

**Clement's New Clothes.  
The Destruction of Old S. Clemente in Rome,  
the Eleventh-Century Frescoes, and the Cult of  
(Anti)Pope Clement III**

by Lila Yawn

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



**Clement's New Clothes.  
The Destruction of Old S. Clemente in Rome,  
the Eleventh-Century Frescoes, and the Cult of (Anti)Pope  
Clement III**

by Lila Yawn

Sometime not long after mid August of 1099, the church of S. Clemente in Rome was decapitated<sup>1</sup>. By then its nave and aisles had been partly buried by the gradual rising of the ground between the Oppian and Caelian hills, and at an unrecorded moment in the opening years of the twelfth century, a deliberate act of destruction finished off the process<sup>2</sup>. Thousands of cubic meters of earth and detritus were packed into the aisles and nave and a floor built on top flush with the tops of the capitals of the nave colonnade<sup>3</sup>. On the north side, parts of the nave wall and clerestory were preserved and incorporated into the outer perimeter of a new church, which sat directly on top of the earlier edifice, dissimulating its presence while mimicking its outlines<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Rainerius of Bleda (Paschal II) was elected pope in S. Clemente on August 13 or 14, 1099. On his election: *Le Liber Pontificalis. Texte, introduction et commentaire*, ed. L. Duchesne, vol. 2, Paris 1892, p. 296; J. Barclay Lloyd, *The Medieval Church and Canonry of S. Clemente in Rome*, Rome 1989 (San Clemente Miscellany III), p. 59, 118; G. M. Cantarella, *Pasquale II*, in *Enciclopedia dei papi*, Roma 2000, vol. 2, p. 228; E. Parlato and S. Romano, *Roma e il Lazio: il romanico*, Milano 2001, p. 29-31. For a reconstruction of the basilica without its roof, see M. Andaloro, *La pittura medievale a Roma, 312-1431. Atlante, percorsi visivi*, Viterbo-Roma 2006, p. 177, fig. V.

<sup>2</sup> Barclay Lloyd, *The Medieval Church and Canonry* cit., p. 53-57, 101-104; F. Guidobaldi, *S. Clemente: gli edifici romani, la basilica paleocristiana e le fasi altomedievali*, Roma 1992 (San Clemente Miscellany IV, 1), p. 227-235.

<sup>3</sup> Prior to the depositing of the fill, the basilica was painstakingly despoiled of its marbles and other valuables, all openings in its walls were blocked, and rough support walls were built in the nave and between its columns to support the colonnades and outer north wall of the new church. Parts of the narthex and north aisle probably remained accessible (Guidobaldi, *S. Clemente: gli edifici romani* cit., p. 234-235). The illustrations in Andaloro, *La Pittura medievale a Roma* cit., p. 168, 177, 180-185, are especially useful for visualizing the spatial relations between the frescoes and space of the church.

<sup>4</sup> R. Krautheimer, et al., *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae. Le basiliche cristiane antiche di Roma (Sec. IV-IX)*, Città del Vaticano 1937-1980, vol. 1, p. 130-131, and tav. XX;

On the south side, the clerestory of the ancient basilica was removed to make room for the colonnade of the new church, and in the process two splendid frescoes executed only a decade or two, and perhaps only a few years, earlier had their tops cut away, depriving more than a dozen painted figures of their upper bodies and heads<sup>5</sup>. An enthroned Christ was lopped off at the waist. The archangels Michael and Gabriel were relieved of their torsos and heads. So were Sts. Nicholas and Peter and two images of the first-century pope and martyr St. Clement of Rome, dedicatee of the church.

The question that no one has yet satisfyingly answered is: why? After the rediscovery of the early Christian complex in the nineteenth century, archaeologists and art historians long considered the entombment of the ancient basilica – which I will call Old S. Clemente – and its transformation into the foundations for the twelfth-century New S. Clemente a response to damage done during the Norman sack of Rome in 1084<sup>6</sup>. Multiple buildings, including SS. Quattro Coronati, located just uphill on the Caelian, were harmed or gutted by fire in the raid, but as Joan Barclay Lloyd and others have observed, Old S. Clemente seems to have escaped similar damage<sup>7</sup>. To date no traces of fire associable with the Norman incursion have been found there nor any direct evidence of other specific physical traumas that might have prompted the edifice's abandonment<sup>8</sup>. By 1099 the early Christian basilica was nearly seven hundred years old, eight hundred in its external walls, and cumulative structural problems, along with the rising level of the soil, may have encouraged the decision to inter it, as happened with various other edifices in Rome in the twelfth century<sup>9</sup>. All the same, structural renovations to the basilica in

Guidobaldi, *S. Clemente: gli edifici romani* cit., p. 137-39, 235, fig. 137, and tav. VI; Barclay Lloyd, *The Medieval Church and Canonry* cit., p. 104-109. On the fill and ground level, see especially F. Guidobaldi, *Gli scavi del 1993-95 nella basilica di S. Clemente a Roma e la scoperta del battistero paleocristiano. Nota preliminare*, in «Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana», 73 (1997), 2, p. 462-465.

<sup>5</sup> For a review of opinions about the frescoes and recent bibliography, see S. Romano, *Riforma e tradizione 1050-1198 (La Pittura medievale a Roma, Corpus, Volume IV)*, Milano 2006, p. 129-150. Color photographs are available in Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 138-139, 145-146; Andaloro, *La pittura medievale a Roma* cit., p. 184; and Parlato and Romano, *Roma e il Lazio* cit., p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> For ideas about the impact of the Norman sack at Old S. Clemente, see Barclay Lloyd, *The Medieval Church and Canonry* cit., p. 54-57, 103, 117-118; Guidobaldi, *S. Clemente: gli edifici romani* cit., p. 56-57; Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 129.

<sup>7</sup> Barclay Lloyd, *The Medieval Church and Canonry* cit., p. 54-57, 103; Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 129. On the damage of 1084 in general, see L. Hamilton, *Memory, Symbol, and Arson: Was Rome 'Sacked' in 1084?*, in «Speculum», 78 (2003), 2, p. 378-399; on the destruction and twelfth-century reconstruction of SS. Quattro Coronati: Krautheimer, *Corpus Basilicarum* cit., vol. 4, p. 3-4, 30-34.

<sup>8</sup> Barclay Lloyd, *The Medieval Church and Canonry* cit., p. 54-57, 117-118; Guidobaldi, *S. Clemente: gli edifici romani* cit., *passim*; cf. Krautheimer, *Corpus Basilicarum* cit., vol. 1, p. 131-132. On the improbability of serious damage in Rome from the earthquake of 1091, see D. Molin, S. Castenetto, E. Di Loreto, et al., *Sismicità di Roma, in Memorie descrittive della carta geologica d'Italia*, vol. L, *La Geologia di Roma. Il Centro Storico*, ed. R. Funicello, Roma 1995, p. 331-408, esp. p. 345-346; on the rising ground level around the basilica: Guidobaldi, *Gli scavi del 1993-95* cit., p. 462-468.

<sup>9</sup> Guidobaldi, *S. Clemente: gli edifici romani* cit., p. 97-156, 234-235; Barclay Lloyd, *The*

the late eleventh century and the addition of a major fresco cycle in the same period strongly suggest that the necessity of rebuilding Old S. Clemente at a higher level was not obvious in those years and that the subsequent decision to expunge the venerable building from the landscape came about abruptly<sup>10</sup>. Precisely what stimulated Church authorities to take this radical action sometime after August of 1099, when Paschal II was elected pope in the basilica, and probably well before Paschal's death in 1118 remains one of the great enigmas of medieval Roman monumental history.

### 1. A Painting Cycle Damned?

In a publication of 2007, Valentino Pace proposed an intriguing and novel solution – namely, that the filling in of Old S. Clemente was an act of *damnatio memoriae*, a willful obliteration prompted by some association between the eleventh-century frescoes of the church and Paschal II's arch-enemy, the philo-imperial pope Clement III, antipope from the Gregorian, or reform-party, perspective<sup>11</sup>. Wibert of Ravenna *al secolo*, Clement III was elected by the Synod of Brixen in 1080 to replace Gregory VII, whom the synod had declared deposed, and from late March of 1084 until well into the 1090s, his was the most persistent and noticeable papal presence in Rome<sup>12</sup>.

*Medieval Church and Canonry* cit., p. 103, 117-118; F. Guidobaldi, C. Lalli, M. Paganelli, and C. Angelelli, *San Clemente. Gli scavi più recenti (1992-2000)*, in *Roma dall'antichità al medioevo*, II. *Contesti tardoantichi e altomedievali*, ed. L. Paroli and L. Vendittelli, Milano-Roma 2004, p. 392, 398.

<sup>10</sup> On the renovations, see Barclay Lloyd, *The Medieval Church and Canonry* cit., p. 117-118.

<sup>11</sup> V. Pace, *La Riforma e i suoi programmi figurativi: il caso romano, fra realtà storica e mito storiografico*, in *Roma e la riforma gregoriana*, ed. S. Romano and J. Enckell, Roma 2007, p. 56-57. See also Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 26-27; and P. Claussen, *Un nuovo campo della storia dell'arte. Il secolo XI a Roma*, in *Roma e la Riforma Gregoriana* cit., p. 62-66, who considers whether there existed «un'arte ghibertina» (p. 63), especially with respect to stone sculpture, but concludes that «l'ipotesi di un'arte ghibertina in ambito romano resta per il momento senza prove» (p. 66). Pace was not the first to ponder a possible relationship between the frescoes and Clement III. Cristiana Filippini briefly discussed whether Hugh Candidus, one of Clement III's electors and Rainerius of Bleda's predecessor as titular cardinal of S. Clemente, had sponsored the fresco cycle but concluded that «the strength with which the frescoes set forth the ideas of the Reform movement seem to rule out this...hypothesis» (C. Filippini, *The Eleventh-Century Frescoes of San Clemente in Rome*, Ph.D. dissertation, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University, 1999, p. 281-284). In a review of 1998, Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri wrote in favor of possible Clementine patronage, noting that «la *praesentia* e la *potentia* di s. Clemente» described in the title of John Osborne's study of 1997 (see note 16 below) «possono tranquillamente essere attribuite al papa che, da molti ritenuto legittimo, prese il nome di quel suo predecessore» (T. di Carpegna Falconieri, *Storia medievale*, in «Studi romani», 46 (1998), 1-2, p. 145-158, esp. p. 153-154; republished in T. di Carpegna Falconieri and V. Beolchini, *Bibliografia di storia di Roma in età medievale [1996-2003]*, in «Reti Medievali - Rivista», 6 (2005) 1, <<http://www.rivista.retimedievali.it>>). Cf. also Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 129.

<sup>12</sup> O. Guyotjeannin, [*Clement III*], in *The Papacy. An Encyclopedia*, ed. P. Levillain, New York-London 2002, vol. 1, p. 328-330; C. Dolcini, *Clemente III, antipapa*, in *Enciclopedia dei papi*, Roma 2000, vol. 2, p. 212-213; J. Ziese, *Wibert von Ravenna. Der Gegenpapst Clemens III (1084-1100)*, Stuttgart 1982 (Päpste und Papsttum, 29); Cantarella, *Pasquale II* cit., p. 228; Claussen, *Un nuovo campo della storia dell'arte* cit., p. 63-64.

Even after Clement III's death in 1100, Paschal II had to contend with lingering opposition in the city and in 1112 with accusations that he himself had gone over to the Wibertist – that is, the imperial – side<sup>13</sup>. With respect to Old S. Clemente, Pace posited specifically that the suppression of the basilica had been undertaken because the recently-painted mural cycle partly cut away in the building of the new church was of Clementine/Wibertian sponsorship or, at the very least, from «Clementine times»<sup>14</sup>.

Pace's proposal is dramatic, alluring, and problematic. We might immediately ask ourselves why Clement III's opponents would have gone to the trouble of filling in a large and venerable early Christian basilica merely to cover up a fresco cycle, particularly when the offending pictures could much more easily have been scraped off of the walls or whitewashed or defaced in some satisfyingly abusive or humiliating way. We might also wonder why paintings that were repositories of Wibertian memory, if indeed they were, were not effaced before or during the conclave of 1099, when Clement III's adversary Rainerius of Bleda was elected pope in their presence. It was Rainerius, after all, who as Pope Paschal II would later have Clement III's remains exhumed and thrown in the Tiber<sup>15</sup>.

## 2. *St. Clement I's Miracles and Martyrdom as Reform-Party «Spin»?*

Pace's hypothesis also clashes frontally with the current majority opinion about the political subtext of the frescoes and their party associations. In roughly the last decade and a half, Nino Zchomelidse, John Osborne, Cristiana Filippini, Patrizia Carmassi, Serena Romano, and Roberto Rusconi, among others, have considered the painting cycle and concluded that the images were commissioned not by Clement III's friends but rather by his enemies, in other words for supporters of Gregory VII (1073-1085) or Urban II (1088-1099), who through the pictures sought to promote reform-party ideals and practices<sup>16</sup>. Old S. Clemente was buried during the years when

<sup>13</sup> On Paschal's troubles and the meaning of «Wibertist», see U. Blumenthal, *Opposition to Pope Paschal II. Some Comments on the Lateran Council of 1112*, in «Annuario Historiae Conciliorum», 10 (1978), p. 82-98, esp. p. 89-95; *Liber Pontificalis* cit., vol. 2, p. 297-298; G.M. Cantarella, *Pasquale II e il suo tempo*, Napoli 1997, p. 53-57, 101-153.

<sup>14</sup> Pace, *La Riforma e i suoi programmi figurativi* cit., p. 57: «Confesso che una sua distruzione per *damnatio memoriae* della qualificante committenza di parte clementina o, comunque, dei tempi clementini, mi parrebbe l'unica ragione adeguatamente credibile».

<sup>15</sup> *Annales sancti Disibodi ad a. 1099*, ed. G. Waitz, in *MGH Scriptores*, vol. 17, Hannover 1861, p. 17; *Liber Pontificalis* cit., vol. 2, p. 307, n. 11. For further analysis and bibliography, see the essays of Umberto Longo and Kai-Michael Sprenger in the present issue of «Reti Medievali - Rivista»; M. 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 and L. Sebastiani, L'Aquila-Roma 1984, p. 69-104; R. Rusconi, *Santo padre. La santità del papa da san Pietro a Giovanni Paolo II*, Roma 2010, p. 47-48.

<sup>16</sup> N. Zchomelidse, *Tradition and Innovation in Church Decoration in Rome and Ceri around 1100*, in «Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana», 30 (1995), p. 7-26, esp. p. 25-26; J.

Cardinal Anastasius, a close associate of Paschal II, was titular cardinal of the basilica, and so if the many current reform-party interpretations of the frescoes are correct, then the idea that the paintings or memories attached to them provoked the suppression of the building would seem to make no sense at all<sup>17</sup>.

Almost certainly created in a single campaign, the frescoes consist of four discrete ensembles: two multi-register compositions on the front façade of the church, flanking the main door; and two paintings with multiple registers and fields that wrap around broad piers built into left-hand (south) nave colonnade probably not long before the frescoes were painted<sup>18</sup>. Apart from one large picture of the *Life of St. Alexius*, which occupies the main register of one of the nave piers, the principal narratives pertain to St. Clement I, his miracles, relics, and cult. The frescoes have been amply analyzed in relation to their various ancient and medieval textual sources, most thoroughly by Filippini and, more recently, by Romano<sup>19</sup>.

To the right of the entrance, the eleventh-century painters depicted the miraculous salvation of a child at the spot near Kherson (Chersona, Chersonesos), in what is now southern Ukraine, where Clement I was martyred by being thrown into the Black Sea with an anchor fastened to his neck (fig. 1), a special form of execution ordered by the emperor Trajan to prevent the faithful from finding and venerating Clement's relics<sup>20</sup>. Although the attempt at killing the saint succeeded, the *damnatio memoriae* did not. Each year on Clement's feast day, according to the story, the water receded, allow-

Osborne, *Proclamations of Power and Presence: the Setting and Function of Two Eleventh-Century Murals in the Lower Church of San Clemente, Rome*, in «Medieval Studies», 59 (1997), p. 155-172; P. Carmassi, *Die hochmittelalterlichen Fresken der Unterkirche von San Clemente in Rom als programmatische Selbstdarstellung des Reformspapsttums. Neue Einsichten zur Bestimmung des Entstehungskontexts*, in «Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken», 81 (2001), p. 1-66; S. Romano, *Commedia Antica e Sacra Rappresentazione nella basilica inferiore di San Clemente a Roma*, in *Figura e racconto: narrazione letteraria e narrazione figurativa in Italia dall'Antichità al primo Rinascimento*. Atti del Convegno di studi Losanna, 25-26 novembre 2005, ed. G. Bucchi, I. Foletti, M. Praloran, S. Romano, Florence 2009, p. 53-88; Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 26f.; Rusconi, *Santo padre* cit., p. 47-48. Most current interpretations of the frescoes owe a direct or indirect debt to H. Toubert, «Rome e le Mont Cassin». *Nouvelles remarques sur les fresques de l'église inférieure de Saint Clément de Rome*, in «Dumbarton Oaks Papers», 30 (1976), p. 1-33.

<sup>17</sup> On Cardinal Anastasius: R. Hüls, *Kardinäle, Klerus und Kirchen Roms 1049-1130*, Tübingen 1977 (Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rome, 48), p. 161-162; Barclay Lloyd, *The Medieval Church and Canonry* cit., p. 60-65; S. Riccioni, *Il Mosaico absidale di S. Clemente a Roma. Exemplum della chiesa riformata*, Spoleto (Perugia) 2006 (Studi e ricerche di archeologia e storia dell'arte, ed. L. Ermini Pani and A. Peroni), p. 4-5; Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 214.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 131-150, provides an overview of recent bibliography on the frescoes. On the piers cf. Barclay Lloyd, *The Medieval Church and Canonry* cit., p. 117.

<sup>19</sup> Filippini, *The Eleventh-Century Frescoes* cit., *passim*, esp. p. 18-19; Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 131-150. For a capsule summary of the ancient and medieval legends and other texts pertinent to Clement's life and other pertinent bibliography, see F. Scorza Barcellona, *Clemente I, santo*, in *Enciclopedia dei papi*, cit., vol. 1, p. 199-212.

<sup>20</sup> Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 131.

ing the faithful to honor him at the site of his death. Largely lost in the rebuilding, a scene above represented angels erecting an underwater tomb for the saint, while another fresco in a parallel position on the left entrance wall shows Clement's second and definitive burial: the translation of his relics to Rome by Sts. Cyril and Methodius in the ninth century and their deposition in Old S. Clemente, presided over by «P[A]P[A] NICOLAO», meaning Nicholas I (858-867)<sup>21</sup>.

A fourth ensemble (fig. 2) is the most important for our purposes. Painted on a pier in the south nave colonnade, the *Mass of St. Clement* and the *Miracle of the Column* tell the story of Sisinnius, the pagan husband of the Christian Theodora, who impiously followed his wife to church one day and was punished with the miraculous loss of his sight and hearing. Although healed through Clement's intercession, Sisinnius attempted to have the pope carried off to prison and was prevented from doing so by yet another miracle, in which his servants were temporarily struck with madness and seized a column in place of the pontiff. Sisinnius eventually converted to Christianity, or so the legend reports<sup>22</sup>. Above the scenes showing the blinding of Sisinnius and the thwarted arrest of St. Clement, the eleventh-century painters executed a more hieratic fresco, which was later cut in two to make room for the floor and colonnade of the new church. Thanks to labels below the feet of several figures and the remains of their clothing, the composition is readily legible as the papal enthronement and consecration of St. Clement by St. Peter, assisted by Linus and Cletus and accompanied by other prelates and at least two laymen<sup>23</sup>.

### 3. *The Donors and Their (Putative) Politics*

No external information survives to indicate exactly when the frescoes were painted or who devised their complicated iconographic program. Most specialists currently date their execution to the last two decades of the eleventh century and thus, although it is rarely mentioned, to the period

<sup>21</sup> Filippini, *The Eleventh-Century Frescoes* cit., p. 125-146, 174; C. Filippini, *La chiesa e il suo santo: gli affreschi dell'undicesimo secolo nella chiesa di S. Clemente a Roma*, in *Art, Cérémonial et Liturgie au Moyen Âge*, ed. N. Bock, P. Kurman, S. Romano, and J.-M. Spieser, Roma 2002, p. 108-110; Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 131. The relics are represented as a corpse in a crimson-draped litter, and whether they belong to St. Clement or to St. Cyril, who was buried in Old S. Clemente, has been the subject of some debate. Today, the former interpretation is the more common (Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit. p. 135-137; Filippini, *The Eleventh-Century Frescoes* cit., p. 173-216).

<sup>22</sup> Filippini, *The Eleventh-Century Frescoes* cit., p. 46-100; Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 18, 46-51.

<sup>23</sup> On this uppermost scene, see especially Filippini, *The Eleventh-Century Frescoes* cit., p. 26-46; Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 138-139. Wilpert's hypothetical reconstruction of the lost parts of the fresco includes many more figures (J. Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten vom IV. bis XIII. Jahrhundert*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1924, vol. 2, fig. 179).

between Wibert of Ravenna's election to the papacy at Brixen (1080) and his death at Civita Castellana (1100)<sup>24</sup>. As Serena Romano recently noted, however, the only real certainty about the paintings is they were sponsored by a lay couple, Beno de Rapiza and Maria Macellaria, who are named in dedicatory inscriptions and also portrayed twice: once in the *Mass of St. Clement* (fig. 2) and once in a register below the *Miracle of Chersona* in the company of their children, Altilia and Clemens (labeled «puerulus Clemens»), offering gifts to the saint, who looks out from a clipeus (fig. 1)<sup>25</sup>.

How much say Beno and Maria had in the cycle's design is an open question, although the obvious family content – the focus on spouses, parents, and children – suggests that they were not merely the financiers<sup>26</sup>. Most recent interpreters, including those who acknowledge the likelihood of a personal element, have nevertheless tended to emphasize the cycle's character as what we might call reform-party agitprop, a pictorial rhetoric inspired, devised, or at the very least approved by the late eleventh-century Gregorian-line popes or their loyalists. Often cited as a likely overseer of the project is Rainerius of Bleda, who served as cardinal priest of S. Clemente from 1078 until his elevation to the papacy as Pope Paschal II in 1099<sup>27</sup>.

These reform-party interpretations coincide in their general principles, if not always in their particulars. In a publication of 2001, Patrizia Carmassi described the frescoes as a special encouragement to celebrate the cults of the Roman popes and martyrs, a practice mandated by Gregory VII's autumn synod of 1078<sup>28</sup>. Carmassi also construed Nicholas I's presence in the translation scene – which, as she noted, is historically inaccurate; it was Hadrian I who oversaw the deposition of Clement's relics in S. Clemente – as a deliberate reference to a reform-party hero and early champion of papal primacy, a principle that Gregory VII and his followers asserted with inflammatory vigor during the period to which the frescoes are normally assigned<sup>29</sup>. In a complementary read-

<sup>24</sup> On the dates of the frescoes, see Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 129-130; and Filippini, *The Eleventh-Century Frescoes* cit., p. 21, n. 57, who also mentions the chronological coincidence with the pontificate of Clement III (p. 281-284). Cf. the slightly earlier date for the frescoes (c. 1078) proposed in C. Bertelli, *La pittura medievale a Roma e nel Lazio*, in *La pittura in Italia. L'Altomedioevo*, ed. C. Bertelli, Milano 1994, p. 228-230.

<sup>25</sup> Romano, *Commedia Antica e Sacra Rappresentazione* cit., p. 56.

<sup>26</sup> Osborne, *Proclamations of Power and Presence* cit., p. 170; Filippini, *La Chiesa e il suo santo* cit., p. 107-119; C. Filippini, *Functions of Pictorial Narratives and Liturgical Spaces: The Eleventh-century Frescoes of the Titular Saint in the Basilica of S. Clemente in Rome*, in *Shaping Sacred Space and Institutional Identity in Romanesque Mural Paintings. Essays in Honour of Otto Demus*, ed. T. Dale and J. Mitchell, London 2004, p. 122-138; Romano, *Commedia Antica e Sacra Rappresentazione* cit., p. 53-88.

<sup>27</sup> For a summary of pertinent literature, see Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 129-150; on the cardinalate and pontificate of Rainerius: Hüls, *Kardinäle, Klerus und Kirchen* cit., p. 160; Cantarella, *Pasquale II* cit., p. 228.

<sup>28</sup> Carmassi, *Die hochmittelalterlichen Fresken* cit., p. 20-25; cf. Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 129.

<sup>29</sup> Carmassi, *Die hochmittelalterlichen Fresken* cit., p. 20-25. On the issue of primacy, see I.S. Robinson, *Periculosus homo: Pope Gregory VII and Episcopal Authority*, in «Viator», 9 (1978), p. 103-131.



ing of 2010, Roberto Rusconi interpreted the figure of Nicholas I as an allusion to Nicholas II (1058-1061), an important pope of the reform<sup>30</sup>. It was under the latter Nicholas that the Papal Election Decree of 1059 was issued, a decree that would later be perceived as a milestone in the reform party's struggle to remove the control of Church offices from lay powers.

The donors also have a place in these readings. Maria Macellaria and Beno de Rapiza have often been conceived of as reform-party sympathizers. Drawing upon the research of Laura Moscati, Carmassi reinforced her pro-Gregorian exposition of the frescoes with reference to twelfth-century documents that attest the presence of a Sasso «*macellarius*» and family living not far from S. Clemente, in territory dominated by the Frangipane, who are known for their support of Gregory VII and Urban II<sup>31</sup>. In 1123 Sasso and his brother witnessed an act of lease for a house near S. Maria Nova, which is located next to the Colosseum and thus in the general vicinity of S. Clemente, and in another notarial instrument of 1137 the same Sasso served as a witness to the testament of a daughter of Cencius Frangipane<sup>32</sup>. On the basis of these and later documents mentioning Sasso and his relatives, Carmassi speculated that the Frangipane and Macellarius families were closely associated with one another<sup>33</sup>.

#### 4. Reform-Party Readings: Imported Cults and Papal Primacy

In 1093, Johannes Frangipane had housed Urban II in his family's mansion near S. Maria Nova, enabling the pontiff, who had been elected at Terracina in 1088, to take up residence in Rome stably, an accomplishment previously prevented by Clement III and his supporters<sup>34</sup>. Like Zchomelidse, who in 1995 connected the iconography of the S. Clemente frescoes with Urban II, Rusconi suggests Urban's arrival in Rome in 1093 as a *terminus post*

<sup>30</sup> Rusconi, *Santo padre* cit., p. 48; A. Ambrosioni, *Niccolò II*, in *Enciclopedia dei papi* cit., vol. 2, p. 174. As we shall see farther along, the imperial party had its own reasons for appreciating the decree.

<sup>31</sup> Carmassi, *Die hochmittelalterlichen Fresken* cit., p. 45-63; L. Moscati, *Alle origini del comune romano. Economia società istituzioni*, Roma 1980 (Quaderni di Clio, 1), p. 37-38.

<sup>32</sup> Carmassi, *Die hochmittelalterlichen Fresken* cit., p. 47-48; Moscati, *Alle origini del comune romano* cit., p. 37-38; G. Savio, *Monumenta Onomastica Romana Medii Aevi (X-XII sec.)*, Roma 1999, vol. 3, p. 28, 847-848, 934-935; vol. 4, p. 545, 1004. For the documents, see *Tabularium S. Mariae Novae ab an. 982 ad an. 1200*, ed. P. Fedele, in «Archivio della reale Società romana di storia patria», 24 (1901), p. 159-196, esp. p. 115-116, 174-175, 182-183. On Sasso and company, see also L. Moscati, *Popolo e arti a Roma prima della «Renovatio Senatus»*, in «Studi romani», 26 (1978), p. 486-487; and T. di Carpegna Falconieri, *Le trasformazioni onomastiche e antroponimiche dei ceti dominanti a Roma nei secoli X-XII*, in «Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Moyen Âge-Temps Modernes», 106 (1994), 2, p. 611-612.

<sup>33</sup> Carmassi, *Die hochmittelalterlichen Fresken* cit., p. 48-62; cf. Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 27.

<sup>34</sup> Carmassi, *Die hochmittelalterlichen Fresken* cit., p. 50-51. For a time in 1089 Urban had succeeded in establishing himself on the Tiber Island (S. Cerrini, *Urbano II, beato*, in *Enciclopedia dei papi* cit., vol. 2, p. 222-225, esp. p. 224).

*quem* for the cycle's execution<sup>35</sup>. Urban was a Cluniac and a native of Châtillon-sur-Marne in Champagne, and for both Zchomelidse and Rusconi, the figures of Sts. Blasius, Egidius, and Antoninus frescoed on the narrow sides of Old S. Clemente's nave piers (those with the St. Alexius and Sisinnius frescoes) belong to a broader promotion of transalpine, and especially French, cults during Urban's pontificate<sup>36</sup>. Filippini (1999) saw a slightly different rationale in the presence of St. Antoninus, whom she identified as Antoninus of Apamea, a Syrian martyr who was decapitated, dismembered, and thrown into a river and whose relics were then miraculously transported to France. Similar to St. Clement in his burial in water and in the eventual transfer of his remains to a Latin-Christian contest, Antoninus figures in the cycle, Filippini proposed, as part of «a political message of conciliation» between the Byzantine and Latin Churches, an important concern of the Roman reform party in the decades following the East-West Schism of 1054<sup>37</sup>.

Papal primacy and the apostolic succession are at the center of Filippini's interpretation of the *Enthronement* fresco (fig. 2, top register), which she rightly recognized as a linchpin of the cycle. In the Middle Ages, there were multiple textual traditions concerning St. Clement's place in the apostolic succession, and they differed over whether he was the first pope after Peter or the third or even fourth. As Filippini observed, however, the painting appears to show Clement as Peter's immediate successor, chosen by the apostle and receiving pontifical power directly from him<sup>38</sup>. Peter had obtained his own authority directly from Christ, and in the fresco he transmits it to the Roman Clement, making him into a fulcrum between Jesus and the apostles and the future bishops of Rome. In harmony with her reform-party reading of the cycle, Filippini interpreted the *Enthronement* as an iconographic celebration of papal primacy, a vital principle for Gregory VII and his followers, and as «a direct polemical message against the anti-pope Clement III», imperial counterpart and enemy of the Gregorian-line popes<sup>39</sup>.

St. Clement sits on an elaborate throne at the center of the register, while Peter stands to Clement's right (our left) with his arms raised. Peter's hands were lost along with his upper body and head when New S. Clemente was built, and so precisely what he was doing with them is uncertain. Wilpert believed that the painting had once shown Peter touching Clement's head in an act of consecration, but, as Filippini observed, it is not out of the question that Peter was crowning Clement with the papal *regnum* or *phrygium*<sup>40</sup>. The

<sup>35</sup> Rusconi, *Santo Padre* cit., p. 47-48; Zchomelidse, *Tradition and Innovation* cit., p. 17-20.

<sup>36</sup> *Liber Pontificalis* cit., vol. 2, p. 293; Cerrini, *Urbano II, beato* cit., p. 222; Zchomelidse, *Tradition and Innovation* cit., p. 17-20; Rusconi, *Santo padre* cit., p. 47-48. For color reproductions of Ewing's watercolors of the frescoes of the three saints, see Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 142, 148.

<sup>37</sup> Filippini, *The Eleventh-Century Frescoes* cit., p. 100-103, 280, 283.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 26-46.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 26-46, 278-279, 283; Filippini, *La chiesa e il suo santo* cit., p. 119.

<sup>40</sup> Wilpert, *Der römischen Mosaiken* cit., vol. 2, p. 538-540, and fig. 179; Filippini, *The Eleventh-Century Frescoes* cit., p. 43-46.

*phrygium* would have been an anachronistic touch, since according to the Donation of Constantine its use was conceded to the popes by Constantine in the fourth century, more than two hundred years after Clement's death; but so would the scarlet mantle and shoes, which are on prominent display in the painting<sup>41</sup>. As Filippini demonstrated, the composition is related to imperial coronation scenes but unique in medieval Roman religious iconography – when Peter stands facing a throne, the throne is nearly always occupied by Christ<sup>42</sup>. With Clement draped in the imperial-pontifical purple and consecrated pope by Peter himself and the only laymen in the painting pushed to the outer edges, the composition seems a perfect expression of two fundamental Gregorian (i.e. reform-party) principles: the pope's absolute authority over the Church; and the supremacy of *sacerdotium* over *regnum*, of priestly over lay power<sup>43</sup>.

### 5. *Rubin's Vase and the Dangers of Perceiving Politics in Iconography*

Now, you may be wondering: what about the decapitation of the basilica? And the question of *damnatio memoriae*? Where can we possibly go with Pace's hypothesis after these learned interpretations, which draw direct and credible connections between the frescoes and major reform-party concerns? How could anyone credibly argue for an association of the same paintings with the opposite side, meaning with Clement III and his supporters? Filippini considered the Clementine option but rejected the idea, having found too many references to Clement I in support of papal primacy and other reform-party principles in pro-Gregorian textual sources<sup>44</sup>.

Admiration for St. Clement of Rome was not exclusive to the Roman reform party, however, and neither was the co-opting of Clement and his writings for polemical purposes. In the large body of broadsides surviving from the papal-imperial struggle of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, partisans in both camps drew upon many of the same authoritative sources to defend their positions. The Bible was a major arsenal in this war of rhetoric<sup>45</sup>. In a letter of 1076 summing up the grievances of the imperial episcopate, which Gregory VII had «trodden under foot like slaves», Henry IV quoted from Psalm 104:15, «Touch ye not my anointed», a phrase that would be cited by Gregory VII seven years later in condemning William the Conqueror's bullying of a churchman by a lay power – William had impris-

<sup>41</sup> W. Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London 1962, p. 317-318; S. Piccolo Paci, *Storia delle vesti liturgiche*, Milan 2008, p. 282.

<sup>42</sup> Filippini, *The Eleventh-Century Frescoes* cit., p. 26-46.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 278-280. On Gregory VII, the imperial episcopate, and the issue of primacy, see Robinson, *Periculosus homo* cit., p. 103-131.

<sup>44</sup> Filippini, *The Eleventh-Century Frescoes* cit., p. 281-284.

<sup>45</sup> J. Leclercq, *Usage e abus de la Bible au temps de la réforme grégorienne*, in *The Bible and Medieval Culture*, ed. W. Lourdaux and D. Verhelst, Louvain 1979, p. 89-108, esp. p. 103.

oned his half-brother, Odo, bishop of Bayeux<sup>46</sup>. Gregorian partisans quoted from St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor 2:15) to defend the judicial immunity of priests, while imperial supporters invoked St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans to underline the necessity of obeying princely power (Rm 13:1)<sup>47</sup>.

Writings ascribed to post-biblical Church fathers, including St. Clement, also play a prominent role in the *Libelli de lite*. Two polemics written immediately in the wake of Gregory VII's death offer a striking example. In his *Liber contra Wibertum* of 1085-1086, the vehemently pro-Gregorian Anselm of Lucca argues in favor of coercive action, including armed warfare, against the enemies of his party and clenches his reasoning with a fusillade of terse excerpts from the Bible, from St. Augustine, and from six early popes, including Clement I<sup>48</sup>. On the opposite side in the fray, Guido of Ferrara, a Clementine partisan, begins his pamphlet *De scismate Hildebrandi* (1086) with a disarming consideration of arguments in favor of Gregory VII and at a culminating moment musters the same sequence of excerpts that Anselm used, drawn from exactly the same patristic and papal authors, including Clement I<sup>49</sup>. This twin to the passage in Anselm's tractate appears shortly before Guido turns the tables and launches into a withering inventory of Gregory's crimes: his fomenting of wars; his treatment of opponents with «the savagery of some wild beast»; his schismatic teachings, contrary to the precepts of the Church fathers<sup>50</sup>. With the passages in question, Anselm and Guido make the same point about the absolute necessity of speaking out against enemies of the truth, and they do so using the same sources, marshaled in the same rapid-fire sequences to defend the truth as their respective sides saw it. Here as elsewhere in the *Libelli de lite*, it is as if monozygotic twins, trained at arms by the same masters, equipped with matching

<sup>46</sup> Robinson, *Periculosus homo* cit., p. 103, 106; *Documents Relating to the War of the Investitures: Henry IV's Answer to Gregory VII, Jan. 24, 1076*, in *The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy* (Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Law Library), <<http://avalon.law.yale.edu/medieval/invo2.asp>>, accessed 22 January 2012.

<sup>47</sup> Leclercq, *Usage e abus* cit., p. 89-108. On the Bible as a point of reference for ideas about government in the Middle Ages, see W. Ullmann, *The Bible and Principles of Government*, in *La Bibbia nell'alto medioevo*, Spoleto 1963 (Settimane del Centro italiano di studi per l'alto medioevo, 10), p. 181-227; and in the same volume, P. Schramm, *Das alte und das neue Testament in der Staatslehre und Staatssymbolik des Mittelalters*, p. 229-255.

<sup>48</sup> *Anselmi Lucensis episcopi liber contra Wibertum*, ed. E. Bernheim, in MGH, *Libelli de lite imperatorum et pontificum saeculis XI. et XII. conscripti*, Hannover 1891, tom. 1, p. 516-538, esp. p. 526-527; K. Cushing, *Papacy and Law in the Gregorian Revolution: the Canonistic Work of Anselm of Lucca*, Oxford 1998, p. 133-136.

<sup>49</sup> *Wido episcopus Ferrariensis de scismate Hildebrandi*, ed. R. Wilmans, in MGH, *Libelli de lite* cit., tom. 1, p. 529-567, esp. p. 544-545.

<sup>50</sup> *Wido episcopus Ferrariensis de scismate Hildebrandi* cit., p. 529-567, esp. p. 557; English translation from *The Age of Gregory VII, 1073-85. Extracts from Two Anti-Gregorian Tracts*, transl. Peter Llewellyn, intro. and abridgement by G. A. Loud, text encoded by The Leeds Electronic Text Centre, January 2001 <<http://faculty.cua.edu/Pennington/ChurchHistory511/Topic%20Three/PeterCrassusTreatise.html#index-div1-N280>> (accessed 22 January 2012).

swords and the same repertoire of thrusts and parries, were fighting on opposite sides in a take-no-prisoners war.

This aspect of the *Libelli de lite* reminds me of Rubin's vase, a visual brainteaser designed by the Danish psychologist Edgar Rubin as part of his research into figure-ground perception<sup>51</sup>. Look for a moment (fig. 3). What does the design represent? Some readers probably see a dark vase. Others may perceive two white faces in silhouette. With a little effort, you can likely toggle back and forth between the two. I find Rubin's vase an apt metaphor for the common body of words and ideas tapped into by the Gregorians and their opponents. Polemicists on both sides were able to use precisely the same authoritative texts to defend diametrically opposed positions.

Rubin's clever design also impresses me as an analogy for our own perceptions of the S. Clemente frescoes and of many other medieval works of art for which we have no direct documentation. No one could reasonably argue that a reform-party program cannot be read into the S. Clemente cycle in light of textual evidence about the party's policies and rhetoric. Filippini, Carmassi, and many others have demonstrated amply that it can be. Yet at the same time, aided by a little mental flexibility, we are equally capable of seeing an anti-Gregorian program in the paintings or, better yet, a pro-Clementine one<sup>52</sup>.

Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri made several suggestions to this effect in 1998. The presence of the Byzantine monks Cyril and Methodius in the fresco of the translation of Clement's relics, for example, «could announce the ecumenical message of Pope Clement III, who initiated a dialogue with the Byzantine Church and with the metropolitan of Kiev»<sup>53</sup>. Concern over East-West relations was not of interest solely to Gregory VII and his allies. I would add that the figure of the Syrian martyr Antoninus of Apamea may have been included in the cycle for the same reason.

Similarly, the prominent presence of the lay donors, Beno and Maria, in paintings in a cardinal's titular church struck Carpegna Falconieri as incongruous in a cycle executed for members of the reform party, which at the time was struggling to take control of the Church out of the hands of the laity<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> Edgar Rubin's chief work is *Visuell wahrgenommene Figuren: Studien in psychologischer Analyses*, 1915 (D. Katz, *Edgar Rubin 1886-1951*, in «The Psychological Review», 58 [Nov. 1951], 6, p. 387-388). On the vase: R. Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception. A Psychology of the Creative Eye. The New Version*, Berkeley/Los Angeles 1974, p. 244, 498; M. Livingstone and D. Hubel, *Segregation of Form, Color, Movement, and Depth: Anatomy, Physiology, and Perception*, in «Science», New Series, 240 (May 6, 1988), p. 747-749; J. Braun, *Computational Neuroscience: Intimate Attention*, in «Nature», 408 (9 November 2000), p. 154-155.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Pace, *La Riforma e i suoi programmi figurativi* cit., p. 56, who observes that the same «visualizations of sanctity» «poterono infatti essere utilizzate da ambedue le parti, concordi in questo (e in altro) anche se fieramente avversi nello schieramento politico».

<sup>53</sup> Carpegna Falconieri, *Storia medievale* cit., p. 154: «In questo dipinto vi sono poi, accanto a papa Nicola I, i ritratti di Cirillo e Metodio, i monaci che portarono a Roma le reliquie di s. Clemente, nel IX secolo. Questo particolare potrebbe annunciare il messaggio ecumenico di papa Clemente III, che avviò un dialogo con la Chiesa bizantina e con il metropolita di Kiev».

<sup>54</sup> Carpegna Falconieri, *Storia medievale* cit., p. 154. Accidents of survival and loss make it

Continuing along this avenue of thought, I find it noteworthy that Sasso *macellarius* and his family, whom Carmassi and others would like to see as closely associated with the Frangipane and thus as reform-party supporters, are documented in the area of S. Maria Nova, and thus in Frangipane territory, beginning only in about 1123, well after the frescoes in Old S. Clemente were painted<sup>55</sup>. Whether Sasso and company were in the area previously remains an open question, as does Sasso's putative but undocumented relation to Maria<sup>56</sup>.

impossible to quantify fluctuations in the frequency of portraits of lay donors in the mural decorations of Roman churches between 1050 and 1150, but the surviving monumental record strongly suggests that the number of such images decreased precipitously after 1100, following the death of Clement III and the solidifying of reform-party authority in Rome under Paschal II. Beginning with Paschal, the Gregorian-line popes and their allied prelates seem to have taken control of church art patronage in Rome, suppressing or discouraging other fonts of sponsorship. As Serena Romano puts it, after 1100, the «'manto' pontificio...sembra riappropriarsi dell'iniziativa, ritessere gli strumenti della propaganda, e voler celebrare la 'Chiesa trionfante' magari anche zittendo una parte della molteplicità di attori che nei decenni precedenti erano stati particolarmente attivi» (Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 16). Of the images of lay donors documented in Romano's corpus of Roman painting between 1050 and 1198, the vast majority date to the third or fourth quarter of the eleventh century (Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., *passim*, esp. p. 16-21, 26-31, 45-55, 56-59, 66-67, 76, 89-92, 129-134).

<sup>55</sup> See note 32 above.

<sup>56</sup> Savio suggests that Maria and Sasso belonged to the same family as a «Constantius macellario» named in a document of 953 in the *Regesto Sublacense* (Savio, *Monumenta Onomastica Romana* cit., vol. 3, p. 847-48, 934-35). The hypothesis is puzzling, given that the text in question identifies Constantius not in Rome but rather as the holder of a vineyard in the territory of Ariccia (*Il Regesto Sublacense del Secolo XI*, ed. L. Allodi and G. Levi, Roma 1885, p. 165). The origin and meaning of the appellation «macellarius» is debated. While Savio associates it with the toponym «Macellum sub Templo Marcelli», Moscati and others consider it pertinent to a trade, and specifically to the meat or cattle business (Savio, *Monumenta Onomastica Romana* cit., vol. 2, p. 119; vol. 3, p. 847-848, 934-935; Moscati, *Alle origini del comune romano* cit., p. 36-41; Moscati, *Popolo e arti a Roma* cit., p. 486-487; Carpegna Falconieri, *Le trasformazioni onomastiche* cit., p. 611). As my italics indicate, I favor the latter etymology. Sasso was likely a wealthy butcher. Occupational epithets (*fornarius*, *olerarius*, *ferrarius*) are common in eleventh- and twelfth-century Roman notarial acts (Moscati, *Alle origini del comune romano* cit., p. 31-41), and while the same period also saw a sharp increase in the use of subsidiary names pertinent to lineage, especially patronymics (but also occasional matronymics, e.g. «de Rapiza»), as well as the emergence of surnames for some families of high status (e.g. the Frangipane), «macellarius» does not seem to belong to either of those categories. Not all of Sasso's relatives are called «macellarius» in the documents, which suggests that the epithet may have traveled through the family line along with the trade (*Tabularium S. Mariae Novae* cit., p. 84-85, 92-93, 96-98, 113-116, 120-122; cf. Carmassi, *Die hochmittelalterlichen Fresken* cit., p. 46-48), and evidence for a toponymic derivation of «macellarius» is not compelling. None of the instances of the appellation in Savio's *Monumenta Onomastica Romana* for the period between 953 and 1123 in Rome pertain to the area of the Theater of Marcellus and thus to Savio's «Macellum sub Templo Marcelli», and only one witness to the epithet has anything to do with the neighborhood where Sasso is later attested: the cession of a «cripta Colliseo» in the early twelfth century enacted in the presence of a certain Petrus *macellarius* and a «Saxo de Mancinu», who also served as a witness alongside Sasso *macellarius* in 1123. Various men called «macellarius» or «macellariu» appear elsewhere in Rome and the Sabine in the Central and early High Middle Ages, in contexts that give no reason to consider them Sasso or Maria's kin, as with the Constantius attested at Ariccia in 953. On naming patterns in eleventh- and twelfth-century Rome, see É. Hubert, *Évolution générale de l'anthroponymie masculine à Rome du X<sup>e</sup> au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in «Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Moyen Âge-Temps Modernes», 106 (1994), 2, p. 573-594; and

## 6. *Maria Macellaria and the Frangipane*

What matters most for our purposes is that physical, familial, or political proximity to the Frangipane, either in 1123 or in the 1080s, by no means implies Gregorian partisanship. The Frangipane are known for their apparent volte-face with respect to the Gregorian-line popes in the second decade of the twelfth century, just prior to the first dated documentary reference to Sasso and his kin in Frangipane territory<sup>57</sup>. In 1093-1094 Johannes Frangipane gave Urban II shelter and protection, just as Cencius Frangipane had supported Gregory VII during Henry IV's siege of Rome in 1084; but in 1118 someone named Cencius Frangipane broke into a conclave in S. Maria in Pallara on Palatine Hill and dragged the pope-elect, John of Gaeta (Gelasius II), off by the arms and hair, imprisoning him and the other churchmen in attendance in a Frangipane stronghold<sup>58</sup>. Leo, a brother of Cencius, had the prisoners released and publicly humbled himself before the new pope, but later in 1118 the same Leo mounted his own attack against Gelasius at S. Prassede on the Esquiline, prompting the pope to flee the city. Although Cencius and Leo appear to have enjoyed somewhat better relations with Gelasius's successor, Calixtus II, at least at the beginning of his pontificate, the détente did not last, and in 1121 Calixtus had the Frangipane's towers in Rome destroyed and forbade their rebuilding<sup>59</sup>. By the time Sasso and his family are securely attested in Frangipane territory, then, the Frangipane's dealings with the Gregorian-line popes were anything but friendly.

In Maria's time, too, their Gregorian loyalties were not monolithic. Documentation for Clement III's pontificate in Rome is sparse due to the thorough *deletio memoriae* effected by Paschal II and his successors, but an entry in the *Regesto* of Farfa makes it clear that at least one Frangipane col-

Carpegna Falconieri, *Le trasformazioni onomastiche* cit., *passim*, esp. p. 597, 610-617, 624-629. For instances of people called «macellarius» or «macellariu» in Roman documents of the period, see Savio, *Monumenta Onomastica Romana* cit., vol. 3, p. 847-848, 934-935; vol. 4, p. 545; *Tabularium S. Mariae Novae* cit., p. 84-85; *Carte del Monastero dei SS. Cosma e Damiano in Mica Aurea. I: Secoli X e XII*, ed. P. Fedele, 1898-1899, reprinted Roma 1982, p. 133-135, 145, 217; *Il Regesto di Farfa compilato da Gregorio da Catino*, ed. I. Giorgi and U. Balzani, vol. 4, Roma 1888, p. 340-341; *Cartario di S. Maria in Campo Marzio (986-1199)*, ed. E. Carusi, Roma 1948, p. 37-38. For evidence of wealthy butchers in the later Middle Ages in Rome, living near the main meat market on the old Forum Transitorium and thus near the area where Sasso and family are attested in the twelfth century, see J.-C. Maire Vigueur, *L'autre Rome. Une histoire des Romains à l'époque des communes (XII<sup>e</sup>-XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Paris 2010, p. 127-136.

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, M. Thumser, *Die Frangipane. Abriß der Geschichte einer Adelsfamilie im hochmittelalterlichen Rom*, in «Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken», 71 (1991), p. 115-122; M. Thumser, *Frangipane, Cencio [2]*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 50, Roma 1998, p. 224-225, esp. p. 224; and M. Thumser, *Frangipane, Leone*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 50, Roma 1998, p. 236.

<sup>58</sup> *Liber Pontificalis* cit., vol. 2, p. 313; Thumser, *Frangipane, Cencio [2]* cit., p. 224; Thumser, *Frangipane, Leone* cit., p. 236.

<sup>59</sup> Thumser, *Die Frangipane* cit., p. 115-122; Thumser, *Frangipane, Leone* cit., p. 236; Thumser, *Frangipane, Cencio [2]* cit., p. 224.

laborated at a high level with Clement's administration. In February of 1088 Leo, son of Cencius Frangipane (the Cencius who had helped Gregory VII in 1084?), assisted at a legal complaint («proclamatio») presented at S. Basilio in Rome by Donadeus, *praepositus* of the abbey of Farfa, against Rusticus Crescentii, who was accused of usurping one of the abbey's castles<sup>60</sup>. Gregory of Catino, who was present at the hearing and recorded it in the *Regesto* of Farfa, dates the event to the time of Clement III («tempore claementis iij papae») and names Leo Frangipane among the nine consuls («consules communitatis boum») who heard the case alongside the presiding official, the urban prefect Petrus<sup>61</sup>.

What the duties of the *consules communitatis boum* were and how they were chosen is uncertain. Moscati describes them as officials of the cattle merchants association; Savio, less credibly, as the «consules bonorum hominum» (his reading of «boum»), a forerunner of the twelfth-century Roman senate<sup>62</sup>. Of interest for our purposes is the decidedly imperial-Clementine company that these men kept. In late April of 1084 on Capitoline Hill, at least two and possibly three of the consuls present in 1088 had served as witnesses to the friendly resolution of a dispute over Civitavecchia<sup>63</sup>. Only a month earlier, Henry IV had entered Rome after a long siege, driving the Pierleoni, who supported Gregory VII, onto the Tiber Island, and defeating the Corsi, who had been holding the Capitoline. The pact that settled the dispute over Civitavecchia was formulated with the newly crowned emperor's assent, at a time when Gregory VII was still a prisoner of Castel

<sup>60</sup> *Il Regesto di Farfa* cit., vol. 5, p. 116 (doc. 1115, an. 1088). I am grateful to Chris Wickham for kindly referring me to this document. On uses of the word «proclamatio» see J. Niermeyer and C. Van de Kieft, *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*, rev. J. Burgers, Leiden-Boston 2002, vol. 2, p. 1116. On Leo Frangipane and the *proclamatio* of 1088, see also I. S. Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany* 1056-1106, Cambridge 1999, p. 218. Leo's relation to the Cencius Frangipane who assisted Gregory VII in 1084 and to the Leo who attacked Gelasius II is uncertain (Thumser, *Frangipane, Leone* cit., p. 235-236).

<sup>61</sup> *Il Regesto di Farfa* cit., vol. 5, p. 116. Farfa's historically imperial sympathies had recently been reaffirmed in 1082, when, according to Gregory of Catino, the monks received Henry IV «most nobly, very honorably and lovingly» («a cunctis fratribus nobilissime valdeque honorifice et amantissime susceptus est»: *Il Chronicon Farfense di Gregorio di Catino*, ed. U. Balzani, Roma 1903, p. 172). These affections were reciprocated with four royal diplomas (1083-1084) confirming the abbey's possessions and privileges and with the expulsion of Rusticus Crescentii from another of Farfa's possessions, the *castrum* of Fara. Although Gregory of Catino's summary of the *proclamatio* of February 1088 explicitly recognizes Clement III as pope, Farfa was less stable in its sympathies toward Wibert/Clement III (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; M. Stroll, *The Medieval Abbey of Farfa. Target of Papal and Imperial Ambitions*, Leiden-New York-Cologne, 1997, p. 63-68; *Il Regesto di Farfa* cit., vol. 5, p. 116; Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany* cit., p. 218).

<sup>62</sup> Moscati, *Alle origini del comune romano* cit., p. 52-53; A. Salimei, *Senatori e statuti di Roma nel medioevo. I Senatori. Cronologia e bibliografia dal 1144 al 1447*, Roma 1935, p. 58-59, n. 22; I. Ait, *Per un profilo dell'aristocrazia romana nell'XI secolo: i rapporti commerciali con l'Africa*, in «Studi storici», 38 (1997), 2, p. 328 and n. 27; Savio, *Monumenta Onomastica Romana* cit., vol. 2, p. 330-331.

<sup>63</sup> *Il Regesto di Farfa* cit., vol. 5, p. 92-93.



Sant'Angelo<sup>64</sup>; recorded in a document dated to the first year of the pontificate «of lord Clement III, supreme pontiff and universal pope» – Clement III had been enthroned as pope at St. John Lateran the previous month<sup>65</sup>; and signed by, among others, Sarracenus and Heinricus Sancti Eustathii, who are also named among the *consules communitatis boum* present at the *proclamatio* at S. Basilio in 1088<sup>66</sup>. A third witness, an Astaldus filii Astaldi, was probably the same as the Astaldus Iohannis de Astaldo also in attendance in 1088 or a close relative<sup>67</sup>.

At the *proclamatio* of 1088, Sarracenus, Heinricus, and Astaldus, together with Leo Frangipane and their fellow consuls, accompanied the urban prefect Petrus and were most likely present for the purpose of affirming his sentence and giving it greater weight<sup>68</sup>. In the eleventh century, the *praefectus urbis* was the chief representative of public authority in Rome, responsible for public order and the administration of justice. He was also a high-ranking papal functionary, who rode beside the pope in processions<sup>69</sup>. The papal schisms of 1061-1072 and 1084-1100 were matched by schisms in the prefecture, which resulted in simultaneous claimants to the office on the papal and imperial sides<sup>70</sup>. In 1088 the «*petrus urbis praefectus*» who heard Farfa's grievance clearly belonged to the Clementine-imperial camp. At the time, Clement III and his faction predominated in Rome, and the Gregorian line of the papacy was *sede vacante*, Victor III having died at Montecassino the previous September<sup>71</sup>. The Gregorians nevertheless had their own prefect in exile, a certain Benedictus, who attended the election of Urban II at Terracina in March of 1088, a month after the *proclamatio* at S. Basilio<sup>72</sup>. How and when Petrus and Benedictus were chosen is not recorded. The last urban prefect before Petrus of which we have notice was Cencius, son of the former pre-

<sup>64</sup> *Liber Pontificalis*, cit., vol. 2, p. 290; Hamilton, *Memory, Symbol, and Arson* cit., p. 383-385.

<sup>65</sup> «Anno, Deo propitio, pontificatus domnj Clementis summi pontificis et uniuersalis tertii papae, primo». Henry IV's reign is the second point of chronological reference: «Et imperante domno Heinrico a Deo coronato summo imperatore, anno primo imperii eius» (*Il Regesto di Farfa* cit., vol. 5, p. 92-93).

<sup>66</sup> *Il Regesto di Farfa* cit., vol. 5, p. 92-93, 116. The advocate Caro also took part in both proceedings (Stroll, *The Medieval Abbey of Farfa* cit., p. 67, n. 13).

<sup>67</sup> *Il Regesto di Farfa* cit., vol. 5, p. 92-93; Stroll, *The Medieval Abbey of Farfa* cit., p. 67, n. 13.

<sup>68</sup> Moscati, *Alle origini del comune romano* cit., p. 52-53; Ait, *Per un profilo dell'aristocrazia romana nell'XI secolo* cit., p. 328 and n. 27.

<sup>69</sup> N. D'Acunto, *L'età dell'obbedienza. Papato, Impero e poteri locali nel secolo XI*, Napoli 2007, p. 49-50; L. Halphen, *Études sur l'administration de Rome au Moyen Âge (751-1252)*, Paris 1907, p. 16-27, esp. p. 22-23; A. Paravicini, *Saggio storico sulla prefettura urbana dal secolo X al XIV*, Roma 1900, *passim*.

<sup>70</sup> Paravicini, *Saggio storico sulla prefettura urbana* cit., p. 10-15; Halphen, *Études sur l'administration de Rome* cit., p. 151.

<sup>71</sup> C. Colotto, *Vittore III, beato*, in *Enciclopedia dei papi* cit., vol. 2, p. 221; Cerrini, *Urbano II, beato* cit., p. 222; Dolcini, *Clemente III, antipapa* cit., p. 213; and Ziese, *Wibert von Ravenna* cit., p. 178f. On the churches held by Clement III's faction, see Claussen, *Un nuovo campo della storia dell'arte* cit., p. 63-64.

<sup>72</sup> Halphen, *Études sur l'administration de Rome* cit., p. 151; Paravicini, *Saggio storico sulla prefettura urbana* cit., p. 12-15.

fect Johannes Tiniosus<sup>73</sup>. A Gregorian stalwart, this Cencius was assassinated in 1077 by a relative of another Cencius (son of the former prefect Stephanus), who had been one of the chief Roman supporters of the imperial (anti)pope Cadalus/Honorius II (1062-1071/1072) and who in 1075 had attempted to kill Gregory VII<sup>74</sup>. Cencius Stephani was close to Hugh Candidus, Rainerius of Bleda's pro-imperial predecessor as titular cardinal of S. Clemente, and participated in the deposition of Gregory VII at the Synod of Worms in 1076<sup>75</sup>.

In short, in 1088, when Clement III's power in Rome was nearing its apex, in a period when the painters hired by Beno and Maria could very well have been at work on the frescoes in Old S. Clemente, Leo Frangipane exercised a role of leadership in Rome as one of the *consules communitatis boum* and acted in an official capacity together with Clement III's urban prefect and other prominent citizens who had cooperated with Henry IV immediately following his conquest of Rome. For an unwavering Gregorian loyalist, such a collaboration with the Roman administration of the «heresiarch Wibert», whose excommunication Victor III had reaffirmed five months earlier, would have been unthinkable<sup>76</sup>. It follows that if Maria Macellaria's political proclivities coincided with those of Leo Frangipane at that date, then they were very probably Clementine<sup>77</sup>.

<sup>73</sup> Halphen, *Études sur l'administration de Rome* cit., p. 149-151.

<sup>74</sup> D'Acunto, *L'età dell'obbedienza* cit., p. 51-52; L. Baldacchini, *Cencio (Cintius, Cinchius, Quintus, Crescentius)*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 23, Roma 1979, p. 520-525; G.B. Borino, *Cencio del prefetto Stefano, l'attentatore di Gregorio VII*, in «Studi gregoriani», 4 (1952), p. 373-400; L. Halphen, *Études sur l'administration de Rome* cit., p. 150-151. On Honorius II/Cadalus: S. Cerrini, *Onorio II, antipapa*, in *Enciclopedia dei papi*, cit., vol. 2, p. 185-188.

<sup>75</sup> Baldacchini, *Cencio* cit., p. 524-525.

<sup>76</sup> On Victor III's confirmation of the excommunication, see Colotto, *Vittore III, beato* cit., p. 219-221; I.S. Robinson, *The Papacy 1073-1198: Continuity and Innovation*, Cambridge 1990, p. 414. A methodological note: by imagining, in response to references in the fragmentary and biased documentary record, that the Frangipane and other prominent Roman families sided uniformly and unbendingly with one side or the other during Clement III's pontificate, we risk underestimating the likely modulations of strategy and alliance as individuals and families negotiated their way through the schism.

<sup>77</sup> In light of that possibility, I find it remarkable that Beno and Maria named their son Clemens. Nothing is known of little Clement other than the representation of him in the family portrait beneath the *Miracle of Chersona* (fig. 1), where he stands beside his mother, offering a taper candle to St. Clement. (On the possibility that the fresco was commissioned to ornament the tomb of little Clement or as an ex voto for his miraculous salvation, see Filippini, *La chiesa e il suo santo* cit., p. 110-117; cf. Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 134). The child's relationship and devotion to St. Clement are underlined in the painting by multiple formal devices: by the words «puerulus Clemens» inscribed beneath the clipeate bust of St. Clement and parallel to little Clement's body; by the boy's position next to the saint and at a higher level than the other donors; and by his candle, which alone of the family's offerings points directly to St. Clement's clipeus. The fresco strongly suggests that St. Clement was the chief inspiration for the child's name, but the possibility that *puerulus* Clemens was born and baptized during Clement III's pontificate obliges us to consider whether Beno and Maria had ulterior reasons for the choice. Although saints' names were commonly given to children in eleventh-century Rome, «Clemens» appears to have been rare, remarkably so, given that Clement I was a revered Roman martyr and

7. *Papal Legitimacy, or the Importance of Being Clement*<sup>78</sup>

Another addition that I would make to Carpegna Falconieri's Clementine interpretation of the S. Clemente frescoes involves the historically erroneous inclusion of Nicholas I in the *Translation* scene. If Rusconi's idea that this figure was intended as an allusion to Nicholas II is correct, then we could just as easily attribute the choice of the figure to Clement III's supporters. The imperial party had its own reasons for appreciating Nicholas II. Nicholas had of course issued the Papal Election Decree of 1059, which imperial partisans argued had been violated in the election of Gregory VII. When the Synod of Worms called upon Gregory VII to step down in 1076 and again in 1080, when the Synod of Brixen declared him deposed, the violation of the decree of 1059 was one of the stated reasons<sup>79</sup>.

By the same token, the French elements in the frescoes that Zchomelidse and Rusconi associated with Urban II could just as easily have been introduced by Hugh Candidus (Hugh of Remiremont) from Lorraine, whom Leo IX had appointed titular cardinal of S. Clemente in 1049 and who was still signing himself with that title in 1080, two years after the date usually given for Rainerius of Bleda's appointment to the post<sup>80</sup>. At the Synod of Worms in 1076, Hugh Candidus had presented evidence for the irregularity of Gregory VII's election, and at Brixen in 1080 he was the first to subscribe the synod's declaration of Gregory's deposition, which he did «on behalf of all the Roman

pope and the titular saint of an important basilica. (On the use of saints' names in eleventh-century Rome in general, see Hubert, *Évolution générale de l'anthroponymie* cit., esp. p. 576; Carpegna Falconieri, *Le trasformazioni onomastiche* cit., p. 603-604; on the name «Clemens» specifically: Savio, *Monumenta Onomastica Romana* cit., vol. 2, p. 83-84). The scarcity of the name cannot be attributed wholly or even largely to its association with Clement III, as it was already unusual in the tenth and early eleventh centuries. For the period between 900 and 1150, Savio's *Monumenta Onomastica Romana* lists only three individuals in Rome who were called «Clemens»: Pope Clement II (1046-1047); Clement III/Wibert of Ravenna (1084-1100); and the young Clemens of the S. Clemente fresco. Savio found references to two other individuals called «Clemens» in Latium, one at Aquino in 1134 and another at Sora in 1150-1168. Contrast that small number of cases with the roughly four thousand four hundred eighty instances of the name «Petrus» found by Savio in Rome and Latium for the same period (Savio, *Monumenta Onomastica Romana* cit., vol. 2, p. 83; vol. 4, p. 42-220). Given the surprising infrequency of the name «Clemens» in Rome, apart from its use by two eleventh-century pontiffs intimately associated with the emperor, we are fully justified in wondering whether, in selecting it for their son, Beno and Maria intended to honor both Clement I and one or both of the eleventh-century popes of that name.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. N. D'Acunto, *L'importanza di chiamarsi Urbano. Onomastica papale e canonistica nella riforma ecclesiastica del secolo XI*, in «Cristianesimo nella storia», 24 (2002), p. 649-679.

<sup>79</sup> H. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085*, Oxford 1998, p. 201-202; I. S. Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany* cit., p. 38-40, 144-146, 198; G. M. Cantarella, *Il sole e la luna: la rivoluzione di Gregorio VII papa, 1073-1085*, Roma-Bari 2005, p. 226-227.

<sup>80</sup> Barclay Lloyd, *The Medieval Church and Canonry* cit., p. 54; Hüls, *Kardinäle, Klerus und Kirchen* cit., p. 111, 158-161; P. Paschini, *Ugo detto Candido*, in *Enciclopedia italiana di scienze, lettere ed arti*, vol. 34, Roma 1937, p. 612; Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany* cit., p. 146. If Bonizo of Sutri's claim is correct, then in 1073 Hugh had proposed Hildebrand as a candidate for the papacy (Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII* cit., p. 73).

cardinals»<sup>81</sup>. By then the Gregorian party considered Rainerius of Bleda titular cardinal of S. Clemente, but who had effective control of the basilica after Henry IV took Rome in 1084 remains an open question<sup>82</sup>. Given the conditions in Rome from late March of 1084 until at least the end of 1093, it seems very unlikely that Rainerius was able to maintain a fixed presence there. What is certain, on the other hand, is that Hugh Candidus returned to Rome under the new regime of Clement III – at St. John Lateran on November 4, 1084, he subscribed a bull, albeit as bishop of Fermo, rather than as titular cardinal of S. Clemente<sup>83</sup>. In summary, who physically controlled S. Clemente between the advent of Clement III in 1084 and well after the entry of Urban II and his followers into Rome beginning at the end of 1093 is simply not known; but because of the nearly continuous absence of the Gregorian-line popes in Rome during that period and the difficulties that Urban II encountered in trying to take up residence in the city, the chances of a stable reform-party presence at S. Clemente during those years are very small.

The Synod of Brixen not only deposed Gregory. It also elevated Wibert of Ravenna to the papacy, which brings me to another possible, and I think more powerful, element of a Clementine reading of the frescoes. Attempt for a moment to see the *Enthronement* (fig. 2, top register) through the eyes of a Roman of the 1080s or 1090s. Whatever your politics, whichever side of the conflict you sympathized with, it would have been virtually impossible, I believe, to look at the fresco without having Clement I's most recent papal namesake come to mind. For nearly a decade after Gregory VII's flight from Rome in 1084, Clement III was a salient figure in the city and enjoyed considerable support from the laity and cardinal priests<sup>84</sup>. Gregory VII's first successor, Victor III (Desiderius of Montecassino), was elected in Rome in May of 1086 but immediately fled to Ardea, Terracina, and finally to Montecassino. The Gregorian-party pope-elect returned to Rome only briefly for his consecration in 1087, after the Normans had taken St. Peter's, which had previously been in the hands of Clement III's supporters<sup>85</sup>. Apart from a brief period on the Tiber Island in 1089, Victor III's successor, Urban II, succeeded in entering and remaining in Rome starting only at the end of 1093, as noted above<sup>86</sup>.

<sup>81</sup> Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany* cit., p. 146; Cantarella, *Il sole e la luna* cit., p. 227.

<sup>82</sup> Hüls, *Kardinäle, Klerus und Kirchen* cit., p. 111, 158-161; Paschini, *Ugo detto Candido* cit., p. 612; Barclay Lloyd, *The Medieval Church and Canonry* cit., p. 54; Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany* cit., p. 146.

<sup>83</sup> Barclay Lloyd, *The Medieval Church and Canonry* cit., p. 54.

<sup>84</sup> Ziese, *Wibert von Ravenna* cit., *passim*; Dolcini, *Clemente III, antipapa* cit., p. 212-216; Cerrini, *Urbano II, beato* cit., p. 222-225. On early defections to Clement's side, see Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII* cit., p. 227-228.

<sup>85</sup> Colotto, *Vittore III, beato* cit., p. 219-221.

<sup>86</sup> Cerrini, *Urbano II, beato* cit., p. 222-225, esp. p. 224; Carmassi, *Die hochmittelalterlichen Fresken* cit., p. 50-51.

My point is that, whatever the date of Maria and Beno's frescoes, anyone who had been paying the least bit of attention in the last decade and a half of the eleventh century would have had a great deal of difficulty in looking at the paintings, and especially at the image of a papal enthronement and consecration (or coronation), and *not* thinking of Clement III. The first major event after Henry IV's entry into the city in 1084 had been the solemn enthronement, consecration, and coronation of Clement III at St. John Lateran, a few minute's walk from S. Clemente<sup>87</sup>. We might therefore reasonably ask ourselves why adherents of the Gregorian party would have chosen a pope named Clement to make their point about papal primacy precisely during the *ventennio* of Clement III, and in a scene that gives special emphasis to pontifical regalia.

Papal names, like papal vestments, were vital signifiers of authority and legitimacy. Popes of the latter half of the eleventh century and the opening decades of the twelfth commonly took the names of admired early Christian pontiffs, evoking the authority and purity of the early Church<sup>88</sup>. The active use of a pontifical name also constituted an important assertion of papal legitimacy and of respect for that legitimacy by others. In the *Libelli de lite*, imperial partisans typically call Clement III «Clemens», while his opponents refer to him as «Wibert». Vice versa, Gregory VII's antagonists call him «Hildebrand», when they are not calling him something worse. Benzo of Alba, a virulent anti-Gregorian with a scatological sense of humor, dubbed Gregory VII/Hildebrand, among other things, «Merdiprandus», which in English is best rendered as «Shitabrand»<sup>89</sup>.

The Synod of Brixen of 1080 imposed the name «Clement» on Wibert of Ravenna, but why that particular name was chosen is not documented<sup>90</sup>. A desire to associate the newly elected pope with Clement II, who had crowned Henry III emperor and who had been elected to replace the deposed Gregory VI, must have entered into the decision. (Similarly, Gregory VII had been a disciple of Gregory VI<sup>91</sup>.) Yet there may have been a more pressing reason for choosing the name – specifically, its powerful overtones of pontifical legitimacy. Given the irregularity of Clement III's election, which had taken place

<sup>87</sup> Dolcini, *Clemente III, antipapa* cit., p. 213.

<sup>88</sup> N. D'Acunto, *L'importanza di chiamarsi Urbano* cit., p. 649-679; T. di Carpegna Falconieri, *Soprannomi di antipapi nel secolo XII*, in «Rivista italiana di onomastica», 8 (2002), p. 161; Rusconi, *Santo padre* cit., p. 43-44, 623.

<sup>89</sup> M. Valgimigli, *Appunti su la poesia satirica latina medioevale in Italia*, Messina 1902, p. 110-116, esp. p. 116, accessed 22 January 2012 at <<http://www.archive.org/stream/appuntisulapoesoovalggoog#page/n133/mode/1up>>; Benzo of Alba, *Ad Heinrichum IV imperatorem libri VII*, ed. K. Pertz, in MGH, *Scriptores*, vol. 11, Hannover 1854, p. 591-681. On Benzo of Alba's plays on names, see also Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII* cit., p. 51.

<sup>90</sup> Ziese, *Wibert von Ravenna* cit., p. 91-92.

<sup>91</sup> See T. di Carpegna Falconieri, *Popes through the Looking Glass, or «Ceci n'est pas un pape»*, in the present volume of «Reti Medievali - Rivista».

outside of Rome with few cardinals in attendance and in an assembly convened by the emperor, the electors very likely chose to initiate their rhetorical-symbolic strategy around the new pope by selecting or approving for him the name of a particularly esteemed and unquestionably legitimate early Christian pontiff<sup>92</sup>.

The *Enthronement* fresco in S. Clemente may have had a similar, legitimizing purpose if its sponsors were indeed partisans of Clement III. The painting portrays a pope named Clement, clearly labeled and consecrated by St. Peter, who before the top half of the composition was lost was perhaps even shown crowning Clement with the papal *phrygium*. The painting places great emphasis on the pontifical throne and vestments, which were vital demonstrations of a pope's genuine claim to the office. Whether Clement was shown wearing the *phrygium* we cannot be sure, but he definitely has the *rubia calciamenta papalia* and *cappa rubea*, the slippers and cloak of imperial scarlet<sup>93</sup>. The red mantle was placed over a new pope's shoulders after his election, and the possession and wearing of it was a critical demonstration of papal legitimacy<sup>94</sup>. In a diatribe against the imperial (anti)pope Honorius II/Cadalus, Peter Damian asks rhetorically whether Honorius/Cadalus had been dressed in the red mantle of the Roman pontiff, as custom demanded<sup>95</sup>. The implication is that he had not, which demonstrated that he had never been pope. The first extant textual reference to a pontiff actually wearing the *cappa rubea* pertains to the papal coronation of Gregory VII in 1073<sup>96</sup>. We can be fairly certain, then, that the solemn enthronement and coronation of Clement III in St. John Lateran in March of 1084 included it, for its absence would have been an open admission that Gregory, rather than Clement, was the real bishop of Rome. It bears mentioning in this context that S. Clemente was on the papal-curial processional route and, again, very close to St. John Lateran<sup>97</sup>.

## 8. Clement's Clothes, Old and New

In summary, in this Rubin's vase of an art-historical puzzle, I find the Clementine readings at least as plausible as the Gregorian-Urbanian ones,

<sup>92</sup> Ziese, *Wibert von Ravenna* cit., p. 91-92.

<sup>93</sup> On the red mantle and pertinent bibliography, see A. Paravicini Bagliani, *Le chiavi e la tiara. Immagini e simboli del papato medievale*, Roma 1998, p. 61-63; A. Paravicini Bagliani, *Il corpo del papa*, Torino 1994, p. 117-120.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 119; Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government* cit., p. 317-318.

<sup>95</sup> Paravicini Bagliani, *Il corpo del papa* cit., p. 119 and 137, n. 55. On Honorius II/Cadalus, see Cerrini, *Onorio II, antipapa* cit., p. 185-88.

<sup>96</sup> Paravicini Bagliani, *Il corpo del papa* cit., p. 119; Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government* cit., p. 317-318.

<sup>97</sup> J. Dyer, *Roman Processions of the Major Litany (litaniae maiores) from the Sixth to the Twelfth Century*, in *Roma felix: formation and reflections of medieval Rome*, ed. E. Ó Carragáin and C. Neuman de Vegvar, Aldershot 2007, p. 128-29.

and indeed rather more so. Let me be clear, however: I am not proposing the former as a definitive interpretation. Attempting to discern the politics of the putative designers of an undocumented painting cycle on the basis of the cycle's iconography impresses me as risky business, a game of historiographically induced preconceptions, self-projection, and cognitive chance upon which I believe far too much writing about medieval art is based. In contemplating the iconography of the frescoes in light of Clement III's pontificate, I find it compelling to see the two Clements (I and III) as the mirror-imaged faces in my own personal Rubin's vase. Yet in reading the studies of my predecessors and colleagues, I am able to shift my vision slightly and discern the single chalice of the Church under the autocratic rule of Gregory VII or Urban II, whose followers may have used the paintings as a means of recovering and appropriating a beloved Early Christian saint for their cause.

One element, however, tips the balance for me, bringing the faces persistently into the foreground. In the S. Clemente complex, there is one place where we can be certain of reform-party sponsorship and of a reform-party mastermind (or masterminds) behind the design of an iconographic program. I am referring to New S. Clemente, the upper church, which was begun sometime after the conclave of 1099 and probably completed by or very soon after Paschal II's death in 1118<sup>98</sup>. Fragments of a twelfth-century fresco program survive in parts of the upper church. Romano, who dates the paintings to the 1120s, thinks that they may have reproduced some of the frescoes in the lower church, but too little survives to show how, if at all, they represented St. Clement<sup>99</sup>.

What impresses me is that where Clement is visible in New S. Clemente, he is utterly changed with respect to the eleventh-century images of him in the lower church. In fact, he has undergone nothing short of an extreme makeover. In Old S. Clemente, both in the paintings sponsored by Beno and Maria (figs. 1-2) and in other medieval works, including the *Particular Judgment* and the *Virgin and Child with St. Clement and a female donor* discovered in the 1990s (fig. 4), Clement I is consistently portrayed as an elderly man with light gray or white hair and a beard of the same color and wearing the clothing of a bishop or pope<sup>100</sup>. The only exception is the clipeate por-

<sup>98</sup> Barclay Lloyd, *The Medieval Church and Canonry* cit., p. 53-66; Riccioni, *Il mosaico absidale* cit., p. 6; Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 214.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 247-249.

<sup>100</sup> J. Osborne, *The 'Particular Judgment': an early medieval wall-painting in the lower church of San Clemente, Rome*, in «The Burlington Magazine», 123 (1981), 939, p. 335-341, esp. p. 335-336, and fig. 3; Guidobaldi, *Gli scavi del 1993-95* cit., p. 470-476; Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 66-67; Andaloro, *La pittura medievale a Roma* cit., p. 181, 189. Discovered during the excavations of 1993-1995, the *Virgin and Child with St. Clement and a female donor* is in the baptistery of Old S. Clemente and thus outside the body of the basilica. The image is a palimpsest. Painted in the tenth century (Guidobaldi) or in the eleventh (Romano), the face of Clement belongs to the earlier of two strata. According to Guidobaldi, «è risultato infatti evidente che il nuovo affresco aveva intenzionalmente conservato la parte superiore della figura di S. Clemente, considerata evidentemente un ritratto più attendibile o comunque vetusto». At some

trait under the *Miracle of Chersona* (fig. 1), which was clearly drawn from an ancient model and which shows Clement in biblical attire but still with the customary gray-white hair and beard<sup>101</sup>. In the early twelfth-century mosaic of New S. Clemente (fig. 5), on the other hand, we find a very different figure: a young man with a black beard, similarly dark hair, and no episcopal or pontifical vestments at all. Clement is instead dressed as an apostle, in a white toga and sandals, holding the anchor that was used to kill him and perched on what appears to be a pile of brightly colored rocks, rather than on a pontifical throne. Next to him sits the elderly Peter, who addresses Clement with the words «Respice p(ro)missum / Clemens a me tibi (Christ)um» («Look upon the Christ, Clement, promised by me to you»)<sup>102</sup>. What we see in the mosaic is not so much a pope as an apprentice apostle and martyr, an identity embedded in the anchor, in Clement's youthful appearance, and above all in his clothing. Although the composition emphasizes the saint's relation to Peter, the first pope (who in the mosaic is clothed as an apostle), the traditional, explicitly pontifical aspects of his attire have been eliminated, as has his advanced age.

By themselves, these modifications might seem inconsequential. However, given the monumental scale of the mosaic, its prestigious placement and lavish materials, and above all Clement's very different prior iconography, attested recurrently in the lower church, it seems clear that these unusual attributes were not chosen casually<sup>103</sup>. Images showing Clement I with dark hair are rare. Among the dozen and a half representations of the saint listed in the Index of Christian Art and datable to the twelfth century or earlier, only a few – for example, a miniature of the ninth century in the Stiftsbibliothek of St. Gall (Cod. Sang. 86, p. 6 [fol. 3v]) – represent him with that attribute<sup>104</sup>. The elderly, white- or gray-haired Clement, on the other hand, was a venerable and widely diffused norm. Elegant, early wit-

time in the late eleventh century, the lower half of Clement's body was covered with a thin layer of *intonaco* and the figure of a kneeling female donor added (Guidobaldi, *Gli scavi del 1993-95* cit., p. 470-476; Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit. pp. 66-67; Andaloro, *La pittura medievale a Roma* cit., p. 179). On Clement's iconography in general: G. Zannoni and M. Celletti, *Clement I, papa, santo*, in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, vol. 4, Roma 1964, col. 38-48, esp. 47-48; G. Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in Central and South Italian Schools of Painting*, Florence 1965, pp. 302-308.

<sup>101</sup> Filippini, *La chiesa e il suo santo* cit., p. 114-115.

<sup>102</sup> Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 213. For current bibliography and interpretations of the mosaics of the apse and apsidal arch, see Riccioni, *Il mosaico absidale* cit.; and Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 209-218.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Riccioni, *Il mosaico absidale* cit., p. 21-22, who discusses the novelty of Clement's clothing but not the different hair color.

<sup>104</sup> Index of Christian Art (copy in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana); Riccioni, *Il mosaico absidale* cit., p. 21, n. 33; Zannoni and M. Celletti, *Clement I, papa* cit., col. 38-48, esp. 47-48; Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints* cit., pp. 302-308. A color photograph of the miniature in the St. Gall manuscript is available at: < <http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/csg/0086/6/small> >, last accessed 22 January 2012. For Wilpert's identification of a fourth-century figure of St. Clement with dark hair, see Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien* cit., vol. 4, p. 216; for a thirteenth-century example in Catalonia: Scorza Barcellona, *Clemente I, santo* cit., p. 206.



nesses include the sixth-century mosaic of St. Clement in S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna and a fresco of the mid eighth century in S. Maria Antiqua in the Roman Forum<sup>105</sup>. In both cases, Clement has white hair and wears the sandals, tunic, and long, draped mantle of an apostle. At S. Maria Antiqua, however, he also has a pallium, an essential emblem of his pontifical-episcopal status.

Most later representations, up to and excluding the mosaic in New S. Clemente, portray Clement wearing priestly and pontifical rather than apostolic attire, typically a chasuble, pallium, and scarlet slippers. Apart from the clipeate bust beneath the *Miracle of Chersona*, all of the representations of Clement in the frescoes sponsored by Beno and Maria (the *Mass of St. Clement* [fig. 1]; the *Translation*; the *Enthronement* [fig. 2]) show him in this pontifical guise, as do the other medieval frescoes in Old S. Clemente<sup>106</sup>. What makes the mosaic of New S. Clemente so remarkable is that the two non-normative options – the dark hair, and the apostolic clothing with no pallium or other pontifical or priestly garments – coincide in the same image. As far as I have been able to determine, the mosaic of New S. Clemente is the only surviving work of its era that portrays Clement with both of those non-standard attributes. The decision on the part of the mosaic's designers to dignify the apsidal arch of the new church with the image of a youthful, apostolic Clement, rather than with the pontifical elder of longstanding tradition so amply attested in Old S. Clemente, must have been a considered, motivated choice.

However subtle to modern eyes, this radical restyling of St. Clement offers some of the strongest evidence, in my opinion, that the frescoes of Old S. Clemente were somehow associated with (anti)pope Clement III. The reform-party designers of the new church's apse mosaic reshaped Clement I's image decidedly away from that of the *senex* in pontifical vestments typical of the lower basilica and of St. Clement's previous iconography in general<sup>107</sup>. This thorough refashioning of the saint can be understood very credibly as a programmatic, reform-party choice, emphasizing, among other things, a return to the *ecclesiae primitivae forma*, in line with the «renouveau paléochrétien» described by Hélène Toubert, or the supreme authority of the popes as Peter's successors, as Stefano Riccioni recently proposed<sup>108</sup>. I see no

<sup>105</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 203, 205; Zannoni and Celletti, *Clement I, papa* cit., col. 39; P. Romanelli and P. Nordhagen, *S. Maria Antiqua*, Roma 1964, tav. 42.

<sup>106</sup> See also Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien* cit., vol. 4, p. 216.

<sup>107</sup> On Leo of Ostia and the other people likely involved in the decoration of New S. Clemente, see Riccioni, *Il mosaico absidale* cit., p. 4-5; Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 215.

<sup>108</sup> H. Toubert, *Le Renouveau paléochrétien à Rome au début du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in «Cahiers Archéologiques», 20 (1970), p. 99-154, esp. 122-52. Riccioni, *Il mosaico absidale* cit., p. 17-22, suggests that the new image of Clement was an answer to the accusations made against Paschal II at the Lateran Council of 1112. For Riccioni, Clement's apostolic attire in the mosaic was perhaps meant to emphasize that Clement was Peter's direct successor and thus endowed with supreme authority and a monopoly over orthodoxy, which made him and his successors immune to accusations of heresy.

reason to dispute either of those interpretations. What I am proposing instead is that the early twelfth-century transformation of Clement, which knowingly deviated from a centuries-old tradition deeply rooted at S. Clemente, may have had an additional advantage from the perspective of the mosaic's reform-party patrons – namely, the clean break that it made with the traditional image of Clement I, which by the end of the eleventh century had become tightly bound up with the memory of their archenemy, Clement III. At his death in 1100 Wibert of Ravenna was an old man, probably of seventy or eighty years, and while we do not have the benefit of surviving portraits or descriptions of his appearance, it is tempting to imagine that, dressed in the pallium, chasuble, and scarlet shoes, he bore at least a passing resemblance to the white-haired Clement visible on the walls of Old S. Clemente<sup>109</sup>. From the perspective of Cardinal Anastasius, Paschal II, and their allies, a depiction of the traditional St. Clement, wearing papal vestments and looking out over their new basilica from the heavenly gold ground of the apsidal arch, would almost certainly have constituted a mnemonic liability, an invitation to recall the aged, recently deceased Clement III, whose memory Paschal II was fighting to suppress.

When the mosaic in the apse of New S. Clemente was crafted in the opening decades of the twelfth century, Clement III was almost certainly a living memory for many Romans. So, too, was his flight into exile and death in 1100, which brings me back, at long last, to Pace's idea about the filling in of the lower basilica as an act of *damnatio memoriae* connected to the eleventh-century paintings. Even if Beno and Maria had been supporters of Clement III, an idea that we can neither prove nor disprove, would it really have been necessary to bury Old S. Clemente merely to hide their fresco cycle? The answer, clearly, is no, and so we find ourselves back where we started, with little to show for it.

### 9. *The Miracles and Damnation of St. Clement III and the Burial of Old S. Clemente*

There is, however, at least one remaining possibility. As Umberto Longo and Kai-Michael Sprenger discuss in their essays in this collection, not long after Clement III's death, rumors began to circulate of numerous miracles at his tomb at Civita Castellana, of lights twinkling in its vicinity and of sudden and spontaneous cases of healing *ad corpus*<sup>110</sup>. In response, Paschal II had Clement's remains removed and thrown into the Tiber, apparently in an

<sup>109</sup> Wibert was probably born between circa 1020 and 1030 (Dolcini, *Clemente III, antipapa* cit., p. 212-213).

<sup>110</sup> For the sources and textual tradition, see *Monumenta Bambergensia*, ed. P. Jaffé, Berlin 1869 (Bibliotheca Rerum Germanicarum, tom. V), p. 194-196; *Annales sancti Disibodi* cit., p. 17; Bertolini, *Istituzioni, miracoli, promozione* cit., p. 69-104.

attempt to eliminate any possibility of the survival and spread of his cult<sup>111</sup>. What I would like to contemplate is this: what if Paschal had been too late and the veneration of St. Clement III had already begun to spread outside of Tuscia, and especially southward toward Rome<sup>112</sup>? What if Paschal's attempt at *deletio memoriae* had even backfired, drawing further posthumous attention to Clement and to his reputation as a saint<sup>113</sup>? I find it tempting to imagine that when those who honored Clement III's memory and sought his intercession were deprived of his tomb and relics, they turned to a surrogate mecca, an ancient church rich in relics and images of Clement's early Christian predecessor of the same name. In short, I suspect that Old S. Clemente may have become of a focus for the veneration of Clement III during the early years of Paschal II's pontificate or, at the very least, perceived as such, or in danger of becoming such, by the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

I realize that this idea may strike some readers as lacking in historical foundation, but there are three historical considerations that embolden me to suggest it. The first is the intriguing coincidence in time between the disposal of Clement III's remains in the Tiber and the abandonment and burial of Old S. Clemente, although whether their chronological vicinity was a matter of days, months, or years is unknown and likely unknowable. The exhuming of Clement III probably took place no later than 1106<sup>114</sup>. The inhuming of Old S. Clemente, on the other hand, must have happened sometime after mid August of 1099 but well before 1118, when the new church seems to have been complete<sup>115</sup>.

My second motivation for imagining that the filling in of Old S. Clemente had something to do with the violation of Clement III's corpse lies in the dissent and suspicion that Paschal II faced, particularly during the middle years of his pontificate. The term «Wibertist» continued to be used well after Clement III/Wibert's death to describe those who supported imperialist popes and Henry V, and following the concessions concerning lay investiture that Paschal made to Henry under duress in 1111, the pope had to fend off charges that he had granted Wibertist churchmen blanket absolution and become a Wibertist himself. Pressed at the Lateran Council of 1112, he confessed his errors, and when the confession did not satisfy his critics, he made

<sup>111</sup> *Annales sancti Disibodi* cit., p. 17; Rusconi, *Santo padre* cit., p. 41; and Sprenger's essay in the present volume.

<sup>112</sup> According to Bertolini, the diffusion of the «operatività» della «virtus» of Clement III seems to have been limited to Civita Castellana, Tarquinia, and their surroundings (Bertolini, *Istituzioni, miracoli, promozione* cit., p. 75-76, 84-93).

<sup>113</sup> For this idea, I am indebted to Kai-Michael Sprenger.

<sup>114</sup> The exact date of the disinterment of Clement III's remains and their consignment to the river is uncertain. Hypotheses vary from as early as September 23, 1101, to as late as 1106. Bertolini and Rusconi connect the action to the forcible removal of the bodies of schismatic bishops from churches ordered by Paschal II between circa 1101 and 1110 (Bertolini, *Istituzioni, miracoli, promozione* cit., p. 93, 103; Rusconi, *Santo padre* cit., p. 42).

<sup>115</sup> Barclay Lloyd, *The Medieval Church and Canonry* cit., p. 53-66; Romano, *Riforma e tradizione* cit., p. 214; Riccioni, *Il mosaico absidale* cit., p. 6.

a public profession of his Catholic faith, as schismatic and heretical bishops were required to do when they were readmitted to the Church. Even then, however, talk of his heresy continued<sup>116</sup>. These events confirm the lingering hostility toward Clement III among members of the dominant church party in Rome, as well as the fear of his memory, and while they probably came too late to have contributed to the decision to have Clement III's remains deposited in the Tiber, their chronological relation to the inhuming of Old S. Clemente is less certain. What Paschal's confession and *professio fidei* of 1112 show, in any case, is that he was willing – and found it necessary – to resort to dramatic public displays to demonstrate his distance from Clement III and those on Clement's side.

My third reason for speculating that Old S. Clemente had perhaps become a focus for devotion to Clement III or a rallying point, real or imagined, for those who honored his memory lies in the parallels that a visitor to S. Clemente in or soon after 1100 might have perceived between Clement III and the early Christian Clement represented in its frescoes, especially those sponsored by Maria and Beno. This conjecture presupposes that at least some people in early twelfth-century Rome were aware of Clement III's miracles, although if such knowledge existed, all traces of it have been lost<sup>117</sup>. Yet we would be wrong to conclude from the silence that rumors of the pope's *prodigia* did not reach the city. Civita Castellana lies close to Rome, about forty-three kilometers as the crow flies, and in the Middle Ages the two cities were still connected by the ancient Via Flaminia, a major north-south thoroughfare<sup>118</sup>. Paschal II and his successors did a thorough job of expurgating the documentary record of references to their adversary, and as the *Annales sancti Disibodi* indicate, they were especially energetic in eliminating any encouragements to the growth and diffusion of Clement's cult<sup>119</sup>. Silencing what today we would call the grapevine or the word on the street, however, whether in Civita Castellana or southward along the Via Flaminia, likely proved more difficult, at least for a time.

The stories represented in the Sisinnius frescoes (*The Mass of St. Clement; The Miracle of the Column*) invite especially clear analogies between the two Clements in their similarities to the most remarkable of Clement III's miracles, that of the blasphemous cobbler. According to Peter of Padua, our main source for Clement III's *miracula*, a cobbler cursed Clement III, asking to be struck blind if Clement were indeed a saint, and immediately lost his sight, only to regain it after two months of terrible ocular pain when he was taken to the pontiff's tomb («ductus tandem ad sepul-

<sup>116</sup> Blumenthal, *Opposition to Pope Paschal II* cit., p. 82-84, 91-95.

<sup>117</sup> Our main source for the miracles, Peter of Padua's letter to Henry IV, seems to have been unknown in central Italy (Bertolini, *Istituzioni, miracoli, promozione* cit., p. 75, 92-93).

<sup>118</sup> The website < <http://www.comuni-italiani.it/056/021/limitrofi.html> >, accessed 22 January 2012, gives the distance between Rome and Civita Castellana *in linea d'aria* as 42.6 kilometers.

<sup>119</sup> *Annales sancti Disibodi* cit., p. 17; *Liber Pontificalis* cit., vol. 2, p. 307, n. 11.

crum sancti, illuminatus est»)<sup>120</sup>. As with Sisinnius, an enemy of the Church and its rightful pope suffered a sudden, punitive loss of vision and then experienced its equally sudden restoration through the saint's intercession. In both instances, moreover, the miracle fostered interior illumination and conversion. The pagan Sisinnius eventually became a Christian, while the anti-Clementine cobbler – who, perhaps not incidentally, was named Paganus – had his eyes opened, both in a literal sense and to Clement III's sanctity, or so the «illuminatus est» of the narrative suggests.

Peter of Padua describes twenty-eight of Clement III's miracles. Five, including that of the cobbler, involve restitutions of sight or of hearing, the former always described in words suggestive of both bodily and spiritual illumination («ita lumen recepit»; «lumen accepit»; «statim illuminatus est»)<sup>121</sup>. Four other prodigies, in addition to that of the cobbler, were specifically directed at demonstrating Clement III's legitimacy before his detractors and enemies. One example will suffice: that of the three priests who had been ordained by a bishop from Clement III's faction, who were consequently prohibited from celebrating Mass by the anti-Wibertian Bishop of Tuscania, and who submitted successfully to an ordeal, the grasping of pieces of hot iron, to prove the validity of their ordination<sup>122</sup>. Early twelfth-century devotees of Clement III may have perceived echoes of the same implied message – of Clement III's legitimacy – in the fresco directly above the stories of Sisinnius in Old S. Clemente, the *Enthronement*, where St. Peter transmits apostolic authority to an enthroned, crimson-clad figure labeled «S[AN]C[TU]S CLEMENS PAPA».

The invitations to analogy also extended to the burials of the two Clements, and specifically to the consignment of their bodies to water, a form of disposal chosen in both cases with the objective of obliterating memory and preempting veneration. The *Annales sancti Disibodi* report that Paschal II had Clement III's remains deposited in the Tiber in response to the reports of miracles at his tomb<sup>123</sup>. Similarly, Trajan had Clement I cast into the Black Sea bound to an anchor in order to impede the hallowing of his relics. An early twelfth-century visitor entering S. Clemente from the atrium was greeted by pictures showing the abject failure of Trajan's plan: images of angels building an underwater tomb for the saint; of throngs of people spilling out of Chersona to venerate him at the site (fig. 1); of a miracle worked *ad corpus*; and of the transfer of that *corpus* to the basilica of S. Clemente in Rome, with a pope and a large throng in attendance.

<sup>120</sup> The cobbler cursed Clement during an exchange with a Wibertian knight: «Et ille: *Si ipse est sanctus, et ludum et lumen protinus amittam. Et statim factus est cecus*» (*Monumenta Bambergensia* cit., p. 195). On this story, see also Bertolini, *Istituzioni, miracoli, promozione* cit., p. 72-73; and Rusconi, *Santo Padre* cit., p. 42.

<sup>121</sup> *Monumenta Bambergensia* cit., p. 194-195; Bertolini, *Istituzioni, miracoli, promozione* cit., p. 72-73.

<sup>122</sup> *Monumenta Bambergensia* cit., p. 194-196; Bertolini, *Istituzioni, miracoli, promozione* cit., *passim*.

<sup>123</sup> *Annales sancti Disibodi* cit., p. 17.

The resonances between the fresco of the *Miracle of Chersona* and the interior of Old S. Clemente must have been strong when the church was still in use. At the center of the fresco we find a canopied altar with an altar cloth, candlesticks, and hanging lamps, furnishings similar to those that a medieval visitor would have seen in three dimensions upon entering the nave of the church. In the painting, however, fish and octopuses swim above and beside the shrine, a reminder of its unusual location. Although not built at the bottom of a sea, Old S. Clemente was nevertheless at the bottom of a valley, between the Caelian and Oppian hills, and set directly above a freshwater spring, which still delivers more than a liter of water per second<sup>124</sup>. In the late nineteenth century and again in the 1930s the recently excavated ancient Roman buildings under its floor flooded, necessitating the installation of two long drainage conduits connected to the ancient sewer around the Colosseum<sup>125</sup>. Medieval sources make no mention of high water in the church in the eleventh century, but neither do they refer to any floods of the Tiber during the more than three centuries between 860 and 1180, a lacuna almost certainly due to scanty record keeping, rather than to any real absence of inundations. The eleventh-century floor of S. Clemente is above any of the recorded high-water levels for Tiber floods, and so if flooding occurred there it was probably due to rain or other local conditions<sup>126</sup>. Given the basilica's position at the bottom of a valley, however, and the rising of the ground around the structure from late antiquity onward, the building likely suffered sporadic, and perhaps even chronic, intrusions of water, especially during heavy rains. In Rome such rains tend to be most copious in November, the month of St. Clement's feast day (November 23<sup>rd</sup>)<sup>127</sup>.

As Federico Guidobaldi and his co-authors point out in their publication of the excavations carried out at S. Clemente in the 1990s, the burial of the basilica was not an isolated phenomenon. Other structures in the city, especially those situated «a *fondo valle*», were interred and rebuilt at a higher

<sup>124</sup> A. Corazza and L. Lombardi, *Idrogeologia dell'area del centro storico di Roma*, in *Memorie descrittive della carta geologica d'Italia* cit., p. 182, 199.

<sup>125</sup> Guidobaldi, *S. Clemente: gli edifici romani* cit., p. 29-31.

<sup>126</sup> Corazza and Lombardi, *Idrogeologia dell'area del centro storico di Roma* cit., p. 182-183, 199; M. Bencivenga, E. Di Loreto, and L. Liperi, *Il regime idrologico del Tevere, con particolare riguardo alle piene nella città di Roma*, in *Memorie descrittive della carta geologica d'Italia* cit., p. 125-172, 151-154, 156-157, 162; cf. the pavement levels of Old S. Clemente in Guidobaldi, *S. Clemente: gli edifici romani* cit., p. 142-47.

<sup>127</sup> On precipitation in Rome: <<http://www.weather.com/weather/wxclimatology/monthly/graph/ITXX0067>> (accessed 22 January 2012). Whether precipitation patterns in Rome in the early twelfth century were the same as they are today deserves further study. So does the question of whether the Medieval Warm Period, more accurately called the Medieval Climatic Anomaly (c. 900-1300), increased the likelihood of flooding in Rome and thus encouraged the burial and rebuilding at a higher level of S. Clemente and other ancient churches. On the Medieval Climatic Anomaly see, for example, R. Bradley, M. Hughes, and H. Diaz, *Climate in Medieval Time*, in «Science», 302 (17 Oct. 2003), 5644, p. 404-405; F. Cheyette, *The disappearance of the ancient landscape and the climatic anomaly of the early Middle Ages: a question to be pursued*, in «Early Medieval Europe», 16 (May 2008), 2, p. 127-165.

level in the twelfth century and thereby rendered less subject to «alluvial phenomena»<sup>128</sup>. In the early twelfth century, humidity and occasional intrusions of water probably constituted a practical nuisance at S. Clemente, as they must have at other buildings in similar positions. However, in Old S. Clemente, unwanted water in the church could also have had symbolic reverberations, especially after Clement III's remains were jettisoned in the Tiber. If the unofficially sainted Clement III had started to be likened to Clement I and associated with his basilica in Rome, as I am conjecturing, then flooding, whether sporadic or chronic, might have impressed some twelfth-century believers as eerily suggestive of the aqueous tombs to which both popes' bodies had been delivered, particularly given S. Clemente's damp, valley-bottom setting.

St. Antoninus of Apamea – who, as already mentioned, is portrayed on the narrow side of a nave pier – had also been thrown into water (a river), and his story may have offered hope to Clement III's followers, distraught at the loss of his relics. According to the version of Antoninus's life reported in a Passionary (Lateran Archive A 80) made roughly in the same period as the damning of Clement III's remains, the saint's severed head was miraculously transported to France, where it became the focus of an important cult<sup>129</sup>. The manuscript containing the story was copied for Anastasius, titular cardinal of S. Clemente under Paschal II, but as we have seen, texts and narratives valued and used by one side were also fair game for the other<sup>130</sup>. The *Translation* fresco on the façade of Old S. Clemente may have appealed to Clement III's devotees in a similar fashion, since it shows the triumphal entry and deposition in Rome of Clement I's relics, which Trajan had attempted to deprive of their due veneration by having Clement thrown into the Black Sea.

The *Liber Pontificalis* reports amazing prodigies during the early years of Paschal's pontificate: red skies; immense rainbows; a potent and persistent comet; exceptionally high tides<sup>131</sup>. The sources are silent about S. Clemente, and so whether the basilica experienced its own local portents we can only speculate. Nevertheless, it is worth considering that if infiltrations of water in the church had coincided in time even approximately with Paschal II's violation of Clement III's remains, then the semiotic consequences for Paschal could have been grave. The possibility of registering the natural phenomenon as a divine affirmation of the gross impiety of his actions toward the miracle-working (anti)pope, whose sanctity was analogous to that of Clement I, might have created an unexpected rhetorical opportunity for Clement III's loyalists and a public-relations nightmare for Paschal and his friend Cardinal Anastasius.

<sup>128</sup> «Meno soggetti ai fenomeni alluvionali» (Guidobaldi et al., *San Clemente. Gli scavi più recenti* cit., p. 398).

<sup>129</sup> Filippini, *The Eleventh-Century Frescoes* cit., p. 13-15, 101-103; P. Jounel, *Le culte des saints dans les basiliques du Latran et du Vatican au douzième siècle*, Rome 1977, p. 47-48, 74-77.

<sup>130</sup> On the copying of the manuscript for Anastasius, see Filippini, *The Eleventh-Century Frescoes* cit., p. 13-15, 101-103.

<sup>131</sup> *Liber Pontificalis* cit., vol. 2, p. XXII and 298. Cantarella, *Pasquale II e il suo tempo* cit., p. 51-54, discusses the prodigies and their interpretation.

Here, clearly, we are in the realm of free speculation, but these possibilities, however conjectural, bring us back to my principal hypothesis. If Pace is correct and Old S. Clemente was indeed destroyed in an act of *damnatio memoriae*, then the problem may not have resided in the sponsorship of the frescoes or in the period when they were painted but rather in what they were inspiring people to think and to do in the opening years of the twelfth century, soon after Clement III's death. The paintings could have been chiseled away and disposed of in the same way as Clement's corpse, but they were not. Yet, if partly under their inspiration Old S. Clemente had shown signs of turning into the focus of a Roman cult of St. Clement III, then for Paschal II and his party, the very space of the basilica would have become symbolically dangerous. With its relics and floor-to-ceiling paintings, semi-interred external walls, and exposure to flooding, Old S. Clemente provided twelfth-century Christians with a bridge to Rome in the era of the apostles and to Clement's site of martyrdom at the bottom of the Black Sea; but by the same token, the basilica may also have been a place where the past seeped into the present, where a saintly modern-day Clement who had no shrines or churches and whose body had been washed into the Tyrrhenian, came to be amalgamated to the ancient Clement and seemed to live again in the images of him on the church's walls. Under those conditions, Clement III's enemies may have seen a wholesale replacing of Old S. Clemente as the only sufficiently final solution, particularly if material practicalities, such as humidity, were already encouraging it. I find that combination of reasons the most compelling explanation for the cancellation of the ancient basilica and its replacement with an entirely new S. Clemente in which St. Clement was rejuvenated, re-dressed, and thoroughly remade in a way that detached him from his pontifical predecessors in the lower church and from his eleventh-century namesake in the Tiber.

Lila Yawn  
 John Cabot University (Rome)  
 lila.yawn@gmail.com





Figure 1.

The *Miracle of Chersona* and Donor Portrait, Lower Basilica of S. Clemente (Old S. Clemente), Rome.

Source of photo: S. Romano, *Riforma e tradizione 1050-1198 (La Pittura medievale a Roma, Corpus, Volume IV)*, Milano 2006, p. 131, fig. 1.

Photo credit given in source: A. Rubino, ICR (cited in S. Romano, *Riforma e tradizione 1050-1198 [La Pittura medievale a Roma, Corpus, Volume IV]*, Milano 2006, p. 405).

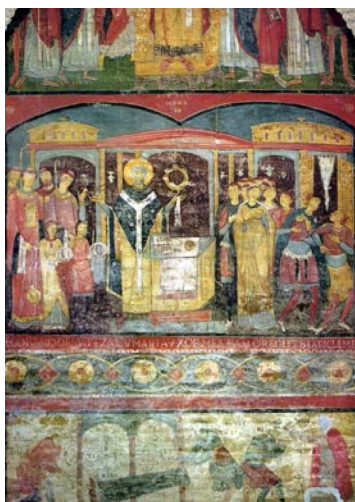


Figure 2.

The *Enthronement of St. Clement*, the *Mass of St. Clement*, and the *Miracle of the Column*, Lower Basilica of S. Clemente (Old S. Clemente), Rome.

Photo: <http://www.basilicasanclemente.com/italiano/tour/IV/stclement.htm>.

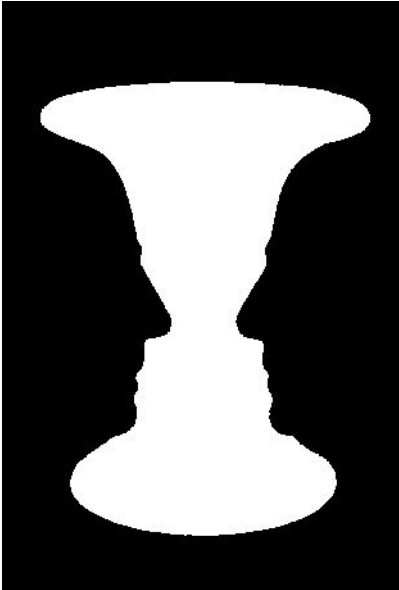


Figure 3.  
Rubin's vase.

Source: Wikipedia <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b5/Rubin2.jpg> (particolare).



Figure 4.

*Virgin and Child with St. Clement and a female donor*, Baptistery of Old S. Clemente, Rome.

Source: M. Andaloro, *La Pittura medievale a Roma, 312-1431. Atlante, percorsi visivi*, Viterbo-Roma 2006, p. 189, fig. 28 (detail).

Photo credit given in source: persons named at the beginning of the book as responsible for the photographic campaign are Gaetano Alfano, Alessio Giorgetti, Domenico Ventura (cited in M. Andaloro, *La Pittura medievale a Roma, 312-1431. Atlante, percorsi visivi*, Viterbo-Roma 2006, p. 5); no photographer named in the caption (M. Andaloro, *La Pittura medievale a Roma, 312-1431. Atlante, percorsi visivi*, Viterbo-Roma 2006, p. 188).



Figure 5.  
Sts. Peter (left) and Clement (right), apse arch of the Upper Basilica of S. Clemente (New S. Clemente), Rome  
Source of photo: S. Romano, *Riforma e tradizione 1050-1198. Corpus, Volume IV*, Milano 2006 (La Pittura medievale a Roma, Volume IV), p. 214, fig. 11.  
Photo credit given in source: A. Rubino, ICR (cited in S. Romano, *Riforma e tradizione 1050-1198. Corpus, Volume IV*, Milano 2006 (La Pittura medievale a Roma, 4, p. 406).

RM

**Materiali e note**

---

