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Bernardus Baptizatus, Bernard de la Planche and the Sermon “*Sedens docebat turbas*” at the Council of Constance¹

CHRIS L. NIGHMAN / ONTARIO - SOPHIE VALLERY-RADOT / LYON

Walter Brandmüller’s magisterial two-volume history of the Council of Constance, published during the 1990s, constitutes a major contribution to the field of conciliar studies. Combining a detailed narrative with an insightful analysis of key events at this important council, the author has synthesized a considerable body of recent research produced by himself and by other scholars over the previous few decades². As such, *Das Konzil von Konstanz* will no doubt stand for many years to come as the definitive historical account of this council. It is precisely because of its expected enduring influence that we feel compelled to respectfully point out and correct an error in this important book. In the Personen- und Ortsregister at the end of Band II there is an entry for Bernardus Baptizatus on p.439 which refers the reader to the entry for Bernard de la Planche on p.452, where it is indicated that these are two names for the same person.

This assertion that Bernard de la Planche and Bernardus Baptizatus were actually one individual seems to have originated in C. M. D. Crowder’s Oxford doctoral thesis on the English “nation” at Constance, which was written over fifty years ago. In discussing the position of the English delegation in a political dispute known as the “priority conflict”, Crowder compared two sermons that he considered to be indicative either of a significant policy change occurring within the English *natio* during August 1417 or of a major difference of opinion among the English delegates at that time³. The first sermon, *Videns Ihesus ciuitatem fleuit super illam* (Lc

¹ Portions of this article were presented in May 2005 in a paper by Nighman at the Canadian Society of Medievalists Conference at the University of Western Ontario.

² W. BRANDMÜLLER, *Das Konzil von Konstanz, 1414-1418*, 2 vols., Paderborn 1991-97. For an overview of the historiography, see A. FRENKEN, *Die Erforschung des Konstanzer Konzils (1414-1418) in den letzten 100 Jahren*, Paderborn 1995 (= AHC 25 [1993]).

³ C. M. D. CROWDER, *Some aspects of the English ‘nation’ at the Council of Constance to the election of Martin V, 1414-1417*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Oxford University, 1953, 377-78. Professor Crowder, who had recently retired from Queen’s University in King-

19:41), was delivered by an English cleric named John Wells on 1 August 1417. This speech, which remains unedited, was not seen by Crowder because at that time it was known to exist in only one manuscript that was not accessible to him. Thus, he relied on the brief description of this sermon provided by Heinrich Finke, who noted that it is a reform sermon dealing primarily with simony⁴. As Crowder recognized, this position would have been consistent with the so-called “reform party”, the faction in the “priority conflict” comprising Sigismund and the German and English *nationes* which advocated that the council should enact sweeping reforms on its own authority before proceeding to a papal election to heal the schism. The second sermon discussed by Crowder in this section, *Duo homines ascenderunt in templum* (Lc 18:10), had been edited in full by Herman von der Hardt, who attributed it to Bernardus Baptizatus and dated it to 22 August 1417⁵. In his analysis of this sermon, which discusses the need

ston, Ontario, provided invaluable assistance to Nighman’s doctoral research, which is gratefully noted in the acknowledgments (p.iii) to that thesis: *Reform and humanism in the sermons of Richard Fleming at the Council of Constance (1417)*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto, 1996.

⁴ H. FINKE (ed.), *Acta Concilii Constanciensis*, 4 vols, Münster 1896-1928 (repr. 1976-1982), II 505. Finke cites a single manuscript for this sermon: Ste 33. This is a mistaken reference to a manuscript which actually was and still is at Zeitz; see NIGHMAN, *Confronting Heinrich Finke’s ‘Stettin MS 33’: a contribution to conciliar sermon studies*, *Codices manuscripti: Zeitschrift für Handschriftenkunde* 36 (Sept. 2001) 13-30. Four additional copies of *Videns* have been found by Nighman and Phillip Stump in their survey of Constance sermon manuscripts, which has been published online by the Bibliographical Society of America: *A Bibliographical Register of Sermons and other Orations Delivered at the Council of Constance (1414-1418)* (<http://www.bibsocamer.org/BibSite/Nighman-Stump/index.html>). None of these five copies of *Videns* mentions the year that it was delivered, though they all do cite the same liturgical date: *Dominica ix post Pentecosten*. Finke must have inferred the date from the fact that Wells’ opening address to *lux orbis universi* strongly suggests the presence of the Emperor Sigismund, who was not at Constance in August 1415 or August 1416. Nighman is currently preparing a critical edition of this sermon and all of the other surviving sermons and other orations delivered by members of the English “nation” at Constance for future publication.

⁵ H. VON DER HARDT (ed.), *Magnum oecumenicum Constantiense concilium*, 6 vols Frankfurt-Leipzig 1696-1700, I 879-93. Von der Hardt’s dating of *Duo homines* is almost certainly incorrect. His source for this edition is the copy in Wolfenbüttel, MS lat. 653 Helms., ff. 99r-113r, the rubric for which identifies the preacher as *Bernardus Baptizatus, OSB de Gasconia*, but gives only the liturgical date (*Dom. xi. post Pentecosten*), not the year. Von der Hardt presumably inferred the year from the many references in this sermon to the upcoming papal election; he also mistakenly cited the liturgical date as *Dom. xi. post Trin.* and referred to Baptizatus as an abbot. There are twenty-eight other known manuscript copies of this sermon;

for both reform and a papal election, Crowder argues that it shows a clear preference for the latter issue, which would have placed this preacher in the “unity party” in the “priority conflict”, a group consisting of most the cardinals and the French, Italian and Spanish *nationes*, who called for an immediate papal election and argued that the question of reform should be deferred to the restored papacy. Crowder’s argument that Baptizatus was a member of the English “nation” is presented in a footnote, where he points to the fact that “Baptizatus was a Benedictine and a Gascon, like de Planche,” and goes on to state that “the nature of the opinions expressed in the sermon and their similiarity to the known views of de Planche make the identification of the two Bernards [as one person] practically certain”⁶. It is for this reason that Crowder attributed both *Duo homines* and another sermon by Bernardus Baptizatus, *Plorabitis et flebitis vos* (Jo 16:20)⁷, to Bernard de la Planche. However, this identification is surely incorrect; there is much evidence indicating that two different individuals have been mistakenly conflated into one.

Bernard de la Planche (de Planca, de Planea) was a prominent figure at the Council of Constance who is often cited in the surviving records from this council. The basic facts of his career and his role at Constance are well known from these and from several other sources, which consistently refer to him as a doctor of decretals, a degree that he apparently earned at the

Phillip Stump and Nighman have checked about half of these copies and found that six of them – Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS lat. fol. 699, ff. 16ra-20ra; Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS theol. fol. 413 (632), ff. 248v-255v; Karlsruhe, Landesbibliothek, MS Reich. 23, ff. 169r-176v; Stuttgart, Landesbibliothek, Theol. Fol. 50, ff. 120va-125va; Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS lat. 4292, ff. 166r-176r; and Wrocław, Biblioteka Kapitulna, MS lat.183, ff. 339v-341v – all agree in dating the sermon to the eleventh Sunday after Pentecost in 1416 (23 August), and none of the manuscripts surveyed date it to 1417. In his “Predigtenregister” (Acta [as note 4], II 506), FINKE cited four of these copies of *Duo homines* (“Be 632, f. 248”, “Rei 23, f. 168”, “Stu 56, f. 120”, and “W 4292, f. 166”), but did not mention this alternative dating. Nor is this date inconsistent with the content of the sermon, for by August 1416 it would have been common knowledge that Sigismund had been successful in persuading the kings of Aragon and Castile to withdraw their obedience from the Avignon pope Benedict XIII and to send delegations to Constance, thus clearing the way for the deposition of the last schismatic pope and a papal election. For a complete list of the manuscript copies, see the entry for this sermon in Nighman and Stump, “Register”.

⁶ CROWDER (as note 3), 377, n. 137. For an examination of delegates at Constance from parts of southern France exclusive of Gascony, see S. VALLERY-RADOT, *Les clercs français du Midi au Concile de Constance*, in: *Cahiers de Fanjeaux* 39 (2004) 143-60.

⁷ For excerpts from *Plorabitis*, see FINKE, Acta (as note 4), II 441-42. For a complete list of the manuscripts, see the entry for this sermon in Nighman and Stump, “Register”.

University of Toulouse⁸. At the time of the council he was the sacristan of the Benedictine monastery of Ste. Croix at Bordeaux, and later he became the prior of the abbey's church at Soulac. As the vicar of the archbishop of Bordeaux at Constance⁹, Bernard de la Planche was a prominent member of the *natio Anglicana*, even serving as its president during the month of July 1417¹⁰. Previous to this, he had represented the English "nation" in August 1416 on a committee dealing with the *fautores Wicleffistarum*¹¹, and in January 1417 he was one of two envoys sent by the council to deliver its summons to Pedro de Luna (Benedict XIII) at Peñíscola¹²; he is also believed to be the orator who delivered a short anonymous sermon before the council on 10 March 1417, *Et nunc reges intellegite erudimini qui iudicatis terram* (Ps 2:10), which constitutes a report on that mission¹³. Finally, he is mentioned in the diary of Cardinal Guillaume Fillastre as a member of the committee on ecclesiastical reform that met during the summer of 1417¹⁴.

Whereas references to Bernard de la Planche abound in the surviving documents from Constance, the opposite is the case with Bernardus Baptizatus. In fact, except for the rubrics and colophons to the sermons that are attributed to him, there seems to be only one surviving document from this council that mentions Bernardus Baptizatus and even here it is not certain that this is the same person as our conciliar preacher. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS lat. 8902 comprises a notarial record of a meeting of the representatives of the French "nation" on the subject of the proposed suppression of annates. This document, entitled *Instrumentum delibera-*

⁸ See M. FOURNIER, *Statuts et privilèges des universités françaises depuis leur fondation jusqu'en 1789*, Paris 1890-1894, III 551, #231, where Bernardus de Planea is included in a 1394 list of *scolares in iure canonico in primo anno* at the University of Toulouse.

⁹ Gallia Christiana, II, 840: *Anno 1417, die 19. Aprilis procuratorem instituit D. Bernardum de Planeau monachum et sacristam S. Crucis, ut suo nomine concilio interesset Constantiensi.*

¹⁰ VON DER HARDT (as note 5), IV 1381-82.

¹¹ J. D. MANSI (ed.), *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, Florence-Venice 1759-98, XXVII, 916.

¹² BRANDMÜLLER (as note 2), II 266-269.

¹³ See FINKE *Acta* (as note 4), II 493. Finke cites a single manuscript copy of this sermon: Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS theol. fol. 413 (632), ff. 28v-30r (cited as Be 632 f.28). However, this manuscript provides neither the name of the orator nor the date; Finke must have inferred this information from the following passage in Guillaume Fillastre's journal (FINKE, *Acta* II 91): *retulerunt processum eorum per organum D. Bernardi vicarii archiepiscopi Burdegalensis, decretorum doctori...* Nighman has found a second copy of this oration in Krakow, Biblioteka Jagiellonska, MS 1648, ff. 4va-5vb, but it also lacks an attribution and date; see NIGHMAN, *Confronting* (as note 4), 16 and 21 (#3). A critical edition of this sermon is also being prepared by Nighman for future publication.

¹⁴ FINKE, *Acta* (as note 4), II 133-34.

tionum nationis gallicanae in concilio Constanciensi super vacantibus, anno 1415, records the proceedings of a series of meetings held in the Dominican chapterhouse at Constance from 15 October to 2 December of that year. It cites the presence of a *magister Bernardus Bapter, licenciatius in theologia* among those in attendance at one of these meetings¹⁵.

While the difference between "Bapter" and "Baptizatus" does cast some doubt as to whether this document refers to our conciliar preacher, the fact that this member of the French delegation is cited as a theologian, rather than a legist like Bernard de la Planche, does correspond to the information provided in the rubrics of many copies of *Plorabit* and *Duo homines*, which consistently refer to him as holding a licence in theology or, in some cases, a *licencia in sacra pagina*. If this is correct, it appears that he obtained this degree outside of France because no record has been found placing him at a French university¹⁶. Additional evidence linking Baptizatus to the French "nation" rather than the *natio Anglicana* is also found among the twenty-seven known copies of *Plorabit*, at least two of which are preceded by rubrics which identify him as the *capellanus serenissimi principis comitis palatini Reni*¹⁷. This is a reference to Duke Ludwig III of Upper Bavaria-Ingolstadt who, in addition to being the Pfalzgraf bei Rhein, was also the Comte de Mortagne and a brother of Queen Isabel of France. It should be pointed out, however, that there does not appear to be any external evidence that corroborates this claim that Baptizatus served as a chaplain to Duke Ludwig¹⁸.

Another indication for the identity of Bernardus Baptizatus is found in the rubrics of two copies of his third sermon at Constance, *Sedens docebat*

¹⁵ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 8902, f. 3. The text has been edited in E. MARTÈNE - U. DURAND (eds.), *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum*, Paris, 1719, II 1543-1609; however, this edition refers to him as *Bernardus Baptista* (col.1557C).

¹⁶ See T. SULLIVAN, *Parisian Licentiates in Theology, A.D. 1373-1500*, Leiden 2004; ID., *Benedictine Monks at the University of Paris, A.D. 1229-1500*, Leiden 1995; and FOURNIER (as note 8). However, see note #25 below.

¹⁷ Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Cod. lat. fol. 860, ff. 93v-98r; and Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. lat. 593, ff. 149r-159r. We thank Phillip Stump for this reference. George Kreuzer pointed out that these two manuscripts are closely related to one another, but he did not provide the text of the rubric for *Plorabit* in his inventory of the Berlin manuscript; see G. KREUZER, *Eine übersehene Handschrift mit Konstanzer Konzilspredigten*, in: AHC 18 (1986) 272-80 at p. 275.

¹⁸ See Th. STRAUB, *Herzog Ludwig der Bärtige von Bayern-Ingolstadt und seine Beziehungen zu Frankreich in der Zeit von 1391 bis 1415*, Kallmünz 1965 (= *Münchener historische Studien*, Abt. Bayerische Geschichte, 7; Diss. phil. München 1966); M. SCHAAB, *Geschichte der Kurpfalz*, vol. 1, Stuttgart 1988; and W. EBERHARD, *Ludwig III. Kurfürst von der Pfalz und das Reich, 1410-1427*, Gießen 1896.

turbas (Lc 5:3)¹⁹, the existence of which was unknown when Crowder was conducting research for his doctoral thesis. In 1965 Johannes B. Schneyer reported his discovery of this sermon in a manuscript at Lübeck²⁰. Because this copy lacks both the name of the preacher and the date, Schneyer's 1967 edition of this sermon is anonymous and undated²¹. But a few years later Schneyer found another copy of *Sedens* in Augsburg, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, MS 4E 211, where it is ascribed to Bernardus Baptizatus, OSB and dated to the fourth Sunday after Pentecost in 1417 (27 June). The colophon to this copy of *Sedens* also identifies the preacher as a monk from the monastery *de Caxta in Gasconia Tarmens. diocesis*²². This same colophon is also found with another copy of this sermon in manuscript at Trier that was unknown to Schneyer which is very similar to the Augsburg manuscript he described²³. We believe that this note refers to the Benedictine abbey of St.-Pierre de Tasque, a southern Gascon town in the diocese of Tarbes which was on the frontier of the territories claimed by the king of England²⁴. If Baptizatus did in fact come from this monastery, he may be identical to Bernardus de Serranto, who became its abbot in 1420²⁵.

¹⁹ We refer to *Sedens* as the "third" sermon by Bernardus Baptizatus at Constance in view of the evidence, as explained above in note #5, indicating that *Duo homines* was delivered in August 1416, not in August 1417. However, as CROWDER points out (note 3, 378), in *Duo homines* Bernardus refers to his having preached twice before at this council; see VON DER HARDT (as note 5), I 879. Crowder, believing that Bernard de la Planche and Bernardus Baptizatus were the same person, counted *Et nunc reges* as one of these two previous sermons. It therefore appears that Bernardus Baptizatus must have delivered yet another sermon sometime before 23 August 1416 that either has been lost or is among the many surviving anonymous sermons from Constance.

²⁰ J. B. SCHNEYER, Konstanzer Konzilspredigten: Eine Ergänzung zu H. Finke's Sermones- und Handschriftenlisten, in: ZGO 113 (1965) 361-88 at p.368. See also ID., Neuaufgefundene Konstanzer Konzilspredigten, in: AHC 2 (1970) 66-77 at p.69.

²¹ ID., Konstanzer Konzilspredigten: Texte, in: ZGO 115 (1967) 117-26.

²² ID., Eine Augsburger Sermoneshandschrift mit Konstanzer Konzilspredigten, in: AHC 3 (1971) 21-28 at p.27.

²³ Trier, Stadtbibliothek, MS 706/233, f. 251ra.

²⁴ See H. LABARTHE, Le système d'information géographique pour la cartographie des obédiences en Gascogne à l'époque du Grand Schisme, 1378-v.1420: un outil heuristique?, in: Cahiers de Fanjeaux 39 (2004) 209-67.

²⁵ Gallia Christiana, I 1259. This Abbot Bernard de Tasque probably attended the University of Toulouse, where a *Bernardus de Sarrauta, clericus diocesis Auxitaniensis* is included among the *scolares in artibus* at that university in a list dated to 1378; see FOURNIER, Statuts, I, 648. If this is indeed Bernardus Baptizatus, it adds yet another coincidence between his career and that of Bernard de la Planche. But the date of this record suggests that Bernard de Sarrauta/Serranto was probably much older than Bernard de la Planche, and thus it is unlikely that they attended their *alma mater* at the same time.

Considering the parallels between Bernardus Baptizatus and Bernard de la Planche, it would be unwise to trust entirely in the information provided in the rubrics and colophons to the sermons attributed to Baptizatus in concluding that they were indeed different individuals. Nor can we be certain, as explained above, that the French theologian "Bernardus Bapter" cited in the Paris manuscript is our conciliar preacher, though it seems likely that he was. However, conclusive evidence demonstrating that the preacher Bernardus Baptizatus and Bernard de la Planche could not have been the same person is apparent by examining the text of *Sedens* in light of the political circumstances in which it was delivered. As Schneyer pointed out, the preacher of this sermon repeatedly exhorts the members of his audience to carry out interior reform; that is, each individual should reflect upon himself and work at improving his own character, eschewing vice and cultivating virtue while diligently performing any pastoral responsibilities pertaining to his office²⁶. Rather than calling upon the council itself to enact reform legislation, at the end of the sermon Baptizatus calls upon the future pope (*O summe future pontifex...*) to carry out the necessary reforms²⁷. The text of *Sedens* thus firmly establishes the preacher of that sermon as a member of the "unity" party in the "priority conflict". While there are several examples of individuals such as the Bishop of Milan who took sides in this conflict that differed from the position of their own "nations", this cannot have been the case with "Bernardus Baptizatus/Bernard de la Planche" as it would require this supposed individual to switch sides twice during the course of a few days. In his journal entry for 26 June 1417, the day before *Sedens* was delivered, the French cardinal Guillaume Fillastre named Bernard de la Planche as one of several prominent members of "the king's party", that is, the "reform party" in the "priority conflict"²⁸. And just a few days after this sermon was delivered, Bernard de la Planche began his tenure during the month of July 1417 as president of the English "nation", which remained firmly within the "reform party" until mid-September of 1417, following the death of Bishop Robert Hallum of Salisbury²⁹. Surely, if such a prominent member of the reform committee had changed his position on this contentious issue, twice in less than a week and in such a public manner, there would have been some mention of it in the diary of Cardinal Fillastre or the chronicle of Ulrich Richenthal or

²⁶ SCHNEYER, *Texte* (as note 21), 117.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 124-25.

²⁸ According to Fillastre's account (FINKE, *Acta* [as note 4], II 118), the divisions within the council between these two factions were especially strained at the end of June, 1417.

²⁹ C. NIGHMAN, Prudencia, plague and the pulpit: Richard Fleming's eulogy for Robert Hallum at the Council of Constance, in: *AHC* 38 (2006) 181-96.

in some other source from this council. Yet no such reference has been found. Therefore, there can no longer be any doubt that Bernardus Baptizatus and Bernard de la Planche were in fact two separate individuals, both of them Benedictine monks from Gascony who were active at the Council of Constance, the former as a prominent preacher in the French "nation" and the latter as a major figure within the *natio Anglicana*.