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A Saint of Damned Memory. Clement III, (Anti)Pope*

by Umberto Longo

In a style characteristic of many monastic chronicles of the Middle Ages, the author of the *Annales sancti Disibodi* laconically notes that in the year of God 1099, «Wibert, invader of the Apostolic Roman See, died; and since he did not have a successor in his sect, the entire Roman populace flowed back over to the side of Paschal II, and thus the Wibertine heresy, which until then had been rampant, was stamped out»¹. Writing in the middle of the twelfth century, the author reports the official, and by then well consolidated, version of the story: the account told by those who had won the long, heated struggle that had pitted Wibert of Ravenna against no fewer than four Gregorian-line pontiffs and which was later imposed, as the canonical narrative, across a Christendom pacified in 1122 with the Concordat of Worms. As a protagonist, Wibert had traversed the entire history of the Church reform and Investiture Controversy, at first as imperial chancellor, then as archbishop of Ravenna, and finally as pope from 1084 until his death in 1100. He had been perhaps the most salient exponent of the philo-imperial Church, an institution that was sincerely engaged in its own right in ecclesiastical reform, albeit in counterposition to the party of the Roman reformers. In 1061, the reform party had set up Alexander II against the imperial candidate, Cadalus/Honorius II,

* I wish to thank Lila Yawn for her invaluable help with the translation of this article into English.

¹ Cited in translation from the *Annales sancti Disibodi ad a. 1099*, ed. G. Waitz, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, XVII, Hannoverae 1861, p. 17: «Interea Wigbertus, romanae et apostolicae sedis inuasor, moritur; et quia non habuit successorem suae sectae, ruit omnis populus ad Paschalem papam, et sic adnichilata est heresis eius, quae hactenus vigebat». On these annals, see W. Wattenbach-R. Holtzmann, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter. Die Zeit der Sachsen und Salier*, neuagsg. Besorgt von F.J. Schmale, Darmstadt 1967, p. 449-450, 597-59.

and then, beginning in 1073, had backed Hildebrand of Soana, who rose to the papal throne as Gregory VII. The dialectic connected to the choice of papal names represents an especially significant line of inquiry for understanding the dynamics and trajectories of the ideological debates surrounding the reform². At the end of that tormented affair, attested by the fiery political rhetoric of the so-called *Libelli de lite*, Wibert/Clement III was presented as an «invader of the Apostolic See», the head of a sect and a heresiarch. This stigmatizing and inexorable judgment was received unquestioningly by the author of the *Annales* of the monastery of Disibodenberg and by the historiographic *vulgata* more generally. As already noted, the judgment in question had been issued by the victors, who had recomposed the threads of the conflict according to the plot that they themselves had elaborated. With respect to Clement III and the *Reichskirche's* version of the reform, Bernard Guenée's considerations ring particularly appropriate: «Social groups, political societies, civilizations define themselves primarily by their memory, meaning their history, but not so much the history that really happened as the history manufactured by their historians»³.

In the magmatic processes through which Christian society gradually recomposed itself in this period, which included a reconfiguration of ecclesiastical structures and a dawning awareness on the part of the papacy of its new position with respect to imperial authority, the version of events proposed by Clement III – who had contributed profoundly to the new definition of the problem's terms – was ultimately defeated. This loss involved an establishment of impious memory with respect to Wibert, who became the object of a genuine *damnatio memoriae*, both in literature but also, as we shall see, in the very real removal of his mortal remains. This process of the obliteration of memory of the Wibertine experience is eloquently attested by the documentary void that one encounters in many episcopal sees between the middle of the eleventh century and the first decades of the twelfth, a void indicative of a veritable cancellation of memory in those episcopal sees that had sided with Clement III⁴. By the mid twelfth century, Clement III was represented, without rebuttal, as an antipope, a heretic, and the head of a sect pestilent to the unity of the Church. The *Reichskirchensystem*, of which

² See N. D'Acunto, *L'importanza di chiamarsi Urbano. Onomastica papale e diritto canonico nella riforma ecclesiastica del secolo XI*, in N. D'Acunto, *L'età dell'obbedienza. Papato, impero e poteri locali nel secolo XI*, Napoli 2007, p. 177-206.

³ Translated from B. Guenée, *Histoire et culture historique dans l'Occident médiéval*, Paris 1980, rééd. 1991, p. 16.

⁴ Cf. N. D'Acunto, *I vescovi di Luni e l'impero nei secoli X e XI*, in *L'età dell'obbedienza. Papato, impero e poteri locali nel secolo XI*, Napoli 2010, p. 271-287, p. 271-274; N. D'Acunto, *I vescovi del Regno Italico*, in *Matilde di Canossa - il papato - l'impero: storia, arte, cultura alle origini del romatico*, a cura di R. Salvarani - L. Castelfranchi, Milano 2008, p. 116-125; G.M. Cantarella, *I vescovi, i Canossa. Dalla riforma ecclesiastica alla lotta per le investiture*, in *Storia della diocesi di Reggio Emilia* (currently in press); N. D'Acunto, *Das Wibertinische Schisma in den Quellen des Regnum Italiae*, in *Gegenpäpste - Prüfsteine universaler Autorität im Mittelalter* (Aachen 8.-10. September 2011) (currently in press).

Wibert/Clement III was the most authoritative representative, had collided in the second half of the eleventh century with a new equilibrium that rendered the middle way possible in Henry III's time, meaning a reform carried out in accord with the emperor, unthinkable.

If we continue to follow the terse account of the author of the *Annales sancti Disibodi*, we encounter an interesting news item that considerably broadens the perspective so narrowed by the victors' version of the story. Specifically, we read that: «Some of the supporters [of Clement III] spread amongst the populace the rumor that prodigious signs [i.e. lights] were glistening near his sepulcher. For that reason the apostolic Lord Paschal, burning with the zeal of God, commanded that he [Clement] be disinterred and thrown into the Tiber, and it was done»⁵.

The story goes on to note how Paschal had established that schismatics who wanted to be readmitted to the Holy Catholic Church would be required to pronounce a solemn *ordo* of reconciliation, whose text is provided in the *Annales*. The author of the *Annales* has no pro-Wibertist hesitations; he is completely at home in the canonical interpretive trajectory, and with respect to the schismatic Clement III, he hands down a judgment with no possibility of appeal. At the same time, however, he does not omit to mention that a *fama sanctitatis* had begun to spread soon after the death of our (anti)pope.

The author also tells us, of course, that it was supporters of the Wibertist party who had disseminated the news of prodigies near Clement's tomb. Yet the episode was clearly not a trifling occurrence, given that Paschal II considered it necessary to make the antipope's cadaver disappear from the sepulcher in order to extinguish its thaumaturgic *virtus* and/or the diffusion of a belief in that *virtus* and thereby to nip a nascent cult in the bud. Even after a half century, the echo of Clement's *fama sanctitatis* and the memory of Paschal II's sensational action aimed at disempowering it had not yet faded away. That finding leads to a series of further considerations.

1. *At the Saint's Tomb*

The account of the annalist of *Disibodenberg* finds confirmation in another text of maximum interest for our purposes. Addressed by the bishop Peter of Padua to Emperor Henry IV and composed between 1101 and 1106 and thus in a period very near the events that it reports, the source – a letter – describes a set of miracles that had taken place in the vicinity of Clement III's tomb⁶. The letter's text is preserved in the celebrated *Codex Udalrici* and

⁵ *Annales sancti Disibodi* cit., p. 17: «Quidam autem de fautoribus eius rumorem sparserunt in populum, ad sepulchrum eius, se vidisse divina micuisse luminaria. Quapropter dominus apostolicus Paschalis zelo Dei inflammatus iussit, ut effoderetur et in Tybrim iactaretur. Quod et factus est».

⁶ *Monumenta Bambergensia*, ed. Ph. Jaffé, Berolini 1869 (Bibliotheca Rerum Germanicarum, tom. V), p. 194-196.

has been studied by a series of scholars⁷. Its author declares that he is providing the emperor with an account narrated to him by Giovanni, bishop of Civita Castellana, who had witnessed the miraculous events at Clement's tomb, and says that he has chosen to include only a few «of the innumerable miracles» that had taken place there.

Focusing on both the text and the miracles that it relates, Margherita Bertolini's excellent study is an obligatory point of departure for any inquiry into the subject and makes it unnecessary in this context to dwell upon the miracles and their beneficiaries one by one. A few observations and thoughts can nevertheless be added⁸. The miracles reported are twenty-eight in all and were selected according to criteria closely connected to the representation and promotion of Clement III's sanctity. The strategy of the story is clear: Clement's sanctity demonstrates that his party is in the right, just as it legitimizes Clement as pope.

A vivid picture emerges from Peter of Padua's letter of a composite humanity heterogeneous in age, gender, social extraction, and status – a society of clerics, soldiers, youths, fishermen, mothers, blacksmiths, cobblers, countesses, and even a hermit. The last figure bears especially eloquent witness to the goodness of the pro-Wibertist choice in the change of heart that the hermit undergoes from the heights of his perfect state of life, a change that causes him to take Clement's side. The miracles that Peter of Padua describes are bestowed upon a broad, well-articulated spectrum of the faithful, who together show that Clement's sanctity, which attests the justness of his cause, is to be welcomed and universally recognized. The diversity of the *miracolati*, in short, underlines the sanctity and diffusion of Clement III's cult to a heterogeneous public and emphasizes its appeal to the various components of a Christian society.

The episode of the hermit also calls for a few considerations supplementary to the existing historiographic tradition. A hermit «*magnae religionis*», we are told, had been tormented by pain caused by an iron ring that he wore on his nude flesh and which had induced gangrene. The hermit supported Clement's opponents, but afflicted with pain, he went to Clement's tomb, where the hoop at once broke into pieces, and he was freed of infection.

This story implicitly likens Clement III to one of the most universally revered reforming popes of the eleventh century, Leo IX, while underlining both Clement's legitimacy as pope and his appeal to the most «angelic» circles of eleventh-century society. A strikingly similar miracle is reported in the

⁷ A thorough assessment is provided in M.G. Bertolini, *Istituzioni, miracoli, promozione del culto dei santi: il caso di Clemente III antipapa (1080-1100)*, in *Culto dei Santi, istituzioni e classi sociali in età preindustriale*, ed. S. Boesch Gajano-L. Sebastiani, L'Aquila-Roma 1984, p. 69-104, *passim*, esp. p. 72-74, and n. 3. Cf. also J. Ziese, *Wibert von Ravenna. Der Gegenpapst Clemens III (1084-1100)*, Stuttgart 1982, p. 271-274; I. Heidrich, *Ravenna unter Erzbischof Wibert (1073-1100). Untersuchungen zur Stellung des Erzbischofs und Gegenpapstes Clemens III. in seiner Metropole (Vorträge und Forschungen)*, Sigmaringen 1984.

⁸ Bertolini, *Istituzioni, miracoli* cit.

Italian redaction of the *Vita* of Leo IX, who was not only a model reformer but also the only eleventh-century pope proclaimed a saint already in the course of that century⁹. Leo's *Vita* relates that a hermit from Gaul, whose iron rings had afflicted him with terrible, rotting wounds that gave off a nauseating stench, went to the tomb of Leo IX, where the rings miraculously fell away. The similarities to Clement III's miracle are obvious, but there is one important difference: the hermit healed by Clement III had previously opposed Clement's party. The miracle at once cured his body and showed him that Clement was in the right.

The iron ring in Peter of Padua's story evokes practices that were widespread in rigorist hermetic circles in the eleventh century, especially the Avellanite communities closely associated with the charismatic reformer Peter Damian. Peter Damian himself made use of iron rings, as confirmed by a Cluniac source coeval with Peter of Padua's letter¹⁰. In the 1060s, furthermore, in response to criticisms that such spiritual athleticisms had elicited even within monastic-hermetic circles of the reform, Peter Damian had written extensively in defense of their lawfulness, as instruments available to those who wished to participate as fully as possible in Christ's sufferings¹¹.

⁹ «Nec hoc quidem silentio transibo. Alia namque die, homo quidam Gallus genere, ut quidam ipsius gentis poenitentes faciunt, ferro cicundatus circulo, ad beatissimi corpus venit Leonis. Cui adeo corpus miserabiliter perstringebatur ferro, ut tumefacta caro ferro, iam non apparente ac sola interiora tenente, tumentibus per totum in circuitu labris, exuberantes de se emitteret saniei rivulos et sordida putredo nausiam videntibus generaret non modicam. 3. Qui, cum diu ad sancti precaretur reliquias, cunctis qui aderant pro eo lacrimabiliter exorantibus, beato interveniente Leone, circulus diri vulneris quo tenebatur crepuit medius. 4. Sic ipse miser qui venerat, incolumis effectus, sanctissimi Leonis beneficia Gallis transalpinando enuntiare properabat occidentalibus», p. 42. The passage pertinent to Clement's miracle is as follows: «Quidam heremita magnae religionis afflictionis causa circulum ferreum nudo corpori circumposuerat. Quem caro accrescens graviter affligebat et multis doloribus replebat: fetorem etiam ferre non poterat. Qui, licet adversariae parti penitus faveret, dolore tamen urgente ad sancti sepulchrum pervenit. Ubi fracto circulo, ab illa gravissima angustia liberatus est». *Monumenta Bambergensia* cit., p. 195.

¹⁰ In recalling Peter Damian's advent at Cluny, the anonymous Cluniac author of the *Miracula Hugonis* of the middle of the twelfth century writes: «this man was in the habit of imposing extraordinary forms of mortification upon himself and was so worn down all over by the grip of the iron rings with which he constricted his body that one could scarcely find a way to help his weakened physique sufficiently to permit him, in some manner, to bear the fatigue of traveling on horseback; and since even a small sin embittered him, he often needed to be reconciled to himself with a penance». This citation is drawn in translation (here rendered into English) from *Cluny e il suo abate Ugo. Splendore e crisi di un grande ordine monastico*, a cura di G.M. Cantarella, D. Tuniz, Milano-Novara 1985, p. 139-140. On the same question, cf. Longo, *La mediazione agiografica nel processo di stabilizzazione del carisma: il carisma di Pier Damiani, in Il carisma nel secolo XI. Genesi, forme e dinamiche istituzionali*, Atti del XXVII Convegno del Centro di studi avellaniti, Negarine di S. Pietro in Cariano (Verona) 2006, p. 51-65, p. 54-55.

¹¹ Cf. J. Leclercq, *La flagellazione volontaria nella tradizione spirituale dell'Occidente*, in: *Il Movimento dei Disciplinati nel settimo centenario dal suo inizio (Perugia - 1260)*, Spoleto (Perugia) 1962 (Deputazione di storia patria per l'Umbria, Appendice al bollettino, 9), p. 73-83; later republished with the title *San Pier Damiani e la flagellazione volontaria*, in *Momenti e figure di storia monastica italiana*, Jean Leclercq osb, ed. V. Cattana osb, Cesena 1993, p. 358-366; B. Calati, «Devotio» - «Poenitentia» in san Pier Damiano, in *Fonte Avellana nel suo millenario. Le origini*, 1, Atti del V Convegno del centro di studi avellaniti, Fonte Avellana (Pesaro-Urbino) 1981, p. 131-149; U. Longo, *Sancti novi e antichi modelli al tempo della riforma della Chiesa*.

One such participant, the very champion of Avellanite askesis, was Peter Damian's favorite disciple, Domenico. Called «the cuirassed», Domenico had bound his body with multiple iron rings, which provoked stench and putrefaction¹². On more than one occasion, Peter Damian also reported a separate but similar miracle involving a young man who prayed to God to make the hoop that he was wearing break when he found the ideal place for his salvation. His prayer was answered on the day when he entered the hermitage of Gamugno, an Avellanite community. There, after only three hours, while reading the Benedictine Rule, he suddenly erupted «*in lacrymas compunctionis*», and the ring broke¹³. Even if Peter of Padua does not refer explicitly to Peter Damian's Domenico or to the young hermit of Gamugno, it is clear that his story aims to show that even those committed to the most rigorous ascetic-spiritual life should recognize Clement III's sanctity and, with it, the legitimacy of his party's arguments.

There is no shortage of traditional miracles on the Christological model in Peter of Padua's account. We read of the woman with a flow of blood, the cripple, the blind man, the paralytic, the deaf person, the mute, the madman,

Pier Damiani e l'inaudita novitas della flagellazione, in *Il moderno nel medioevo*. Atti del Seminario di studio dell' Istituto storico italiano per il medioevo, Rome 2010, p. 61-86 (Nuovi studi storici, 82); N. D'Acunto, *I laici nella Chiesa e nella società secondo Pier Damiani. Ceti dominanti e riforma ecclesiastica nel secolo XI*, Rome 1999 (Nuovi studi storici, 50), p. 164; cf. also N. D'Acunto, *Lotte religiose a Firenze nel secolo XI. Aspetti della rivolta contro il vescovo Pietro Mezzabarba*, in «Aevum», 66 (1993), p. 279-312; Longo, *Pier Damiani versus Teuzone: due concezioni sull'eremitismo a confronto*, in *Monaci, ebrei, santi. Studi per Sofia Boesch Gajano*, Atti delle Giornate di studio «Sophia kai historia», Roma, 17-19 febbraio 2005, ed. A. Volpato, Rome 2008, p. 63-77.

¹² On his own body, which was so worn down by fasting and by the lorica that it had taken on a black color, the cuirassed Domenico experimented with new instruments for optimizing penance. Peter Damian relates that Domenico added four more rings to the four that had long encircled his body. On another occasion, Domenico paid a special visit to a certain «*fabriles officinas*» in Ravenna and drew up plans for new instruments of constriction («*nova ferreorum nexuum argumenta, multisque se vinculis per diversa membra ipse sibimet iudex et reus violenter artavit*»). *Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani*, hrsg. von K. Reindel, Teil 3, nr. 91-150, München 1989 (Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Epistolae, 2, Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit, 4), ep. 109, p. 219. In letter 56 to Cerebrosus, Peter Damian defends and explains the use of the lorica: «*Lorica est homo indutus ad carnem, ferreis membra diversa circulis ambit, mittit cum labore metaneas, allidit in pavementum crebrius palmas. Ut quid haec et his similia, nisi ut dum per haec corpus affligitur, animae refrigerium procuretur? Quodcumque enim illud est, per quod caro penitenciae causa laceratur atque percillitur, per hoc homo proculdubio contracti reatus squalore purgatur*» (*ibidem*, II, p. 159).

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 218-219. Tears are a distinctive feature of the spirituality of the Damianite hermits, the sign of a just *conversatio* and of perfect askesis, a feature observable beginning with the *Vita Romualdi*. On this subject, cf. G. Tabacco, *Privilegium amoris: aspetti della spiritualità romualdina*, in G. Tabacco, *Spiritualità e cultura nel medioevo*, Napoli 1993, p. 167-194, p. 173-191; G. Fornasari, «*Pater rationabilium eremitarum*»: *tradizione agiografica e attualizzazione eremitica nella «Vita beati Romualdi»*, in *Fonte avellana nel suo millennario*, 2. *Idee, figure, luoghi*, Fonte Avellana 1983, p. 25-103, now also in G. Fornasari, *Medioevo riformato del secolo XI. Pier Damiani e Gregorio VII*, Napoli 1996, p. 203-66, p. 230-240; P. Nagy, *Le don des larmes au Moyen Âge. Un instrument spirituel en quête d'institution, V^e-XIII^e siècle*, Paris 2000, p. 171-184. On the subject see also U. Longo, *Pier Damiani e l'agiografia. scrittura, spiritualità, riforma* (currently in press).

all of them emblems of the conformity of Clement's sanctity to the evangelical model. Of equal interest are the punitive miracles. Disbelievers change their minds before the power of the (anti)pope and saint, having learned which side is the correct one to choose.

This last theme brings us face to face with one of the focal points in the fight to the death between the Gregorian and Wibertian parties: the recognition and validity of priestly ordinations. This element of Peter of Padua's narrative is composite and well structured. A group of clerics ordained by a bishop belonging to Clement's faction had been banned from celebrating the divine service in Tuscania. Three Wibertine and three Gregorian clerics faced off in an ordeal. In it, «our men» – the bishop of Civita Castellana's term for the Wibertines, repeated by Peter of Padua – bested their adversaries, emerging intact from the trial by fire and thus causing their opponents to abandon the field and the city¹⁴. Peter of Padua specifies that the entire province, «*tota provincia*», had come to know a related story, that of the two priests who had refused to recognize Clement's sanctity and with it the justness of his party and whose disbelieving mouths had consequently become monstrously contracted and twisted.

The saint's prodigious works had a precise geographic context: Roman Tuscia. Their radius of action was limited and depended on proximity to the saint's tomb. The recipients are explicitly enumerated and include, above all, Clement III's faithful, called *fratres* by the bishop of Civita Castellana who narrated this well-balanced corpus of miracles to Peter of Padua, selecting them from among *multa alia*. Fortified by these accounts of Clement's prodigies, the Wibertine «*fratres*» had the responsibility of spreading the news across Christendom, both to demonstrate the correctness of their choice of the Clementine side and to create the *fama sanctitatis* necessary in their era for the universal recognition of a saint's cult. The function of the stories is straightforward, the choice of miracles carefully weighed and calibrated. At

¹⁴ On ordeals see: R. Bartlett, *Trial by fire and water: the medieval judicial order*, Oxford 1988; G. Miccoli, *Pietro Igneo. Studi sull'età gregoriana*, Roma 1960, *passim*; J. W. Baldwin, *The intellectual preparation for the canon of 1215 against the ordeals*, in «*Speculum*», 36 (1961), p. 613-636; A. Degl'Innocenti, *Le vite antiche di Giovanni Gualberto: cronologia e modelli agiografici*, in «*Studi medievali*», s. III, 25 (1984), p. 31-91; O. Capitani, *Da Landolfo Seniore a Landolfo Iuniore: momenti di un processo di crisi*, in *Atti dell'XI Congresso Internazionale di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo* (Milano, 26-30 ottobre 1987), Spoleto (Perugia) 1989, vol. II, p. 595-622; N. D'Acunto, *Lotte religiose a Firenze nel secolo XI. Aspetti della rivolta contro il vescovo Pietro Mezzabarba*, in «*Aevum*», 66 (1993), p. 279-312, ristampato in N. D'Acunto, *L'età dell'obbedienza. Papato, impero e poteri locali nel secolo XI*, Napoli 2007, p. 85-133; N. D'Acunto, *Tensioni e convergenze tra monachesimo vallombrosano papato e vescovi nel secolo XI*, in *I Vallombrosani nella società italiana dei secoli XI e XII. Atti del I Colloquio Vallombrosano* (Vallombrosa, 3-4 settembre 1993), Vallombrosa (Arezzo) 1995, p. 53-81; ristampato in D'Acunto, *L'età dell'obbedienza cit.*, p. 135-165; M. Ronzani, *Pietro Mezzabarba e i suoi confratelli. Il reclutamento dei vescovi della "Tuscia" fra la morte di Enrico III e i primi anni del pontificato di Gregorio VII (1056-1078)*, in *L'organizzazione ecclesiastica nel tempo di San Guido: istituzioni e territorio nel secolo XI. Atti del convegno* (Acqui Terme, 17 e 18 settembre 2004, a cura di S. Balossino, G. Garbarino, Acqui Terme (Alessandria) 2007, p. 139-187.

the time, there was not yet a codified procedure for the recognition of sanctity, and so the strategies of promotion necessarily aimed at increasing both the number of supporters of a cult in the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the quantity of faithful who sought the saint's intercession. In Clement III's case, the promotion of sanctity was also indissolubly linked to the will to convince the public, from the imperial court downward, that Clement's sanctity was the divine endorsement of his side in the schism.

The variety of beneficiaries of the antipope's *virtus* invites the public to see itself in the stories and to identify with the protagonists. Peter of Padua's focus on the indecision over which side to choose on the part of the recipients of the miracles and his emphasis on the exemplary and prodigious punishments imposed upon those who cast doubt on Clement's sanctity suggest that in his time not everyone had sided with either one party or the other and that a conspicuous number of people were undecided, especially amongst the clergy. Even the monastic community of Farfa, the traditionally philo-imperial abbey to the north of Rome, was not axiomatically on Clement III's side. In an exacting reconstruction of the documentation pertinent to the relations between Clement and this Sabine abbey of Santa Maria di Farfa, Tersilio Leggio has shown that their relations were not necessarily the ones that we might predict if we assume that Clement and the abbey operated according to shared intentions tied to an affiliation with the philo-imperial party¹⁵.

This finding allows us to consider the matter at a still higher level. Even the relationship between Clement III and Emperor Henry IV was not characterized by an unequivocal, unidirectional commonality of aims. Carlo Dolcini has rightly noted how Clement III, especially beginning in the 1090s, found himself largely alone, in a position that did not coincide with that of the imperial court and which was often isolated from it¹⁶. Seen in that light, Peter of Padua's letter to the imperial court might readily strike us as an attempt to gain the court's attention and favor. This impression is strengthened by the inaccuracy of one thing that the aforementioned passage in the *Annales sancti Disibodi* says about the Wibertine heresy – that is, that it ended with the antipope's death. After Clement III's demise, his faction did not disperse immediately. Indeed, no fewer than three papal successors in the Wibertine/Clementine line were elected in opposition to Paschal II¹⁷, a fact that makes the question of the diffusion and reception of Clement's miracles, which may have circulated more widely under Henry V than under Henry IV, all the more interesting.

¹⁵ T. Leggio, *L'antipapa Clemente III di fronte a Farfa ed alle altre abbazie della Sabina*, in «Ravenna. Studi e ricerche», 13 (2006), p. 145-180.

¹⁶ C. Dolcini, *Clemente III*, in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, XXVI, Roma 1982, p. 186.

¹⁷ R. Schieffer, *Das Reformpapsttum und seine Gegenpäpste*, in *Gegenpäpste - Prüfsteine universaler Autorität im Mittelalter* (currently in press).

2. *The Pope Saint*

The proclamation of Clement III's sanctity is an exceptional case. After the era of the martyrs, the attribution of miracles to a pope and the promotion of his sanctity were not at all usual. The *Liber Pontificalis*, which contains the *Vitae* of the early medieval Roman pontiffs, in only two instances reports miracles worked by popes, those attributed to Pope Silverius (536-537) and to Pope Martin I (649-653). These papal *Vitae* follow the pattern of the *Gesta episcoporum* without trespassing into the genre of hagiography. The relations between the papacy and sanctity enter a new phase beginning in the era of the Church reform.

Recently, in an invaluable volume dedicated to the history of papal sanctity from the origins to John Paul II, Roberto Rusconi dedicated a section to the phenomenon of Clement III – rightly, in my opinion¹⁸. After Gregory VII, the conception of the pope's functional sanctity changed, and a knowledge of that change equips us to interpret the great diffusion enjoyed by cults such as that of St. Pope Leo IX (1049-1053). The proclamation of the thaumaturgic sanctity of Clement III belongs to this trajectory and was rendered possible by the changing climate and, more specifically, by a process stimulated by a growing self-awareness on the part the Roman See with respect to the figure and attributes of the pontifex. The connotations of Clement's sanctity helped to legitimize the party that identified with him in the fiery context attested by the *Libelli de lite*, but those connotations were only able to emerge thanks to the new atmosphere surrounding the figure and functions of the pope and, in particular, the relentless progression, from the mid-eleventh century onward, toward the recognition of papal primacy. A series of trajectories intertwined. Two forces –the struggle to regenerate Christian society, and the elaboration of papal primacy as an arm in the fight for universal supremacy between the popes and emperors – worked in tandem, leading to sharp accelerations.

As first glance, the decision on our part to focus on Clement III and thus on an antipope might seem eccentric, especially from a traditional or confessional (i.e. Roman Catholic) perspective, but the subject constitutes an important methodological indicator; for it offers a concrete example of the various souls of the reform – a reform not traceable to a unitary and unified vision with a normalizing intent but rather a complex, many-sided phenomenon. Rusconi observes, for good reason, that if a tenacious adversary of no fewer than four exponents of the Gregorian line of the papacy was accorded a cult, as happened in Clement III's case, then the possibility of asserting the sainthood of a pope and the sanctity of the papacy in general was becoming both plausible and amenable to varied inflections. The case of Clement III is certainly indicative of how alternatives within the reform, their different paths and projects, were a concrete reality, attested not only by written

¹⁸ R. Rusconi, *Santo Padre. La santità del papa da san Pietro a Giovanni Paolo II*, Rome 2010. The section about Clement III, entitled *Clemente III un (anti)papa santo*, is found on p. 40-50.

sources, beginning with the updates of the *Liber Pontificalis*, but also by the highly significant choices of papal names, which legitimized the respective lines of the reform by drawing on the ideal of the *ecclesiae primitivae forma*¹⁹.

Affirmed, disputed, and condemned to oblivion, the sanctity of (anti)pope Clement III (Rusconi justly puts the «anti» in parentheses) effectively shows how the eleventh-century reform cannot be understood as a unitary and unique process. There was no linearity. Instead of talking about the reform, we would do well to speak of reforms – of an ensemble of reforms and restorations that paved the way for unexpected, revolutionary outcomes. For the eleventh century, it is simply inappropriate to speak of ecclesiastical reform in the singular²⁰.

As G. M. Cantarella has acutely observed, there is no disputing that «the structures of the Church were modified more over the course of that “long century” than in the hundreds of preceding years back to the triumph of Christianity». On that subject, too, we need to speak in the plural. The reform is made up of a series of reforms, of a non-homogeneous array. The revolution is a series of revolutions. The reforms of ecclesiastical structures «came about, amongst themselves, in a dialectic way; the revolutions unfolded, ultimately translating into a total transformation, but not a programmed one – one that furthermore, or above all, did not have one lone root». Onto these many roots, these multiple reforms, the reform of the papacy grafted itself, along with a progressive awareness of the pope’s universal authority and, especially, of the function of papal primacy. Within the papacy, as well, there was no absolute unity of aims, as the case of Clement III clearly shows, nor was there a unity of methods and perspectives within the very nucleus of the Roman reform to which Hildebrand of Soana/Gregory VII belonged. Peter Damian, Hildebrand’s alter ego, is a case in point, given that he and Hildebrand/Gregory eventually had a falling out, by which time their versions of the reform had sharply diverged²¹.

A second very interesting element illuminated by the life and reception of Clement III is the central role played by the communications strategies of the medieval Church and especially the power of images with respect to medieval political institutions. Especially significant are the complicated questions surrounding the renovations of the basilica of S. Clemente, with its elaborate

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 42-45. See also note 2 above.

²⁰ G.M. Cantarella, *Il papato e la riforma ecclesiastica del secolo XI, in Riforma o restaurazione? La cristianità nel passaggio dal primo al secondo millennio: persistenze e novità* (Fonte Avellana 29-30 agosto 2004), Negarine di S. Pietro in Cariano (Verona) 2006, p. 29-50, esp. p. 27-30. See also M.C. Miller, *The Crisis in the Investiture Crisis Narrative*, in «History Compass», 7/6 (Nov. 2009), p. 1570-1580.

²¹ On this subject cf. U. Longo, *L’esperienza di riforma avellanita e i rapporti con il mondo monastico*, in *Civiltà monastica e riforme. Nuove ricerche e nuove prospettive all’alba del XXI secolo*, ed. G.M. Cantarella, «Reti medievali-Rivista», 11 (2010), < <http://www.rivista.retimedievali.it> >, p. 10-11.

iconographic program. Echoes of the struggle between the Roman reformers and Wibert/Clement III are certainly not lacking in the S. Clemente frescoes, whoever dictated their content. In one fresco we find an array of early Roman pontiffs in the company of St. Peter, while other paintings show Popes Clement I and Nicholas I, nimbed and wearing the pallium, attributes that seem to demonstrate and visibly sanction the legitimacy of papal power by sanctifying papal authority²². My larger point here is that the reform was an important crucible for the elaboration and establishment of conceptions of papal sanctity.

With Clement III we find ourselves still in the thick of the phenomenon, at the heart of the eleventh-century reform. For that reason, we would do well to return to Gregory VII and look at the problem again from a slightly different perspective.

3. «*That the Roman pontiff, if he has been ordained canonically by the merits of blessed Peter, is without doubt sanctified*»²³

These few, dry, direct words were very likely intended to be the gist – the juice, if you will – of a collection of decrees justifying the argument as conceived by Gregory VII. The phrase constitutes proposition XXVI of the *Dictatus Papae*, a text of tersely vivid language and profound consequences, and is followed in the pertinent register in the Vatican Secret Archive by a cross-reference to a text by Ennodius of Pavia, to which the author likely intended to add other references to works in the canonistic tradition. This passage from the *Dictatus Papae* is a central one for the history of the relationship between the papacy and sainthood, mainly because of its subsequent development. Even though it does not stray far from prior traditions of canon law, it marks an essential evolution of thought surrounding the status of *sanctus* attributed to the popes over the course of a centuries-long tradition. In its dense and peremptory formulation, it also suggests an embodiment at the individual and institutional level of those powers entrusted to Peter in his own time, with the term *sanctus* pointing to an exclusive status.

²² Cf. in the present volume L. Yawn, *Clement's New Clothes*; cf. also 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; Rusconi, *Santo Padre* cit., p. 44-50; J. Osborne, *Proclamations of Power and Presence: the Setting and Function of two Eleventh-Century Murals in the Lower Church of San Clemente, Rome*, in «*Mediaeval Studies*», 59 (1997), p. 155-172; *Bibliografia di storia di Roma in età medievale (1996-2003), ad annum 1998*, ed. T. di Carpegna Falconieri e V. Beolchini, in «*Reti Medievali Rivista*», 6 (2005), 1, < <http://www.rivista.retimedievali.it> >, p. 9-11; cf. also I. Herklotz, *Gli eredi di Costantino. Il papato, il Laterano e la propaganda visiva nel XII secolo*, Rome 2000 (La corte dei papi), 6), p. 113-131.

²³ «*Quod Romanus pontifex, si canonicè fuerit ordinatus, meritis beati Petri indubitanter efficitur sanctus*»: *Dictatus papae*, XXIII [= *Reg. II*, 55], in *Das Register Gregors VII*, p. 207; cf. Rusconi, *Santo Padre* cit., p. 31.

The sanctity linked to the popes is characterized by a new coloring rooted in new realities. No longer do we find only the martyrial typology of sanctity, that of Peter's first successors and of the early medieval martyrs who died in the clash with the Byzantine emperors over Monothelitism; nor do we find, as its only supplement, the model of sanctity associated with Doctors of the Church, for example with Leo I or Gregory the Great. Instead, we encounter a new kind of papal sanctity, one tightly bound to the dawning awareness and growing affirmation of papal primacy. This variety of sainthood is functional in nature and works «independently of personal merits, insofar as the pope had inherited the merits of St. Peter and consequently exercised an authority and a power that were at once earthly and heavenly»²⁴.

The terms of the question, then, are papal primacy and functional sanctity. Gregory VII and later canonists who confronted the question, above all Gratian, did not want to create a sort of hereditary sanctity, one passed down automatically through the apostolic succession. Yet the concept nevertheless went forward delineating itself in that way and eventually took the shape of a typology of sainthood peculiar to the pope, an outcome in a centuries-long process that led to the affirmation of the hierarchical supremacy of the bishop of Rome, at least in the Western Church. The pope's functional sanctity, in other words, came about partly in response to the affirmation of his primacy, and it had another great result, as well – namely, changes in the concept of sanctity in general, which led, starting in the reform era and above all in the twelfth century, to the papal monopoly on canonizations, officially ratified by Pope Gregory IX in 1234²⁵.

With respect to the early Middle Ages, the eleventh and twelfth centuries saw a notable growth in the varied conceptions of papal sanctity and sainthood. The increase was accompanied, moreover, by a broadening of the typologies, which began to extend beyond the criterion of martyrdom and to take other virtues into account—governmental, doctrinal, and disciplinary ones. The burgeoning of the papal cult is especially detectable in liturgical books, which served as a principal vehicle of memory of the Roman pontiffs.

Papal sanctity acquired a physiognomy and function that became increasingly pronounced and defined during the struggle between the Roman reformers and the German emperors. The assertion of the *libertas ecclesiae* relied increasingly on martyrs and on other possible models of sanctity as points of reference. With regard to the latter category, meaning the other role models, the explosion of the cult of Pope Leo IX (1049-1054), the mid-eleventh-century trailblazer of the Roman reform, is especially telling and in its geographic propagation shows the breadth of influence and the measure of propulsive force of the Roman reforming front. During the second half of the eleventh century, the martyrial model of sanctity was reaffirmed, above all with reference to those popes who had valiantly defended the prerogatives

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 31-33.

of the Roman See, but at the same time, the growing prominence of pontifical sainthood and the new conceptions pertinent to it had a decisive impact on the ecclesiological structures of the papacy itself.

With its emphasis on papal primacy and functional papal sainthood, the eleventh-century reform did not amount to a revolution, in the sense that it did not advance novel ideas and in so doing overturn previous traditions. Rather, it brought an old matter to its conclusion with the help of an enormous canonistic and doctrinal heritage and conceptual apparatus, at a moment when the existing equilibria had shifted and the long-maturing self-awareness of the Roman See had finally come to fruition. The consequences for the Western Christian Church were enormous, with respect both to the Eastern Church and imperial authority. The heat of the conflict amplified the high-handed affirmations and innovative procedures and honed them razor-sharp.

In summary, the ideological clash of the Investiture Controversy prompted a strong taking of positions and forced the players to make peremptory gestures with definitive and accelerated results. These were steps forward in the Roman See's growing self-consciousness, with consequences of lasting and enormous scope. Among these momentous outcomes were the drawing of a clear distinction between the clergy and the laity, the so-called «clericalization of the clergy», and the definitive fleshing out of pontifical primacy. Even the latter development cannot be regarded as something entirely new. Gregory VII's celebrated definition in the *Dictatus papae* was instead a condensation of prior tradition, albeit with wholly innovative outcomes, a pushing to extreme consequences of ideas already present in inchoate form. The powerful dialectical context and the white-hot ideological debates, especially those revolving around the struggle against the emperor for universal supremacy, spurred the situation past the point of no return.

4. *Post mortem*

From the very start, Clement III's sainthood as affirmed and promoted by his supporters was the target of a violent campaign of confutation. Many different sources evince the rancorous reactions to the proclamations of his sanctity. Cardinal Pietro Pierleoni, the future (anti)pope Anacletus II, composed an epigram against «qui Sutriae vivens maledictus papa fuisti / in Castellana mortuus urbe iaces». The biography of Paschal II in the *Liber Pontificalis* gives Clement III a gelid treatment: «Miser Wibertus, iam non papa qui numquam papa»²⁶. The author of that *vita* even says that Clement's date of death is not worth remembering, that doing so is contemptible, while

²⁶ *Liber Pontificalis* cit., III, p. 145. Cf. L. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis aux mains des Guibertistes et des Pierléonistes*, in «Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire», 38 (1920), p. 165-193; G.M. Cantarella, *Pasquale II e il suo tempo*, Napoli 1997, p. 52.

affirming that the antipope's memory on earth ought to be lost and that the following epitaph should suffice: «He was a heresiarch. Let that be his title»²⁷.

The actions taken against the recognition of the (anti)pope's sainthood were urgent and effective. Not only did it prove impossible for a suitable hagiographic legend to take shape, with the collection of miracles as its point of departure; the cult itself was also snuffed out in the birthing, not once but repeatedly, with the removal of Clement III's cadaver from its sepulcher and its dispersal in the Tiber. Paschal II was implacable in his efforts in the first decade of the twelfth century to have the corpses of schismatic bishops removed from churches, and for the remains of Clement III, above all, there was to be no peace²⁸. This assessment holds true whether his body was removed from its tomb at Civita Castellana or recovered and taken to Ravenna as reported in the *Chronica* of Ekkehard of Aura, who in 1106 noted that Paschal II had had Wibert's bones taken out of the church in Ravenna where they had lain for six years. Immediately afterward, he adds, Paschal «declared all of [Clement's] decisions null and void»²⁹.

The consignment of Clement III to oblivion included the physical cancellation of his remains, an action that suffocated a fledging cult intolerable to the victors in the conflict. The last act in this process of the removal of memory occurred some decades later, when the Roman cardinal Paolo Scolari, ascending the papal throne in 1187, assumed the name Clement III, thus canceling even the memory inherent in the name.

5. *The Reforms. A History in the Plural*

The promotion of Clement III's sanctity, along with the strenuous opposition to its diffusion and to memories associated with the pontiff, constitutes a powerful tool for bringing out the composite realities of the eleventh-century Church reform and especially the elaboration of ideas about papal pri-

²⁷ *Liber Pontificalis* cit., III, p. 145.

²⁸ «Excommunicatorum cadavera de sanctorum basilicis proicienda censemus», *Liber Pontificalis* cit., II, p. 369; cf. also: *Annales Sancti Disibodi* cit., p. 17.

²⁹ «Sic nimirum, sic per tot iam annos obnubilata lux oriri coepit nostris in partibus orthodoxa; depublicatur et ventilator, diiudicatur et convincitur, foetet et respuitur, condempnatur et anathematizatur heresies Wigbertina vel Heinriciana; abdicates sive fugatis hereticis, catholici cathedris pontificalibus destinantur, e quibus etiam aliqui inter ipsa festa consecrantur. Denique in tantum divinae legis subito zelus efferbuit, ut etiam ipsa cadaver pseudoepiscoporum ab ecclesiis eliminarentur, quotquot autem ab ipsis errant ordinate, usque ad generalem audentiam ab officiis suspenderentur. Aecclesia romana, iam enim exaltatis sibi divinitus cornibus, ad incutiendum timorem cunctis usquequaque scismatum membris, etiam capitis ipsius ossa Wigberti scilicet dicti papae, de sepulchro suo, quod per VI annos in ecclesia Ravennensi possederat proici fecerat, universaque eius instituta ut vere non apostolici sacerdotis, sed ut apostatici invasoris, annullari decreverat». *Ekkehardi Chronicon a. 1106*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, VI, Hannoverae 1844, p. 233-234.

macy. The history of the (anti)pope's contested and negated sainthood offers a well-equipped laboratory for elucidating the composite, many-sided, absolutely non-linear and non-coinciding character of the ecclesiastical reform, which cannot, and must not, be conceived of as unitary, linear process.

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