

## Boniface VIII, *Unam sanctam*.

It is remarkable that there remains much disagreement as to the precise text of this famous bull. It certainly does not help that it was contentious when it was issued, continued to be contentious, and remains contentious today, at least in certain ecclesiastical circles. The text in the *Extravagantes communes* 1.8.1 is obviously truncated and may not be totally accurate. Pierre Dupuy in his *Histoire du différend d'entre le pape Boniface VIII et Philippe le Bel* (Paris 1655), which is still being used for documents of the dispute, printed the version in Extrav. Comm. The volume of Boniface VIII's register for the year in question (published in 1939) is not available online. I offer here the online text produced by a somewhat eccentric Catholic, Ronald L. Conte, Jr. (<http://www.catholicplanet.com/TSM/Unam-Sanctam-Latin.htm>). He, in turn, collated four 19th-century editions. The reason that I have some confidence that he has done as well as could be done without the register is that Conte has also published a criticism of a translation that is widely circulated on the internet. His criticism is valid. The translation is just wrong at the point that he mentions. The translation that follows the Latin text (from *Medieval Sourcebook*) makes the correction. I have preserved Conte's notes for each section. The paragraph numbering, convenient for reference purposes, is certainly not in the original.

Bonifatius, Episcopus, Servus servorum Dei.

Ad perpetuam rei memoriam.

1. Unam Sanctam Ecclesiam Catholicam et ipsam Apostolicam urgente fide credere cogimur et tenere. Nosque hanc firmiter credimus et simpliciter confitemur: extra quam nec salus est, nec remissio peccatorum, Sponso in Canticis proclamante, 'Una est columba mea, perfecta mea: una est matris suae, electa genitrici suae:' [Canticles 6:8] quae unum corpus mysticum repraesentat, cujus caput Christus, Christi vero Deus. [1 Corinthians 11:3] In qua unus Dominus, una fides, unum baptisma. [Ephesians 4:5] Una nempe fuit Diluvii tempore arca Noe, unam Ecclesiam praefigurans, quae in uno cubito consummata, [Genesis 6:16] unum, Noe videlicet, gubernatorem habuit et rectorem, extra quam omnia subsistentia super terram legimus fuisse deleta.<sup>1</sup>

2. Hanc autem veneramur et unicam; dicente Domino in Propheta, 'Erue a framea, Deus, animam meam et de manu canis uncam meam;' [Psalm 21:21] pro anima enim, id est, pro seipso capite simul oravit et corpore: quod corpus uncam scilicet Ecclesiam nominavit, propter sponsi, fidei, sacramentorum, et charitatis Ecclesiae unitatem. Haec est tunica illa Domini inconsutilis, [John 19:23-24] quae scissa non fuit sed sorte provenit.

3. Igitur Ecclesiae unius et unicae unum corpus, unum caput, non duo capita quasi monstrum, Christus videlicet, et Christi vicarius Petrus Petrique successor; dicente Domino ipsi Petro, 'Pasce oves meas,' [John 21:17] 'meas,' inquit, et generaliter non singulariter has vel illas, per quod commisisse sibi intelligitur universas. Sive igitur Graeci, sive alii se dicant Petro ejusque successoribus non esse commissos, fateantur necesse se de ovibus Christi non esse; dicente Domino in Joanne, 'unum ovile et unicum esse pastorem.' [John 10:16]<sup>2</sup>

4. In hac ejusque potestate duos esse gladios, spiritualem videlicet et temporalem, Evangelicis dictis instruimur. Nam dicentibus Apostolis, 'Ecce gladii duo hic,' in Ecclesia scilicet, cum Apostoli loquerentur, non respondit Dominus nimis esse sed satis. [Luke 22:38] Certe qui in potestate Petri temporalem gladium esse negat, male verbum attendit Domini proferentes, 'Converte gladium tuum in vaginam.' [Matthew 26:52] Uterque ergo est in potestate Ecclesiae,

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<sup>1</sup> Schaff has 'futuram' instead of 'perpetuam' in 'Ad perpetuam rei memoriam.'

Tosti adds 'corporis' in 'cujus corporis caput Christus.' But Manning, Mirbt, and Schaff all lack corporis, and the word adds nothing to the meaning.

Manning has the typographical error of 'omnis subsistentia,' instead of 'omnia subsistentia.'

<sup>2</sup> Tosti and Schaff lack 'et' in 'inquit, et generaliter,' but add 'est,' in 'necesse est, se'; Manning and Mirbt agree in adding 'et' and lacking 'est'. But neither adding 'et,' nor taking away 'est,' would seem to alter the meaning of the text.

Tosti alone adds a second 'unum' in 'unum ovile, unum et unicum esse Pastorem,' making the text read: 'one and only one Pastor.'

spiritualis scilicet gladius et materialis. Sed is quidem pro Ecclesia, ille vero ab Ecclesia exercendus. Ille sacerdotis, is manu regum et militum, sed ad nutum et patientiam sacerdotis.<sup>3</sup>

5. Oportet autem gladium esse sub gladio et temporalem auctoritatem spirituali subijci potestati: nam cum dicat Apostolus, ‘Non est potestas nisi a Deo, quae autem sunt a Deo ordinatae sunt,’ [Romans 13:1] non autem ordinatae essent, nisi gladius esset sub gladio, et tanquam inferior reduceretur per alium in suprema. Nam secundum beatum Dionysium, lex divinitatis est, infima per media in suprema reduci.<sup>4</sup>

6. Non ergo secundum ordinem universi omnia aequae ac immediate, sed infima per media, et inferiora per superiora ad ordinem reducuntur. Spiritualem autem et dignitate et nobilitate terrenam quamlibet praecellere potestatem, oportet tanto clarius nos fateri quanto spiritualia temporalia antecellunt. Quod etiam ex decimarum datione, et benedictione, et sanctificatione, ex ipsius potestatis acceptione, ex ipsarum rerum gubernatione claris oculis intuemur. Nam veritate testante, spiritualis potestas terrenam potestatem instituere habet et judicare, si bona non fuerit, sic de Ecclesia et ecclesiastica potestate verificatur vaticinium Hieremiae, ‘Ecce constitui te hodie super gentes et regna,’ [Jeremiah 1:10] et caetera quae sequuntur.<sup>5</sup>

7. Ergo si deviat terrena potestas, judicabitur a potestate spirituali, sed si deviat spiritualis minor a suo superiori: si vero suprema, a solo Deo, non ab homine poterit judicari, testante Apostolo, ‘Spiritualis homo judicat omnia, ipse autem a nemine judicatur.’ [1 Corinthians 2:16]

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<sup>3</sup> St. Bernard (De Consideratione, Lib. iv. c. 3) writes:

“Uterque ergo Ecclesiae, et, spiritualis scilicet gladius et materialis; sed is quidem pro Ecclesia, ille vero et ab Ecclesia exercendus: ille sacerdotis, is militis manu, sed sane ad nutum sacerdotis et jussum Imperatoris.”

“And both therefore, are of the Church, specifically, both the spiritual sword and the material. But indeed, the latter is to be exercised on behalf of the Church; and truly the former is to be exercised by the Church; the former is of the priest, the latter is by the hand of the soldier, but truly at the will of the priest and the order of the emperor.”  
[Latin text from: Rev. Johannes Baptist Alzog, Manual of Universal Church History, Volume 2, (Gill and Son: Dublin, 1890), p. 448-449.]

<sup>4</sup> Tosti lacks ‘autem’ in ‘non autem ordinatae essent.’

Tosti has the word order: ‘quae autem a Deo sunt, ordinatae sunt.’

Mirbt and Manning agree on the text above, except that Mirbt has the typographical error: ‘ordinatae’ and Mirbt has comma before ‘a Deo’.

[Further note by CD: As a number of people have pointed out, this is not a direct quotation of anything in Pseudo-Dionysius. It may be derived from ch. 10 of the *De coelesti hierarchia*, the Latin text of which may be found in Hugh of St. Victor’s commentary, PL175, col. 1099A–B: “Connexa est itaque sic ipsa quidem honorabilissima circa Deum animorum dispositio ex perfectiva illuminatione ordinata, in eam immediate ascendendo occultior: et manifestior divinitatis illuminatione purgatur, et illuminatur, et perficitur. Occultior quidem tanquam invisibilior, et magis simplicata et unificata. Manifestior vero ut ante data, et primo lucet, et universalior, et magis in eam, ut oportet, forma effusa. Ab ipsa autem iterum proportionaliter secunda, et a secunda tertia, et ex tertia secundum nos hierarchia, secundum ipsam bene ornantis ordinationis legem in harmonia divina, et analogia ad simul omnis boni ornatus super principale principium et consummationem hierarchiae reducitur.” Or as a reasonably reliable translation from the Greek reads: “We have concluded, then, that the most reverend Order of the Minds around God, ministered by the perfecting illumination through its immediate elevation to it, is purified, and illuminated, and perfected by a gift of light from the Godhead, more hidden and more manifest---more hidden, indeed, as being more intelligible, and more simplifying-, and more unifying; more manifest, as being a first gift and a first manifestation, and more complete, and more affused to it as transparent. And from this (Order) again, in due degree, the second, and from the second, the third, and from the third, our Hierarchy, is reverently conducted to the super-original Origin and End of all good order, according to the self-same law of well-ordered regularity, in Divine harmony and proportion.”]

<sup>5</sup> Schaff omits with an ellipse (...) everything in n. 6 from ‘Non ergo’ through ‘si bona non fuerit’, then he agrees with the rest of the text above.

Tosti lacks ‘et’ in ‘per media, et inferiora’.

Mirbt and Manning agree on the text above.

Hugh of St. Victor, in the 12th century, in ‘De Sacramentis Christianae Fidei,’ lib. II, c. 4, writes the following:

“Spiritualis potestas terrenam potestatem et instituere habet ut sit, et judicare habet, si bona non fuerit.”

“The spiritual authority holds [the ability] so that it may establish the earthly authority, and holds [the ability] to judge if it might not have been good.”

[Latin text from: Rev. Johannes Baptist Alzog, Manual of Universal Church History, Volume 2, (Gill and Son: Dublin, 1890), p. 448-449.]

8. Est autem haec auctoritas, etsi data sit homini et exerceatur per hominem, non humana, sed potius divina, [potestas,] ore divino Petro data, sibique suisque successoribus in ipso [Christo], quem confessus fuit petra firmata, dicente Domino ipsi Petro, ‘Quodcunque ligaveris,’ [Matthew 16:19] etc. Quicumque igitur huic potestati a Deo sic ordinatae resistit; Dei ordinationi resistit, [Romans 13:2] nisi duo sicut Manichaeus fingat esse principia: quod falsum et haereticum [esse] judicamus: quia testante Moyse, non in principiis, sed in principio coelum Deus creavit et terram. [Genesis 1:1]<sup>6</sup>

9. Porro subesse Romano Pontifici omni humanae creaturae declaramus, dicimus, definimus, et pronunciamus omnino esse de necessitate salutis.<sup>7</sup>

Datum Laterani

xiv kal. Decembris,

[18 November]

pontificatus nostri anno octavo [1302, CD].

[Translation:]

Boniface VIII, bishop, servant of the servants of God,  
For a permanent record of the matter:

Urged by faith, we are obliged to believe and to maintain that the Church is one, holy, catholic, and also apostolic. We believe in her firmly and we confess with simplicity that outside of her there is neither salvation nor the remission of sins, as the Spouse in the Canticles [Sgs 6:8] proclaims: ‘One is my dove, my perfect one. She is the only one, the chosen of her who bore her,’ and she represents one sole mystical body whose Head is Christ and the head of Christ is God [1 Cor 11:3]. In her then is one Lord, one faith, one baptism [Eph 4:5]. There had been at the time of the deluge only one ark of Noah, prefiguring the one Church, which ark, having been finished to a single cubit, had only one pilot and guide, i.e., Noah, and we read that, outside of this ark, all that subsisted on the earth was destroyed.

We venerate this Church as one, the Lord having said by the mouth of the prophet: ‘Deliver, O God, my soul from the sword and my only one from the hand of the dog.’ [Ps 21:20] He has prayed for his soul, that is for himself, heart and body; and this body, that is to say, the Church, He has called one because of the unity of the Spouse, of the faith, of the sacraments, and of the charity of the Church. This is the tunic of the Lord, the seamless tunic, which was not rent but which was cast by lot [Jn 19:23-24]. Therefore, of the one and only Church there is one body and one head, not two heads like a monster; that is, Christ and the Vicar of Christ, Peter and the successor of Peter, since the Lord speaking to Peter Himself said: ‘Feed my sheep’ [Jn 21:17], meaning, my sheep in general, not these, nor those in particular, whence we understand that He entrusted all to him [Peter]. Therefore, if the Greeks or others should say that they are not confided to Peter and to his successors, they must confess not being the sheep of Christ, since Our Lord says in John ‘there is one sheepfold and one shepherd.’ We are informed by the texts of the gospels that in this Church and in its power are two swords; namely, the spiritual and the temporal. For when the Apostles say: ‘Behold, here are two swords’ [Lk 22:38] that is to say, in the Church, since the Apostles were speaking, the Lord did not reply that there were too many, but sufficient. Certainly the one who denies that the temporal sword is in the power of Peter has not listened well to the word of the Lord commanding: ‘Put up thy sword into thy scabbard’ [Mt 26:52]. Both, therefore, are in the power of the Church, that is to say, the spiritual and the material sword, but the latter is to be administered *for* the Church but the former by the Church; the former in the hands of the priest; the latter by the hands of kings and soldiers, but at the will and sufferance of the priest.

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<sup>6</sup> Tosti and Schaff add ‘potestas’ in ‘sed potius divina, potestas, ore divino Petro data’.

Tosti and Schaff add ‘Christo’ in ‘successoribus in ipso Christo, quem’.

Tosti adds ‘esse’ in ‘haereticum esse judicamus’; Schaff does not.

All of the additions of Tosti are useful in elucidating the meaning of the text.

Mirbt has parentheses before ‘etsi’ and after ‘hominem’, also he adds parentheses around ‘sicut Manichaeus’. Otherwise Manning and Mirbt agree on the text above.

<sup>7</sup> Tosti and other sources lack ‘et pronunciamus’; some sources place it in brackets and italics.

Schaff, Mirbt, and Manning agree with the above text.

Saint Thomas Aquinas, opusc. contra errores Graec. fol. 9:

“Ostenditur enim, quod subesse Romano Pontifici sit de necessitate salutis.”

“For it is revealed that subjection to the Roman Pontiff is from the necessity of salvation.”

[Dr. Johann Karl Ludwig Gieseler, A Text-book of Church History, (Harper Brothers: New York, 1857), p. 351.]

However, one sword ought to be subordinated to the other and temporal authority, subjected to spiritual power. For since the Apostle said: 'There is no power except from God and the things that are, are ordained of God' [Rom 13:1-2], but they would not be ordained if one sword were not subordinated to the other and if the inferior one, as it were, were not led upwards by the other.

For, according to the Blessed Dionysius, it is a law of the divinity that the lowest things reach the highest place by intermediaries. Then, according to the order of the universe, all things are not led back to order equally and immediately, but the lowest by the intermediary, and the inferior by the superior. Hence we must recognize the more clearly that spiritual power surpasses in dignity and in nobility any temporal power whatever, as spiritual things surpass the temporal. This we see very clearly also by the payment, benediction, and consecration of the tithes, but the acceptance of power itself and by the government even of things. For with truth as our witness, it belongs to spiritual power to establish the terrestrial power and to pass judgement if it has not been good. Thus is accomplished the prophecy of Jeremias concerning the Church and the ecclesiastical power: 'Behold to-day I have placed you over nations, and over kingdoms' and the rest. Therefore, if the terrestrial power err, it will be judged by the spiritual power; but if a minor spiritual power err, it will be judged by a superior spiritual power; but if the highest power of all err, it can be judged only by God, and not by man, according to the testimony of the Apostle: 'The spiritual man judgeth of all things and he himself is judged by no man' [1 Cor 2:15]. This authority, however, (though it has been given to man and is exercised by man), is not human but rather divine, granted to Peter by a divine word and reaffirmed to him (Peter) and his successors by the One Whom Peter confessed, the Lord saying to Peter himself, 'Whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound also in Heaven' etc., [Mt 16:19]. Therefore whoever resists this power thus ordained by God, resists the ordinance of God [Rom 13:2], unless he invent like Manicheus two beginnings, which is false and judged by us heretical, since according to the testimony of Moses, it is not in the beginnings but in the beginning that God created heaven and earth [Gen 1:1]. Furthermore, we declare, we proclaim, we define that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff.

Dated at the Lateran [18 November 1302].