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**An Essay on the *damnatio in memoria***  
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**Place of Oblivion and Memory**

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

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**An Essay on the *damnatio in memoria* of Clement III (1084-1100)  
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1. «DEAD ANTIPOPE KEEPING COMPANY WITH THE FISH!» That might have been the headline of the brief account of Clement III's end in the records of the German monastery of Disibodenberg if their author had been a tabloid journalist rather than a twelfth-century annalist. As the author notes, when Pope Paschal II learned that Clement III's followers were spreading rumors of miracles that Clement had purportedly performed, Paschal decided to put a prompt end to the circumstance. In a military demonstration of strength, he seized the city of Civita Castellana, had Clement's cadaver disinterred, and ordered it thrown into the Tiber<sup>1</sup>.

Paschal II's approach to the corpse of his enemy and former rival for the *cathedra Petri* illustrates a particular variant of what is conventionally called *damnatio* or *deletio memoriae*, a form of intentional forgetting typically applied to antipopes<sup>2</sup>. Since official histories of the Holy Roman Church did

<sup>1</sup> *Annales S. Disibodi*, ed. G. Waitz, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, vol. 17, Hannover 1861, p. 4-30, esp. p. 17, *ad annum* 1099: «Wigbertus Romanae et apostolicae sedis invasor, moritur; (...) Quidam autem de fautoribus eius rumorem sparserunt in populum ad sepulcrum eius vidisse divina micuisse luminaria. Quapropter dominus apostolicus Paschalis zelo Dei inflammatus iussit ut effoderetur et in Tyberim iactaretur. Quod et factum est». For the historical context see also J. Ziese, *Wibert von Ravenna, Der Gegenpapst Clemens III. (1084-1100)*, Stuttgart 1982, (Päpste und Papsttum 20), p. 273; for an analysis of the miracles worked by Clement, M.G. Bertolini, *Istituzioni, miracoli e 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, Rome 1984 (Collana di studi storici 1), p. 69-104; R. Rusconi, *Santo Padre. La santità del papa da san Pietro a Giovanni Paolo II*, Roma 2010, p. 40-43, and the article of U. Longo in the present volume.

<sup>2</sup> A comprehensive study of *damnatio memoriae* and the various forms of the selective destruction of memory in the Middle Ages is long overdue. Such a study, with a focus on the early Middle Ages, is currently underway by Gerald Schwedler (Zurich). Founded in Zurich in 2011, the inter-

not (and do not) number Clement III (Wibert of Ravenna) among the legitimate popes, there was no need to remember even the place, date, and circumstances of his burial. This was true of dead antipopes in general, most of whom did not create any further problems after their respective demises. Who among us would guess, for example, that some antipopes, including Paschal III (1164-1168), the second antipope of the Alexandrine Schism (1159-1177), were buried at the very center of Roman Christianity, in St. Peter's Basilica<sup>3</sup>? The long inscription at the entrance to the Vatican grottoes, the area of pontifical graves under St. Peter's, listing all of the popes laid to rest there does not, of course, mention any «antipopes», given the damning of their memory. Since for medieval, as for modern Christianity, the desecration of a grave was a sacrilegious act, even former political opponents were normally allowed to rest in peace once they were defeated and dead. Symptomatic of the attitude underlying this practice is Emperor Henry IV's well-known wish, «Would that all my enemies lay [buried] so honorably». Henry made this remark, Otto of Freising tells us in his *Gesta Friderici*, after his advisors had urged him to destroy the splendid tomb of the anti-king Rudolf of Rheinfelden because its epitaph described Rudolf as the legitimate king<sup>4</sup>.

There were exceptions to this rule of non-violation, however. The tombs of some antipopes were deliberately destroyed because they had become

national research group «*Damnatio memoriae* - Deformation und Gegenkonstruktion von Erinnerung in Geschichte, Kunst und Literatur» («*Damnatio memoriae*: Deformation and Counter-Construction of Memory in History, Art and Literature») <<http://www.damnatio-memoriae.net>> [last accessed 24 January 2012] aims to serve as a comprehensive, interdisciplinary forum for information and discussion on the topic. An initial survey of the phenomenon in the Middle Ages is provided in the following conference proceedings: *Condannare all'oblio. Pratiche della damnatio memoriae nel Medioevo*. Atti del convegno di studi svoltosi in occasione della XX Edizione del Premio Internazionale Ascoli Piceno (Ascoli Piceno, Palazzo dei Capitani, 27-29 novembre 2008), ed. A. Rigon and I. Lori Sanfilippo, Roma 2010. On uses of the concept of *memoria damnata* in Curial sources mentioning schismatic popes and other enemies of the Church since the mid-twelfth century and further methodological reflections on *memoria damnata* as a counterpart to the concept of *bona* or *sancta memoria* see Sprenger, *Damnatio Memoriae*.

<sup>3</sup> Appendix of Ottonis et Rahewini *Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris*, ed. G. Waitz and B. Simson, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rer. Germ in us. scholarum*, vol. 46, Hannover 1912, esp. p. 350: «Gwido, qui et Paschalis, moritur et in basilica beati Petri Romae sepelitur». See also the list of the papal burial places in M. Borgolte, *Petrusnachfolge und Kaiserimitation. Die Grablegen der Päpste, ihre Genese und Traditionsbildung*, Göttingen 1989 (Veröffentlichung des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte, 95), p. 343-360; for individual antipopes of the so-called Investiture Contest see *ibidem*, p. 147 (note 143), 151 (note 5), 175.

<sup>4</sup> Ottonis et Rahewini *Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris* cit., p. 23: «Fertur de imperatore, quod, cum pacatis paulisper his seditionum motibus ad predictam aecclesiam Merseburch venisset ibique prefatum Rudolfum velut regem humatum vidisset, cuidam dicenti, cur eum, qui rex non fuerat, velut regali honore sepultum iacere permitteret, dixerit: 'Utinam omnes inimici mei tam honorifice iacerent'». For a deeper analysis of this passage see the forthcoming article by G. Schwedler, *Purifying Memory in the Middle Ages. Cleansing soul, deleting remembrances and the example of the attempted purge of Rudolf of Rheinfelden*, in *How Purity is made - Persistence and Dynamics of the Purity Mindframe*, ed. P. Rösch and U. Simon, Wiesbaden 2012 [in press].

places of hagiographic veneration because of miracles that the occupants' followers believed had occurred there or in the vicinity<sup>5</sup>. By working miracles, (anti)pope Clement III was still able, even after his death, to endanger the pontifical legitimacy of his opponent and rival, Pope Paschal II. In Paschal's day, any honorable tomb of a pope named Clement III was destined to become a significant bone of contention, given that for Paschal and his supporters such a pope had never existed. Clement was a schismatic and a heretic in their view. Thus, the strict rules of canon law did not allow him to be buried in the sacred ground of a churchyard and certainly not in any church<sup>6</sup>. Needless to say, the idea of a sanctity attached to the heretical Pope Clement III was completely unacceptable. Any belief in miracles performed by him and celebrated by those who venerated him would have legitimized his pontificate posthumously while simultaneously dishonoring Pope Paschal II and casting Paschal in the role of the real schismatic, the real antipope. Clearly, radical measures were urgent. The complete and efficient destruction of Clement's tomb and corpse was inevitable from Paschal's perspective in order to ensure the intended and permanent effects of his opponent's *damnatio memoriae*. Not a single material trace could be left that might serve in the future as a relic and thus as a vehicle of liturgical or hagiographic veneration. Since Clement III had died in a state of excommunication, Paschal II and his supporters considered Clement damned for all eternity. God himself had canceled Clement's name from the *liber vitae*, as we read in Paschal's biography in the *Liber pontificalis*, which refers to the heretic Wibert, «cuius nomen Deus in caelis de libro vitae delevit»<sup>7</sup>. Clement's corpse and the illusion of his legitimate pontificate were to be washed away once and for all with the waves of the Tiber. At least that was the plan pursued by Paschal II, whose legitimacy in the apostolic succession and place in the *ecclesia triumphans* would thus shine even brighter, once he had crushed Clement's usurpatory claims and relegated them to oblivion<sup>8</sup>.

An interesting twelfth-century example, parallel to the case of Clement III, underlines this particular motivation for the destruction of an antipope's tomb. Following the death in Lucca in April 1164 of Victor IV, Alexander III's first rival in the Alexandrine Schism, several contemporary sources reported

<sup>5</sup> This was obviously the case with Clement's tomb, cf. U. Longo's article in the present volume.

<sup>6</sup> For further discussion of this particular problem in canon law, see S. Scholz, *Das Grab in der Kirche*, in «Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Kanonistische Abteilung», 84 (1998), p. 270-306.

<sup>7</sup> *Le Liber Pontificalis. Texte, Introduction et Commentaire*, ed. L. Duchesne, vol. 2, Paris 1892 (Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 2<sup>e</sup> série), p. 298: «Transitus immo mortis eius diem scire estimo indignum fore mortalibus eiusque memoriam in terris scribere cuius nomen Deus in caelis de libro vitae delevit: heresiarcha fuit, sic sibi sit titulus».

<sup>8</sup> The lost early-twelfth-century frescoes of the Lateran palace showing the defeated antipopes of the so-called Investiture Contest serving as footstools for the victorious popes underline the importance of remembering former enemies as schismatic antipopes as propaganda for the *ecclesia triumphans*. For details see M. Stroll, *Symbols as Power. The Papacy following the Investiture Contest*, Leiden 1991 (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 24), p. 16-35.

that the deceased pope was working miracles<sup>9</sup>. In the eyes of Alexander III's followers, of course, this situation was completely unacceptable, as for them a legitimate Pope Victor IV had never existed. That perspective explains why Pope Gregory VIII, when he went to Lucca in 1187, deliberately destroyed Victor IV's tomb and epitaph and had Victor's bones thrown out of the church in which they had lain for years by then<sup>10</sup>. A contemporary copy of the epitaph on Victor's tomb indicates that it referred *expressis verbis* to the miracles (*signa*) of the saint (*adnumeratur sanctis*). It seems very likely that these details of hagiographic and potentially liturgical memory attesting to Victor's sanctity motivated Gregory to intervene personally, even years after the Alexandrine Schism had ended<sup>11</sup>.

2. The reasons for the destruction of Clement's grave seem clear enough, but the brief account in the *Annales Sancti Disibodi* nevertheless raises a number of questions. Where in the Tiber did the papal troops dispose of Clement III's corpse, for example? Did they carry out the act clandestinely, or was it done in the presence of Paschal II and other witnesses – that is, before the papal and public eye? Was Clement merely cast perfunctorily and pragmatically into the river, or are there any indications of some ritual performance associated with the event? Why, furthermore, was Clement thrown into the Tiber at all and not disposed of in some other way?

The fact that the details of Clement III's watery doom come down to us via a German source written far from Rome points to a paradox also inherent in some other instances of the intentional damning or deleting of memory. In Clement's case we might suspect that Paschal II's orders were not aimed so much at disguising the fact that a Wibert of Ravenna had once existed as at establishing a certain quality of memory – an incrimination and a recollection of Wibert's *memoria* in the negative, a *memoria damnata*, accompanied

<sup>9</sup> For instance Acerbus Morena, *Historia*, ed. F. Güterbock, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rer. Germ. n. s.*, 7, Berlin 1930, reprinted Berlin 1964, p. 175: «Dominus vero papa Victor die Lune, que fuit [...] dies mensis Aprilis, in civitate Luce fati munus impleverat. Pro cuius sanctis meritis dicitur Deum multa miracula ibi fecisse»; *Annales Laubienses continuatio* a. 1056-1505, ed. D. G. Waitz, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, vol. 4, Hannover 1841, p. 28-30, esp. p. 24 *ad annum* 1164: «Domnus Octavianus diem ultimum clausit (...) cuius sanctitas et in vita et in morte claruit, et ad eius sepulcrum innumera miracula ostensa sunt, Domino videlicet papatum eius signis evidentibus approbante; cui succedit in papatu Paschalis». More miracles worked by Victor IV are narrated in the *Annales Palidenses* auctore Theodoro monacho, ed. G.H. Pertz, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, vol. 6, Hannover 1858, p. 48-98, esp. p. 91f.

<sup>10</sup> Sigebertus Gemblacensis *Chronica, Continuatio Aquicinctina, Auctarium Nicolai Ambienensis*, ed. L.K. Bethmann, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, vol. 6, Hannover 1844, p. 405-438, esp. p. 405-438 *ad annum* 1187: «Lucam inveniens ibi confracto sepulcro Octaviani ossa deiecit extra ecclesiam».

<sup>11</sup> For details on the case of Victor IV, see chapter II of my doctoral thesis, *Regnante Frederico inclito imperatore in Italia, de papa vero incerti sumus. Studien zur Wahrnehmung des Alexandrinischen Schismas in Reichsitalien (1159-1177)*, Tübingen 2012 (Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom, Nr. 125) [in press].

by a demonstration to the world, via a public act, that there never had been and never would be an honorable grave (and thus a place of liturgical *memoria*) associated with the condemned schismatic. What I am getting at is that we may wish to consider whether Paschal II sought not so much to efface all traces of Clement III as to have his old nemesis *remembered*, and remembered specifically as the antipope in the Tiber.

Having the dead body of a political enemy sunk in the Tiber was by no means a new or an isolated phenomenon. Across the urban history of Rome, from antiquity to the twentieth century, we find multiple cases in which political enemies met a similar fate or at least faced the threat of it. Several such instances, referred to below, provide a clearer view of what seems to be something of a Roman tradition and clarify the various ideas behind the practice of «sending someone into the Tiber». In considering them, however, I would also like to refer back to the paradoxical effect regularly associated with the practice. Although presented as a brother of Lethe, the river of forgetfulness, the Tiber – even when it served as a putative instrument of oblivion, of *delitio memoriae* – sometimes in reality became the stage for the creation of a new tradition, a new and lasting memory.

Before proceeding to these examples, let us survey the topography of Wibert's case. We know that he died in Civita Castellana. Since it was Bishop John of Civita Castellana, a prominent Wibertian, who propagated the cult of St. Clement III in the first place, we can also be quite sure that Clement was buried in one of the major churches of the city, even if our sources do not tell us its name<sup>12</sup>. In order to jettison Wibert in the Tiber, as Paschal had ordered, the pope's men necessarily had to carry his exhumed corpse out of the city center of Civita Castellana and at least ten kilometers along the ancient Via Flaminia until they reached the river. We might well wonder why they would have taken on such a burden. Why did they not simply burn the body and scatter the ashes to the winds? My point is that the Tiber seems to have played some major role in this drama of deletion. A further question follows. Did Paschal's men choose the nearest point of access to the Tiber's banks, or were they instead ordered to carry the dead antipope all the way back to Rome to prove to Paschal II that his still dangerous enemy had truly and without any doubt been scuttled? The *Annales Sancti Disibodi* reassure us, after all, that the papal orders had been carried out thoroughly: «Quod et factum est». Given the enormous, indeed crucial, political significance of this act, it seems very possible that Paschal II was more personally involved in the matter than merely as the commander of the deed, but, alas, the sources are silent about the matter – or were they silenced?

3. For a moment, we would do well to set this consideration aside and look at the Tiber itself. In Roman history and cultural memory (*Erinnerungskultur*),

<sup>12</sup> Ziese, *Wibert* cit., p. 271f.

the Tiber undoubtedly occupies a position of vital significance<sup>13</sup>. The idea of establishing a special «museo del Tevere» in Rome dedicated to the Tiber as a specific Roman *lieu de mémoire* has been considered repeatedly in recent years, if thus far without concrete results<sup>14</sup>. In the founding myth of Rome, the Tiber itself made a fateful decision, a choice averting two intentional, politically motivated fatalities in the river. When the twins Romulus and Remus were sentenced to be exposed in the river, the God Tiburinus did not take revenge for the sacrilege – that is, for the broken vow of chastity – that Rhea had committed with Mars but rather had mercy on the boys<sup>15</sup>. Told here only in brief, this well-known story manifests two elements that over the course of history became leitmotifs in the cultic-liturgical relation of the city towards its river: first, the necessity of appeasing the life-giving and avenging Tiber with religious sacrifices in order to prevent its regular floods; second, the constant threat to the symbiosis between city and river, in both the distant and the recent past<sup>16</sup>.

Already from the pre-Republican period, evidence survives of a ritual called the Argei, in which the colleges of priests went to the *pons Sublicius*, near the Tiber Island, after a procession through the city and, at the ritual's culminating moment, threw anthropomorphic figures made of bulrushes into the river<sup>17</sup>. This archaic purification ritual continued to be practiced through the classical and imperial periods, even though its original meaning by then had been lost – by the Augustan period it was no longer comprehensible. Ancient authors such as Ovid and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, however, believed that the Argei reflected or at least alluded to the archaic and by then long-outdated practice of human sacrifice, or, according to a more humane interpretation, the ancient idea that the Tiber's waters would transfer the dead to their (Greek) mythological homeland<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Of the various books on the history of the Tiber and its role in the Roman *Erinnerungskultur*, see for instance C. D'Onofrio, *Il Tevere*, Roma 1980.

<sup>14</sup> For the concept of *lieu de mémoire* see P. Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire*, 7 vols., Paris 1984-1991; P. Nora, *Zwischen Geschichte und Gedächtnis*, Berlin 1990. For an Italian approach, see M. Isnenghi, ed., *I luoghi della memoria*, 3 vols., Roma-Bari 1997-1997. Already in 1965 a special exhibition dedicated to the Tiber was proposed by F.M. Apollonj Ghetti, *Per una mostra del Tevere*, in F.M. Apollonj Ghetti, *Tuttotevere*, Roma 1980, p. 23-35. A more recent approach, which has not yet been brought to fruition, is offered by Michael Hasey with his project, «Museo del Tevere», coordinated by T. Winton and L. Pignatti: <<http://www.michaelhasey.com/2295783/MUSEO-DEL-TEVERE>> [last accessed 24 January 2012].

<sup>15</sup> A. Bendlin, *Romulus*, in *Der Neue Pauly*, ed. H. Cancik and H. Schneider, vol. 10 (*Pol-Sal*), Stuttgart-Weimar 2001, cols. 1130-1133. For the different versions and the relevant texts see H.J. Hillen, *Von Aeneas zu Romulus. Die Legenden von der Gründung Roms. Mit einer lateinischen Ausgabe der Origo gentis Romanae*, Düsseldorf-Zürich 2003; *Origo gentis Romanae. Die Ursprünge des römischen Volkes*, ed. M. Sehlmeier, Darmstadt 2004 (Texte zur Forschung, 22).

<sup>16</sup> For various aspects of this symbiotic relation see the volume by M.M. Segarra Lagunes, *Il Tevere e Roma. Storia di una simbiosi*, Roma 2004.

<sup>17</sup> R.E.A. Palmer, *The Archaic Community of the Romans*, Cambridge 1970, p. 84-97; H.S. Versnel, *Argei*, in *Der Neue Pauly*, ed. H. Cancik and H. Schneider, vol. 1 (*A-Ari*), Stuttgart-Weimar 1996, cols. 1057-1059.

<sup>18</sup> For the still open question of the meaning and origin of the ritual see G. Radke, *Gibt es Antworten auf die «Argeerfrage»?*, in «*Latomus*», 49 (1990), p. 5-19.

In early Roman antiquity the Tiber was also the place designated for performing the highly symbolic rite of the *poena cullei*<sup>19</sup>. This very old capital punishment, which was traditionally applied to patricides, was particularly cruel. After a severe flogging (with *virgae sanguineae*) the condemned person was enclosed in an old, ideally waterproof sack along with some live animals: a monkey; a rooster, a dog; and a snake. Some sources also mention a scorpion. Finally, the bag was sealed and thrown into the Tiber to be transported by the river's currents to the Tyrrhenian Sea, where the unfortunate human occupant and his involuntary animal companions would finally drown, if they had not already encountered death along the way. Both the choice of the animals and the bag's intended final destination, the Tyrrhenian Sea, underline the highly symbolic character of this archaic procedure, which combined elements of punishment and sacrifice aimed at ritual purification and – given the severity of the crime – at reconciliation with the gods. These functions are implied even by the word used to describe the procedure, «supplicium», which in Latin can mean both «sacrifice» and «punishment». Meanwhile, another aspect of the practice needs to be taken into consideration. Applying the *poena cullei* meant that the condemned person was deliberately denied a proper funeral, an extremely severe measure, since according to ancient belief it was impossible for any dead person floating in a river or sea to gain access to the underworld<sup>20</sup>. By committing such a heinous crime as the murder of one's own father, the condemned person had excluded himself from society and would thus remain in an excluded state even beyond death. We find parallels, or at least counterparts, for these ideas in the medieval period, given that any person excommunicated from the Church suffered social exclusion in life and, having died in a state of excommunication (*in statu excommunicationis* or *anathematis*), was damned for eternity<sup>21</sup>.

In ancient Roman society, we also encounter the practice of dumping the corpses of executed enemies in the Tiber in another context, that of *memoria damnata*, a posthumous punishment often called in recent historical writing «damnatio memoriae», a scholarly term coined in the late seventeenth century to describe the repertoire of penalties used to suppress or to incriminate the memory of a public enemy<sup>22</sup>. As in the *poena cullei*, an inglorious ending

<sup>19</sup> E. Cantarella, *I supplizi capitali in Grecia e a Roma*, Milan 1991, p. 264-305; O.F. Robinson, *Penal practice and penal policy in ancient Rome*, Abingdon 2007, p. 44-47; E. Florike, *The cock, the dog, the serpent, and the monkey. Reception and transmission of a Roman punishment, or historiography as history*, in «International Journal of the Classical Tradition», 2 (1995-1996), 2, p. 159-192.

<sup>20</sup> A. J. Storfer, *Zur Sonderstellung des Vatermordes. Eine rechtsgeschichtliche und völkerpsychologische Studie*, Leipzig-Wien 1911, p. 26f.

<sup>21</sup> For details about excommunication and its different forms and a discussion of it in the context of canon law see E. Vodola, *Excommunication in the Middle Ages*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1986.

<sup>22</sup> Still a key source: F. Vittinghoff, *Der Staatsfeind in der römischen Kaiserzeit, Untersuchungen zur Damnatio Memoriae*, Berlin 1936; more recently H.I. Flower, *The art of forgetting: disgrace & oblivion in Roman political culture. Studies in the history of Greece and Rome*, Chapel Hill 2006; F. Krüpe, *Damnatio memoriae. Über die Vernichtung von Erinnerung. Eine Fallstudie zu Publius Septimius Geta (198-211 n. Chr.)*, Leipzig 2011. For a



in the Tiber in cases of *memoria damnata* constituted only one step in the systematic destruction of anything that might remind others of the executed person, at least in a positive sense. The objective, ultimately, was not so much to suppress all memory of the condemned person as to establish a lasting negative memory – that is, a *memoria damnata*. Cassius Dio gives us a precise description of how this procedure was applied in a particularly harsh manner to Lucius Aelius Sejanus, the former prefect of the praetorian guard who had been sentenced to death in the year A.D. 31 as a result of his intrigue against the emperor Tiberius. En route to the place of his execution he was made to witness with his own eyes the removal of the statues that portrayed him, and his name was also cancelled from public inscriptions, as the practice of *memoria damnata* required. The cruelty did not end there, however. Following the execution, the corpse of Sejanus was first thrown down the Gemonian stairs, which led from the Capitoline to the Forum, where his dead body was left for at least three days, to be abused by the rabble and the dogs. The maltreated cadaver was then dragged on a hook through the city before being hurled, at long last, into the Tiber<sup>23</sup>.

Deterrence was obviously one of the primary objectives of this politically motivated and stigmatizing procedure. Yet the penalty was also applied to even higher-ranking persons who had fallen into disgrace – for example, to the emperor Vitellius, as related in Suetonius's biography of the short-lived emperor, and to Elagabalus «whose body was dragged through the streets» and «around the Circus» before the soldiers finally «attached a weight to it to keep it from floating and hurled it from the Aemilian Bridge into the Tiber, in order that it might never be buried» – thus reports the *Historia Augusta*<sup>24</sup>.

recent approach to similar practices in the Middle Ages see the articles in *Condannare all'oblio cit.*, esp. G. Schwedler, *Damnatio memoriae - oblio culturale: concetti e teorie del non ricordo*, p. 3-18, with observations on the scholarly tradition and a methodical discussion of the controversial issue of whether the technical term *damnatio memoriae* should be used for similar actions in the Middle Ages.

<sup>23</sup> Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana*, 58, 11, quotation from Dio's Roman History with an English translation by E. Cary, 9 vols. Cambridge 1914-1926, here vol. 7, p. 214-217: «Thereupon one might have witnessed such a surpassing proof of human frailty as to prevent one's ever again being puffed up with conceit. (...) The populace also assailed him, shouting many reproaches at him for the lives he had taken and many jeers for the hopes he had cherished. They hurled down, beat down, and dragged down all his images, as though they were thereby treating the man himself with contumely, and he thus became a spectator of what he was destined to suffer. For the moment, it is true, he was merely cast into prison; but a little later, in fact that very day, the senate assembled in the temple of Concord not far from the jail, when they saw the attitude of the populace and that none of the Pretorians was about, and condemned him to death. By their order he was executed and his body cast down the Stairway, where the rabble abused it for three whole days and afterwards threw it into the river». For a biography and the historical background see D. Hennig, *Lucius Aelius Seianus. Untersuchungen zur Regierung des Tiberius*, München 1975.

<sup>24</sup> Suetonius, *Life of Vitellius*, XVII (2): «Tandem apud Gemonias minutissimis ictibus excarnificatus atque confectus est et inde unco tractus in Tiberim». D. Magie, ed., *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, 3 vols., Cambridge, Mass. and London 1967, vol. 2, p. 140f., with the Latin text and an English translation: «Post hoc in eum impetus factus est atque in latrina ad quam confugerat occisus. Tractus deinde per publicum; addita iniuria cadaveri est, ut id in cloacam milites mit-

Political deterrence and disgrace need a public, however. The punitive sequence was thus carried out in the very center of the city, near the Forum Romanum or in Elagabalus's case in the Circus Maximus. It was essential that the entire city see and be aware of the act of humiliation and witness the final fate of the condemned persons, who were deprived of bona fide graves where they might be remembered. In his *Naturalis historia*, Pliny the Elder offers a remarkable example of such an execution, its public reception, and, even more notably, its documentation in public records and representations: the execution and consignment to the river of T. Sabinus for an outrage against Nero, son of Germanicus, a case especially notable because Sabinus's dog voluntarily followed its master's corpse into the river and attempted to keep it from sinking<sup>25</sup>. Obviously, as an instrument of *memoria damnata* this sort of practice was quite successful, since these examples and the negative images associated with them dominate and characterize later memories and traditions of the figures in question, including our own.

4. In light of the ancient Roman practice of depositing one's defeated political enemies in the river as the final step in the ritual punishment of *memoria damnata post mortem*, we might well wonder whether it was pure coincidence that, during the battle of the Milvian Bridge on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 312,

terent. Sed cum non cepisset cloaca fortuito, per pontem Aemilium, adnexo pondere ne fluitaret, in Tiberim abiectum est, ne umquam sepeliri posset. Tractum est cadaver eius etiam per Circi spatia, priusquam in Tiberim praecipitaretur». Engl. Translation: «Next they fell upon Elagabalus himself and slew him in a latrine in which he had taken refuge. Then his body was dragged through the streets, and the soldiers further insulted it by thrusting it into a sewer. But since the sewer chanced to be too small to admit the corpse, they attached a weight to it to keep it from floating, and hurled it from the Aemilian Bridge into the Tiber, in order that it might never be buried. The body was also dragged around the Circus before it was thrown into the Tiber».

<sup>25</sup> Pliny *Natural History*, with an English translation, 10 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1938-1962 (The Loeb Classical Library), here vol. 3 (books VIII-XI), ed. H. Rackham, Cambridge Mass. 1947, p. 102f.: «sed super omnia in nostro aevo actis p. R. testatum Appio Iunio et P. Silio coss., cum animadverteretur ex causa Neronis Germanici filii in Titium Sabinum et servitia eius, unius ex his canem nec in carcere abigi potuisse nec a corpore recessisse abiecti in gradibus gemitoriis maestos edentem ululatus magna populi Romani corona, ex qua cum quidam ei cibum obiecisset, ad os defuncti tulisse; innatavit idem, cadavere in Tiberim abiecto sustentare conatus, effusa multitudine ad spectandam animalis fidem». The English translation given here is adapted from the early English translation in Philemon Holland, C. Plinius Secundus *The Historie of the World*, London 1603, Book VIII, chapter 145 <<http://penelope.uchicago.edu/holland/pliny8.html>> [last accessed 24 January 2012]: «But this surpasses all things that happened in our time and stands upon record in the public registers - namely, that in the year that Apius Iunius and P. Silus were consuls, T. Sabinus and his servants were executed for an outrage committed upon the person of Nero, son of Germanicus. One of those who died had a dog, which could not be kept from the prison door, and when its master was thrown down the so called Gemonian Stairs the dog would not leave his dead corpse, but kept up a most piteous howling and lamentation around it, in the sight of the great multitude of Romans that stood round about to see the execution and the manner of it. (...) Moreover, when the carcass was thrown into the river Tiber, the same dog swam after it, and used every means he could to bear it afloat, that it should not sink. And at the sight of this spectacle and of the poor dog's fidelity to its master, people ran out of the city in droves to the waterside».

Maxentius, Constantine's defeated pagan opponent, is reported to have fallen into the Tiber and drowned, as reported in all versions of the story<sup>26</sup>. Should we consider this element fact or fiction? In either case, the image of the drowned Maxentius was to become an important element in the later iconographic tradition of a victorious Christendom and in the political propaganda of an *ecclesia triumphans*, as, for example, in the frescoes of the Sala di Costantino in the Vatican Stanze, at the very center of ecclesiastical power. This leitmotif seems to have had some impact on later legends concerning earlier persecutors and quintessential oppressors of Christianity. For our purposes, two examples will suffice: those of the emperor Domitian, whose memories were damned in antiquity; and of Pontius Pilatus, who played a crucial role in the death of Jesus Christ. In at least some medieval accounts, both men are reported to have faced an ignominious death in the Tiber<sup>27</sup>.

The intention of deleting the memory of a person or of transforming it in a decidedly negative way sometimes takes unexpected paths. In several legendary accounts of early Christian martyrs, the Tiber becomes a stage of Christian sacrifice and martyrdom, rather than of *damnatio memoriae*. Some of the condemned are reported to have been killed by drowning – for example, St. Symphorosa, who was cast into the river with a stone tied around her neck<sup>28</sup>. Others, such as the brothers Simplicius and Faustinus, were thrown into the Tiber «per pontem qui vocatur Lapideus», after being executed by other means<sup>29</sup>. When these Christian victims and martyrs then washed ashore or were pulled out of the water by their followers and relatives, they in effect thwarted the intentions of their judges by ensuring that their memory was not lost. On the contrary, the recovery of their remains created an important hagiographic topos that demonstrated both their own innocence and sanctity and the legitimacy of their religion. In other words, throwing Christians into the Tiber dead or alive sometimes turned out to be

<sup>26</sup> W. Kuhoff, *Ein Mythos in der römischen Geschichte. Der Sieg Konstantins des Großen über Maxentius vor den Toren Roms am 28. Oktober 312 n. Chr.*, in «Chiron», 21 (1991), p. 127-174, here p. 161, note 88. On the reception of the battle at the Milvian bridge see also A. Demant, *28. Oktober 312. In hoc signo vinces*, in: *Erinnerungstage - Wendepunkte der Geschichte von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. E. François and U. Puschner, München 2010, p. 41-54.

<sup>27</sup> M. Kern, *Domitian*, in *Lexikon der antiken Gestalten in deutschen Texten des Mittelalters*, ed. M. Kern, A. Ebenbauer, S. Krämer-Seifert, Berlin 2003, p. 230, with reference to the twelfth-century Kaiserchronik and the late-thirteenth-century Weltchronik of Jans der Enikel. For Pilate, several different medieval legends exist, cf. A. Scheidgen, *Die Gestalt des Pontius Pilatus in Legende, Bibelauslegung und Geschichtsdichtung vom Mittelalter bis in die frühe Neuzeit: Literaturgeschichte einer umstrittenen Figur*, Frankfurt a. M. 2002 (Mikrokosmos, 68); B. Mattig-Krampe, *Das Pilatusbild in der deutschen Bibel- und Legendenepek des Mittelalters*, Heidelberg 2001. For Pilate's end in the Tiber, see for instance A. Graf, *Roma nella memoria e nelle immaginazioni del Medio Evo*, vols. 1-2, Torino 1882-1883, here vol. 1. p. 355: «È noto ciò che si racconta di Pilato, che, buttato nel Tevere, richiama tanti diavoli, e suscita così orrende tempeste, che gli abitatori del paese circostante sono costretti ad estranelo...».

<sup>28</sup> A. Lumpe, *Symphorosa*, in *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, vol. 11, Herzberg 1996, cols. 367-368.

<sup>29</sup> E. Sauser, *Simplicius, Faustinus und Beatrix*, in *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, vol. 10, Herzberg 1995, cols. 488-489.

a boomerang *in memoriam* for the pagans who had condemned them, a weapon that turned back upon its users, rendering them, according to a long-lived tradition, unjust usurpers and persecutors whose own memories were then condemned, just as those of Domitian, Nero, and Pilate had been.

A variation on this leitmotif of a Christian layperson or clergyman unjustly cast into the Tiber acquired a certain importance in one episode of papal history. I am referring to the so-called Cadaver Synod of 897, when a dead pope was put on trial. To make the trial possible, Pope Stephen VI ordered the already rotting corpse of his predecessor, Formosus, exhumed and delivered to the papal court for judgment. There, Formosus was seated on the papal throne and, at the end of the trial, sentenced. The verdict was that Formosus had been unworthy of the papacy. A specific form of the *memoria damnata* was thus applied to the offender, who through this macabre procedure had been cast in the role of anti-pope, in which all of his acts were declared invalid. The papal vestments were torn from his body, which was then hastily buried without a proper tomb and later dug up and thrown in the Tiber. The dead pope was eventually retrieved by one of his followers, secretly interred, and only after his rehabilitation and *restitutio memoriae* by Pope Theodor II in 898 finally transferred to St. Peter's Basilica, where he still rests today, regarded as a legitimate successor of Saint Peter, the Prince of the Apostles<sup>30</sup>.

5. One might wonder whether these images of the Cadaver Synod and the tossing of Pope Formosus into the Tiber, or even the ancient practices mentioned above, were on Pope Paschal II's mind when he ordered that Clement III be scuppered in the river. The question is difficult to answer, given that we appear to have only two documented cases from the medieval period in which a dead (anti)pope in point of fact (and not only in the wishes of his adversaries) faced the peculiar ignominy of consignment to the Tiber – very few instances, in short, in comparison to the documented cases in Roman anti-quity. Most of the so-called antipopes died in exile after they had abdicated, far from Rome and unnoticed by the public, and were buried in graves that have since been forgotten<sup>31</sup>.

It goes without saying that the symbolically charged procedure of depositing a dead antipope in the Tiber required exceptional and urgent political circumstances. In both of the documented cases, those of Formosus and Clement, the choice resulted from pure political pragmatism and calculation. For their adversaries, it was an essential means of demonstrating the

<sup>30</sup> H. Zimmermann, *Papstabsetzungen des Mittelalters*, Graz 1968, p. 53-76; M. Borgolte, *Petrusnachfolge* cit., p. 124-126; S. Scholz, *Transmigration und Translation. Studien zum Bistumswechsel der Bischöfe von der Spätantike bis zum Hohen Mittelalter*, Köln 1992 (Kölner Historische Abhandlungen, 37), p. 220-222.

<sup>31</sup> Few of the exact burial places of (anti)popes down to the end of the twelfth century are known. Cf. the overview of Borgolte, *Petrusnachfolge* cit., p. 343ff., and the references to individual antipopes at p. 147, note 143, p. 151, note 5, and p. 175.

irrevocable defeat of an illegitimate rival, in an impressive and memorable way. The terse phrase «quod et factum est» in the *Annales Sancti Disibodi* suggests that the violation of Clement III's corpse was not performed secretly but rather carried out with some sort of public display, guaranteeing that the event would be noticed and remembered even beyond Rome – as indeed it was, in a historical source written twelve hundred kilometers away.

The hypothesis that the damning of Clement's remains involved some form of ostentation appears to be supported by a comparable act also credited to Paschal II, even if the episode in question seems at first sight to belong to a completely different category. The medieval legend of the founding of the Roman church of Santa Maria del Popolo, one of Rome's oldest parish churches, reports the sinister story of Nero's demon, which reputedly sometimes walked around near his tomb at the spot where the church would later be built. The legend goes on to say that a walnut tree, which had apparently grown out of the sepulcher and straight from Nero's heart, was especially haunted by his demon. By Paschal's time the tree had already claimed several victims as they entered or left the city through the Porta Flaminia. Alarmed, the Roman people asked the pope to take remedial action. In a dream, the Madonna herself appeared to Paschal, ordering him to fell the tree and to destroy Nero's tomb. In 1099, the legend reports, Pope Paschal executed this order as well as an exorcism at the cursed spot, after a procession of all the cardinals and Roman clergy and people. Once the procession had reached its destination, Paschal cut down the tree with his own hands and scattered Nero's bones into the Tiber, to the applause of the numerous onlookers. Finally, in grateful recognition and to commemorate the affair, he founded the chapel of St. Mary at the spot where the haunted tree had once grown<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> The particulars of the legend are told in Iacobo de Albericis, *Historiarum sanctissimae et gloriosiss. Virginis Deiparae de populo almae Urbis Compendium*, Rome 1599, p. 1-10. For Mary's order to Paschal, p. 5ff: «En [sic] favore divino tertia nocte post ieiunium et orationem illi apparuit Sanctissima Virgo Dei Mater Maria unica et pia maestorum consolatrix, quae benigne hunc in modum loquuta est: 'o Paschalis, o Paschalis, hilari et laeto sis animo; Deo enim placuit abstinentia tua, exaudita est oratio tua populi totiusque tui supplicatio, respexit lachrymas, observavit suspiria, mensus est lamenta, et animo quaerimonias posuit, numeravit singultus, cordolia perpendit, et ad extremum cognovit magnam molestiam, qua populus tuus Romanus ab istis mortiferis draconibus afficitur. Propterea ne dubites (...) sed egredere, perge, ac irruere quamprimum ad portam Flaminiam, ubi nucem quamdam reperies ea altitudine, et latitudine, quam omnem aliam arborem illic consitam excellit et praestat. Super illam latitant, et commorantur hostes omnium nostrum communes; ecce vide, tot tantisque malis opportunum et paratum remedium singulare: fac illam succidi sine mora, ed radicitus evelli festina, sub qua invenies corpus miseri et semper infelicis Neronis, quod illinc statim admoveri et proiici in Tiberim curabis. Exinde in eodem loco eodemque situ ecclesiam meo nomini consecratam aedificari effcito' (...). Quamobrem eo foelicissimo die a Deo Omnipotente populus Romanus liberatus, exauditus fuit, proiecto infelicis Neronis corpore ibi reperto in Tyberim». See also Graf, *Roma* cit., vol. 1, p. 354f. An Italian version clearly based on the earlier Latin text is given in Ambrogio Landucci Sanese, *Origine del Tempio dedicato in Roma alla Vergine Madre di Dio Maria*, Roma 1646, p. 7-16; see esp. p. 12: «Altro non resta per liberarlo dalle presenti sciagure, e assicurarlo dalle future, se non che tu come pastore e capo, ratto te ne vada alla Porta Flaminia, dove trovarai una

How far back the Roman tradition of Nero's demon and its destruction by Paschal II goes is not yet ascertainable and requires further research. In the archive of S. Maria del Popolo the legend is attested, at latest, beginning in the late Middle Ages, as it was referred to in a catalog drawn up by the notary Sifrido Costede in 1426, which listed the relics venerated in the church, as well as the indulgences offered to visitors, and which also contained a version of the «narrazione del Miracolo della Noce sotto Pasquale»<sup>33</sup>. Costede asserted that he had copied the «narrazione» from an «antica Tabella, che esisteva all'Altar Maggiore», and so there can be no doubt that the tradition was based on an earlier text. The source in question was perhaps a medieval altar inscription that had originated much closer in time to the events of 1099, even if the exact date and nature of the lost «antica tabella» and the redaction of its text cannot yet be delimited any further. The possibility that the story significantly predates the composition of Costede's catalog is strengthened to some extent by the earliest known written source containing a variant of it: a fourteenth-century manuscript of an anonymous commentary on Godfrey of Viterbo's *Speculum Regum*, whose author seems to have been well versed in specifically Roman matters, apart from fact that he mistakenly transposed the legend to the sixth century, attributing–Paschal II's role to a pope named Pelagius, either Pelagius I (556-561) or Pelagius II (579-590)<sup>34</sup>.

funesta noce, che per soprastare a tutti gli arbori di quei contorni, da colui, che sopra tutti in cielo volle sublimarsi, fu eletta per suo sacrilego seggio, e per guardare con la sua gran ferità l'ossa del crudelissimo Nerone, che alle radici di quella giacciono. Stringi con intrepida mano il ferro, taglia, svelli l'arbore, trovarai le profane ossa, si buttino nel Tevere, già che quello dalla sua impietà fu colorito, e tinto con tanto sangue christiano. Et ivi voglio, che per eterna memoria del presente beneficio, e per riparare alle ruine del tuo popolo, e commutare tante sciagure in altrettante grazie, e per segno, ch'io in perpetuo mi dichiaro padrona, signora, e protettrice di lui, vi si edifichi un tempio al mio nome consagrato: questo è, o Pasquale, l'unico e opportuno rimedio a tanti danni: questo eseguirai, e da te partendomi, poi ti aspetto in cielo»; p. 15: «Ottenuta questa spirituale vittoria, acquistato libero il campo de gl'inimici, assicurati i vincitori di più non poter esser ossessi, giubilando tutti, a gara sradicata la superba pianta e ivi trovate le ossa dell'infelice Nerone alle radici di quella, con maledizioni, e detestazioni furono conforme al comandamento di Maria date in preda alle correnti acque del Tevere. E chi sa? che allora maggiormente turbandosi per ritenere poscia nel suo seno cosa cotanto immonda, più non habbia potuto far'acquisto della sua limpida chiarezza?» A similar account is also provided in P.M. Felini, *Trattato nuovo delle cose meravigliose dell'alma città di Roma*, Roma 1610, facsimile dell'originale Roma 1995 (Le antiche guide di Roma, 4), p. 27f. here p. 28f.

<sup>33</sup> The original document from 1426 seems to be lost but in the index to the archive compiled in 1776 by Tommaso Verani, who had obviously seen the original manuscript, it is referred to as «Catalogo, o sia nota delle reliquie esistenti in questa chiesa di S. Maria del popolo colla narrazione del miracolo della noce sotto Pasquale, e indulgenze copiata in quest'anno 1426. Da un'antica tabella che esisteva all'altar maggiore, per mano del notaro, e canonico Sifrido Costede», cf. *Santa Maria del Popolo a Roma*, ed. E. Bentivoglio and S. Valtieri, Bari-Roma 1976, p. 203.

<sup>34</sup> Who wrote this commentary is not known, but G. H. Pertz, the editor of Godfrey's *Speculum Regum*, underlined that the anonymous author must have been very familiar with Italian and especially Roman matters, an inference that leads to the conclusion that the author very likely came from Rome. Cf. Gotifredi Viterbiensis *Speculum Regum*, ed. G.H. Pertz, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, vol. 22, Hannover 1872, p. 1-93, esp. p. 4: «auctorem prodit

The story of Nero's demon and tomb was also told in the latter half of the fifteenth century and was well known even beyond Rome, as attested by variants of it in the travel account of 1452 of the Nuremberg patrician Niklaus Muffel and in various other handwritten and printed travel guides for pilgrims in the German and Dutch vernaculars<sup>35</sup>. When architectural changes

Italum, urbis Romae bene gnarum. (...) Multa vero eaque fabulosa de antiqua deorum et regum historia traduntur, quae alibi frustra quaesivi. Alia vero ex populi ore sumpta esse videntur, praesertim quae de ecclesiis aliisque aedificiis Romae urbis vel de rebus miraculosis alibi factis referuntur». The anonymous author refers to the legend in detail in the context of Nero's life, esp. p. 72: «Sciendum quod Nero fuit primus persecutor ecclesie seu servorum Christi (...) Mortuo eo [Nero], lupi corpus eius dilaceraverunt et Romae extra portam, ubi nunc est ecclesia Sancte Marie ad populum, est sepultus. Ubi demones tunc circa corpus suum tam homines quam iumenta pretereuntes iugulabant, quousque ad preces et orationes Pelagii [*sic! Instead of Paschalis*] pape beata Virgo sibi in sompnis apparuit et arborem subtus quam Nero sepultus fuit succidere iussit. Papa igitur crastino cum clero processionem illuc fecit, arborem propria manu primus cum securi secare incepit, et ecce demones ululantes fugientes locum reliquerunt et cessavit periculum ibidem. Populus Romanus vero videns se a demone liberatum, papam rogavit ut ecclesiam ibi in honore virginis Marie, cuius auxilio essent liberati, construeret. Quod et papa fecit una cum populo, et Marie ad populum nominavit, que antea porta Flaminea dicebatur. Sanctus Gregorius vero papa immagine gloriose virginis Marie, quam sanctus Lucas depinxit, una cum aliis reliquiis illuc collocavit». Neither the *Liber Pontificalis* cit., nor the *Regesta Pontificia* report such an act by Pope Pelagius I or II (*Regesta Pontificum Romanorum ab condita ecclesia ad annum post Christum natum MCXCVIII*, ed. P. Jaffé, tom. I [a Petro ad an. MCXLIII], Lipsiae 1885, p. 124-136 [Pelagius I] and p. 137-140). The author seems also to be mistaken in saying that the famous icon of Mary had been donated to the church by «Sanctus Gregorius», meaning Pope Gregory the Great (590-604), rather than by Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241), who according to Roman tradition, transferred the icon from the Lateran to Santa Maria del Popolo in 1239 (G. Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani. Die Geschichte römischer Kultbilder im Mittelalter*, Weinheim 1990, p. 167 and p. 295 note 382). In later Roman traditions, the destruction of Nero's tomb is always associated with Pope Paschal II instead of Pope Pelagius. Cf. Wolf, *Salus Populi Romani* cit., p. 330f., with an extract from Giovanni Battista's treatise on the icon of Mary from S. Maria Maggiore (1464), p. 331: «Quartam [imaginem dei geneticis a beato Luca pictam] veneramur in ecclesia sancte Marie de Populo (...) Hanc in ecclesia sancti Petri antea asservatam Pascasius summus Pontifex ad locum daemoniaco incurso obsessum adduxit, ubi ecclesia, quam nunc videmus, constructa et imagine in ea dimessa, locum ab omni adversitate liberavit».

<sup>35</sup> *Niklaus Muffels Beschreibung der Stadt Rom*, ed. W. Vogt, in *Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart CXXVIII*, Tübingen 1876, p. 53: «Item in der kirchen Maria del populo (...) und der alter stet an der stat, do Nero der pöß keyser begraben lag, und die teufel allen leutten und allem vich die heubter abprachen, die zu dem thor auß oder einginngen; die teufel waren auf dem nuspaum der von ihm wuchs aus seine hertzen und kunt nymant gewissen wo von das kom dann der babst; der bestellet ein proceß und ging daryn mit allem volk vastend dreytag; und darnach kom ein stym von der junckfrau Maria dem babst in den schlaf, sagt ym, das Nero do begraben wer und in dem nuspaum die teufel ir wonung hetten; und sagt dem babst, das er den paum ausgrub und den Nero herausnem und an die stat ein capellen pauet in ir ere; das geschach und die capellen ward gantz gepauet von allem volk nur in eim tag und darumb wurd sie geheissen Marie de populo». N.R. Miedema, *Rompilgerführer in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit. Die ›Indulgentia ecclesiarum urbis Romae‹ (deutsch/niederländisch). Edition und Kommentar*, Tübingen 2003 (Frühe Neuzeit, Band 72), p. 120f., p. 165, and esp. p. 273f., the *Historia et descriptio* with the variation in which Pope Paschal had the felled nut tree burned: «Da di kirche ist, da hat gestanden ein großer nußbom, darvff so wonten die tufel. Wer dafur ginge ader ritte, den lesteren sie, vnd wist nieman, wer das tet. Sant Pascasio, dem bapst, wart geoffnet, er solt den nussbom abhowen vnd ein kirchen an die stat buen, vnßer lieben Frawen zu ere. Der bapst machet ein gros process mit geistlichem vnd weltlichem volck, vnd gingen zu Rom fur die port, genant Flaminea, zu dem nußbom. Vnd tet der bapst den ersten streich an den bom vnd rutet

were made to the church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including the moving of the altar to a new position, the founding of the church was still clearly associated with Paschal II's purification ceremony, as attested by an inscription from 1627, which refers to the event<sup>36</sup>. This tradition of the salvation of the Roman people from Nero's demon is still impressively represented in the early seventeenth-century stucco relief in the vault over the church's main altar, which portrays the story in three scenes, showing Paschal II felling the haunted tree with the Virgin Mary's help, destroying the pagan tomb, and dedicating a chapel to Mary at the site<sup>37</sup>. Although the relief does not show the consignment of Nero's bones to the Tiber, that element of the narrative was obviously still known in Rome in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as it appears in sundry written works about S. Maria del Popolo, in particular those by Iacobo de Albericis (1599) and Landucci (1646), and in Benedetto Millino's description of the church<sup>38</sup>.

6. If we now turn back to the Wibertian Schism, it may seem no mere coincidence that Paschal II defeated both Nero and Clement III. As of yet, there is no proven connection, either of origin or of content, between the sources that narrate Clement's end in the Tiber and the extinction of Nero's demon. In numerous medieval sources, however, Nero appears not only as the archetype of a persecutor of the Church or as the Antichrist<sup>39</sup>; he also serves – especially in works generated by the Gregorian party during the Wibertian Schism – as a synonym for the then-current antichrist (Emperor Henry IV) and his

den selben bom gantz vß der erden. Da vand man vnder dem bom ein sarck, darin so lag der lib des bo'sen Nerons, der sant Peter vnd sant Paul hette laßen marteren vnd to'ten vnd och vil ander cristen. (...) Darnach ließ der vorgevant bapst Pascalis den lib des bo'sen Nerons mit dem nußbom zu puluer gantz verbrennen vnd verbannet alle die tufel, die vff dem nußbom gesessen woren, vnd puet da ein kirchen vnd nant sie Maria de Populo darumb, das so vil volcks da was, vnd gab darzu II tusend iar ablas ...».

<sup>36</sup> The commemorative inscription from 1627 is edited in *Santa Maria del Popolo a Roma* cit., p. 30-32: «ALTARE. A. PASCALI PAPA. II / DIVINO AFFLATU / RITU. SOLEMNI. HOC LOCO. ERECTUM / QUO. DEMONES / PROCERAE. NUCIS. ARBORI. INSIDENTES / TRANSEUNTEM. HINC. POPULUM. DIRE. INFESTANTES / CONFESTIM. EXPULIT // URBANI. VIII. PONT. MAX. AUTHORITATE / EXCELSIOREM. IN LOCUM. QUEM. CONSPICIS / TRANSLATUM. FUIT / ANNO. DOM. MDCXXVII. DIE. VI. MARTII».

<sup>37</sup> A photo of the vault is provided in *Santa Maria del Popolo a Roma* cit., tabl. VII, Nr. 22, and in S. Valtieri, *L'Altare Maggiore secentesco*, in *Santa Maria del Popolo. Storia e restauri*, ed. I. Miarelli Mariani and M. Richiello, 2 vols., Roma 2009, p. 533-542, p. 536, fig. 402.

<sup>38</sup> For the books by Iacobo de Albericis (1599) and by Landucci (1646) see note 34 above. The *Saggio della Roma descritto da Benedetto Millino* (Cod. Chigi o VII 141), is edited by G. Terzulli and F. Rausa, in *Santa Maria del Popolo. Storia e restauri* cit., p. 749-822, esp. p. 757: «È fama, che la prima fondazione di questa chiesa fusse sotto Pasquale II verso gli anni del Signore MC il quale, gettate nel Tevere le ceneri di Nerone ivi sepolto, vi ponesse la prima pietra dell'altare».

<sup>39</sup> C. Pascal, *Nerone nella storia aneddotta e nella legenda*, Milano 1923, esp. p. 272-286 for *Nero redivivus* and Nero as the coming antichrist. See also Graf, *Roma nella memoria* cit., vol. 1, p. 332-361, and R. Konrad, *Kaiser Nero in der Vorstellung des Mittelalters*, in *Festiva Lanx: Studien zum mittelalterlichen Geistesleben*. Johannes Spörl dargebracht aus Anlaß seines 60. Geburtstages, ed. K. Schnith, München 1966, p. 1-15.



most docile disciple (Wibert of Ravenna). Together with his imperial protector, Wibert was stigmatized as the new «Simon Magus» or as «Nero's pupil», absorbed by the demonic spirit of his master, i.e. Henry IV, the «New Nero»<sup>40</sup>. At the very least, the medieval and quite likely Roman author who recorded and shaped the legend of the extermination of Nero's demon at the spot where S. Maria del Popolo was later built must have had some idea, perhaps based on an oral tradition of the event, that a purification ritual of the kind required a public audience, both to witness it and to report it.

This inference leads to yet another question. If, as the legend narrates, Nero's bones, and along with them his spirit, were disposed of in the Tiber in a public rite of cleansing conducted by the pope himself, might it not also appear likely that the corpse of antipope Clement III faced an equivalent procedure – that is, a jettisoning in the context of a public ceremony, rather than a perfunctory pitch into the river at some random spot near Civita Castellana? In Clement III's case, as with the story of Nero's ghost, the cause of the crisis was traceable to Nero, i.e. to the demonic spirit who, from the point of view of Wibert's enemies, animated the eleventh-century antichrist-emperor and his antipope. In both cases, furthermore, it was Pope Paschal II who managed to repel the supernatural manifestations of two enemies and persecutors of the Church: Nero and Wibert, who like Nero was extinguished in the Tiber. In following this line of reasoning, we could conclude that Paschal's order to exhume Clement III's corpse and to deposit it in the Tiber was not intended so much to snuff out Wibert's memory as to brand him with disgrace and thus to establish a specifically negative memory of him. Indeed, it seems that Paschal II wanted Clement III to be remembered rather than forgotten, albeit remembered in a specific way: as both the defeated antipope and as the defeated servant of Nero, the ancient and future antichrist.

The infamy-creating effect of this kind of public ceremony of purification could be intensified by various means. Impressive examples are provided by the execution of Arnold of Brescia in 1155 and by the treatment of Cola

<sup>40</sup> R. Konrad, *Kaiser Nero in der Vorstellung des Mittelalters* cit., esp. p. 9f. for the use of these metaphors (Nero, Simon Magus) within the propagandistic literature of the so-called Investiture Contest, for instance within Donizonis *vita Mathildis*, ed. L. Bethmann, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, vol. 12, Hannover 1856, p. 348-409, here p. 384: «Rex et Guibertus faciunt iuvenescere tempus / Neronis prisci, qui precepit crucifigi / Petrum, cervicem Pauli gladio ferrit idem, / Et propriae ventrem percindere matris ab ense / fecit, ut inspiceret, requievit ubi malus ipse. / Sic proprie matris palmas calcaribus acris / transfodit missus Sathane, Guibertus iniquus. / Nullum quippe virum timuit nisi Nero magistrum»; Deusedit presbyteri cardinalis *libellus contra invasores et symoniacos et reliquos scismaticos*, ed. E. Sackur, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Libelli de Lite imperatorum et pontificum saeculis XI. et XII.* vol. 2, Hannover 1892, p. 292-365, here p. 329: «Sed postea, ut dictum est, a prefato Guiberto, novo Simone mago, veluti alter Nero, seductus est [Henricus IV. Imperator]»; p. 330: «idem imperator eius [Guidonis] Nero»; [Rupert von Deutz?] *Monachi cuiusdam exulis S. Laurentii de calamitatibus ecclesiae Leodensis opusculum*, ed. H. Boehmer, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Libelli de Lite imperatorum et pontificum saeculis XI. et XII.*, vol. 3, Hannover 1897, p. 622-641, esp. p. 625: «Cum Nero Romam teneat, Symonque / Papa vocetur?» and p. 627: «'Ei michi!' dixit, 'Symon atque Nero / nunc revixerunt, miseram matrem / rursus oppugnant'».

di Rienzo, the popular leader and tribune of the Roman people, who was murdered in 1354. Both of these men were killed, destroyed really, with the greatest possible public exposure and in a manner that created deliberately strong images. Arnold of Brescia was burned in public and his ashes deliberately scattered into the Tiber – both Pope Hadrian IV and Emperor Frederic I feared that a conventional grave would develop into a place of hagiographic veneration for Arnold's followers<sup>41</sup>. Cola di Rienzo's fate was even worse<sup>42</sup>. After his murder, his dead body was exposed for several days in public and then dragged through the city. Finally, he was burned near the Mausoleum of Augustus, and his ashes were scattered, presumably either to the winds or, since the conflagration took place near the riverbank, in the Tiber. The goal was for nothing to remain of him, and, indeed, nothing of him remained: «Non ne remase cica», as his anonymous biographer wrote<sup>43</sup>.

7. Really nothing? *Deletio memoriae* – mission accomplished? Not at all. It was these strong images that laid the very basis for a future mystification of both Arnold of Brescia and Cola di Rienzo and exerted a powerful influence over their later reception. Martyrs and heroes, it goes without saying, must die in an extraordinary manner. Regarding the Tiber's function and special role in all of these cases we could readily surmise that disposal in the river was much more than a pragmatic expedient, an efficient way of making dead corpses disappear. Certainly, we can be sure that through history hundreds, maybe thousands, of dead bodies were cast into the Tiber, above all those of unknown murder victims whose stories were never told, except in the occasional newspaper headline. A few notables were «buried at river», among them the Duke of Candia, a son of pope Alexander VI, whose body was put there after his assassination in 1497 to conceal the crime<sup>44</sup>. Many of those supposed heretics – that is, non-Catholic Christians – who for religious reasons, were commonly deprived of a «Catholic» burial in Rome prior to the establishment of the non-Catholic cemetery also sometimes found their final resting place (so to speak) in the Tiber if they had not been hastily buried near *Muro torto*, the burial ground set aside by the Curia for the condemned

<sup>41</sup> Arnold's execution is reported by Otto of Freising: *Otonis et Rahewini Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris* cit., p. 134: «tandem in manus quorundam incidens, in Tuscie finibus captus, principis examini reservatus est et ad ultimum a prefecto Urbis ligno adactus ac, rogo in pulverem redacto funere, ne a stolidi plebe corpus eius venerationi haberetur, in Tyberim sparsus». Similiar accounts can be found in the *Ligurinus* or in Godfrey of Viterbo's works. Cf. R. Schmitz-Esser, *Arnold von Brescia im Spiegel von acht Jahrhunderten Rezeption. Ein Beispiel für Europas Umgang mit der mittelalterlichen Geschichte vom Humanismus bis heute*, Wien 2007, p. 48f.

<sup>42</sup> For a more recent biography of Cola di Rienzo, see T. di Carpegna Falconieri, *Cola di Rienzo*, Roma 2002.

<sup>43</sup> Anonimo Romano, *Cronaca*, edizione critica, ed. G. Porta, Milan 1979 (Classici 40), cap. XXVII, here p. 265: «Cosi quello cuorpo fu arzo e fu ridotto in polve: non ne remase cica».

<sup>44</sup> For the murder of the Duke of Gandia, see F. Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom im Mittelalter vom V. bis zum XVI. Jahrhundert*, vol. 7, Stuttgart 1894, p. 394f.

and held by popular belief to be somehow haunted because of the former presence of Nero's tomb and the spot where his demon had once walked abroad<sup>45</sup>.

With Sejanus, however, as with Vitellius and Elagabalus, Formosus and Clement, Nero's demon, Arnold of Brescia and Cola di Rienzo, something else was at stake. The watery ends of these men were deliberately put on the public stage in the context of religious or political rituals and symbolic communicative actions for the sake of demonstrating a victory over former enemies or, more precisely, the thoroughgoing defeat of those enemies. These acts were clearly intended to be remembered. It seems very likely to me that in Rome from antiquity through the medieval period there existed some sort of awareness, perhaps a sort of subliminal cultural memory, of the Tiber as the appropriate place – the most suitable stage – for conducting these symbolic acts of *post mortem* humiliation.

We can trace an awareness of that tradition in later centuries and to some extent in our own time, even if its uses have been more symbolic and metaphorical than the physical casting of individuals into the Tiber. An example is a singular notice in the chronicle of Viterbo written by Niccolò della Tuccia, who tells us that pope Urban VI, following his controversial election in 1378, ordered that eleven cardinals be thrown into the Tiber<sup>46</sup>. Although this report does not correspond to the facts – as far as the documentary record attests, the order was neither given nor executed – the action was nonetheless conceivable, as the chronicler's note suggests, and to Niccolò della Tuccia's contemporaries it may have seemed plausible, even highly believable. A similarly striking story that seems to have at least some trustworthy nucleus is reported by the Florentine chronicler Giovanni Villani. When in 1328 Louis IV, called the Bavarian, together with his (anti)pope Nicholas V were forced to withdraw from Rome, the emperor's victorious Roman opponents, especially the Orsini family, ordered a remarkable ritual, a rite of purification, to be carried out in public. In August of 1328, all of the privileges of the banned emperor and «heretical» (anti)pope, were burned on the Capitoline, and thus before the eyes of the world, in order to underline the defeat of both men. That was not all, however. Even the buried corpses of their followers, as well as those of the some German soldiers who had been

<sup>45</sup> For the history of the *cimitero acattolico* in Rome, see W. Krogel, *All'ombra della piramide. Storia e interpretazione del cimitero acattolico di Roma*, Rome 1995, esp. p. 23–27 (*I luoghi dei rinnegati e dei condannati*). Already during the eleventh and twelfth centuries the area near the *Muro torto* was regarded as a haunted, cursed place, as attested in private Roman documents (F. Astolfi, *La piazza del Popolo dall'Antichità al Medioevo*, in *Santa Maria del Popolo. Storia e restauri* cit., p. 13-47, esp. p. 29: «luogo di indubbio malaugurio»).

<sup>46</sup> *Cronache di Viterbo e di altre città scritte da Niccolò della Tuccia in due parti*, in *Cronache e statuti della Città di Viterbo*, pubblicati ed illustrati da I. Ciampi, Firenze 1872 (Documenti di Storia Italiana pubblicati a cura della R. Deputazione sugli studi di storia patria per le provincie di Toscana, dell'Umbria e delle Marche, V), p. 38: «Questo papa non volle osservare li patti di papa Gregorio passato col prefetto e ne uscirono gran rumori. Il papa fece buttare in Tevere undici cardinali, e se n'andò a Tivoli senza cardinali».

killed in the fighting, were deliberately disinterred, dragged through the streets of Rome, and thrown into the Tiber. Clearly, they, too, were regarded as heretics and schismatics, who had forfeited their right to be buried in normal graves and in sacred ground<sup>47</sup>.

In a more popular rhetorical context, this practice was alluded to in several poems affixed to the Pasquino<sup>48</sup>. At the end of the fifteenth century, furthermore, it was invoked as a subtle warning to Pope Alexander VI. One day the pope found a leaflet attached to the door of the Vatican Library, inscribed with a message saying that the Orsini and Colonna families had settled their fighting and would henceforth stand together to fight a certain bull that had devastated Ausonia, their aim being to send it and its calves to the bottom of the river<sup>49</sup>. Not much imagination was needed to understand which bull the message meant. The bull was the heraldic animal in Alexander Borgia's coat of arms.

In cases where performing the practice directly proved impossible, it was sometimes used as symbolic compensation. When Pope Paul IV died in 1559, the Roman people fell into a violent turmoil and tried to take possession of his corpse. They did not succeed, however, due to the heavy guarding of his provisional grave<sup>50</sup>. The honorary statue that had recently been dedicated to him on the Capitoline was within reach, however, and it endured the rage of the Roman mob, which tore it down, chopped off its head, tossed it through the streets of Rome with immense ridicule and scorn, and finally hurled it in the river<sup>51</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, Edizione critica, ed. G. Porta, 3 vols., Parma 1990-1991, esp. vol. 3, p. 638f. lib. XI, ch. 95: «Come il Bavaro, che si faceva chiamare imperadore, col suo antipapa si parti di Roma e venne a Viterbo. (...) E a dì VIII d'agosto vennono il legato cardinale e messer Napoleone Orsini con loro seguaci con grande festa e onore; e riformata la santa città di Roma della signoria di santa Chiesa, feciono molti processi contra il dannato Bavero e contra il falso papa, e su la piazza di Campidoglio arsono tutti i loro ordini e brivilegi; ed eziandio i fanciugli di Roma andavano a' mortori, ov'erano sotterrati i corpi de' morti Tedeschi e d'altri ch'aveano seguitato il Bavero, e iscavati de le monimenta gli tranavano per Roma e gittavangli in Tevero. Le quali cose per giusta sentenzaia di Dio furono al Bavaro e al suo antipapa e a' loro seguaci grande obrobbo e abbominazione, e segni di loro rovina a abbassamento».

<sup>48</sup> For instance in the *Epitaffi sopra li Cardinali*, in the *Pasquinate Romane del Cinquecento*, ed. V. Marucci, A. Marzo and A. Romano, 2 vols., Roma 1983 (Testi e documenti di letteratura e di lingua, VII), vol. 2, p. 594-598, esp. p. 598: «Sermonetta [Nicola Caetani, cardinal of S. Nicola in Carcere] vergogna de'suoi panni / nel Tebro si somerse e ne fu degno, / ché non mertò tal peso in suoi pocc'anni».

<sup>49</sup> Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom im Mittelalter* cit., p. 416: «Ausonios fines vastantem caedite taurum / Cornua monstrifero vellite torva bovi. / Merge, Tyber, vitulos animosus ultor in undas, / Bos cadat inferno victima magna Jovi».

<sup>50</sup> T. Torriani, *Una tragedia nel Cinquecento romano. Paolo IV e i suoi nepoti*, Roma 1951, p. 84f. D. Chiomenti Vassalli, *Paolo IV e il processo Carafa. Un caso d'ingiusta giustizia nel Cinquecento* (Storia e documenti, 120), Varese 1993, p. 129-131; D. Büchel, *Das Grabmal Papst Pauls IV. Carafa (1555-1559). Zeugnis einer Geschichtsrevision*, in *Totenkult und Wille zur Macht. Die unruhigen Ruhestätten der Päpste in St. Peter*, ed. H. Bredekamp and V. Reinhardt, Darmstadt 2004, p. 121-140, esp. p. 122f.

<sup>51</sup> A photograph of the head of the statue, which was later found in the Tiber, is provided in Chiomenti Vassalli, *Paolo IV e il processo Carafa* cit. See also M. Butzek, *Die kommunalen Repräsentationsstatuen der Päpste des 16. Jahrhunderts in Bologna, Perugia und Rom*, Bad Honnef 1978, p. 271-279; M. Butzek, *Fragment der kapitulinischen Ehrenstatue Papst Pauls IV.*, in *Vittoria Colonna, Dichterin und Muse Michelangelos* [exh. cat.], ed. S. Ferino-Pagden, Wien 1997, p. 37, n. III.

Until the nineteenth century, these symbolic reminiscences were still so vivid that Giuseppe Garibaldi could express the wish that, at least in theory, some of the cardinals of the Roman church should be thrown into the river<sup>52</sup>. A variant of his wish nearly came true during the translation of the corpse of pope Pius IX in 1881 from St. Peter's to San Lorenzo fuori le mura, when anticlerical zealots waiting at Ponte Sant'Angelo attempted in a rather less theoretical manner to take hold of the coffin, which they were obviously strongly committed to tossing off the bridge. Their intention was made more than a modicum clear by their loud exclamations: «A fiume il Papa porco» and «abbasso le carogne» – «Into the river with the pig Pope!» and «down with the carrion!»<sup>53</sup>.

There have been a few similarly non-theoretical outcomes in even more recent Roman history. One of the last eyewitness accounts of the events of September 18, 1944, is especially stirring. When an outraged crowd apprehended Donato Caretta, who had been the governor of the Regina Coeli prison, the crowd killed him by drowning him in the Tiber. Later, his recovered corpse was exposed on the façade of the prison, where hundreds of people had suffered under his governance during the period of the German occupation of Rome. The analogies to cases such as that of Cola di Rienzo were obvious, and the newspaper *Domenica* commented in its edition of September 24<sup>th</sup> of the same year: «A Roma si sono verificati episodi che non si verificavano dai tempi di Cola di Rienzo»<sup>54</sup>.

Today, the metaphor of a tradition that started more than 2500 years ago seems to live on in the Roman vernacular. «Te butto ar fiume» has long been proverbial, not only in the casual conversation of individual dispute but also in the jargon of recent political crises. When Francesco Rutelli, the former mayor of Rome, visited Treviso during his campaign for election as prime minister in 2001, Giancarlo Gentilini, the mayor of that city and a well-known member of the Lega Nord, received him quite personally with the following words: «Rutelli, sei già nel braccio della morte». In addition to this cordial greeting, Gentilini proposed that Rutelli «deve essere buttato nel Tevere»<sup>55</sup>. These words were obviously uttered with a very special «Roman» resonance, as the similar, frequent applications of the phrase to Silvio Berlusconi in banners carried in public demonstrations and in innumerable internet blogs continued to be, even after he stepped down in November of 2011<sup>56</sup>.

Toward the end of this walk through the Tiber's history as a setting for ritual punishments and rituals of extermination, the reader may be inclined to ask how specifically Roman these practices were. In reality, we know of many

<sup>52</sup> Cf. T. Kienlechner, *Garibaldi wollte die Kardinäle in den Tiber werfen*, in «Merian», 29 (1976), Heft 12 (Vatikan), p. 119-122.

<sup>53</sup> G. Spadolini, *I Repubblicani dopo l'unità*, Firenze 1980<sup>4</sup>, p. 161-163.

<sup>54</sup> G. Ranzato, *Il linciaggio di Carretta, Roma 1944. Violenza politica e ordinaria violenza*, Milano 1997, esp. p. 127 for the quotation.

<sup>55</sup> S. Felice, *Rutelli, il treno parte tra minacce e insulti*, in «Corriere della Sera», 11 Feb. 2001, p. 9.

<sup>56</sup> <<http://bakounine.blog.lemonde.fr/2011/11/13/berlusconi-al-fiume-la-carogna>> [last accessed 24 January 2012].

other politically high-ranking persons who, over the course of history, were cast into rivers and seas after being put to death by their triumphant adversaries. The histories of other cities located along rivers, furthermore, also record cases in which the corpses of dead but still dangerous enemies were «drowned» in waterways. Archbishop Arnold von Selenhofen, who was killed by the people of Mainz in 1160, was at first supposed to be thrown in the Rhine before his followers finally managed to have him buried<sup>57</sup>. Jacopo de' Pazzi, one of the ringleaders of the Pazzi conspiracy against the Medici in Florence, was defenestrated by the furious Florentine people before being dragged naked through the streets and finally thrown into the Arno<sup>58</sup>. The ashes of Joan of Arc were thrown into the Seine<sup>59</sup>. Jan Hus was burnt during the Council of Constance in 1415 and his ashes deliberately put in the Rhine to prevent their future veneration as relics<sup>60</sup>. To cite a more modern example: seven of the high-ranking members of the Nazi regime, after they had been sentenced to death during the Nuremberg Trials, were killed, burned, and their ashes dumped into a branch of the Isar<sup>61</sup>. A similar fate befell Adolf Otto Eichmann, one of the major organizers of the Holocaust, who was executed by the Israelis in 1962. Eichmann's ashes were scattered over the Mediterranean Sea to prevent his grave from becoming a pilgrimage spot for Nazi hold-outs and future neo-Nazis, as unfortunately happened with the tomb of Adolf Hitler's former deputy Rudolf Hess, whose remains were only

<sup>57</sup> *Vita Arnoldi Archiepiscopi Moguntini*, in: *Monumenta Moguntina*, ed. P. Jaffè, Berlin 1866 (Bibliotheca Rerum Germanicarum, 3), p. 604-675, esp. p. 674: «Maguntini interea, pauperum improperia et totius mundi maledictum non valentes ferre, consilium fecerunt, ut cadaver sanctissimi viri (immitteretur) in amnem et caractere excommunicationis infamatum, impositum tabulae, aquis suspenderetur, ut sic, ubi appulerit, legentes excommunicationis libellum, ei sepulturam et alia humanitatis officia denegarent».

<sup>58</sup> I. del Badia, ed., Luca Landucci, *Diario Fiorentino dal 1450 al 1516 continuato da un anonimo fino al 1542, pubblicato sui codici della comunale di Siena e della Marucelliana*, Firenze 1883, p. 21: «E a dì 17 di maggio 1478, circa a ore venti, e fanciugli lo disotterròno un'altra volta, e con un pezzo di capresto, ch'ancora aveva al collo, lo straccinorono per tutto Firenze; e, quando furono a l'uscio della casa sua, missono el capresto nella canpanella dell'uscio, lo tirorono su dicendo: *picchia l'uscio*, e così per tutta la città feciono molte diligioni; e di poi stracchi, non sapevano più che se ne fare, andorono in sul Ponte a Rubaconte e gittorolo in Arno. E levarono una canzona che diceva certi stranbotti, fra gli dicevano: *Messer Iacopo giù per Arno se ne va*».

<sup>59</sup> C. Beaune, *Jeanne D'Arc*, Paris 2005, p. 368.

<sup>60</sup> Concerning this aspect see A.T. Hack, *Heiligenkult im frühen Hussitismus. Eine Skizze*, in D.R. Bauer, K. Herbers and G. Signori, ed., *Patriotische Heilige. Beiträge zur Konstruktion religiöser und politischer Identitäten in der Vormoderne*, Stuttgart 2007 (Beiträge zur Hagiographie, 5), p. 123-156, esp. p. 140f., with note 75 and the quotation of Petri de Mladonowicz *Relatio de magistro Johanne Hus* (ed. V. Novotný, *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum* 8, Prag 1932, p. 25-120, here p. 146f.): «Interea carnifex quidam vestem Hussii tenebat; Ludovicus autem, simulatque cognovit esse tunicam Hussii, iussit eam ac cingulum, denique quicquid ipsius esset esse, iniicere in ignem dicens: 'Boemi enim id vice sacramenti haberent ac colerent.' Deinde carnifici pollicitus est iacturam hanc compensaturum esse. Postremo omnia igne in cinerem concremata cum pulvere ac terra alcius effossa in bigas imposuere, deinde in Renum praeterlabentem (!) dissiecerunt, quod ipsius nomen prorsus apud fideles extinguerent». A more recent biography is provided by P. Hilsch, *Johannes Hus (um 1370-1415). Prediger Gottes und Ketzler*, Regensburg 1999.

<sup>61</sup> <<http://www.urteile.nuernberg.de/urteil/urteil2.html>> [last accessed 24 January 2012].

recently exhumed and buried secretly to stop such veneration, which had been going for decades<sup>62</sup>. It is definitely not a matter of chance, moreover, that only a few months ago the dead body of Osama Bin Laden was not buried in the ground but instead cast somewhere into the waters of the Indian Ocean.

These are only a few examples from the twelfth century to the twenty-first, and the list could easily be amplified. Obviously this widespread ritual was not, and is not, a singularly Roman one. For a full understanding of the practice, many other aspects need to be considered, particularly from a cultural-anthropological perspective – for example the purifying function of water and the sea in the burial ceremonies of different cultures; the river as a symbol; and the function of the grave as a place of worship and individual memory<sup>63</sup>. Perhaps only in Rome, however, can we trace the peculiar tradition of consigning dead political enemies to the river over the course of more than two and a half millennia. Such continuities render Rome and its river, the ritual's stage as a place of oblivion and memory, genuinely exceptional.

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<sup>62</sup> See the article in the digital version of German newspaper «Bild» of 21 Jul. 2011 <<http://www.bild.de/news/inland/rudolf-hess/grab-von-hitlers-stellvertreter-rudolf-hess-aufgeloest-18973416.bild.html>> [last accessed 24 January 2012].

<sup>63</sup> For further discussion of some of these themes, see the brilliant book by R. Harrison, *Die Herrschaft des Todes*, München 2006.