

**Popes through the Looking Glass,
or «Ceci n'est pas un pape»**

by Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri

Reti Medievali Rivista, 13, 1 (2012)

<<http://rivista.retimedievali.it>>



Framing Clement III, (Anti)Pope, 1080-1100

Umberto Longo, Lila Yawn (eds.)

Firenze University Press



Popes through the Looking Glass, or «Ceci n'est pas un pape»

by Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri

The road not taken belongs on the map
(R. Cowley)

Romans have a popular saying: «Morto un papa se ne fa un altro»¹. In short, no one is indispensable, not even the pope. Life goes on, whatever happens. Yet what happens if, when one pope dies, instead of electing one you elect two, and these two popes then begin to fight with one another? What happens if, in place of one clear possibility, the future presents you with two? Between the second century and the fifteenth, the names of roughly forty people have come down to us who declared themselves legitimate popes, bishops of Rome and successors of st. Peter, but who then passed into history as antipopes. The phenomenon was clearly vast².

¹ «When one pope dies you make another one».

² A complete list: Natalius (ca. 200); Hippolytus (217-235); Novatian (251-258); Felix II (355-365); Eulalius (418-419); Laurentius (498-499, 501-506); Dioscorus (530); Theodore (687); Paschal (687); Theophylact (757); Constantine II (767-768); Philip (768); John VIII (844); Anastasius [III] Bibliothecarius (855); Christopher (903-904); Boniface VII (Franco, 974, 984-985); Donus II (ca 974); John XVI (John Philagatus, 997-998); Gregory VI (1012); Gregory VI (John Gratian, 1045-1046); Benedict X (John Mincius, 1058-1059); Honorius II (Cadalus, 1061-1064/1072); Clement III (Wibert of Ravenna, 1080-1100); Theodoric (1100); Adalbert (1101); Sylvester IV (Maginulf, 1105-1111); Gregory VIII (Maurice Bourdin, 1118-1121); Celestine II (Tebaldo Boccapeccora, 1124); Anacletus II (Pietro Pierleoni, 1130-1138); Victor IV (Gregorio Conti, 1138); Victor IV (Octavian of Monticelli, 1159-1164); Paschal III (Guy of Crema, 1164-1168); Calixtus III (John of Strumi, 1168-1178); Innocent III (Lando of Sezze, 1179-1180); Nicholas V (Peter of Corvaro, 1328-1330); Clement VII (Robert of Geneva, 1378-1394); Benedict XIII (Pedro de Luna, 1394-1423); Alexander V (Peter of Candia, 1409-1410); John XXIII (Baldassarre Cossa, 1410-1415); Clement VIII (Gil Sánchez Muñoz, 1423-1429); Benedict XIV

The cases are so diverse that they are difficult to classify³. Some people remembered as antipopes occupied the papal throne only briefly and were rapidly removed in factional struggle. Some were mere pawns moved around by others on the political chessboard. Others, however, and they were not a mere few, were personages of great importance, men who controlled the papacy effectively, sometimes for long periods of time, and who had significant followings. In this final category, one group – the antipopes of the second half of the eleventh century and of the first half of the twelfth, those of the era of the so-called «Investiture Controversy» and the struggle between the empire and the reform papacy – is especially conspicuous. Within that category, moreover, one figure stands out even further: Clement III, Wibert of Correggio, chancellor of the empire and archbishop of Ravenna. Elected pope in 1080 and consecrated in 1084, Clement died in 1100⁴.

The authors of the other essays in this collection write specifically about Clement's history and how we can try to reconstruct it, but I would like to consider a more general problem – namely, the very concept of «antipope». What distinguishes a pope from an antipope? Why, furthermore, is it historically useful to ponder the theme?

The film *Brancaleone alle Crociate* (Brancaleone at the Crusades) was a great success in Italy in the 1970s⁵. In one scene, we witness an imaginary encounter between a pope, Gregory VII, and an antipope, our Clement III⁶. In the center is St. Columbine, a hermit-monk (played by Gigi Proietti) who lives on top of a column. The roles of «good guy» and «bad guy» are very well defined: the «good guy», the legitimate pope, is of course Gregory VII (played by Augusto Mastrantoni: fig. 1), with his benevolent look and handsome white saint's beard. As his champion, Gregory has the stalwart, but also ridiculous,

(Bernard Garnier, 1424-1429); Benedict XIV (Jean Carrier, 1430-1437); Felix V (Amadeus of Savoy, 1439-1449).

³ For recent biographies of the antipopes see the *Enciclopedia dei papi*, Roma 2000, 2 voll. Bibliography on the topic is generally sparse: e.g. L. Silvani, *Storia degli antipapi*, Torino 1971. Cf. K.-M. Sprenger, *Damnatio memoriae o damnatio in memoria. Qualche osservazione metodologica sui cosiddetti antipapi*, in *Condannare all'oblio. Pratiche della damnatio memoriae nel medioevo*. Atti del convegno di studio svoltosi in occasione della XX edizione del Premio internazionale Ascoli Piceno (Ascoli Piceno, Palazzo dei Capitani, 27-29 novembre 2008), ed. I. Lori Sanfilippo and A. Rigon, Roma 2010, p. 67-87, p. 80-81.

⁴ J. Ziese, *Wibert von Ravenna der Gegenpapst Clemens III (1080-1100)*, Stuttgart 1982 (Päpste und Papsttum, 20); I. Heidrich, *Ravenna unter Erzbischof Wibert: 1073-1100. Untersuchungen zur Stellung des Erzbischofs und Gegenpapste Clemens III. in seiner Metropole*, Sigmaringen 1984; C. Dolcini, *Clemente III antipapa*, in *Enciclopedia dei papi* cit., II, p. 212-217, <[⁵ *Brancaleone at the Crusades*, Italy, 1970, written by Agenore Incrocci, Furio Scarpelli and Mario Monicelli, directed by Mario Monicelli. The actors speak in a strange, pseudo-medieval Italian. Along with the slightly earlier film *L'Armata Brancaleone* \(1966\), this film is for Italians what *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* \(1974\) is for English speakers.](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/clemente-iii_(Enciclopedia_dei_Papi)/> [last accessed 19th January 2012].</p></div><div data-bbox=)

⁶ Thanks to Kai-Michael Sprenger for kindly reminding me of this passage. The scene is available on the website *Cinema e medioevo*, <http://www.cinemedioevo.net/classici/brancalone_crociate.htm> [last accessed 19th January 2012].

Brancaleone da Norcia (played by Vittorio Gassman). The «bad guy», in contrast, is the illegitimate pope, Clement, clean-shaven, with ugly teeth, a venomous stare, and a shrill voice. (The actor here is unknown: fig. 2).

The scene unfolds as follows:

- [Gregory] Saint Columbine! May heaven be near you!
- [Columbine] Who are you?
- [Gregory] We are the pope. We bring you our devotion, Saint Columbine!
- [Columbine] The pope? Welcome [are you] on the day of Pentecost! Come forward and show yourself!
- [Clement, breaking into the conversation] *We* are the pope!
- [Clement's army] Hurray for the true pope!
- [Gregory's entourage] Hurray for the true pope!
- [Clement] I excommunicate you!
- [Gregory] Who?
- [Clement] You!
- [Gregory] *You*, who are an antipope?!
- [Clement] Me?! The antipope is *you*.
- [Gregory, turning to Columbine] Saint Columbine, you be the judge.
- [Columbine] What evil times⁷!

It goes without saying that in successive scenes Pope Gregory prevails over Clement. His champion, Brancaleone, submits to God's judgment by walking over burning coals with his bare feet (fig. 3). Clearly, God is on Gregory's side, and once Gregory triumphs, everyone abandons the antipope (fig. 4). Yet, in that hypothetical present of one day nine hundred years ago where I stopped the film, the two popes are still fighting with one another, and no one knows who will win. Indeed, the hermit on the column has no idea which of the two popes to choose and finds himself in a state of total confusion while each of the claimants accuses the other of being an antipope.

We have before us two popes, one pitted against the other, symmetrical and opposed as if in a mirror. Columbine's column provides the axis of the symmetry (fig. 5). Each pope shouts at his rival, calling him an antipope. How, then, do we go about distinguishing the one from the other? If we adopt the canonical position, meaning the one officially established by Catholic Church tradition, then there are no doubts involved. The distinction between pope and antipope is eminently clear. The pope is the legitimate Roman pontiff, Peter's successor through an uninterrupted line, elected according to procedures that change over time but which always adhere to the principle of

⁷ [Gregorio] Santo Colombino! Lo ciel te sia vicino! - [Colombino] Chi sei? - [Gregorio] Semo lo papa, te venimo a reca' la nostra divozione, santo Colombino! - [Colombino] Lo papa? Benvenuto lo dì di Pentecoste! Eh veni avanti, e faticì vedere! - [Clemente] Noi semo lo papa! - [Esercito di Clemente] Viva lo vero papa! - [Seguito di Gregorio] Viva lo papa vero! - [Clemente] Io te scomunico! - [Gregorio] A chie? - [Clemente] A tene! - [Gregorio] Te, che sei antipapa! - [Clemente] Io? Antipapa sei! - [Gregorio] Santo Colombino! A te lo iudicio! - [Colombino] Mala tempora!

inspiration by the Holy Spirit⁸. An antipope, by contrast, is a transgressor, someone who presumptuously dares to declare himself pope using illegitimate procedures and with help from the devil. He is a monstrous invader of the Apostolic See, a heresiarch, even an anti-Christ.

This is a powerful interpretive system, rooted in Church histories composed for normative and apologetic purposes. If confessional authors – meaning religious ones, whose reasoning is openly based on the teachings of the Church – distinguish between a pope and an antipope in such a categorical manner, we are wrong to fault them on historical grounds, since they have opted to apply a meta-historical criterion, rather than an historical one. For a confessional author, mankind's path leads toward salvation according to a divine plan⁹. An antipope is thus nothing more than a stumbling block for the Church, whose ultimate victory is a foregone conclusion. It should not surprise us that in his introduction to the *Enciclopedia dei papi* (The Encyclopedia of Popes), published in 2000 on the occasion of the Great Jubilee, Cardinal Paul Poupard wrote the following: «In addition to the popes recognized as such, we must also recall the thirty-seven antipopes, whose particular physiognomy contributes more than a little in certain moments to creating confusion and disrepute for the very institution [of the papacy]»¹⁰.

As the Roman Catholic Church (and others) advance it, the history of the antipopes is history constructed *ex post facto* – that is, after the game is over. There can be only one winner, a precept that someone narrating history from the confessional perspective cannot set aside. Again, there can be only one winner: the person who is in the right, because whoever is in the right must ultimately win. History – and it is not an empty saying – is written by the winners. With a careful selection, recomposition, and destruction of memory, themes that Umberto Longo, Kai-Michael Sprenger, and Lila Yawn discuss in their respective studies, narrators of history operating from the confessional point of view succeed in forming a tidy picture, a unified plot in which the bright white of the pope and the infernal darkness of the antipope are perfectly distinguishable. Apocryphal scriptural texts offer a useful comparison. Apocryphal scriptures are texts whose deviancy and falsehood have been officially designated as such by the Church, leading to their exclusion from the biblical canon. In a parallel manner, the antipopes are conceived of as extraneous to the legitimate and uninterrupted apostolic succession that began with St. Peter.

⁸ A.M. Piazzoni, *Storia delle elezioni pontificie*, Casale Monferrato 2003; A. Melloni, *Il Conclave. Storia dell'elezione del Papa*, Bologna 2005.

⁹ Considerations similar to mine are developed by G. Miccoli, *In difesa della fede. La Chiesa di Giovanni Paolo II e Benedetto XVI*, Milano 2007, p. 212-214, and G. Macy, *The Hidden History of Women's Ordination: Female Clergy in the Medieval West*, Oxford 2008, p. 4-6.

¹⁰ P. Poupard, *Il papato in una enciclopedia*, in *Enciclopedia dei papi* cit., I, s. p.: «Oltre i papi riconosciuti come tali dobbiamo ricordare anche i 37 antipapi, la cui particolare fisionomia contribuisce non poco, in alcuni momenti, a creare confusione e discredito all'istituzione stessa».

This confessional view of the antipopes is not the only possible one, however. The phenomenon can also be examined from a different perspective, one that is not finalistic, meaning that it does not consider historical facts with hindsight, basing its interpretations on a knowledge of final outcomes. We cannot assert, for example, that at the moment when Napoleon was crowned emperor and winning every battle we already knew that he would eventually lose everything. If we were to say such a thing then we would be claiming to know from the outset how things are going to end, when in fact we do not. If we think in this way, then we are not analyzing historical information but rather exploiting that information to demonstrate the thesis that we brought to it at the outset. In order not to write history with hindsight, we have to make a very great effort at seeing past events as if we were *inside* of them, as if we ourselves were anchored in that distant present, frozen in the still frame along with the contenders, when the possibilities were still virtually infinite and the end of the story had yet to be written¹¹. If we do our best at moving through history with this perspective, then things immediately become more complicated. Suddenly, we are no longer dealing with a pope and an antipope but rather with two claimants to the title of pope, each with the possibility of coming out the winner. Each one has been elected in a more or less legitimate way, although the problem of their legitimacy, which is of interest to the confessional historian and which was also profoundly important to the contemporaries who lived through those events, is not our principal problem. Of greater interest from the point of view that I am proposing is the prospect of witnessing a confrontation, a war, as it evolves on many levels.

For a moment, however, let us return to the question of legitimacy. What authority chose these popes? Each one is convinced that he is the rightful pontiff, as is the host of friends and of armed men who surround him. Each pope has also anathematized and excommunicated the other. Each of the two may even have his own line of successors, as Clement III eventually would in the early twelfth century and as happened even more notably during the Great Schism of the late Trecento and early Quattrocento, when Western Christendom was divided in its obedience to the popes of the Roman and Avignonese lines¹². In our eleventh-century freeze-frame there are two forces on the field, and which of the two fortune will ultimately smile upon is not clear. Each of the two contenders has many possible futures before him, but the outcome toward which he sees himself moving is victory over his adversary. Whether he will succeed has yet to be seen.

This non-finalistic way of thinking about history, a mode of inquiry rooted in the continuous mutability of events and possibilities, appears in various

¹¹ One could argue that our approach constitutes Counterfactual (or Virtual) History, but it does not. We are not interested in considering what would have happened if the antipope had won the dispute. Such intellectual-imaginative endeavors are attractive from a narrative standpoint but not useful in discerning what happened historically.

¹² H. Millet, *L'Église du Grand Schisme 1378-1417*, Paris 2009.

articles in the aforementioned *Enciclopedia dei papi*. Remarkably, the first volume of the *Enciclopedia*, with its chronological arrangement, begins and ends not with two popes but rather with the first bishop of Rome, Peter, and with an antipope of the ninth century, Anastasius Bibliothecarius. According to Girolamo Arnaldi, editor of the medieval segments of the *Enciclopedia*, the Middle Ages of the popes consists of the period between Gregory the Great (590-604) and Felix V (1439-1449), between the man often called «the first pope of the Middle Ages» and the last antipope worthy of the name¹³. That Felix is the last person remembered as an antipope tells us something important¹⁴: the phenomenon of the antipopes was fundamentally medieval, although we should also note that there have been antipopes in our own era. They have nothing to do with the ones under discussion here, however. They tend to be minimal figures rather than strong personalities on the model of Clement III, who in his own time really did have a chance of emerging triumphant and changing the course of history¹⁵.

The non-predetermined, non-finalistic historical eye, which attends to events as they happened, affords a conceptual revolution, which has already renewed historical studies in many areas and restored voices to those who lost their own struggles and were thereby deprived of the possibility of talking about themselves¹⁶. With respect to the historical moment that we are considering, this reversal of perspective has already permitted some scholars, especially Ovidio Capitani and Cinzio Violante, to comprehend that the eleventh-century reform – which in some historiographic milieus continues to be referred to with the imprecise and outdated term «Gregorian Reform» – was not the monolithic achievement of a pontiff whose victory was a given from the outset but rather a painful synthesis of tensions, opposing ideas, tested possibilities, and paths undertaken and abandoned¹⁷. In this moving

¹³ G. Arnaldi, *L'età medievale*, in *Enciclopedia dei papi* cit., p. 47-90, p. 47, < [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/leta-medievale_\(Enciclopedia-dei-Papi\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/leta-medievale_(Enciclopedia-dei-Papi)/) > [last accessed 19th January 2012].

¹⁴ *Amedée VIII-Felix V, premier duc de Savoie et pape (1383-1451)*. Colloque international: Ripaille-Lausanne, 23-26 octobre 1990. Études publiées par Bernard Andenmatten et Agostino Paravicini Bagliani; avec la collaboration de Nadia Pollini, Lausanne 1992.

¹⁵ See < http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:20th-century_antipopes > [last accessed 19th January 2012].

¹⁶ The main point of reference in this regard is the celebrated book by Nathan Wachtel, *La vision des vaincus: les Indiens du Pérou devant la conquête espagnole 1530-1570*, Paris 1971 (Engl. transl.: *The Vision of the Vanquished: the Spanish Conquest of Peru through Indian Eyes, 1530-1570*, Hassocks 1977), which in telling the story of the European conquest of South America takes the point of view of the *indios*, rather than of the *conquistadores*.

¹⁷ O. Capitani, *Esiste un'«età gregoriana»?*, in «Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa», 1 (1965), p. 454-481; C. Violante, *La riforma del secolo XI come progressiva sintesi di contrastanti idee e strutture: verifiche e prospettive*, in «Critica storica. Bollettino ASE», 26 (1989), 1, p. 155-166; *Riforma o restaurazione? La cristianità al passaggio tra primo e secondo millennio*, Negarine di S. Pietro in Cariano (Verona) 2006; *Le diverse anime della «riforma»*, a cura di C. Sereno, in «Reti medievali. Repertorio», 2006, < <http://www.repertorio.retimedievali.it> >. See also D. Glass, *The Sculpture of Reform in North Italy ca 1095-1130. History and Patronage of Romanesque Façades*, Farnham 2010, e.g. p. 9: «This view is certainly not new to historians who

magma, Clement III and his advisors emerge as imposing figures, despite Clement's traditional antipapal designation.

A journey taken up and aborted, a path lost in the forest – these metaphors sum up the fate of those men whom tradition has labeled antipopes. Those of us who attempt to see history in the way that I am proposing do not believe that antipopes were born antipopes, that they were «perverse» from the start, but rather that they were branded with that mark of infamy because they were defeated. If this manner of thinking is correct, then the definition of an antipope offered by *Wikipedia* (perhaps the first place most people look today for immediate information about anything) is inexact, given its strong finalistic connotations. An antipope is not, as *Wikipedia* affirms, «a person who opposes a legitimately elected or sitting Pope»¹⁸. An antipope is instead a pope whom another pope declares illegitimate and who loses his conflict, either on the battlefield or in the media.

What I am getting at is that an antipope can only exist through a mirror: the mirror of his opponent¹⁹. Each antipope comes into being as such by way of two or even three elections, as well as a political clash. He is definable as an «anti», moreover, only as the contrary of his double and thus as a fake, a falsifier, a shadow. At the same time, what holds true for one side also holds true for the other. As events transpire, we never find simply a pope and an antipope. Rather, there are two contemporaneous popes, or even simultaneous antipopes. Each of the two parties is a pope in his own eyes and an antipope in the eyes of the other. Each lives as an antipope only through the interpretive mirror of the other. Each knowingly uses rhetorical codes to affirm his own full legitimacy, placing himself in the line of the apostolic succession, while proclaiming the out-and-out illegitimacy of his adversary, whom he characterizes as a counterfeit. The struggle in question is a war of propaganda, aimed both at the contenders' own loyalists and at their opponents²⁰. This brief excerpt from a papal letter in which one pope describes the counter-election of his rival allows us to sample and savor the sort of dis-

have gradually been revising Fliche's all-encompassing notion of the Gregorian Reform for more than a generation. Among art historians such is unfortunately not the case, for in that discipline the Gregorian age is still painted with all too broad a brush». Maureen Miller recently stressed the need to rethink the meta-narrative of the reform period: M.C. Miller, *The Crisis in the Investiture Crisis Narrative*, in «History Compass», 7/6 (Nov. 2009), p. 1570-1580.

¹⁸ < <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antipope> > [last accessed 19th January 2012]: «An antipope [Latin < http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_language >: *antipapa*] is a person who opposes a legitimately elected or sitting Pope [< <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope> >] and makes a significantly accepted competing claim to be the Pope».

¹⁹ As in *Dagobert*, a film by Dino Risi (Italy, France, 1984), where Pope Honorius I and his double, the impostor Introchius (characters both played by Ugo Tognazzi), meet in a church.

²⁰ MGH SS, *Libelli de lite imperatorum et pontificum saeculi XI. et XII. conscripti*, Hannoverae 1891-1897, 3 voll.; M.S. Audebert, *La propagande pontificale et sa réception au temps des schismes (XI^e-XII^e siècles)*. *Innocent II, Anaclet II: la mémoire d'une guerre de libelles, lectures et débats*, in *Comunicazione e propaganda nei secoli XII e XIII*, a cura di R. Castano, F. Latella e T. Sorrenti, Roma 2004, p. 595-612.

course involved: «In truth, some brothers, newly arrived with respect to place and time and very few in number, suffocated by the persuasive wiles of wicked people, have attempted to erect another altar; to introduce the anathemas of Jericho into the sanctuary of God; to make, in the darkness, the idol of Belphegor out of the earrings of foolish women»²¹.

Who wrote this letter? It was not Innocent II (1130-1143), the pope who ultimately prevailed and whom the Church considers canonical, but rather his rival, Anacletus II (1130-1138), remembered by history as an antipope²². There are many other examples, including much cruder ones. What we see are opposing popes armed against one another, and around them a world living in uncertainty²³. Fig. 6 shows a sculpted stone capital of late twelfth century in the cathedral of San Leo (Rimini) that has recently been interpreted as a symbol of opposing popes, represented as two wild animals on the barque of Peter rowing in opposite directions²⁴. Alliances form and dissolve. There are negotiations. Fighting erupts. One of the two parties will win. That is a given, even if the future victor's identity is not. The winner's triumph, furthermore, will permit the cancellation of his adversary's memory (*damnatio memoriae*, or *deletio memoriae*) or its consignment to eternal infamy (*memoria damnata*)²⁵. Documents, bodies, tombs, and cult sites are destroyed, as we read in the articles of Umberto Longo, Kai-Michael Sprenger, and Lila Yawn.

I want to be especially clear about one thing. Our project of restoring antipopes to their dignity as popes, as they were seen in their own time by themselves and by others, is a methodological choice and by no means an attempt to demonstrate that the men in question were *the* legitimate popes,

²¹ «Verum quidam de fratribus loco et tempore novitii et paucissimi numero, quorundam perfidorum blandis astutiis suffocati, altare aliud erigere, et anathema Hierico in sanctuarium Dei introducere, et simulacrum Phegor de inauribus mulierum insipientium sunt in tenebris fabricare conati»; PL 179, col. 700, n. 9, Rome, Saint Peter, 1th May 1130.

²² P.F. Palumbo, *I precedenti, la vicenda romana e le ripercussioni europee dello scisma di Anacleto II*, Roma 1995 (a new edition of *Lo scisma del MCXXX. I precedenti, la vicenda romana e le ripercussioni europee della lotta tra Anacleto e Innocenzo II*, Roma 1942); F.-J. Schmale, *Studien zum Schisma des Jahres 1130*, Köln-Graz 1961; R. Manselli, *Anacleto II*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, III, Roma 1961, p. 17-19; now in *Enciclopedia dei papi cit.*, II, p. 268-270; W. Maleczek, *Das Kardinalskollegiums unter Innocenz II. und Anaclet II.*, in «Archivum historiae Pontificiae», 19 (1981), p. 27-78.

²³ Kai-Michael Sprenger is in the process of publishing a book on this topic: *Regnante Frederico inclito imperatore in Italia, de papa vero incerti sumus. Studien zur Wahrnehmung des Alexandrinischen Schismas in Reichsitalien (1159-1177)*, Tübingen 2012 (Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom, Nr. 125) [in press].

²⁴ F.V. Lombardi, *L'eco dello scisma papale nel dualismo figurativo dei capitelli romanici di San Leo*, in «Studi montefeltrani», 32 (2010), p. 43-72, p. 57.

²⁵ K.M. Sprenger, *Damnatio memoriae oder Damnatio in Memoria? Überlegungen zum Umgang mit so genannten Gegenpäpsten als methodisches Problem der Pabstgeschichtsschreibung*, in «Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken», 89 (2009), p. 31-62; Sprenger, *Damnatio Memoriae o damnatio in memoria cit.* In 2011 the international interdisciplinary research group "Damnatio Memoriae - Deformation and Counter-construction of Memory in History, Art and Literature" was founded: cf. <<http://www.damnatio-memoriae.net/index.html>> [last accessed 19th January 2012].

with right on their side. Making such arguments even for the most important and credible of the (anti)popes would be foreign to the interests of the historian, whose job, as Marc Bloch taught us, is not to judge but to understand²⁶. The generic label of «antipope» agglomerates situations that in reality need to be distinguished from one another with great care²⁷. Some antipopes were patently illegitimate, just as some popes now considered canonical were elected in canonically inadmissible ways²⁸. In some cases, doubts about a particular figure's legitimacy are probably destined to remain such²⁹. The legitimacy of pontifical succession is a complicated issue, since it does not derive from laws founded upon natural elements, such as birth or membership in a family, as successions within dynasties do. Rather, it resides in an election in which many different political entities participate, according to shared procedures. As we know, however, both the rules and the people change over time. By way of example, I can offer a paradoxical comparison that may explain, among other things, why Wibert of Ravenna received the pontifical name of Clement. Gregory VI is often considered an antipope, since he was deposed in 1046 by a synod that Emperor Henry III presided over and was replaced with Pope Clement II, whom the Church counts among the legitimate popes³⁰. Gregory VII, in contrast, is officially held to be a legitimate pope, even though he was deposed in 1080 by a synod that Emperor Henry IV presided over and was replaced with Pope Clement III, whom the Church considers an antipope³¹. Gregory, Henry, Clement. The names of the protagonists were exactly the same on both occasions, as was the means used to depose one pope and to choose a replacement – namely, a synod. Thirty or so years passed between the two events, however; the numerals of the protago-

²⁶ M. Bloch, *Apologie pour l'histoire ou métier d'historien*, Paris 1949; Engl. transl. *The Historian's Craft*, New York 1953, ch. IV, 1: «Judging or Understanding?».

²⁷ Thus, for example, we can have two popes elected contemporaneously in the same election (as in the cases of Innocent II and Anacletus II in 1130 and of Alexander III and Victor IV in 1159); or a pope elected after the formal deposition of his predecessor (as with Clement III, who was elected in 1080 following the deposition of Gregory VII, who had been elected in his turn in 1073), and so on.

²⁸ For example, Gregory VII: cf. G.M. Cantarella, *Il sole e la luna. La rivoluzione di Gregorio VII papa, 1073-1085*, Roma-Bari 2005, p. 81-86.

²⁹ L. Pellegrini (Mario da Bergamo, O.F.M. Cap.), *La duplice elezione del 1130. I precedenti immediati e i protagonisti*, in *Contributi dell'Istituto di Storia medievale*, I, Milano 1968, p. 265-302.

³⁰ *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. J.D. Mansi, XIX, Venetiis 1774, col. 617; P. Engelbert O.S.B., *Heinrich III. und die Synoden von Sutri und Rom in Dezember 1046*, in «Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte», 94 (1999), p. 228-266. On the problem of the legitimacy or illegitimacy of Gregory VI, which is still unresolved (different sources mention different circumstances: non-canonical and simoniacal election procedures, a deposition of authority, Gregory's renunciation of the office before the synod), cf. A. Sennis, *Gregorio VI*, in *Enciclopedia dei papi cit.*, II, p. 148-150, <[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gregorio-vi_\(Enciclopedia-dei-Papi\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gregorio-vi_(Enciclopedia-dei-Papi)/) > [last accessed 19th January 2012].

³¹ *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. J.D. Mansi, XX, Venetiis 1775, coll. 547-550.

nists increased by a digit (for example from Clement II to Clement III); and the relation of pope to antipope was turned on its head.

Considering the antipopes in the way that I am suggesting, that is as popes regarded as legitimate in their own day by a significant number of people, allows us to understand them better than we could by simply branding them subverters of the established order. Indeed, it permits us to see them as actors in normal contexts and not merely as targets in polemical tirades. We can study them, for instance, as bishops and sovereigns, and as protagonists of a *different* established order³². Clement III is especially amenable to this kind of thinking. Consider the following questions. Who among the various claimants to the papacy was the most physically present in Rome in the last decades of the eleventh century? The answer: Clement III. He lived in the city in 1084 and then almost uninterruptedly from 1087 to 1100. How large was his following? Answer: very large. Was he considered a saint after his death? Yes. Did he have a tomb where miracles were said to happen? Yes³³.

The point that I have just made about Clement III could also hold true on slightly different terms for another great antipope of the era, Anacletus II, who reigned from 1130 to 1138. Without Anacletus, Sicily might not have become a kingdom, and in particular a kingdom subject to the Holy See. It was Anacletus – and not his rival, Innocent II, now considered legitimate – who conferred the title of King of Sicily on the Norman prince Roger II³⁴. While Anacletus occupied Rome, Innocent had taken refuge in France. There is a paradox here. The relationship of vassalage between Rome and the Kingdom of Sicily, which lasted until the end of the eighteenth century, was instituted by an antipope.

The commissioning of art, the development of administrative, ceremonial, and liturgical apparatuses, the governance of ecclesiastical and civil affairs, and relations with both the powerful and the populace were functions that antipopes exercised before a Christendom that at least in part held that they had a right to do so. The once massive documentation of their activities is nearly all gone, however³⁵. To understand the magnitude of what was lost,

³² Cf. N. D'Acunto, *I vescovi di Luni e l'Impero nei secoli XI e XII*, in *Da Luni a Sarzana - 1204-2004. VIII centenario della traslazione della Chiesa vescovile*. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Sarzana 30 settembre-2 ottobre 2004, ed. A. Manfredi and P. Sverzellati, Città del Vaticano 2007 (Studi e testi, 442), p. 153-169, p. 156-157.

³³ Sprenger, *Damnatio memoriae o damnatio in memoria* cit., p. 75-76; R. Rusconi, *Santo padre. La santità del papa da San Pietro a Giovanni Paolo II*, Roma 2010, chapt. I, 5: «Clemente III, un (anti)papa santo».

³⁴ PL 179, coll. 715-717, n. 39, Benevento, 27th September 1130.

³⁵ Cf. L. Paolini, *Storia della Chiesa di Bologna medievale: un "cantiere" storiografico aperto*, in *Codice diplomatico della Chiesa bolognese. Documenti autentici e spuri (secoli IV-XII)*, ed. M. Fanti, L. Paolini, preface by O. Capitani, Roma 2004 (Fonti per la Storia dell'Italia medievale, Regesta Chartarum, 54), p. LIII-CVI; D'Acunto, *I vescovi di Luni e l'Impero* cit., p. 154-156; N. D'Acunto, *Pier Damiani e gli esordi del monastero di S. Gregorio*, in *Pier Damiani e il monastero di S. Gregorio in Conca nella Romagna del secolo XI*. Atti del convegno di studio in occasione del primo centenario della nascita di Pier Damiani (1007-2007), Morciano di Romagna, 27-29 aprile 2007, ed. N. D'Acunto, Spoleto (Perugia) 2008, p. 119-146: p. 145; Sprenger, *Damnatio memoriae o damnatio in memoria* cit., p. 78-80.

consider that the surviving portion of the register of antipope Nicholas V, a rare case of the survival of an antipope's papers, contains over seven hundred letters written by Nicholas's chancery in only about two months in 1328, his first year of rule³⁶. Consider, moreover, that Nicholas V was little more than a puppet pope, set up by the emperor Louis the Bavarian and by the Romans in opposition to the extremely powerful John XXII (1316-1334).

Even if the very filtered and reduced documentation offers us little help, this theme of the normalcy of the antipopes is something that we should consider fundamental. More often than not when we are dealing with antipopes, clear and emphatic judgments about their legitimacy and their extraneousness to the canonical path derail our ability to comprehend. The normative definition of the difference between canonical popes and antipopes can easily find its way into histories that conceive of themselves as entirely outside of confessional thinking. This phenomenon – of a confessional element creeping into purportedly non-confessional historical thought – undoubtedly derives from the overwhelming force of the official, canonical interpretation. We have already noted the imprecise definition offered by *Wikipedia*, which perhaps unknowingly draws upon Catholic teaching. The same sort of involuntary condemnation is also detectable in some art-historical scholarship. When art historians refer to the eleventh-century reform, only in rare cases do they acknowledge that, in addition to Gregory VII, our Clement III was also on the scene and, furthermore, that he was the one who remained in Rome for many years, while Gregory VII and his successors were far away³⁷. It is not out of the question, then, that some artistic patronage may be attributable to Clement III, rather than to the rival popes whom tradition considers legitimate. Could we reasonably imagine that as an antipope Clement was not capable of constructing or decorating a church? Obviously, the question is rhetorical, as Lila Yawn considers in her study.

To begin my conclusion, I would like ask: what is left of these historical characters today? Some texts survive, many of them polemical. There are also

³⁶ Nicholas V's Register: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, *Reg. Vat.* 118 and 118A. On this source: K. Eubel, *Der Registerband des Gegenpapstes Nikolaus V.*, in «Archivalische Zeitschrift», n. ser., 4 (1893), p. 123-212; G. Biscari, *Un frammento del registro di Niccolò V.*, in «Archivio della R. Società romana di storia patria», 42 (1919), p. 318-358. About this antipope: A. De Vincentiis, *Niccolò V antipapa*, in *Enciclopedia dei papi* cit., II, p. 522-524, < [³⁷ Cf. exceptions in C. Filippini, *The Eleventh-Century Frescoes of Clement and Other Saints in the Basilica of San Clemente in Rome*, Ann Arbor \(Michigan\), UMI Dissertation Services, 2000; P. Claussen, *Un nuovo campo della storia dell'arte. Il secolo XI a Roma, in Roma e la Riforma Gregoriana*, ed. S. Romano and J. Enckell, Roma 2007, p. 62-66; V. Pace, *La Riforma e i suoi programmi figurativi: il caso romano, fra realtà storica e mito storiografico*, in *Roma e la riforma gregoriana* cit., p. 56-57; and S. Romano, *Riforma e tradizione 1050-1198*, Milano 2006 \(*La pittura medievale a Roma*, 4\), p. 26-27.](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/niccolo-v_res-1beaa897-8c5e-11dc-8e9d-0016357eee51_(Enciclopedia_dei_Papi)/> [last accessed 19th January 2012]. A fragmentary register of Anacletus II, containing 36 letters and dated to 1130, has also survived (Cod. membr. Cas. 159): cf. P.F. Palumbo, <i>La cancelleria di Anacleto II</i>, in <i>Scritti di paleografia e diplomatica in onore di Vincenzo Federici</i>, Firenze 1944, p. 80-131.</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

a few iconographic memories of memories, drawings made of frescoes before they were destroyed³⁸. Of the antipopes, ultimately, we have almost nothing but highly filtered representations. It is for exactly that reason that I included a reference to Lewis Carroll in my title. Passing through the looking glass, we find our point of view reversed. In these collected studies, we are writing not so much about «anti-popes» as about «other-popes», reflections in the mirrors of their adversaries. Those adversaries won their respective wars and so were able to pass their visions onto the future as the only visions able to convey the truth. Following this same line of thought, I chose a subtitle that plays upon the caption inscribed by Magritte in one of his masterworks, *La trahison des images* (*The Treachery of Images*): «Ceci n'est pas une pipe» (fig. 7). As the painting says, this is not a pipe. It is a painting portraying a pipe. The point is that, as a painting, it cannot in reality *be* a pipe. About the work Magritte wrote the following: «The famous pipe...? I've been criticized for it quite a lot. Still... Can you fill it [meaning with tobacco]? No, you can't: it's just a representation. If I had written under my painting, "This is a pipe", it would have been a lie»³⁹. Painted in 1928-1929, Magritte's pipe anticipates deconstructionism, suggesting, as it does, that we can ultimately gather not the real but rather only its representation. The same painting is the theme of an important essay by Michel Foucault, which meditates on the relationship between an object and its textual and iconographic description⁴⁰. If from the pipe we pass to the pope (fig. 8) things change very little. What we know about antipopes does not correspond to what they were but rather to the texts, the descriptions, and the representations through which memories of them have come down to us. At the same time, behind the picture of an (anti)pope, there was a person, regarded as a real pope by himself and by others. Behind the text there lies a reality.

Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri
 Università degli Studi di Urbino "Carlo Bo"
 tommasodicarpegna@hotmail.com

³⁸ I. Herklotz, *Gli eredi di Costantino. Il papato, il Laterano e la propaganda visiva nel XII secolo*, Roma 2000 (La corte dei papi, 6), p. 113-131.

³⁹ «La fameuse pipe, me l'a-t-on assez reprochée ! Et pourtant, pouvez-vous la bourrer ma pipe ? Non, n'est-ce pas, elle n'est qu'une représentation. Donc si j'avais écrit sous mon tableau " ceci est une pipe ", j'aurais menti ! ». Cit. from < <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magritte> > [last accessed 19th January 2012].

⁴⁰ M. Foucault, *Ceci n'est pas une pipe. Deux lettres et quatre desseins de René Magritte*, Montpellier 1977 (Engl. transl.: *This is not a Pipe. With Illustrations and Letters by René Magritte*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1983).



Figure 1.
Gregory VII, the good pope (*Brancaleone alle Crociate*, 1970).



Figure 2.
Clement III, the bad antipope (*Brancaleone alle Crociate*, 1970).



Figure 3.
God's judgement (*Brancaleone alle Crociate*, 1970).



Figure 4.
Abandonment of the antipope (*Brancaleone alle Crociate*, 1970).



Figure 5.
Symmetry (*Brancaleone alle Crociate*, 1970).



Figure 6.
Two opposing popes in the barque of St. Peter? (capital in San Leo cathedral), from F.V. Lombardi, *L'eco dello scisma papale nel dualismo figurativo dei capitelli romanici di San Leo*, in «Studi montefeltrani», 32 (2011), p. 57.



Figure 7.
R. Magritte, *La trahison des images. Ceci n'est pas une pipe* (1928-1929).



Figure 8.
Ceci n'est pas un pape. Photo editing by Ludovica Cavallari.