the possibility of distinguishing the dioceses from each other. Normally this is easy, as the names of the dioceses are generally quite clearly copied into the entries. But, unfortunately, there are some dubious cases. That is why I created the last group of questionable provenance.[22]

If one concentrates on the total number of clear cases, it can be noted that the most petitions came from French territory, followed by the German area. If

[21] The half numbers refer to the fact that the spouses sometimes came from two different dioceses or even territories. In these cases I have given half units.

[22] There are, for example, the dioceses of Aosta in Italy and Augsburg in Germany that are both called in Latin *Aug tensis*. Normally, it is quite easy to distinguish between them, for the Italian names sound very different from the German ones. And, fortunately, in this case it is also possible to compare with the entries in the *Repertorium*. It is more difficult to find the difference between, for instance, all those dioceses called in Latin *Aquensis*; this is Dax and Aix in France, and Aqui in Italy, for the French and Italian names are sometimes so similar that it is impossible to decide. It is similarly difficult to recognise the difference between the dioceses of Reggio-Emilia and Reggio-Calabria in Italy, both called *Reginensis*. The situation is even made more problematic because the French diocese of Riez is also called *Regensis*. One also has difficulties concerning the differences between Valencia and Valence, Constance and Coutances, as well as Plasencia and Piacenza. Furthermore, sometimes names of dioceses appear in the registers that do not correspond to any of the dioceses given in the *Hierarchia Catholica*. These are obviously mistakes of the scribes or the proctors, who did not know which diocese was meant and, therefore, they might have put the name of the nearest town, for example. In some cases, the scribes probably just made spelling errors. When a supplicant was not connected to a certain diocese, the diocese was not given but replaced by *sine dioc.* These were often the cases of royal or other persons administering a territory larger than one diocese or of people who travelled a great deal.

one adds the cases from all the three Italian territories, Italy reaches the third place with 3442.5 cases. The Iberian Peninsula is in fourth place with 2113.5 petitions (the Spanish and Portuguese cases added together). Thereafter, one finds the 'British Isles' and Ireland, together with 1213 entries. The lowest frequencies are found in Eastern Europe and, finally, Scandinavia.

The most populated areas near the centre of the Church are the ones with the most petitions. The further away from the Holy See one moves, the fewer petitions occur. Considering a journey to the curia for making a petition, this kind of result seems to be quite obvious. It was not so usual to leave for Rome from the remote parts of Christendom as it was from nearer areas. Moreover, the remote parts of Scandinavia or Scotland were less populated than the central territories of Europe and, consequently, there were also fewer petitions from Scandinavia, although the territories could be of the same size.

Secondly, if one compares the numbers to the size and wealth of the dioceses (and here I refer to the sums of taxes that each diocese had to pay to the Holy See[23]), there seem to have been more petitions from the richest and biggest dioceses than from the smaller and poorer ones.[24] This result also seems to be obvious, but, as the example of England shows, it was not necessarily so. There, for example, one can note that only very few petitions came from the archdiocese of Canterbury, even though it was very rich. Such an exceptional underrepresentation is, however, easy to explain, as the archbishop of Canterbury had great authority to handle cases similar to those with which others went to the Penitentiary, so that people from there did not have to turn to Rome. Unfortunately, there are not the sources from all other dioceses that might be informative about the kind and extension of authority that bishops or archbishops had.[25]

Provenance of supplicants and reasons for turning to the Penitentiary

If one compares the provenance of the supplicants and the petition category, great differences in the numbers of petitions from different territories can be found. Concerning the marriage petitions, most of them came from Italy (1502.5 cases). From northern Italy alone (817.5 cases) there are more cases

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[23] About taxes see Konrad Eubel, ed., *Hierarchia Catholica Medii Aevi sive Summorum Pontificum S.R.E. Cardinalium, Ecclesiarum Antistitum Series ab anno 1198 usque ad annum 1431 perducta e documentis tabularii praesertim vaticani*, vol. 2 (Münster: Regensberg, 1901).

[24] For example, the number of petitions from northern Italy varies strongly according to the importance and size of the diocese. From the largest dioceses there are many petitions (Milan 148, Genova 131), from the middle-sized dioceses fewer (Mantova 29, Verona 21) and from the smallest ones only a few, if any (Chioggia 1, Pedena 2); ASV, *Penitenzieria Ap., Reg. Matrim. et Div.*, vol. 7-11, 13.

[25] Concerning the activity of the archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Bourgchier (1454–1486), see, for example, *Registrum Thome Bourgchier Cantuariensis archiepiscopi a. d. 1454–1486*, ed. F.R.H. du Boulay, The Canterbury and York Society, 54 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957).

than from France (745.5 cases) or from Germany (710 cases). It is also interesting to note that many marriage petitions came from the Irish dioceses.

French (1015 and 43 cases), German (752 and 64 cases) and Italian (936 and 55 cases) petitions dominate the *de diversis formis* and *de declaratoriis* groups, as they should, according to their general quantities. However, if one looks at the petitions for dispensation from illegitimacy, that is, the *de defectu natalium* and *de uberiori* categories, we see that German petitions (992 and 202 cases) are in great majority when compared to the other territories; Spain (488 and 76 cases) and France (423 and 146 cases), that follow it in number, have less than half as many petitions.

The promotion cases follow the same pattern as the marriage cases. The Italian dioceses (445 cases, of which most – 288 – came from northern Italy) are in first place, followed by the French (179 cases) and the German (165 cases) territories.

The most striking difference in can be found in the petitions for receiving a confessional letter or other graces in confessional matters (the *de confessionalibus perpetuis*, *de confessionalibus in forma 'Cupientes'* and *de sententiis generalibus* categories), as more than half of them originated from France (1860 cases). The dominance of the French supplicants in these categories is very large; from the German territories, in second place, there are only 713 such petitions.

These 'general trends' in provenance of the petitions show only frequencies but do not tell anything about the actual reasons for turning to the Penitentiary. On the basis of the total, for example, it can be shown that Frenchmen had intensive contacts with the Penitentiary, but, in fact, one third of these connections concentrated on only one type of petition.

Particularities of each territory

Table 3 presents the proportion of each supplication category in the different territories. It shows clearer which kind of cases were the most common in each territory and the differences between them.[26]

For the territory of *Anglia*, one can easily note that the illegitimacy cases formed the most important supplication category (34%). In the second and third place, but quite far away from the illegitimacy numbers, there are the *de diversis formis* and the *de confessionalibus* petitions.

Eastern Europeans turned to the Penitentiary for different reasons. They had various problems with canon law (that is, the categories of *de diversis formis* and *de declaratoriis*, together 46%). In addition they often asked for confession letters.[27]

[26] As has already been said, it is not possible to explain minutely the details behind the results shown in table 3.

[27] More detailed information concerning the Eastern European petitions may be found in the article by Piroska Nagy and Kirsi Salonen in this volume.

Table 3: Reasons to turn to the Penitentiary from different territories (in percentages)

Provenance	*matr.*	*div.f.*	*decl.*	*Def. n.*	*uber.*	*prom.*	*conf.*	*cup.*	*sent.*	Total
Anglia	12	22	1	34	1	10	16	2	1	100
East. Europe	13	34	12	8	0	9	21	1	1	100
Gallia	17	23	1	10	3	4	37	2	3	100
Germania	20	21	2	28	6	5	16	1	2	100
Hibernia	55	6	0	33	1	0	2	0	3	100
Hispania	30	25	4	26	4	4	4	0	3	100
Italia inf.	43	31	2	8	1	11	2	0	2	100
Italia med.	44	32	3	6	0	10	2	1	2	100
Italia sup.	44	24	1	7	1	16	4	1	3	100
Lusitania	9	33	5	23	4	7	9	0	10	100
Scandinavia	10	13	5	49	1	1	19	0	3	100
Scotia	36	3	0	29	2	2	27	0	1	100
?	23	38	3	9	2	11	11	1	3	100
All cases	27	23	2	17	3	6	17	1	3	100

Source: ASV, *Penitenzieria Ap., Reg. Matrim. et Div.*, vol. 7-11, 13.

As already mentioned above, Frenchmen turned to the Penitentiary in the first place for receiving confessional letters (37%). But there are also many *de diversis formis* petitions from the French territory.

Germans often wrote to the Penitentiary concerning matters of illegitimacy (28%), but other kinds of categories are equally represented: marriage (20%) as well as canon law matters (23%), and also confession letters (16%). Thus, Germans turned to the Penitentiary with quite heterogenic needs.

The Irish situation is rather different; Irishmen turned to the Penitentiary only for certain matters. More than half of the petitions concern marriage (55%) and illegitimacy (33%) and only very rarely other matters.

Spaniards used the Penitentiary for marriage (30%) and illegitimacy (26%) matters as well as for problems with canon law (29%). The situation is again quite heterogeneous; there was no special need for them to turn to the Penitentiary.

Italians (all three territories may be combined as they followed more or less the same pattern) turned to the authority of the Penitentiary first of all concerning marriage matters (43–44%), but also regarding canon law, while they were, for example, not interested in illegitimacy dispensations or confessional letters.

The Portuguese seem to have needed the Penitentiary in canon law (38%) and illegitimacy (23%) matters. The other petition categories contain only relatively few cases.

Scots in their turn used the Penitentiary mainly for three different matters: marriage (36%), illegitimacy (29%) and confession letter (27%) issues.

Strangely, only very few entries are to be found in the *de diversis formis* and in the *de declaratoriis* categories that normally are relatively large petition groups.

Such divisions, however, do not tell the actual reasons behind the need for grace in the individual territories, as there still might have been important differences between the dioceses in one territory. For example, according to table 2, Scandinavians turned to the office mainly for illegitimacy matters (49%). This fact is, however, an illusion, for 31 of the total 49 Scandinavian illegitimacy entries came from Danish dioceses, where the number of these matters was, therefore, much larger than in Scandinavia generally.

Conclusions

In this contribution, I have shown that each Christian territory had its own kind of needs for turning to the Penitentiary. Frenchmen needed letters for being able to confess to their own father confessor, Irishmen for getting legally married to relatives in some degree, and illegitimate German men to start an ecclesiastical career.

Such a divergent result is extremely interesting, for the regulations of canon law were the same for each Christian. Consequently, in theory, Christians from all over the world should have turned to the Penitentiary similarly and in similar kinds of matters. This was, however, not the case; they tended to come to the Penitentiary for different reasons that they considered important. It varied from territory to territory. Behind this variety, one probably has to look for local customs, regional laws, and different authorities – why and how still remains a matter to be studied in the future.

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ABBREVIATIONS RELATED TO THE COLLECTIONS OF THE VATICAN SECRET ARCHIVES

ASV = Archivio Segreto Vaticano

Arm. = Armadio

Congr. Vescovi e Regolari, Visita Ap. = Congregazione dei Vescovi e Regolari, Visita Apostolica

Instr. Misc. = Instrumenta Miscellanea

Penitenzieria Ap., Reg. Matrim. et Div. = Penitenzieria Apostolica, Registra Matrimonialium et Diversorum

Reg. Vat. = Registra Vaticana

Reg. Lat. = Registra Lateranensia

Reg. Suppl. = Registra Supplicationum

Reg. Aven. = Registra Avenionensia

RPG = Repertorium Poenitentiariae Germanicum

PREFACE

The present publication contains selected papers from two international conferences: the first was held at the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Bergen (Norway), in October, 2003[1] and the second at the Department of Medieval Studies, Central European University, Budapest (Hungary), in January, 2004.[2] The purpose of these meetings was to gather researchers interested in the history and significance of the papal curia and, in particular, the Apostolic Penitentiary, in the later Middle Ages. The main emphasis was placed on a comparative approach and on the role of peripheral areas of Western Christendom in their communication with the Holy See.

There are various kinds of centre-and-periphery hierarchies.[3] There are geographic, social, economic, and cultural peripheries and centres. "The general textbooks ... address materials from the geographical and social peripheries of privileged cultures only as adjuncts to their central narrative. ... The history of Scandinavia and Eastern Europe become excursus to a central narrative."[4]

However, concerning the communication of the Holy See with various areas of Christendom in the Middle Ages, the impact of 'peripheries' has attracted a new interest in recent years. Since the opening of the archives of the Apostolic Penitentiary to researchers in 1983 relatively few scholars have exploited the sources, but recently their number has increased. Most of them have studied the supplications to the Penitentiary of petitioners from their own home countries and edited material on a national basis. The German Historical Institute, under the leadership of Ludwig Schmugge, has already published several volumes of entries concerning German-speaking territories. Also, the Norwegian and Icelandic material has recently been released by Torstein Jørgensen and Gastone Saletnich. Similar enterprises are in process in several other countries: Poland, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, England and Wales. The examination of territo-

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[1] "*The Late Middle Ages and the Penitentiary Texts: Centre and Periphery in Europe in the Pre-Reformation Era.*"

[2] "Ad Confines. *The Papal Curia and the Eastern and Northern Peripheries of Christendom in the Later Middle Ages(14th – 15th c.).*"

[3] For this and the following, see Teofilo F. Ruiz, "Center and Periphery in the Teaching of Medieval History," in *Medieval Cultures in Contact*, ed. Richard F. Gyug (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003), 252.

[4] Ibidem, 248.

ries on the geographic peripheries in their relation to Rome has been a main focus in these studies.

The archival material of the Penitentiary and the communication of the papal curia with the various regions of late medieval Europe should, however, not be studied only on national levels. There is an increasing need for such studies to be supplemented by comparative searches for differences and analogies in how Christians from different corners of Europe used the papal offices and were treated by them. It is well known that even though the regulations of canon law were in theory the same for everyone, regional differences in interpreting and applying them emerged in the Late Middle Ages. The need to turn to the papal authority in matters of canon law varied depending on the role of local bishops and the presence or absence of papal legates or collectors, who often had the power to deal with similar matters *in partibus.* Also, people in the central territories of Christendom had different opportunities for turning to the papal curia with their requests than those living on the peripheries of the Christian world.

Questions like these played the central role in the discussions of the two conferences noted above. In this book we will render an overview of the present status of this new field of research. As an introduction, Piroska Nagy deals with the question of how to apply centre-periphery models to a comparative analysis of the sources. Kirsi Salonen uses the Penitentiary registers from the period of Pope Pius II to analyse the supplications, their provenance, and the role of peripheries.

Two peripheral parts of late medieval Europe and their significance concerning the communication with the Holy See represent the main part of the publication: Northern Europe and East Central Europe. Comparative analyses of Scandinavian and Scottish source material from the Penitentiary Registers are made by Torstein Jørgensen, Kirsi Salonen, and Irene Furneaux. The studies on East Central Europe are introduced by an inquiry concerning the general importance of the area for the papal curia (Jadranka Neralić), and an overview of the communication of the Holy See with Albania (Etleva Lala). Piroska Nagy and Kirsi Salonen offer a quantitative analysis of East Central Europe and the Penitentiary (1458–1484), followed by contributions on individual territories, such as the Czech lands (Lucie Doležalová) and Dalmatia (Ana Marinković). The contribution by Gastone Saletnich and Wolfgang Müller indicates that in any studies of the role of peripheries one must not neglect the more central areas. Blanca Szeghyová and Ludwig Schmugge show that local archives and their contents are an indispensable additional source for comparative analyses.

Many friends and colleagues have helped in preparing this book for print. We are pleased to thank the personnel of the Penitenzieria Apostolica, especially Padre Ubaldo Todeschini, for reading the manuscript and suggesting useful corrections. We are also much obliged to the skilled staff of the *Sala di Studio* in the Vatican Archives, who patiently brought us volume after volume of the reg-

isters and helped with other problems. Judith Rasson from Central European University deserves our gratitude for copyediting our text.

Finally, we wish to thank the academic institutions which in a more direct way have promoted this project: the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of Bergen, the Department of Medieval Studies at the Central European University in Budapest, the Institut für Realienkunde of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Academy of Finland, and the Department of History at the University of Tampere.

Bergen, Budapest, and Tampere, November 2004

Gerhard Jaritz, Torstein Jørgensen, Kirsi Salonen