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Roman and Avignonesse propaganda in the aftermath of the Great Schism: a new perspective on a political clash from two inedited letters (1378-89)

by Gabriele Bonomelli

Il presente lavoro analizza e pubblica due lettere latine anonime che aiutano a valutare il clima politico all'indomani dello scisma d'Occidente: una lettera del Diavolo indirizzata a Clemente VII e un'invettiva letterariamente raffinata contro Urbano VI. Dopo una breve indagine degli eventi che portarono allo scoppio dello scisma, il saggio confronta le due lettere alla luce del quadro politico coevo, al fine di dimostrare perché esse si qualificano come documenti propagandistici che presentano ciascuno dei due papi come una minaccia per la cristianità, e di valutare il modo in cui sfruttano la loro peculiarità letteraria per incrementare l'impatto delle loro accuse politiche. L'obiettivo del lavoro è dunque di leggere lo scoppio dello scisma attraverso una prospettiva di studio basata su alcune peculiari strategie di comunicazione politica messe in atto nell'immediatezza della doppia elezione.

This paper analyses and edits two anonymous Latin letters that help to assess the political climate in the aftermath of the Great Schism: a Devil's letter addressed to Clement VII and a literary polished invective against Urban VI. After a brief investigation of the events that led to the outbreak of the schism, the paper compares the two letters in light of the contemporary political framework, in order to demonstrate why they qualify as propagandistic documents that present each of the two popes as a threat for Christendom, and to evaluate how they exploited their literary distinctiveness to increase the strength of their political accusations. In doing so the aim is to assess the outbreak of the Schism from a viewpoint based on some distinctive strategies of political communication employed after the double election.

Medioevo, secolo XIV, Clemente VII, Urbano VI, grande scisma d'Occidente, *ars dictaminis*, lettere del Diavolo.

Middle Ages, 14th century, Clement VII, Urban VI, Great Western Schism, *ars dictaminis*, Devil's letters.

Abbreviations: HAB, Herzog-August Bibliothek (Wolfenbüttel).

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1. Introduction

Italy's diplomatic framework in 1378, on the eve of the outbreak of the schism, was fragile. Since 1375 the war of the eight saints, which opposed a league of cities led by Florence and Milan to the papacy, had been raging.¹ The return of the papacy to Rome, planned since the 1360s, played a major role in this conflict: as Gregory XI entered the Peninsula in the autumn of 1377 (against the will of the French court and his cardinals, who did their utmost to convince the pope to change his mind about returning to Rome), the Italian cities' military situation was jeopardised.² Florence, moreover, had been under interdict for one year and was suffering from the economic retaliation of the holy see.³ Both sides longed for peace: the negotiations, conducted by the papal legate, cardinal Jean de la Grange, opened in Sarzana in February 1378 but had to be interrupted on 30 March, as the news of the parting of Gregory XI three days before had reached the Tuscan city.⁴ Walter Brandmüller has pointed out that at these negotiations there was much more at stake than the end of a military conflict: "Es ging wohl um die Einordnung des zurückgekehrten Papsttums in das Konzert der italienischen Mächte".⁵ The papacy had been absent from Italy for seventy years; a streak of French pontiffs had been elected who were often deeply entangled in the affairs of the French crown and who, despite their (sometimes dwindling) attempts to reconquer the papal states – which, according to Joëlle Rollo-Koster, by the mid-century "had evolved into a concatenation of petty tyrants who basically ruled for themselves, recognizing papal suzerainty only when it fit their needs, if ever" – had often openly favoured the policies of the kings of France.⁶ This is why the election of the new pontiff was crucial: in the contemporaries' view, the return of the papacy to Rome and the end of the French influence over the latter were at stake.⁷

¹ A detailed account of the conflict in David Peterson, "The war." See also Berardo Pio, "La Guerra."

² On Gregory's stubbornness to return to Italy see Rollo-Koster, *Avignon*, 140-6.

³ Williman, and Corsano, "The interdict." See also Rollo-Koster, *Avignon*, 130-9 and Peterson, "The war," 191-3. On the economic retaliation see Pio, "La Guerra", 379-84.

⁴ The Sienese ambassadors transmitted the news to the city on 1 April. Brandmüller, "Zur Frage," 22 reports what Bernabò Visconti, Signore of Milan, said to the Florentines about the impact that this event would have on the peace negotiations: "Et ine parlano, di che non sapeno se'nnon che doppo el parlare che fece co'loro fummo chiamati noi et tutti e gl'altri collegati, absente el cardinale, et essendo ne presentia di misser B(ernabò) e' Fiorentini et noi altri tutti ambasciatori, misser B(ernabò) parlò e dixè: Voi Fiorentini sapete bene come io ove voluto che abiate pace et qui n'ò fatto ch'io ò possuto per darnela. E parevami avere ridotte le cose in termini che stavano bene per santa chiesa et per voi. Hora ch'eravamo per conchiudere, pare si dica ch'el papa sia morto. Et per questo dite voi Fiorentini che non avete mandato di potere conchiudere. Et io dico ch'io non so s'è morto o'nno, ma, come si sia, papa dobbiamo avere".

⁵ Brandmüller, "Zur Frage," 8.

⁶ The quote from Rollo-Koster, *Avignon*, 89. The best example of French partisanship is pope Clement VI, who was described as being "unshamedly partial" by Wood, *Clement VI*, 141.

⁷ Martin, "Das avignonische Papsttum." Stefan Weiß, "Luxury and extravagance." Waley, "Opinions of the Avignon papacy."

The controversial process that led to the papal election of Bartolomeo Prignano with the name of Urban VI resulted, on 20 September 1378 in the town of Fondi, in the schismatic election of Robert de Genève, who took the name of Clement VII. Numerous sources cover the events of these months, and the first part of this essay will attempt to examine them critically; the second section will then analyse two inedited Latin documents that contribute to assess the polemical framework in the years immediately following the double election. The first is a letter written in the name of the Devil directed against Clement VII, while the second is a highly-refined invective whose target is Urban VI. Each of them harshly upbraids the policies of the pontiffs by retracing the latter's misconduct as well as the events that led to their election, together with the most controversial moments of their pontificates. In doing so they sketch an interesting picture of the political and religious situation in the aftermath of the outbreak of the schism. The following essay will carry out a comparative analysis of these sources in the coeval polemical framework: the aim is to present the reader with some peculiar strategies of political communication that intended to frame the polemical climate of the time. The challenges posed by the schism, in fact, were not only addressed by means of juridical and theological writings written by the most prominent intellectuals of the time or through the celebration of official public court trials:⁸ unofficial documents like the Devil's letter and the invective that will be presented here also contributed to shaping the climate of opposition of these years, and manuscript evidence testifies to their interest for the intellectuals that grappled with the issue of the schism. These writings epitomise what I call 'non-official polemical literature': anonymous documents that did not stem from official environments such as the papal curia or the secular chanceries and that exploited a distinctive literary form to convey their political message. In doing so they aided the abovementioned official means of political debate with the intention of supporting the Roman or Avignonese pope in the aftermath of the double election of 1378. This is also why these inedited sources qualify as propagandistic documents, a point that will be addressed more thoroughly in due course.⁹ The present contribution, therefore, aims at contextualizing these writings in a historical and literary perspective and to assess their distinctiveness within the framework of one of the major political and religious upheavals for Medieval Christendom.

⁸ The most famous trial was that of Medina del Campo, which took place between 1380 and 1381 and contributed to the passage of the Iberian kingdoms to Clementine obedience: see Rehberg, "Le inchieste." On the troubled adherence of the Iberian kingdoms to the French pope see also Seidlmayer, *Die Anfänge*, 25-117. Clement VII celebrated several consistory trials in which he deposed the adherents of the Roman obedience: Göller, "Der Gerichtshof," 617.

⁹ For the concept of propaganda in the middle ages see Miethke, "Propaganda politica." Studt, "Geplante Öffentlichkeiten." Wolfram, "Meinungsbildung."

2. From Rome to Fondi: the election of Urban VI and the outbreak of the schism

Firstly a critical – although synthetic – reconstruction of the turbulent election of Urban VI and of the events that led to the outbreak of the schism must be carried out. This will allow to evaluate the stances of those who took part in these events in order to separate “facts and fictions” (“Fakten und Fiktionen”, to quote a recent, brilliant research by Andreas Rehberg) of one of the most crucial moments in the history of the late Middle Ages.¹⁰ The sources to investigate are numerous and heterogeneous. The accounts of the schismatic cardinals are of foremost importance, among which stands the *Casus secundi electi*; these, however, were compiled to justify the prelates’ decision to elect Clement VII. Important documents on the Urbanist side are the *Factum Urbani* (also known as *Casus primi electi*) and the *Conscriptio*, written by Alfonso Pecha, confessor of St. Bridget of Sweden and very close to the Avignonese cardinal Pedro de Luna (the future Benedict XIII).¹¹ All these sources were written to justify the actions of their authors and are sometimes the result of later interventions: one must, therefore, proceed with caution in assessing them.¹² More impartial (and often little considered) sources are the letters sent by ambassadors and cardinals from Rome and other cities (Florence, Siena, Mantua): these convey their authors’ perception of the events at a time that is almost contemporary to the facts narrated.¹³ In addition to this, an enormous amount of individual reports (about 170 writings by 150 witnesses, often written years after 1378) is extant and has not yet been examined in detail.¹⁴ Many of these documents were collected in the so-called *Libri de schismate* by the cardinal of Pamplona Martin de Zalva and, after his death in 1403, they remained by the Avignonese curia of Benedict XIII.¹⁵ Eventually, one must also consider the vast number of juridical treaties that were written to support the claims of each of the pontiffs.

On 7 April all the sixteen cardinals who were in Rome (six others remained in Avignon and Jean de la Grange was still in Tuscany) entered the conclave in a room set up on the first floor of the Vatican whose entrances had been either closed or walled off to protect the prelates from any assault by the Roman mob.¹⁶ Nearly every document insists on the pressures exerted by the Roman population from the beginning of the conclave to demand the election of a

¹⁰ Rehberg, “Ein ‘Gegenpapst.’”

¹¹ Rehberg, “Ein Gegenpapst,” 238. On the *Conscriptio* see Lerner, “Alfonso Pecha’s treatise.” Ullmann, *The origins*, 25-28 also supports the validity of the Spanish prelate’s testimony.

¹² One such work has been carried out on the reports of the Urbanist and Clementine cardinals by Dykmans, “La troisième.” For the deposition of the chamberlain of the Florentine cardinal Piero Orsini see Dykmans, “Du conclave.”

¹³ Twenty-seven of these accounts are edited in Brandmüller, “Zur Frage.”

¹⁴ Rehberg, “Ein Gegenpapst,” 235. Millet, “La question.”

¹⁵ Seidlmayer, “Die spanischen ‘Libri de schismate.’”

¹⁶ Valois, *La France et le Grand Schisme d’Occident*, 35-6.

Roman, or, at least, an Italian pontiff (“Romano lo volemo, o al manco italiano!” as the slogan went).¹⁷ The French cardinals claimed that they had been threatened by the population even before the conclave had convened, which is why they – allegedly – entered the conclave in a state of agitation (Pedro de Luna had made testament and Robert de Genève wore an armour under his *rochet*).¹⁸ Although a certain amount of tension with the crowd was *routine* during the election of a pontiff, the situation in 1378 must have been more tense than usual because of the political implications of a return of the papacy to Rome.¹⁹ The college of cardinals was divided into at least three factions: the six “Limousins” (led by Jean de Cros, bishop of Limoges), the five French (to which the Spaniard Pedro de Luna must be added) and the four Italians.²⁰ Apparently the last two groups converged on the need to elect an Italian against the Limousins, who wanted to appoint a French relative of Gregory XI.²¹ Testimonies from Urban and Clementine sides claim that during the private talks between the cardinals before the conclave opened, the archbishop of Bari, the Neapolitan Bartolomeo Prignano, was mentioned as one of the likely candidates.²² Other witnesses claim that the absolute majority of the cardinals, at that time, already agreed on his election, as reported by Bishop Niccolò di Viterbo (an Urbanist partisan).²³ Prignano had been in the service of the curia

¹⁷ The quote is taken from the account of the Clementine cardinals of 2 August 1378: see Dykmans, “La troisième,” 233. Numerous versions of this slogan have been transmitted, some of which are much more violent towards the cardinals. Some examples in Valois, “L’election,” 361: “Romano lo volemo, o almanco italiano; o per la clavellata di Dio, saranno tutti tutti, Franchilone e Ultramontani, occisi e tagliati per pezzi, e li cardinali li primi”. According to Ullmann, *The origins*, 83, a report written before 1408 that supports the schismatic cardinals transmits a similar version of this slogan: “Par la bodella de Dyo vo morere o ferrate papa romano”. Other variations are listed in Přerovský, *L’elezione*, 35. The turmoil of the Roman mob was already known in Florence in the days just after the death of Gregory XI: Brandmüller, “Zur Frage,” 8.

¹⁸ Rollo-Koster, “Civil violence.”

¹⁹ According to Marc Dykmans, “La bulle,” Gregory XI had taken countermeasures to tackle any problematic situation that could arise after his parting by granting the cardinals some derogations from the canonical form of election. The prelates, however, seem not to have been aware of such powers. See also Valois, “L’election,” 357-8 and Rollo-Koster, “Civil violence,” 17-9.

²⁰ On the composition of the college of cardinals see Valois, *La France*, 22-3 and Přerovský, *L’elezione*, 43.

²¹ Valois, *La France*, 26-7. According to Dykmans, “Du conclave,” 224, the report of Bindo Fesulani (written in Avignon in May 1380) attributes this to the pressure of the Romans even before the conclave started.

²² On the life of Prignano before he ascended to the papal throne see Přerovský, *L’elezione*, 1-32.

²³ Valois, “L’election,” 372-80 and Ullmann, *The origins*, 12-7. Pastor, *Ungedruckte Akten*, 8 edits the testimony of the bishop of Viterbo: despite the prelate’s factiousness, the report gives an account of the numerous conversations that the prelate had with the members of the college of cardinals just after the election. In one of these, with the Limousin cardinal Pierre de Sortenac, the bishop reported that: “Ivi ad dominum Vivariensem; facta sibi simili conscientia respondit, quod si volebam respensionem, quod pranderem secum, alias nunquam responderet mihi. Ivi ad prandium et post prandium solus cum solo feci sibi questionem, dicens, quod ipse semper fuit verax in sermone et nunquam ipsum a veritate separare poterant, et ydeo singularem confidentiam habens rogaveram, quod pro salute anime mee et sue diceret veritatem, quia non volebam esse ydolatra, nec ipse deberet velle, quod ad instantiam suam sum ydolatra. Respondit mihi breviter: domine Viterbiensi non malinconicetis, quod ipse Barensis est papa concorditer electus antequam intraremus conclavi”.

for a long time and held the position of vice-chancellor regent (he substituted Pierre de Monteruc, one of the Limousin cardinals who had remained in Avignon). He was appreciated by the cardinals for his administrative skills and his knowledge of curial procedures.²⁴ His name, therefore, seemed to please everyone: the internal parties of the college as well as the crowd.²⁵ Prignano was thus elected immediately in the morning of 8 April with the only abstention of Giacomo Orsini. In the meantime the Roman citizens outside the palace, unaware of the election, menacingly repeated their slogan. On Orsini's order the archbishop of Bari was swiftly sent for along with five other Italian prelates in order to close the conclave as soon as possible. To summon other prelates together with Prignano served two purposes: to prevent the crowd from understanding who had been elected (which would avoid the plunder of the latter's residence to get relics)²⁶ and to allow the cardinals, in case of the candidate's renunciation, to pick from the remaining prelates, thus speeding up the procedure.²⁷ Due to a series of miscommunications between the cardinals and the Roman mob, word had spread among the citizens that the oldest cardinal in the college, the Roman Francesco Tebaldeschi, had been elected.²⁸ Hence, the cardinal's residence was plundered in the hope of grabbing some relics of the new pontiff.²⁹ As evening was approaching, cardinal Tebaldeschi proposed to repeat the election: his colleagues, although they stated that there was no need to do so as nobody doubted the correctness of the procedure that had taken place in the morning, further confirmed the election, again with the only exception of cardinal Orsini. In the meantime another rumour had spread among the crowd: a Limousin (whose representants the Romans hated fiercely) had been elected. This was enough for the Romans to burst into the apostolic palace, with the cardinals seeking shelter in their apartments. The citizens were still unaware of the election of Prignano – the archbishop himself had not yet been informed – but now they demanded that a Roman

²⁴ Zutshi, "Continuity and discontinuity." Cristoforo da Piacenza (in a letter to Ludovico Gonzaga) and Francesco Casini (who was writing to his homeland Siena) insist on Prignano's abilities: see Brandmüller, "Zur Frage", 25-6. On the archbishop's activity in the apostolic chancery in the service of the chancellor Pierre de Monteruc see Williman, "Schism," 33-7.

²⁵ According to Valois, "L'election," 380-1, Prignano was considered "comme un des leurs" by the French cardinal and had taken part in the Roman political life since his return from Avignon, which made him be appreciated by the citizens and the *officiales*.

²⁶ Rollo-Koster, "Civil violence," 34-5 affirms that this did not prevent the residence of the abbot of Monte Cassino, a Roman prelate summoned with Bartolomeo Prignano, from being sacked.

²⁷ There seems to be some confusion regarding the exact number of prelates summoned by Orsini: Valois, *La France*, 47 affirms that they were six (not including Prignano) and so does Rollo-Koster, "Civil violence," 32. However, the account of cardinal Corsini's chamberlain, written a few days after the election, states that the summoned prelates were five, plus the archbishop of Bari (as reported by Brandmüller, "Zur Frage," 29: "Et antequam dicta electio publicaretur, ordinaverunt mittere pro eodem et quinque aliis prelatibus Romanis." Dykmans, "Du conclave," 226 also reports that the same chamberlain, as he testified in 1380, said that "fecerunt unam zedulam qua querebatur quod venirent aliqui Romani prelati et Ytali, inter quos nominabatur dominus Barenensis".

²⁸ Dykmans, "La troisième," 221.

²⁹ Rollo-Koster, "Civil violence", 33. Ullmann, *The origins*, 18-9.

be elected pope. The cardinals were stricken by panic and staged a tragicomic event: the elderly Tebaldeschi (who suffered from gout and could barely move) was dressed in the papal vestments, placed on the See and, despite his desperate attempts to say that the archbishop of Bari was the real pontiff, the cardinals sang the *Te Deum* while Tebaldeschi was exposed to the crowd, who was out of control and was plundering the palace. This farce, at least, had the desired effect: the Romans dispersed and so did most of the cardinals, who fled to Castel Sant'Angelo or outside Rome (Robert de Genève, armed, found shelter in the castle of Zagarolo, about thirty kilometres from the city). The following morning the situation had cooled and a third, definitive and unanimous confirmation of the two previous elections took place. It was Prignano himself who advocated for this confirmation (the archbishop managed to retrieve almost all the cardinals for this final act).³⁰ The new pontiff was thus consecrated and, on 18 April, he was crowned by Orsini in the presence of all the cardinals who had taken part in the conclave.³¹

The cardinals later testified that by that moment they were already aware that the election had not been canonical; however, fearing for their lives, they did not raise the question.³² The situation in which Bartolomeo Prignano was elected was by all means one of high tension and turmoil. However, recent studies have downplayed the impact of actions such as lootings (limited to the residences of those cardinals who were believed to have been elected and, in part, to the conclave), the alleged threats directed to the French cardinals or the intimidating attitude of the Roman mob to elect an Italian pope.³³ Moreover, this was something on which the cardinals had probably already agreed even before the beginning of the conclave, and the archbishop of Bari was

³⁰ See Dykmans, "La troisième," 230-7 for the cardinals' accounts of these elections. Another account of the election is dated 10 April and was written by Agnolo di Pietro Bindi for the city of Siena: see Brandmüller, "Zur Frage," 27-8. The Avignonese reports describe this initiative of the elected pope in a negative and despotic light: according to the deposition of Bindo Fesulani edited by Dykmans, "Du conclave," 226, the archbishop of Bari, frightened and perhaps aware of the invalidity of the procedure that had led to his election, ordered the city militia to pick up the cardinals with these words: "Et nisi faciatis eos venire, nihil est factum". See also Ullmann, *The origins*, 21-2.

³¹ Brandmüller, "Zur Frage," 30. Valois, *La France*, 50-62 insists on the role of the chamberlain Pierre de Cros in opposing Urban's requests to return to the Vatican: it was at that moment that, according to the Avignonese reports, the hypothesis of the unlawfulness of the election started to circulate.

³² Ullmann, *The origins*, 25-43. See also one of the testimonies edited in Dykmans, "La troisième," 239: "Et ab illo tempore domini cardinales in reverentiis et aliis tractaverunt eum ut papam, non tamen cum intentione et proposito ex hiis aliquid novi iuris tribuere aut ipsum in primo confirmare. Et ipse in consistoriis ac extra in promotionibus ac aliis usus est ut papa. Tamen ista omnia facta fuerunt in urbe, ut predicatur, ubi domini cardinales, saltem ultramontani, nunquam se reputaverunt securos; ymo similiter credunt et communiter creditur quod si in urbe suam promotionem revocassent in dubium vel eam impugnassent, omnes interfecti fuissent, cum causa impressionis continue perduraret". Some remarks on this also in Dykmans, "Du conclave," 227.

³³ Přerovský, *Lelezione*, 61 insists on the violence of the Roman mob as the main reason for invalidating the election of Prignano, who was elected by "un conclave irregolare, che portò alla tiara un candidato non voluto da tutti".

confirmed three times.³⁴ The lootings were limited to the residences of those who the mob thought had been elected, which hardly suggests an intent to daunt the cardinals: several testimonies speak of the practice of plundering the objects of the newly elected as customary, which makes clear that such violent behaviour was not intended as a means to threaten the prelates.³⁵ However, it is evident that the cardinals, especially those who were unaccustomed to the Romans, interpreted these actions as intimidating. The testimonies of the *ultramontani* are, in fact, peppered with *clichés* against the Romans, who are portrayed as naturally prone to violence and hostile to the French. One must also bear in mind that the cardinals, who wrote these reports months or years after the events, probably reshaped their memories and enhanced the intimidating attitude that they attributed to the Roman citizens.³⁶ At any rates, none of the cardinals raised any doubts about the legitimacy of the election in the following weeks. On the contrary, they joyously spread news of the election in several letters to European sovereigns in which the abilities of the newly elected, which made him perfectly fit for the papal dignity, were praised at length.³⁷

The cardinals' dissatisfaction with the new pontiff, however, didn't take long to surface. Bartolomeo Prignano had probably been chosen in light of the grave financial crisis of the papacy after decades of military campaigns in Italy. The archbishop of Bari, well known for his administrative skills, was the ideal candidate to restore the papal finances and he immediately set to work for this.³⁸ It was clear soon enough that his zeal would affect the college of cardinals directly: Urban VI set out on a radical reorganisation of the cardi-

³⁴ Rollo-Koster, "Civil violence," 33-56.

³⁵ Interesting in this regard is the testimony of Dietrich von Niem, who described Bartolomeo Prignano's actions after he was made aware of his election, see von Niem, *De scismate*, 11-2: "Qui quidem Urbanus statim libros et aliquas alias res ipsius ad loca tuta ipsius portari fecit, ne, si rumor insurgeret in populo quod ipse electus esset in papam, forsitan romani more suo irruerent in eius hospicium ac ipsum suis libris et rebus huiusmodi spoliarent". Rollo-Koster, "Civil violence," 38 quotes a passage from the *Vita* of Urban VI in the *Liber pontificalis* which is also interesting in this regard: "Et expectantes potius publicata electione Romani pontificis currere ad domum electi spoliare in signum gaudii".

³⁶ Rehberg, "Ein Gegenpapst," 242-9.

³⁷ Brandmüller, "Zur Frage," 11 and 32-4 quotes the examples of cardinal Pietro Corsini and Robert de Genève. See also Ullmann, *The origins*, 32. According to Valois, *La France*, 72-4 Pedro de Luna was one of the most enthusiastic in praising Prignano's qualities immediately after his election.

³⁸ Weiß, "Luxury," 74. Dykmans, "La troisième," 232 edits a passage from the report of 2 August in which the schismatic cardinals: "nominaverunt dictum dominum Bartholomeum tunc archiepiscopum Barensensem, et ipsum, tamquam eis, ut credebant, magis notum, et in factis et moribus curie magis expertum, licet sequens experientia contrarium ostenderit manifeste, elegerunt in papam". According to Lerner, "Alfonso," 440, Alfonso Pecha (an urbanist partisan) also testified that the name of Prignano had been made: "ex eo quod erat [dictus archiepiscopus] vir litteratus honestus et bonus, et sciebat practicam cancellarie apostolice et modum expeditionis negotiorum et stilum Romane curie". See also Swanson, *Universities*, 6 on this. On Prignano's administrative skills see Zutshi, "Continuity," 287. See Přerovský, *Lelezione*, 45-60 for a survey of the relations that the single cardinals had with Prignano before his election.

nals' income with the intention of reducing it drastically.³⁹ It was not only the utopian and abrupt projects of financial reform that undermined the pontiff's position: his harsh character, coupled with his inclination to violent outbursts also contributed to jeopardising his relations with the cardinals, who began to describe the pope as irascible and hypocritical, a completely different person from the esteemed collaborator of the vice-chancellor that they had elected before the new office intoxicated him.⁴⁰ The pontiff's Neapolitan origin also fostered more issues: Urban made no secret of his desire to raise some of his fellow citizens to the cardinalate, among whom were several of his relatives (rumours spoke of 30 new cardinals, a staggering increase to the 22 then existing).⁴¹ Eventually, the hopes that the new pope would soon bring the papacy back to Avignon were dashed by Urban VI's decision to remain in Rome.⁴²

By mid-June all the *ultramontani* obtained the pope's permission to leave the city to escape the torrid Roman summer climate and took refuge in Anagni, where their discontent with Urban VI gradually took the form of an opposition, even though they continued to forward petitions for benefices in which they apostrophised the pope in the mildest and most submissive terms.⁴³ In July three of the Italian cardinals (Tebaldeschi could not move from Rome because of gout) were sent by the pope to hear the complaints of the rest of the college. The Italian were themselves undecided about what to do with Urban and their colleagues attempted to cajole them into joining them: on 26 July the Italians reported their version of the election, which was used on 2 August as the basis for the French cardinals' account, the abovementioned *Casus*.⁴⁴ Seven days later thirteen cardinals (the Limousins, the French, Jean de la Grange and Pedro de Luna) joined by chamberlain Pierre de Cros – Jean's brother – issued a *Declaratio* in which Urban VI was deemed as an intruder

³⁹ Weiß, "Luxury," 74-9 and Zutshi, "Continuity," 289. A harsh judgement on Urban's attempts at reformation is passed by Ullmann, *The origins*, 44-5, according to whom the pope's methods were: "to say the least, undignified, and defeated the whole object of reform, however praiseworthy his intentions".

⁴⁰ Valois, *La France*, 67-72 recalls in particular Urban VI's clumsy treatment of the powerful cardinal Jean de La Grange after his return to Rome on 24 April. Ullmann, *The origins*, 46-50 lists numerous anecdotes of Urban's wrath in these months towards cardinals, ambassadors and sovereigns. The progressive softening of Urban VI's attitude was of little use, as Cristoforo da Piacenza reported in a letter to Ludovico II Gonzaga on 24 June (quoted by Brandmüller, "Zur Frage," 41): "et secundum consilium istorum se regebat et regit, licet in primordio sui apostolatus fuerit valde durus et precipue dominis cardinalibus; sed incipit mutare mores".

⁴¹ Weiß, "Luxury," 80.

⁴² Dykmans, "La troisième," 257 and Ullmann, *The origins*, 50-1.

⁴³ The testimony of Niccolò da Viterbo is interesting in this regard. The prelate was stunned by the hostile attitude of the cardinals during the summer and, during a conversation with Jean de Cros in June (who assured him that Urban VI was the true pope), the bishop asked (the passage in Pastor, *Ungedruckte*, 9-10): "Quid, queso, est quod omnes dimistis eum solum? Respondit: quia nolumus mori in aere Romano nec occidi ab eis. Replicavi: domini mei Maioris Monasterii, de Luna cum Florentino et S. Petri non veniunt et sunt cum ipso. Respondit: venire debent breviter". On the demands for benefices in these months and the language used in these petitions see Ullmann, *The origins*, 53.

⁴⁴ Rollo-Koster, "Civil violence," 28.

whose claims to the throne of Peter were declared null and void.⁴⁵ By the end of the month they moved to Fondi, to the residence of count Onorato Caetani, who was hostile to Urban VI because the pope had dismissed him from his position as *rector* of the provinces of Campania and Marittima and had also denied him repayment of a loan of 20 000 florins that the count had granted to Gregory XI.⁴⁶ The three remaining Italians (Tebaldeschi had died on 8 September) joined them and, on 20 September, elected Robert de Genève to the papal throne with the name of Clement VII. Urban VI immediately reconstituted the college of cardinals by appointing twenty-eight new members chosen from among his relatives and fellow countrymen.⁴⁷ On 20 June 1379 Clement VII, after unsuccessful attempts to extend his support in the Peninsula, returned to Avignon.⁴⁸

To complete the picture of these events let us turn briefly to the juridical disputes aroused by the double election. In the accounts of the schismatic cardinals the latter are pictured as forced by the Roman mob to elect Prignano in order to save their lives. However, they did not oppose the election until late in the summer and no doubt is raised on the validity of the election in the cardinals' correspondence during these months. The cardinals replied to these objections on 2 August: the fear for their lives prevented them from speaking freely in the presence of the wrathful and vindictive Urban, who inspected their letters or even dictated them himself.⁴⁹ More than one witness – including Alfonso Pecha, very close to the future Benedict XIII – claimed instead that it was Robert de Genève, during one of the meetings with the Italians, who proposed his name along with that of the archbishop of Bari.⁵⁰ The *Casus* opposed this reconstruction and claimed that Prignano was indeed mentioned before the conclave, but because the archbishop had plotted with the city officials (the “*officiales Urbi*”) to have him included among the candidates. He allegedly convinced the chiefs of the Roman militia, the *Banderesi* – the same ones he sent to gather the prelates who had fled to Castel Sant'Angelo –⁵¹

⁴⁵ Ullmann, *The origins*, 69-75 provides a full translation of the document. According to Zutshi, “Continuity,” 289, the presence of the camerlengo among the Clementines dealt a fatal blow to Urban's administration for the following months.

⁴⁶ Valois, *La France*, 77. Ullmann, *The origins*, 50. Přerovský, *L'elezione*, 101-2. Labande, “Caetani, Onorato.”

⁴⁷ For the events of these months see Valois, *La France*, 74-82 and Dykmans, “Clemente VII, antipapa.” Ullmann, *The origins*, 63 reconstructs a picture of the events in which the Italian cardinals were allegedly deceived by their colleagues and concludes that “could not but recognise his election as valid”. On the process of creation of cardinals in these years see Philippe Genequand, “Kardinäle,” 322-6.

⁴⁸ Dykmans, “Du conclave,” 211.

⁴⁹ Ullmann, *The origins*, 86 reports that Robert de Genève claimed to have written them “*timore potius quam amore*”. See also Dykmans, “La troisième,” 239.

⁵⁰ Valois, *La France*, 27. Dykmans, “Clemente VII,” 227. Lerner, “Alfonso,” 420.

⁵¹ The *Banderesi* were two leaders of the Roman city militia, the so-called *Felice societas dei Balestrieri e dei Pavesati*. The most extensive study on this subject is that of Maire Vigueur, “La felice societas.” As Rehberg, “Ein Gegenpapst”, 255 reports, this *militia* was, in those days, in charge of the defence of the cardinals.

to stir up the crowd against the cardinals and force them to elect him.⁵² It may be that this reconstruction was intended to silence the choice to elect a shared candidate for which the cardinals did not want to take responsibility at that moment.⁵³

As early as July the cardinals requested *consilia* to two of the most prominent Italian law experts, Giovanni da Legnano and Baldo degli Ubaldi.⁵⁴ The former replied to Pedro de Luna's appeal with his *De Fletu ecclesie*, while the latter wrote his *Allegationes* for cardinal Orsini.⁵⁵ Both agreed that the election of Urban VI had been canonical.⁵⁶ Probably in the wake of these judgments, on 6 August the Italians proposed to summon a council to settle the matter, which the *ultramontani* bitterly refused: Urban VI being illegitimate and the papal throne vacant, there was no supreme authority that could convene a council.⁵⁷ This would become a ticklish issue in the juridical debate of the following decades on which intellectuals would argue for decades.⁵⁸ In the same months another Clementine cardinal, Pierre Flandrin, submitted one of his legal treatises to Pedro Tenorio, canonist and archbishop of Toledo, who politely (and perhaps with a touch of irony: he called Flandrin "arx iuris canonici") concluded on the same line of the Italians. At this point cardinal Orsini took charge of defending the position of his fellow cardinals.⁵⁹ By August 1379 another *consilium* backed Urban VI and was written by Bartolomeo

⁵² Dykmans edits the prologue of the *Casus* of 2 August, in which one reads that, after the parting of Gregory XI: "officiales Urbis diverse consilia in Capitolio tenuerunt, aliqua secreta, aliqua maiora, aliqua generalia", to which Prignano had allegedly participated: «Et in uno existis consiliis fuit iste dominus Bartholomeus, tunc archiepiscopus Barenis, prout ipse publice confessus est, licet asserat modo quod ipse impressionem fieri dissuasit». Right afterwards the archbishop, "ut asserunt fide digni, se multum recommendavit bandarenisibus in ecclesia Beate Marie Nove antequam conclave intraretur" (as edited in Dykmans, "La troisième," 227-9). This version is also reported by Williman, "Schism," 37.

⁵³ According to Lerner, "Alfonso", 421, Alfonso Pecha declared that even the Limousins supported (before the conclave) the candidacy of Prignano because they were convinced that he would bring the papacy back to Avignon. The contradictions in the accounts of the schismatic cardinals are described in Ullmann, *The origins*, 75-89. Some Clementine reconstructions of these events are Raymond, "D'Ailly's epistola," 182-3 and Jamme, "Réseaux," the latter in open criticism of English Urbanist historiography. Přerovský, *L'elezione*, 63 is also decidedly oriented towards a Clementine reconstruction that often insists on the inadequacy of Urban VI.

⁵⁴ This topic goes beyond the scope of this essay. Some fundamental studies on the juridical treatises of these years are Sieben, *Traktate*. Girgensohn, "Das Recht." Seidlmayer, *Die Anfänge*, 118-71.

⁵⁵ On Giovanni da Legnano and his *De Fletu* see Pio, *Giovanni da Legnano*, 42-69. See also Ullmann, *The origins*, 143-60.

⁵⁶ Dykmans, "La troisième," 247-50. Swanson, *Universities*, 24-5. Girgensohn, "Das Recht", 713-4. According to Genequand, "Kardinäle", 316-7: "Den Kardinälen schien es also ganz offensichtlich unmöglich, den Herausforderungen der Epoche ohne ein Haupt gerecht zu werden".

⁵⁷ Bliemetzrieder, "Zur Geschichte." See also Valois, *La France*, 76. Sieben, *Traktate*, 15. Ullmann, *The origins*, 57-8.

⁵⁸ Ullmann, *The origins*, 158-60.

⁵⁹ Pio, *Giovanni da Legnano*, 72-3. Bliemetzrieder, "Zur Geschichte," 629-30. On the irony of Pedro Tenorio see Dykmans, "La troisième," 251-2: "Encore faut-il dire que le ton se nuance d'une forte ironie". On this see also Sieben, *Traktate*, 18 and Ullmann, *The origins*, 64-6.

da Saliceto.⁶⁰ Other replies from the Avignonese obedience arrived in 1379 by the newly elected cardinals Pierre Ameilh and Pierre de Barrière,⁶¹ while in 1380 Urban VI requested Giovanni da Legnano and Baldo to draw up another treatise to defend the legitimacy of his election.⁶²

Within one year from the double election, the division of Europe in two rivalling obediences had made clear the political essence of the schism: this was, as Robert Swanson efficaciously summarised, a “legal issue concerning a disputed succession to a particular office”, and again “not [...] a matter of belief, but of administration”.⁶³ This political character of the schism is echoed in the sources to which we turn now.

3. *Urbanist and Clementine propaganda: a letter from the Devil for Clement VII and an invective against Urban VI*

The Herzog-August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel preserves a composite manuscript, Codex Guelferbytanus 32.10 Augusteus 2^o, which contains numerous Latin documents of fundamental importance for the study of the great western schism.⁶⁴ The manuscript contains treatises (such as the *Placatus ecclesiae* by Giovanni da Legnano), letters from popes and sovereigns as well as sermons that address the lawfulness of the convocation of a council without the consent of the pontiff. Manuscripts such as this served to collect material to support the intellectuals who argued in favour of this solution (the *via concilii*), which is why Bénédicte Sère labelled them as “dossiers de travail”.⁶⁵ While a more detailed description of this specimen will be presented at the end of this essay, it is now important to stress that, among these texts, two have not received attention before. The first is a short letter written in the name of the Devil whose addressee is Robert de Genève and whose heading reads “Epistola sub tipo Dyaboli directa domino Clementi” (the text occupies fols. 342r-343r).⁶⁶ This document is, unfortunately, incomplete. The first to

⁶⁰ Swanson, *Universities*, 26.

⁶¹ Girgensohn, “Das Recht,” 714-5.

⁶² Dykmans, “La troisième,” 250.

⁶³ This point is made by Swanson, “Obedience.” A passage from an inedited treatise on the schism is interesting in this regard. The treatise was written in the area of the University of Oxford around 1396 and is now conserved in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 188, cc. 62r-66v. On c. 62v the anonymous author wonders what the origin of the division was and answered that there were two main sources for the schism: “una originaria et occulta solus Dei iudicio reservata, et alia patens et propinquo humano oculo manifesta”. The treatise goes on to specify the second point (f. 64v): “Sed de causa immediata, patenter sive propinqua secundum probabiles seu verisimiles coniecturas tractare. Unde tam immediatam sive propinquam puto fuisse illam electionem quam veteres cardinales fecerunt de facto de cardinali Gebennensi in papam prentensum, postquam dominum Urbanum VI tamen prius elegerant, quasi illa celebrata non foret”. Some information on the treatise in Harvey, *Solutions*, 69.

⁶⁴ The manuscript is described in von Heinemann, *Die Augusteischen Handschriften*, 7-11.

⁶⁵ Sere, *Les débats*, 69.

⁶⁶ HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2^o, f. 342r.

report this letter was Helen Feng in her unpublished doctoral thesis, where the scholar also provided a working transcription. Since Feng did not propose a title for the epistle, here I shall refer to it as *Epistola Clementis*.⁶⁷ No other manuscript witness of this letter has surfaced yet, but the edition at the end of this paper presents its text with several corrections to the transcription made by Feng as well as to the copyist's own mistakes. The second document is also anonymous and was copied right after the Devil's letter in the manuscript. It is an invective addressed against Urban VI, as the heading reads: "Epistola contra Urbanum ipsi Urbano directa, sed nescio nomen auctoris, in qua pulchre et valde rethorice deducuntur eius plurima forensia" (the text occupies fols. 344r-345v).⁶⁸ This will also be edited at the end of this essay under the title *Invectiva contra Urbanum VI*. There is no evidence of any direct connection between the two, but to read them together will provide a more exhaustive picture of the opposing arguments exploited by intellectuals and polemicists of the time when dealing with the double election of 1378.

The *Epistola Clementis* opens with an elaborate *salutatio* that is addressed not only to Clement VII, but also to all the adherents of the Avignonese pontiff:

Princeps tenebrarum, speculator acutissimus et subdilissimus, seductor animarum carissimo filio nostro Roberto olim Basilice XII Apostolorum presbitero cardinali per dampna<n>dum vicarium cuiusdam crucifixi inimici nostri atrocissimi ordinato, in vexilliferum ministrorum nostrorum electo, ac omnibus aliis cardinalibus, prelatibus, nobilibus, clericis et laycis sequacibus et subditis suis devotissimis, nostram salutem et nostrorum contemptam observanciam mandatorum, cum perfecte dilectionis augmento.⁶⁹

To fully appreciate this articulate *salutatio* it is necessary to turn to the earlier tradition of the Devil's letters. The *Epistola Clementis* is indebted to the *salutatio* of the most famous of these letters, the so-called *Epistola Luciferi*, written by the Cistercian monk Pierre Ceffons in 1351 and addressed against the excesses of the Avignonese curia of Clement VI:

Lucifer princeps tenebrarum, tristia profundi regens Acherontis imperia, dux Herebi, rex Inferni, rectorque Gehennae, universis sociis regni nostri, filiis Superbiae, praecipue modernae Ecclesiae principibus, de qua noster adversarius Ihesus Christus per prophetam praedixit: *Odivi ecclesiam malignantium*, salutem quam vobis optamus et nostris obedire mandatis ac prout incepistis legibus parere Sathanae ac nostri iuris praecepta iugiter observare.⁷⁰

The letter of Pierre Ceffons enjoyed extraordinary diffusion already in the fourteenth century, with more than two hundred manuscript copies known today – the only exception in the preservation pattern of fictitious political

⁶⁷ Feng, *Devil's letters*, 375-7 for the edition and 245-9 for some remarks on the text.

⁶⁸ HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2^o, f. 344r.

⁶⁹ HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2^o, f. 342r.

⁷⁰ Schabel, "Lucifer princeps," 168. The biblical passage is taken from Ps. 26:5.

letters, which are otherwise transmitted in only a handful of manuscripts – and therefore functioned as a model for most of the later letters of the Devil.⁷¹

The *salutatio* mentions the cardinalate of Clement VII, to which Robert de Genève had been elevated by Gregory XI on 31 May 1371.⁷² Clement's papal dignity, on the contrary, is never referred to. While Gregory XI is called "the damned vicar" (which makes it clear that the author had no animosity towards the French pope), it is interesting to note that Clement VII is only mentioned by his name and is addressed as "dearest son". The author was likely familiar with the teachings of *ars dictaminis* for the writing of the letters in the name of the pontiff, the only one who could refer to any of his addressees with such formula.⁷³ The Devil is acting as Clement's superior, as if he were impersonating a pontiff who addresses one of his faithful servants in an official letter. This leads to the third element of interest of this *salutatio*: its adherence to the phrasing in use in chancery environments. Here again the *Epistola Clementis* reveals the influence of the *Epistola Luciferi*, whose author, who had worked in the chancery of the king of France, made vast use of his knowledge of official formularies to expose the iniquities of the papal curia.⁷⁴ This letter was not the first to exploit this parodic device: another Devil's letter written between 1266 and 1268 also replicated the phrasing of an official papal document to upbraid the misbehaviours of the mendicant friars as well as those of the pope, who defended them.⁷⁵ The *Epistola Clementis* fits perfectly, although with its own peculiarities, into the framework of this distinctive literature. This letter, in fact, does not so much parody official formularies as it aims to emulate an official document:

*Abissus multa caritas nostra, quam <ab> infancia erga fastigium nostre potencie sedulis studiis habuistis et, enutriti in illa, crescente tempore fervencius demonstrastis habere, crescente eciam erga nos vestre clare devocionis effectum. Tu igitur specialiter, Roberte dilecte, quem nostro lacte nutritum nostris educavimus laribus quemque in teneris annis tuis dignitatibus, honoribus, diviciis et parentela vallavimus, inter omnes filios orbis terre non ingratus filius extitisti.*⁷⁶

⁷¹ Feng, *Devil's letters*, 450-5 listed the manuscript tradition, to which Schabel, "Lucifer", 173-5 made numerous additions. On this letter's function as a model for later Devil's letters see Feng, *Devil's letters*, 119.

⁷² Dykmans, "Clemente VII," 593-606. Eubel, *Hierarchia*, 21.

⁷³ Rockinger, *Briefsteller*, 730-1 reports that the only cases in which the use of another term ("fratrem") was recommended was for the correspondence between pontiffs and cardinals or patriarchs.

⁷⁴ Schabel, "Lucifer," 171: "Iam enim prae multitudine quam nobis continue destinatis, his obscuris recessibus multipliciter occupati, vobis in terris superius committimus vices nostras et volumus vos esse nostros vicarios et ministros, quia etiam de missione propinqua Antichristi cogitamus, cui viam optime praeparatis".

⁷⁵ The edition in Wattenbach, "Über erfundene Briefe," 104-16. The text has been reproduced without modifications by Feng, *Devil's letters*, 336-53. On this letter see also Lehmann, *Die Parodie*, 88-90 and Dronke, "The land of Cokayne," 273.

⁷⁶ HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2^o, c. 342v.

The *narratio* opens with a biblical quote (here in italics), taken literally from Psalm 35.7: “iudicium tuum abissus multa”, which is reshaped to serve the Devil’s purpose of substituting his “caritas” to God’s “iudicium”. While the teachings of *ars dictaminis* had made it fairly common to open a letter with a quote from the Bible in order to summarise and explicit the intent of the missive,⁷⁷ the choice of this specific passage is interesting as Psalm 35 revolves around the reprehension of the wicked who has no fear of God before his eyes (“Dixit scelus impij in medio cordis eius, non esse timorem Dei ante oculos eius”).⁷⁸ This prepares the reader for what is to come, that is the reconstruction of Robert de Genève’s past – who is now addressed directly with a vocative, the only one employed in this letter, while the praise of having been nurtured in the Devil’s affection also referred to the wider audience of Robert’s peers – which is read in the light of the cardinal’s association to the Devil. To organise the *exordium* as an historical reconstruction of the efforts of the Devil to subdue Christendom is another element in common with the *Epistola Luciferi*.⁷⁹ A reference is made to the time when Robert was appointed papal legate for Romagna and the March of Ancona, a position that the cardinal held from 27 May 1376 to 13 March 1378. The Genevan had the challenging task of restoring the authority of the Church in the area after the revolts of the papal cities.⁸⁰ The *Epistola Clementis*, after recalling the destruction of Jerusalem by the emperors Titus and Vespasian, praises the cardinal for having pretended to comply with Gregory XI’s orders and for having brought havoc to the most part of Italy.⁸¹ The list of the cardinal’s enterprises in the Peninsula goes on:

et tecum propterea gentes nostris beneplacitis servientes in destructionem Ytalie, cuius pars non minima contraria est nostris operibus, adducendo et ipsam Ytaliā vastari diligentius procurando. Tu quoque in ipsa, ut eam nostre subiceres dicioni, prout iam fecisti, pro parte dissessiones, divisiones et scandala posuisti et nonnullas civitates, castra et loca insignia per gentes prefatas destrui et vastari fecisti, eorum incolis trucidatis, et <ut> multarum gentium multitudinem <ad> nostrorum fidelium consortia aggregares et ut multiplicatos manipulos ad aream nostri erarii deportares.⁸²

⁷⁷ Hartmann, *Ars dictaminis*, 13-5.

⁷⁸ Ps. 35, 1-3.

⁷⁹ Schabel, “Lucifer,” 168: “Dudum quidem Christi vicarii, sequentes eius vestigia, signis et virtutibus coruscantes, et degentes sub quadam paupere vita, per ipsorum praedicationes et opera quasi totum mundum a nostra tyrannidis iugo ad suam converterunt doctrinam et vitam, in nostri Tartarei regni elisionem maximam et contemptum necnon in nostrae iurisdictionis non modicum praeiudicium et gravamen, non verentes nostram laedere potestatem et terrificam nostri principatus offendere maiestatem”.

⁸⁰ Dykmans, “Clemente VII,” 224-5. Eubel, *Hierarchia*, 21.

⁸¹ HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2°, c. 342v: “Tu eciam nobis graves per Tytum et Vespasianum in Iherusalem illatas iniurias ob crucifixi predicti intuitum et amorem, nuper missus ad Lombardie partes per vicarium crucifixi, eius recusans parere mandatis (licet illa fingeres impleturum), sagaciter vendicasti triginta animas uno denario, prout inimici nostri prius contra nos fecerunt venundando”.

⁸² HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2°, c. 342v.

Italy, that was stubbornly opposing the designs of the Devil (a reference to the alignment of the Peninsula with the urbanist obedience), had suffered division and devastation because of the actions of the cardinal. The mention of the massacre of citizens refers to the direst moment of Robert's office as papal legate. Between February 2 and 3, 1377, the population of Cesena rebelled against the continuous harassments of the papal mercenary troops who were supposed to defend the citizens. In order to quell the rebellion, Robert summoned the English mercenary John Hawkwood: his company, over the next three days, not only killed the rebels, but also exterminated the defenceless population, which according to contemporary reports was completely annihilated.⁸³ The Devil's letter thus refers to a contemporary event which had had a huge impact on contemporaries. Even though its narration was greatly exaggerated by the anti-papal propaganda (first and foremost by the Florentine chancellor Coluccio Salutati), this event stained the reputation of the Genevan cardinal in the eyes of the Italians and contributed to preventing him from mustering the support he longed for after his election.⁸⁴

Let us now take a first look at the *Invectiva* against Urban VI, starting with a few words on why we refer to this text as "invective", although no such definition is extant in the manuscript. The Middle Ages are peppered with scathing and sometimes defamatory writings in which the addressees are often openly insulted in the roughest of terms. The invective, a literary typology that was defined since Plautus and Cicero, peaked in the fifteenth century thanks to the flow of literary – and political – libels written by the Italian humanists; such writings, which take various forms both in verse and prose, are characterised by a harsh and direct language to attack political opponents and to stir up antagonism against them or their peers and sometimes overlap with the so-called *Streitschriften*, a term usually employed to refer to political controversies.⁸⁵ The writing against Urban VI meets all these criteria, both formally (its language and choice of terms are well-refined) and in light of its content, which is a scathing *tirade* against the pope, who is pictured as the worse evil that could befall Christendom. In this regard, the term invective refers to a text whose aim was to slander a political opponent by means of a direct, bitter and sometimes vicious terminology coupled with a highly-re-

⁸³ Dykmans, "Clemente VII," 225-6: "Ancora l'anno successivo, così riportano i cronisti contemporanei, nei granai, nelle cisterne, sul greto dei fiumi, si trovavano i miseri resti delle vittime dell'eccidio". The events that led to the massacre are explained in more detail in Caferro, *John Hawkwood*, 188-90. See also Valois, *La France*, 80-1; Rollo-Koster, "Civil violence," 55. Cohn, *Lust for liberty*, 103-4 quotes a passage from the contemporary *Cronaca Malatestiana* that refers to this event. Ullmann, *The origins*, 162-3 describes Robert's behaviour in this regard as "cold-blooded disregard for the fundamentals of human morality".

⁸⁴ Jamme, "Réseaux," 261-84 edits a series of letters written by Clement VII shortly after his election and addressed to some communes of the Apennine area (Osimo and San Severino) in which the pontiff stressed his love for the people of Italy despite his direct involvement in the massacre of Cesena a few years earlier. On Salutati's reaction to the massacre, see Peterson, "The war," 200.

⁸⁵ Laureys, "Per una storia," 18.

finned literary style: as Marc Laureys has efficaciously summarised, the invective should not be so much considered “come un modello letterario, ovvero un genere», but should be related «alla prassi letteraria di caratterizzare negativamente delle persone».⁸⁶ The anonymous author expresses his contempt for the former archbishop in an elaborate *exordium* that stresses the former’s rhetorical skills:

Inhumane homo (nescio enim quo decenciori tytulo valeas insigniri, qui nichil humanitatis possides nisi formam), volenti michi sepius ad te scribere, iam manui calamum apponenti ut te ipsum et tua scelera ostenderem, que ut puto cum lacte suxisti sic illa maxima familiaritate coniuncta sunt, et incipienti forte ab uno se aliud opponebat, et – cur id tacerem? – quod principalius tui habebat potestatem querebat, et iterum ab alio et deinde ab alio inchoanti se alia offerebant conquerencia se postponi.⁸⁷

The *Invectiva* opens by rhetorically claiming the difficulty of putting into words all the crimes of Urban VI, which, as the quoted passage goes, the pontiff had sucked along with his mother’s milk (an image that also recurred in the *Epistola Clementis*). The author starts by addressing Urban with a vocative, thus exhibiting one of the most recurring stylistic features of this text; by contrast, the vocative (of the name of birth) had been employed only once in the *Epistola Clementis* to refer to the Avignonese pope, who throughout the text is always mentioned by means of pronouns. Moreover, while the Devil always speaks of himself in the plural – a consequence of the letter’s adherence to chancery writing style – the anonymous author of the *Invectiva*, in the few places where he reveals his writing self (such as the beginning of the quoted passage: “nescio”, “michi”), employs the singular in order to cast his accusations in a more direct way as well as to weave a lively, personal discourse with Urban. Urban VI is presented as wrathful and hot-tempered, an image of the pope that can be juxtaposed to the one from several of the aforementioned contemporary sources.⁸⁸

Tu autem dum a superbie stimulo agitaris, colorem mutas, os torques spumamque iactas, frontem contrahis, spandis frequencia verba, et oculos accensis lampadibus similes tenes.⁸⁹

In the *exordium* the author had confessed the impossibility of picking a specific crime to start with: now cruelty is chosen as the most regrettable of Urban’s evils. While the Devil’s letter had briefly referred to characters from the Roman antiquity (the emperors Titus and Vespasianus), this invective insists at length on the comparison of Urban VI to another classical figure whose cruelty had prompted anecdotes since the antiquity: Hannibal. Two episodes of savagery that allegedly occurred after the battle of Cannes are

⁸⁶ Laureys, “Per una storia,” 13.

⁸⁷ HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2^o, c. 344r.

⁸⁸ An interesting example of such behaviour in Ullmann, *The origins*, 46, who reports that “the pope was blazing like a lamp” to describe his violent reaction during a consistory.

⁸⁹ HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2^o, c. 344r.

recalled: when the Carthaginian leader built a bridge over the river Vergello with the corpses of Roman soldiers and when Hannibal ordered the amputation of the exhausted Roman prisoners' toes (both probably taken from the historical work of Valerius Maximus, the only Roman historian which reports this same episode to describe Hannibal's cruelty):⁹⁰

Offert se superbie tue ministra et executrix crudelitas de se fieri mencionem, postulans que recto iudicio exaudienda est, tametsi crudelis. Legimus Hanibalem quod ponte super Gello flumine, Romanis corporibus facto, suum transvexerit exercitum, et itinere omnes fessos romanos captivos prima parte pedum succisa relinquerit.⁹¹

The *Invectiva* also parallels the *Epistola Clementis* as it turns to the example of a Roman emperor to describe the personality of the former archbishop of Bari, who is compared to Nero before insisting on the juxtaposition with Hannibal:

Si Claudium Neronem tam crudelem fuisse comperimus ut matrem propriam scindi iusserit et Urbem diversis in locis mandaverit incendi, ipsorum tamen nullus crudelitate ac sevicia te equavit. Sevīt Hanibal paganus, poenus, miles in hostes; tu christianus, italus, clericus, non in hostes sevisti, sed in tuos. Quippe quem antiepiscopum Aquilanum feceras, non itinere fesso aut onere, non primam partem pedum succidi, sed eum coram tuis ad id intentis oculis gladiis occidi iussisti. Infelix tali animi concitacione, infelicior mandato tam crudeli, infelicissimus spectaculo tam horrendo. Ubi vero umquam legimus Hanibalem in commilitones suos sevisse ut eos fecerit post diros carceres et tormentorum diversa genera vivos sepeliri quod tu, fama referente, facere non erubuisti de hiis quos prius fratres nominabas.⁹²

Notwithstanding the similarity in the subject chosen, this passage is stylistically dissimilar to the one in the *Epistola Clementis*, whose phrasing followed the chancery practice more closely. This invective, instead, is characterised by a nearly-poetic style which recalls the humanistic letter-writing features that would soon replace, in official and private correspondence, the rigidity of the precepts of medieval *ars dictaminis*.⁹³ Some of the features of this writing style will be mentioned in the course of this paper following the studies of Ronald Witt and Clémence Révest, but this passage's highly-refined phrasing already presents some of these key-features, which demonstrate the author's rhetorical and literary skills. The first is the set of three adjectives referred to Hannibal, which are mirrored in the corresponding ones referred to Urban; the second is the recall of the ablative absolute «*itinere fesso*» from

⁹⁰ Valerius Maximus, *Memorable doings*, 314: "Eorum dux Hannibal, cuius maiore ex parte virtus saevitia constabat, in flumine <Ver>gello corporibus Romanis ponte facto exercitum transduxit, ut aequae terrestrium scelestum Carthaginiensium copiarum ingressum Terra quam maritimarum Neptunus experiretur. Idem captivos nostros oneribus et itinere fessos [iam] prima pedum parte succisa relinquebat". Scholars have confronted the historical reliability of such anecdotes about Hannibal's cruelty: see in particular Pomeroy, "Hannibal" and Canter, "The character."

⁹¹ HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2°, c. 344r.

⁹² HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2°, cc. 344r-v.

⁹³ Révest, *Romam veni*, 310 speaks in this regard of the "carcans de l'*ars dictaminis*".

the previous passage, which is no longer considered to be a justification for the criminal behaviour of the prelate, as one could suppose in judging Hannibal's treatment of Roman prisoners, who could not walk anymore because of exhaustion; eventually, a third interesting element is the *climax* of the adjective *infelix* referred to Urban which underlines the crescendo of the cruelty of the pope's conduct: it starts from the moment when the criminal action was conceived, passes through the order that was given and ends in the dreadful vision of the slaughtered cleric. But who is this unfortunate victim? Just as the *Epistola Clementis* evoked the massacre of Cesena for which Robert de Genève was held co-responsible, one of the darkest moments in the pontificate of Urban VI is recalled here. After the double election, the pope set up to rebuild his consensus in the Peninsula from his native city, Naples. He appointed several Neapolitan cardinals and supported king Charles III of Durazzo in his struggle for the crown of Naples against Queen Joanna, who was excommunicated in 1379 because of her support to the claims of Louis I of Anjou (brother of the French king Charles V) to the Neapolitan throne.⁹⁴ This policy, however, did not prevent the occurrence of bitter clashes both with the college of cardinals and with Charles III. The relations with Charles III had already deteriorated by 1383 because of the latter's support to some cardinals that were critical towards Urban's conduct. Despite a temporary rapprochement between the pope and the king, the following year Urban excommunicated Charles III and his wife, queen Margaret.⁹⁵ In the same year the pope (in the castle of Nocera, which he had granted to his nephew Francis Prignano along with several other fiefs) imprisoned and tortured five cardinals who were under Charles III's protection: Urban had uncovered a plan by which the prelates (allegedly) intended to depose him in light of his mental incapacity.⁹⁶ The aforementioned passage thus refers to one of the prelates who had been imprisoned, the archbishop of L'Aquila Clemente Secenaria, appointed by Urban VI in opposition to Bernardo da Teramo, who had turned to the Avignonese side.⁹⁷

The tortures of the archbishop are known thanks to a letter of queen Margaret dated at the end of January 1385. The queen wrote that the pope: "immediate et publice suspendi [fecit] in eculeo et acriter tormentari, non ut antiquum decretorum doctorem et presulem, sed ut latronem insignem"⁹⁸. The letter goes on to describe some of the tortures to which the cardinals were

⁹⁴ Ullmann, *The origins*, 95.

⁹⁵ Fodale, *La politica*, 80-96.

⁹⁶ Fodale, *La politica*, 97-131. Ullmann, *The origins*, 167-8.

⁹⁷ Sabatini, "Da Teramo, Berardo," 789. Clement was not the only representative of the Church of L'Aquila to suffer the wrath of Urban VI. His predecessor, Stefano Sidonio (or *de Montilio*), appointed by Gregory XI in 1377, had turned to the Avignonese obedience. As Eubel, *Hierarchia*, 98 reports, Urban VI on 3 October 1381 summoned him to Rome and referred to him as "olim episcopum Aquilani". After his deposition the bishop took refuge in Perugia, but the militia sent by the pope found him and killed him: see D'Avino, *Cenni storici*, 23.

⁹⁸ The text is quoted from Sauerland, *Aktenstücke*, 822.

also subjected, which sketches an image of Urban's wrath that can be juxtaposed to the one the *Invectiva* had laid out:

Eos alligare vinculis iussit, humo cubare, pauca et mala alimonia tradi (...) Et cum se pocius conspiceret vinci quam vincere, ad alia tormenta convertit et in ora aliquorum et nares acetum et calcem precepit habundanter infundi et a carnificibus delicata corpora inhumaniter pertractari, aliis calamos in unguibus figi et reliquis fune tempora premi.⁹⁹

Urban VI is not only described as a violent and cruel man, but also as someone who is totally unsuited to the papal dignity. The fate of the cardinals remained shrouded in mystery, but the German polemist Dietrich von Niem – who was working at Urban VI's side in these years – has it that they were eventually killed.¹⁰⁰ Another point in common between this invective and the first lines of the *Epistola Clementis* is the description of the devastation caused to Italy by the pontiff's policy, for which the author turns once more to the comparison between Urban VI and the emperor Nero:

Nero preterea in multis locis urbem iussit incendi. Tu eam totam non materiali igne, quia defuit voluntati potencia, sed inextinguibili rancorum et odiorum igne ipsam Urbem non tantum solam, sed plurimas non tantummodo urbes sed et patrias et nationes incendisti. Quod si de materiali igne loqui libet, interroga Neapolim commiseram que te produxit, interroga Campaniam Maritimam, Patrimonium, ducatum Spoletanum, Marchiam, Romandiolam, Tusciam, et omnia climata mundi, ad que tua rabies potuit pervenire: fatebuntur profecto tuas flammam et tuum ferrum se expertas, et in dies amplius experiri. Dicerem postremo Deum omnipotentem interroga, qui cuncta prospicit, cuncta videt.¹⁰¹

Urban VI had had no qualms about acting cruelly against those whom he had once called his brothers (the archbishop of L'Aquila and the dissident cardinals) and his actions brought devastation throughout Italy. Naples leads the list not only because it is the birthplace of the pope, but especially because of Urban's ruthless behaviour in the conflict between Louis of Anjou and Charles III. The pope had disregarded the impact of this conflict on the local community and had exploited his Neapolitan ally for his own schemes (among which the granting of several territories to his nephew). Two other passages, besides the killing of the archbishop of L'Aquila, are crucial in establishing a *terminus*

⁹⁹ Sauerland, *Aktenstücke*, 823.

¹⁰⁰ Dietrich had become, by the moment he set to work on the *De schismate* in 1409-10, a fierce opponent of the memory of the Neapolitan pope. The passage concerning the cardinals is in Niem, *De schismate*, 110: "quadam nocte infra paucos dies, antequam de Janua huiusmodi recederet, de mense Decembri, ut quidam retulerunt, securi eos perculti seu mactari, aliqui autem dixerunt, quod in mari eos praecipitari fecit. Sed qualitercunque sit, utique ipsi quinque cardinales postea non videbantur. Dicebatur enim a multis, quod in stabulo equorum dicti Urbani in quadam fossa repleta calce viva eorum corpora proiecta et in eadem totaliter combusta et in cineres conversa fuerant". On the fate of the cardinals see Ullmann, *The origins*, 168.

¹⁰¹ HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2°, c. 344v.

a quo for the writing of the *Invectiva*. The first is a brief reference to the Hospitallers of Rhodes:

Nisi forte putes Iohannem Baptistam tibi patrocinio non defuturum, cuius religionem in fidei propugnaculum conditam funditus destruxisti, hiis qui in Rodio sunt redditus subtrahendo et pueros ordinando religionis sue ministros, quos eodem momento professos facis et priores.¹⁰²

Urban is accused of having diminished the income of the Order and of having substituted the chiefs of the Hospitallers with “pueros”, which is why John the Baptist – the Order’s saint – has abandoned the pope’s side. The author refers to the troubled scenario faced by the Order in the first years of the Schism. Fernandez de Handia, the Master General elected in 1377 by pope Gregory XII, was a Clementist and had managed to secure the Order to the French pope since 1379.¹⁰³ Urban attempted to extend his influence over the Hospitallers and deposed the master General in 1382, replacing him with one of his fellow Neapolitans, Riccardo Caracciolo, in 1383.¹⁰⁴ Although the Roman pope ultimately did not manage to win the Hospitallers in Rhodes to his side, some of the Italian preceptories did join the Urbanist obedience in 1384 after a Chapter General was held in Naples that year; this resulted in some of the revenues (*responsiones*) that were to be sent to Rhodes to be withheld, and at the same time several members of the Order who had joined the Clementist side were replaced.¹⁰⁵ Although the financial stability of the Order was not jeopardised as a result (the latter relied chiefly on the French priories’ contributions),¹⁰⁶ it is likely that the events of 1384 prompted the author to insert this reference as testimony of one of the many ways in which Urban had set out to destroy the Church and its servants. The year 1384 is also indirectly referred to in another passage which recalls the marriage of two of the pope’s nieces – who were forcedly taken out of their monasteries – which took place in January 1384 in Naples during the brief period of rapprochement between Urban and Charles III.¹⁰⁷

Aut forte putas ubi presidio fore inclitam illam atque beatam verginem Claram, cui duas neptes tuas, annis pluribus sibi sacratas, abstulisti atque mortalibus maritis coniunxisti, que sponso immortalis se voverunt?¹⁰⁸

Both passages enhance the framework of Urban’s impiety: the author has skilfully pictured two saints, John the Baptist and Clare of Assisi – allegedly, the pope’s nieces had joined the latter’s Order, the Poor Clares, although no

¹⁰² HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2°, c. 344v.

¹⁰³ Luttrell, “Intrigue,” 32.

¹⁰⁴ Luttrell, “Intrigue,” 41.

¹⁰⁵ Luttrell, “Intrigue,” 42-6.

¹⁰⁶ Luttrell, “Intrigue,” 34.

¹⁰⁷ Fodale, *La politica*, 100. The nieces were Beritella and Cicella, see Prerovsky, *L’elezione*, 5.

¹⁰⁸ HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2°, c. 344v.

specific information is available on this – as having abandoned the Roman pope due to the latter’s wicked actions against their Orders.

It is now time to turn to the Devil’s letter again. After recalling Robert de Genève’s activity as papal legate in Italy, the attention is laid on the events after the parting of Gregory XI (a corrupted passage is now extant which we marked with two *crucis*: for a detailed discussion on this see the *note to the text*):

Tu quoque defuncto Gregorio, nostri sepedicti inimici vicario, arcessitis tibi Ambranensi et Sancti Eustachii necnon Maioris Monasterii ac Lemovicensi, tunc eius cardinalibus, et Petro archiepiscopo Arelatensi et nonnullis aliis fidelibus et devotis nostris et presertim predicto Ambranensi, cuiusdam nostri secreti ministri consorcio continue sociato, cum eis multa secreta et utilia consilia habuisti, ut urbem sceleratissimam, nostri nominis inimicam (†oi† in ea nostrorum maiorum inimicorum devotorum crucifixi prefati corpora requiescant), exponeres vastitati, incipiens Castrum cuiusdam Angeli nuncupati contra dictam urbem et quemdam vicarium crucifixi predicti facere rebellari.¹⁰⁹

The cardinals that are listed are Jean de la Grange, bishop of Amiens, Pierre Flandrin, bishop of Viviers, Géraud Dupuy, abbot of the Benedictine convent of Marmoutier and Jean de Cros, bishop of Limoges and senior penitentiary. After them comes the chamberlain of Gregory XI, Pierre de Cros, who was present at the publication of the *Declaratio* on 9 August (he would also be made cardinal on 23 December 1383).¹¹⁰ The Devil is recalling what happened after the second election of Bartolomeo Prignano, when most of the cardinals fled from the conclave and took refuge in Castel Sant’Angelo. The historical reconstruction of the *Epistola Clementis* is interesting because it conveys a significantly different picture from the one of contemporary reports. The Roman mob, which occupies a foremost place in both the Urbanist and Clementine testimonies, is never mentioned here, and no reference is made to any disorders either. On the contrary, the French cardinals are portrayed as the instigators of the opposition to the newly elected, an opposition which started from the moment the cardinals took refuge in Castel Sant’Angelo. The plots and conspiracies which Clementine reports attributed to the archbishop of Naples (who allegedly angled with the Banderesi for bolstering his election) are now laid entirely on the cardinals, whose undisputed leader in such conspiracy was Robert de Genève. Even the Urbanist testimonies did not portray the French cardinals in these terms and merely downplayed the violence of the Roman mob. The *Epistola Clementis* delves deeper into this partisan reconstruction of the events and holds Robert accountable for the instigation of his supporters, who allegedly killed many Roman citizens from Castel Sant’Angelo. This is a reference to the moment when cardinal

¹⁰⁹ HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2°, c. 342v.

¹¹⁰ Eubel, *Hierarchia*, 21. Valois, *La France*, 55 speaks of the flight of the cardinals to Castel S. Angelo after the election of Prignano but does not mention du Puy, de la Grange and Pierre de Cros.

Pedro de Luna was returning from the conclave, a crowd of citizens joyously accompanying him: the garrison of Castel Sant'Angelo mistakenly considered the Spaniard to be the Romans' hostage and attacked the citizens.¹¹¹ The letter then follows the events chronologically and focuses on Robert de Genève's whereabouts during the summer:

Postremum, ut nostrum fidelissimum et constantissimum te ostenderes filium, dimissa sepedicta urbe, versus Anagni et civitatem Fundorum, ut gentes illarum parcium ad nostram benivolenciam et obedienciam traheres, te cum predictis et aliis nostris fidelibus transtulisti, quod nobis extitit pre omnibus gracios: ob amorem nostri nominis te contra prefatum vicarium ipsius crucifixi virili animo erexisti et consuetum nomen ipsius vicarii assumpsisti ut scisma, heresim, scandalum nobis gratissima poneris inter credentes nomini crucifixi predicti in omnibus finibus orbis terre et alios at<t>raheres similia faciendi.¹¹²

The actions of the dissident cardinals are presented as intended to deceive Christendom from the beginning. The most interesting element, however, is the assertion that such evil deeds not only fostered the schism, but heresy as well. The association between schism and heresy is a ticklish issue that would be at the centre of heated juridical and theological debates in the following decades. The two terms would be gradually associated with each other, which eventually led to the conclusion that anyone, even a pontiff, who fomented or defended the schism was a heretic and should be punished as such.¹¹³ The first hints of this assimilation would make their way into the juridical and theological reflection after the outbreak of the schism: the thought of intellectuals active at the University of Paris (among which Henry of Langenstein, Conrad of Gelnhausen, Pierre d'Ailly, Gilles des Champs) are of foremost importance

¹¹¹ HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2°, fol 342v: "et demum prefatas tuas gentes, magnam gentem prefate sceleratissime urbis interreptam gladio, ad nostram curiam transmittendo studuisti". On this event see Ullmann, *The origins*, 20.

¹¹² HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2°, cc. 342v-343r.

¹¹³ The peak of this reflection is exemplified in a *consilium* by the university of Bologna between 1407 and 1408, edited in Martene and Durand, *Thesaurus*, 894-7 and whose *incipit* reads as follows: "scisma antiquatum licet a principio sit scisma, eius tamen per durationem et obstinationem in fine transit in haeresim". Two passages from the already mentioned English treatise on schism are also worth mentioning in this regard (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 188, f. 65v): "Secundo videndum est que dampna ex hoc scismate contigerunt et que pericula imminent in futurum. Unde constat quod inter cetera mala, duo pessima contingerunt, et timendum est quod sunt duo verisimiliter eventura. Unum malum quod contigit et omni die contingit est fidelium animarum perplexitas, aliud est hereticarum opinionum varietas". The treatise then continues on this line on cc. 66r-v (the integration in brackets is mine): "Et imminet duo mala futura, videlicet, diuturnioris scismatis verisimilis introductio et fidei salvationis apud fideles multiformis et offendiculosa delusio sive diffamatio. Circa primum considerandum est, quod cum ambo contententes de papatu mutuo in seipsos et in sibi mutuo adherentes censuras tulerint et cotidie ferunt horribiles, necesse est, quod censure illius qui verus est, quatenus rite et recte late sunt, obligent censuratos, cum ille sit iudex ordinarius omnium atque pastor, cuius sententia sive iusta <sive> iniusta est timenda et cetera. Item, tam antipapa quam sibi adherentes sunt reputati scismatici et per hoc tam a iure excommunicabiles quam a papa excommunicati et per consequens tamquam pro peccato mortali reputati, omni respiscant damnandi, cum iuxta canones non nisi pro mortali excommunicari quis debeat, ergo credens leges ecclesie locum habere non debeat dum perplexa pericula tot animarum considerant".

in this.¹¹⁴ The fact that the *Epistola Clementis* refers to this juxtaposition introduces the issue of the letter's chronology. Right after the quoted passage the Devil promises Robert the reward for his services ("magna et multa propterea nostre remuneraciones premia promereris")¹¹⁵ and states that it will go no further in dealing with the evil deeds of the Avignonese pope, who has more (wicked) plans for the future: "Et quia hec et multa alia, que longum essent narrare, fecisti et disponis facere animosius in futurum".¹¹⁶ The letter was therefore written within the limits of the pontificate of the Genevan, which ended with his death on 16 September 1394. The letter ends abruptly after these lines, but it is likely that the missing part is not extensive: it is well known that the mention of a future reward marks the conclusion of an epistle according to the medieval manuals of *ars dictaminis*.¹¹⁷ In this regard, the phrasing "hec et multa alia" should be understood as a strategy that leaves the stage open for Clement VII's future crimes: the public was thus led to believe that the crimes that had been exposed so far were only a small part of Robert de Genève's actions. This makes it likely that the *Epistola Clementis* was written in the aftermath of the election of September 20, when Clement VII was striving to muster consensus in the Peninsula to be recognised as the legitimate pontiff.¹¹⁸ It is reasonable to assume that this letter had the intent to discourage such plans by insisting on the crimes of the Avignonese pope. In fact, a document such as the *Epistola Clementis* could reach the peak of its propagandistic mission as long as it was read in the same moment of the events that it narrated – this same strategy was also employed by another fictitious political letter in 1313.¹¹⁹ It was in the author's interest that his audience remembered well the events of the election, so that the aversion towards the Genevan cardinal that permeates the letter could be mirrored in its readers, the Italian adherents of Urban VI.¹²⁰

Let us now turn one last time to the *Invectiva* against Urban VI before drawing some general conclusions. The invective intensifies the level of accusations against the pontiff and criticises the latter's nepotistic policy in favour of Francis Prignano:

Una forte racio te poterit excusare, si non tibi, sed inclite prosapie tue, uni superstiti nepoti tuo thesaurisare te dicas, cui quod fecisti iudicium fuit tuum insanum amorem recti amoris nescire fines. Digna est indubie excusatio tua si enim talem virum nobis <potest> videri novum Chatonem, novum Scipionem, novum Cesarem, novum Cycleronem continencia, maiestate, strenuitate et eloquencia, thesauros ecclesiarum et si quos alios potes, confers. Notus est homo, tantis muneribus dignus, propter quem

¹¹⁴ Again, this topic goes beyond the scope of this essay. Some fundamental studies on this are Bosworth, "The changing concept." Millet, "L'hérésie." Fois, "Lecclesiologia."

¹¹⁵ HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2°, c. 343r.

¹¹⁶ HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2°, c. 343r.

¹¹⁷ Rockinger, *Briefsteller*, 368.

¹¹⁸ See Jamme, "Réseaux," 269-76 on Clement VII's hopes of gaining support in Italy as well as on the communication strategies of the two pontiffs in these years.

¹¹⁹ Bonomelli, "Un trattato."

¹²⁰ A similar argument is also made by Feng, *Devil's letters*, 249.

templa sanctorum liceat spoliare, quem qui viderit non mirabitur tali patrono fore nepotem.¹²¹

Urban VI is also chastised on the ground of his carnal vices: “Itaque unum notorium dicam, ceteris silencio datis, quod impudica quevis mulier se facilius a viris abstineret, quam tu vir a viris: vide quam mite tecum ago, qui uno articulo sum contentus”.¹²² When it comes to gluttony, the *Invectiva* relies once more on the use of metaphors from the antiquity, which underlines the proximity of this text to the humanistic literary sensibility: “De gula agendum esset, cuius iudicium non est respectu absentium, sed eorum qui tibi assunt, qui frequencius te Bachi et Cerer<i>s templa frequentare vident, quam Iovis et Palladis, decet vero an<n>ectere aliis”.¹²³

The text goes on and mentions envy, wrath and sloth as well as the falsity of the pontiff. While the *Epistola Clementis* ended with the promise of the rewards (“premia”) to the already damned Clement VII, the invective leaves a faint glimmer for the salvation of Urban VI’s soul, as long as he impetrates it to God and Clement VII:

Hiis paucis tecum agere volui, que ex magno acervo tuorum scelerum decerpsi, non ut ita me magnificem, quod ad meum ululatum te mutare existimem, que Demostenis eloquencia aut Cyconis irrita propositi faceres, sed ut scias omnibus, sicut et mihi, omnia predicta fore nota, tantoque magis aliis qui sensu habundant et intellectu, quibus me carere agnosco. Et si preter spem eveniret ut te ipsum et errorem tuum recognoscens, ad Deum, qui semper misericors est, recurreres, et clementissimum eius vicarium dominum Clementem pro delicti venia orares, magni pretii sui esset mea oratio, que tuam et sequencium te animas potens esset in spem salutis adducere.¹²⁴

The conciseness of these accusations is justified by the meekness – another rhetorical excuse that parallels the purported impossibility, at the beginning, to pick a specific crime to start from – that prevents the author from fully exposing all of Prignano’s evil deeds. The fact that Urban VI is persuaded to repent makes clear that the pontiff was still alive at that time: the chronology can therefore be placed between 1384 and December 1389.

3. Conclusions

The first element that emerges from the reading of the *Invectiva* is its affinity to the humanistic letter-writing sensibility. Some stylistic elements are of foremost importance in this regard, such as the frequent alternance of short periods introduced by vocatives and exclamations and longer, more intricate phrases, all of which confers rhythm to the discourse. Another point

¹²¹ HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2^o, c. 345r.

¹²² HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2^o, cc. 345r-v.

¹²³ HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2^o, c. 345v.

¹²⁴ HAB, Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2^o, c. 345v.

is the constant presence of classical references – Hannibal, Cicero, Demosthenes, Caesar, Cato, Nero among the humans, Jupiter, Athena, Bacchus, Ceres among the deities in a two-*folii* text – to exemplify the vices of Urban VI and to contrast them with the ancients’ virtues; it is also important to recall the highly polished structure of some passages (like the one on the torture of Clemente Secernaria). In more general terms, the harshness of the language used to cast the accusations against Urban, peppered with insults and scathing remarks, is also one of the key-aspects of humanistic invectives.¹²⁵ All these elements combine to release the fullness of the invective’s chastising potential. The abovementioned features coincide with some of the stylistic peculiarities identified by Clémence Revest in her analysis of humanistic letter-writing at the beginning of the 15th century (although more in-depth research on this subject should be carried out, especially in relation to the *cursus* of the *Invectiva*).¹²⁶ This is not to say that the author should be labelled as a “humanist” (a problematic definition that will not be tackled here),¹²⁷ but to stress the writer’s closeness to some of the key-features which, in the following decades, would gradually crystallise to form the humanistic style of letter-writing thanks to those intellectuals who, from their posts in the European chanceries, witnessed the unfolding of the events related to the schism. The literary framework in which these two sources should be understood is not, therefore, one of neat opposition between an “old”, medieval, and “new”, humanistic writing style, but more one of partial juxtaposition and innovation, a framework in which – as Clémence Revest efficaciously summarised – “Il ne s’agissant pas d’une refonte *ex abrupto* de l’épistolographie solennelle curiale [...] plutôt de l’emploi adapté et épisodique de certains aspects, notamment de leurs potentialités de véhémence”.¹²⁸

The author of this bitter invective was likely directly engaged in Clement VII’s environment and was well-versed in rhetoric: it seems reasonable to think of someone active in the Avignonesse curia or in secular chanceries (of Charles V or the Duke of Anjou). These were the best places from where the author could have access to all the information about the Roman pope including his personal history, his policies (he probably read the letter of queen Margaret or a similar account) and, above all, the pontiff’s clashes with the college of cardinals and with Charles III. The author skilfully mixed historically verifiable information with malicious rumours (among which the passage on Urban’s sexual lechery) and built a narration in which Urban VI is portrayed as an impostor, a hypocrite and a threat to Italy and the whole of Christendom. Given the lack of other testimonies of this letter, it is hard to grasp its intended public. Nonetheless, if the proposed chronology is correct,

¹²⁵ Laureys, *Per una storia*, 14.

¹²⁶ Witt, “Medieval “Ars Dictaminis”.” Revest, *Romam veni*, 306-11. See also Burton, “From ars dictaminis.”

¹²⁷ Revest, *Romam veni*, 59-60.

¹²⁸ Revest, *Romam veni*, 310.

this was the period in which the hopes that the Avignonese obedience could spread in Italy started to wane after the death of Louis I of Anjou: a document like this may have been written as a reaction to the strengthening of Urban VI's power in the Peninsula, in the attempt to persuade the Roman pope's adherents to embrace the Avignonese obedience. As the rest of fictitious letters, documents such as these were not set up with the intention of being read by their recipients (only in one case is an – alleged – confirmation of this extant),¹²⁹ but more as open, official letters to be read by anyone who could understand them and was interested in their political implications. Late Medieval invectives have been labelled as “testi che non sono indirizzati alla persona oggetto di critica, ma destinati ad un pubblico che spesso, come nel caso del discorso ingiurioso, è considerato come un giudice”;¹³⁰ this is a valid statement not only for the *Invectiva*, but for the *Epistola Clementis* as well, whose audience and scope were the same as the former. This does not imply that *anyone* could be the recipient of such distinctive literary devices: exactly as it happened with legal treatises or other political documents of the Late Middle Ages, the intended public of these texts was restricted to those specialists who were (often directly) engaged in the conflict of these years; nonetheless, there is also evidence of fictitious political letters having been included in chronicles (both Latin and Vernacular) or translated into the Vernacular centuries after they were written by someone who fully grasped their political intent, which opens to the possibility that these epistles could be made available to a broader public than the one their authors had originally in mind.¹³¹ Moreover, news of the writing of other fictitious political letters was reported in official texts (an English treatise on the schism dating at the end of the 15th century) as well as in later chronicles.¹³² Unfortunately, in the present case one can only speculate that the *Invectiva* and the *Epistola Clementis* were also reported in other sources, but it is reasonable to assume that the former enjoyed a wider

¹²⁹ Clement VI allegedly read the *Epistola Luciferi* according to Matteo Villani and Mathias von Neuemburg: see Villani, *Cronica*, II.48 and Hofmeister, “Die Chronik,” 453-4.

¹³⁰ Laureys, *Per una storia*, 13.

¹³¹ See Bonomelli, “Qui totum sibi vendicat.”

¹³² Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Digby 188, f. 66v: “Alii vero latenter insurgunt personam quasi Sathane induentes, et vice sua loquentes, confingunt epistolas nomine collegii infernalis confectas et prelati ecclesie universalis directas ipsos fratres et socios appellantes, et ad animas fidelium captivandos, ipsos prelatos eorum esse cooperarios astruentes. Numquid tot assertiones horrende cum tanta libertate hiis diebus prodirent, si earum fautores soliditatem iusti regiminis in ecclesia Christi conspicerent? Certe nequaquam”. See also Harvey, *Solutions*, 75; Scase, “Let him be kept.” 62; Feng, *Devil's letters*, 212-3. A Devil's letter written in 1408 is mentioned in a 1498 chronicle, today extant only in printed form, the *Magnum Chronicon*, 346: “Item epistola blasphemia plena scripta fuit in pergameni pelle hirsuta ab una parte et affixa ostio domus confessarii papae, tanquam missa per Sathanam daemonum principem confessorio papae, ut amico Satanae, quod papam a iuramento, quod in conclavi praestitit, ut dicebatur, absolvisset. In qua quidem epistola diabolus nominat sibi dilectissimum et periurum, quae sic incipit: Satanus regnorum Acherontis Imperator, tenebrarum Rex, profundissimae perditionis dux, superbiae princeps, et omnium damnatorum aeternus trucidator, fidelissimo dilecto nostro Iohanni Dominici ordinis praedicatorum perditionis filio”.

circulation than the latter in light of its more ordinary literary form. However, the fact that both, like the vast majority of fictitious political letters from these decades, were copied in a composite manuscript along with crucial documents to the understanding of the political dynamics of the Great Schism,¹³³ testifies to their interest for those intellectuals who were at the forefront of the heated debates around the schism. This is paramount for their political engagement, even though the actual impact of documents such as these on the Late Medieval political scenario must have been minimal. One should consider these sources as a yardstick to gauge the political temperature of their time: they should not be evaluated in light of their impact on wider, international policies, for which one must turn to the mass of official political, legal and theological writings that were circulating in these years.

While some scholars have often labelled fictitious political letters as rhetorical exercises or *divertissements*,¹³⁴ a deeper investigation into documents like the *Epistola Clementis* – around forty such exemplars are extant from the 12th to the 15th century – exhibits a neat separation between these two literary typologies. The profile of the author of the Devil’s letter is in some ways similar to the one of the anonymous that wrote the *Invectiva*: someone who was familiar with the phrasing of official documents – maybe, like Pierre Ceffons, this person had also been employed at chancery, or had at least full knowledge of medieval *dictamen* and letter-writing – even though his rhetorical ability is not comparable to that of the other anonymous. It is likely that this Urbanist partisan was in Rome in April, as one can infer from the details about the manoeuvres of the French cardinals during the night of the election. The *Epistola Clementis* also combines news of real events with rumours that indicate its author’s urbanist partisanship: Robert de Genève is thus pictured in a similar way as Urban VI, a cruel man devoted to lying and deceiving, a servant of the Devil who strives to destroy Christendom. In this regard, the label of “propagandistic documents” becomes clearer. One should not consider this term in the sense that an official, recognised authority intentionally sets up a communication medium intended to influence people’s way of thinking. These two documents have been written by well-versed partisans of the rivaling obediences, each with the intention to cast their political enemies in the vilest possible light: their authors did not disdain any cheap shot to achieve this, they presented rumours as facts and expounded blatantly partisan reconstructions of well-known historical events to justify their own political stance and, at the same time, to belittle the rivalling faction, whose adherents and chief are ruthlessly chastised and presented as the worse evil of Christen-

¹³³ See for example the following manuscripts: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Latin 14643; Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 437; Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod 11804 and Cod. 4971; Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 7305 and Vat. Lat. 3477; Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, Ms.Ex.Vind.Lat. 57; Gdansk, Polska Akademia Nauk Biblioteka Gdańska, Mar. F. 244 and Mar. F. 266; Eichstätt, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. st. 698.

¹³⁴ Günther, “Zur Vorgeschichte,” 649. Delehayé, “Note sur la légende,” 173.

dom. This characteristic makes them comparable to Early Modern polemical libels which, according to Clare Egan “were a blend of fact and fiction at best and if they contained grains of truth, then the public libellous form they took was intentionally misleading to their public audience, and their contents were publicized in order to cause harm”.¹³⁵ This is especially true in the case of the *Invectiva*, whose vitriolic language and defaming attitude adds to its destination of propagandistic libel that could be appreciated by a broader, non-specialistic public with the aim of stirring up evil sentiments against – as well as of taunting – the addressee.¹³⁶ Eventually, the scarce diffusion of the documents of this essay is not, in our opinion, a criterium to reject their authors’ propagandistic intent, which should be assessed according to the intent of the texts and not to the latter’s distribution: these documents were, for their own nature, ephemeral, even more so in an age before the invention of printing, which, coupled with the use of the Vernacular, would make fictitious letters and slanderous invectives more readily available to a wider, non-specialistic public in Early Modern Europe.¹³⁷ Eventually, the circulation of such writings was also probably hampered by the presence of swarming official polemical libels aimed at capturing the attention of the intellectuals who would contribute to the healing of the schism.

A major difference between these two documents lies in their communicative strategies. This period, as Armand Jamme has stated, “favorisa la construction d’espaces spécifiques de subjectivité adaptés aux processus qu’ils alimentaient, et ceci tout spécialement dans un contexte marqué par une compétition entre des modèles rivaux d’autorité politique et religieuse”.¹³⁸ The *Invectiva* is free from the formal boundaries of chancery models: this allows its author to express his rhetorical mastery via a one-to-one dialogue with the pope that resembles a full-fledged humanistic invective.¹³⁹ The *Epistola Clementis*, instead, levels its accusations within the framework of an official document that adheres to the prescriptions of medieval *dictamen*, which is why the Devil’s letter does not indulge in rhetorical figures but exposes the evil deeds of Clement VII somewhat rigidly and without embellishment by relying only on the parodistic mechanism characteristic of the rest of the Devil’s letters, which Paul Lehmann dubbed “satirische[s] Lob” (to disguise reproaches as praises).¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Egan, “Libel,” 76.

¹³⁶ Laureys, *Per una storia*, 13-4: “Sono opere dove l’ingiuria non è lo scopo principale, ma fa parte del processo dialettico intento a trovare una verità superiore, spesso con una dimensione propagandistica o programmatica”.

¹³⁷ The history of fictitious political letters in the Early Modern Era still needs to be investigated. Some useful studies and collection of sources are Niccoli, *Rinascimento*. Schottenloher, *Flugschriften*. Usher Chrisman, *Conflicting visions*.

¹³⁸ Jamme, “Réseaux,” 261-2.

¹³⁹ Laureys, *Per una storia*, 12.

¹⁴⁰ Lehmann, *Die Parodie*, 91-2.

It is well known that, since the thirteenth century, the writing of official documents was closely related to the rhetorical skills of the members of the chancery, who were well-versed in the *ars dictaminis*.¹⁴¹ At the end of the fourteenth century, a different sensibility was gradually emerging in writing those letters that functioned as public documents that were exchanged between political or religious authorities. The imitation of ancient stylistic models was fostered by the spread of humanistic culture and quickly reached the highest circles of European political and intellectual life: this new, classical style would replace, in the following decades, the rigor imposed by the teachings of medieval *dictamen*. If one is to go by Clémence Revest's well-grounded argument that it is only between 1405 and 1406 that one can fully appreciate the presence of the humanistic writing style in official correspondence (thanks to Leonardo Bruni), these two testimonies allow to appreciate the contemporary presence of two different styles for letter-writing at a time when literary ferment – fostered by the political upheavals brought about by the schism –¹⁴² were moving the chanceries from the rigidity of *dictamen* towards the flexibility of humanistic epistolography.¹⁴³ Another interesting aspect is the distinctiveness of the *Epistola Clementis* in comparison to the Devil's letters that have been mentioned. The letter against Clement VII is the first of its kind to address a specific person and to expose his evil deeds in detail: the Devil's letters that came before limited their polemics against the generic malpractice of the ecclesiastics.¹⁴⁴ Clement VII and the other French cardinals are now at the centre of the discourse from the first lines, and the whole text is modelled on contemporary events. It must be noted that from this moment on this pattern would be replicated by other letters of the Devil, which could testify to the circulation of the *Epistola Clementis*, at least within restricted networks of readers.¹⁴⁵ This letter is not only another (biased) account of a member of the urbanist obedience, but it testifies to the growing tension between the rivaling popes in the aftermath of the outbreak of the schism.

The impact that the outbreak of the schism had on Christendom must also be taken into account. This was immediately perceived as a moment of severe uncertainty. Both authors chose to make use of distinctive communication strategies to interpret the turbulent situation that had come into being after 1378. They sketch a political and religious clash that did not only develop at

¹⁴¹ Lazzarini, "Records, politics," 21.

¹⁴² Some elements to assess the new forms of polemical communication during these years have been outlined by Hayton, and Shaw, "Communicating solutions."

¹⁴³ Revest, *Romam veni*, 306-11.

¹⁴⁴ According to Feng, *Devil's letters*, 15: "After 1350 the second change becomes perceptible. While the 'devil's-letter' stories of the post-Gregorian period and the pre-fourteenth-century independent letters show a marked concern for clerical conduct, the full-length examples of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries turn their attention to the problems of church government".

¹⁴⁵ An example is the letter that was addressed to the Archbishop of Ragusa Giovanni Dominici in 1408: see Feng, *Devil's letters*, 233-45. Zippel, "La lettera del Diavolo". Lehmann, *Die Parodie*, 64. Clémence Revest, "Les libelles."

an official level by means of military campaigns, excommunications and intellectual treatises. Even short, anonymous and ephemeral documents like these contributed to the formation of the rivalling obediences, not so much in the sense that they had any practical effect on the creation of two separate political sides, but in that they participated in the early phase of the polarisation of western European Christendom in two opposing political factions that would shape Europe's history for the following thirty years. Both these texts are peculiar in their way of conveying opposing political visions into similar writings that combine innovation and tradition, on the one hand, with rhetorical skills and a propagandistic intent, on the other. If the schism was a period that contemporaries perceived as an unprecedented crisis for Christianity, it was precisely thanks to this political and religious upheaval that intellectuals refined their strategies of political communication, and both the *Epistola Clementis* and the *Invectiva* stand as privileged testimonies to this.¹⁴⁶

4. *Edition of the Epistola Clementis and of the Invectiva contra Urbanum VI*

Before presenting the text of the two letters, some brief notes on Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2° and on the criteria followed in the critical edition are in order. This will help sketch the genesis of this composite manuscript and it will walk the reader through the peculiarities of these texts.

Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2° consists of 362 paper *folii* and dates from the beginning of the 15th century. On f. 15v is an index of the contents, which lists the documents as far as f. 290v. No indication of provenance is extant, and there is no numeration other than the modern Arabic one in black ink on the top right corner of the *folii*. The codex must have been set up by someone who had an interest in the legal and political disputes around the schism. The contents may shed some light as to how the manuscript was set up: it includes a vast number of documents relating to the schism, including treatises, letters and sermons that address specifically the possibility of convening a council without the consent of the pontiff; such documents were most likely intended to support those intellectuals who argued in favour of this solution. The documents preserved up to f. 290v concern the years just before the Council of Pisa (1409) and do not go beyond the latter's opening. Six blank *folii* then follow, after which the second section of the codex opens. While the first section was characterised by *folii* of heterogeneous sizes, had been copied by a variety of hands and its *mise en page* reflected a somewhat chaotic and hasty copying and gathering process of several documents – all of which testifies to their inclusion in the manuscript from different sources and several copyists over time – the second section presents a more refined *mise en page* and a single copyist attended to the transcription of all the remaining texts. Although

¹⁴⁶ Hayton, "Hildegardian prophecy."

here one still finds documents related to the debates around the schism, these date from 1378 and the years immediately following: the section opens with the *Planctus Ecclesiae* by the law expert Giovanni da Legnano, after which are several letters by Urban VI against the cardinals who abandoned him. Right after these, on fols. 342-345v, the *Epistola Clementis* and the *Invectiva* have been copied. It is therefore likely that this manuscript was set up starting from two sets of documentation (as the incompleteness of the index also testifies); it is even more interesting that some *folii* were probably taken out from this specimen to assemble another manuscript extant in the same library, Cod. 361 Helmst., which also contains a fictitious letter: the *Epistola Dominici*, written in 1408 against cardinal Giovanni Dominici (1356-1419). This manuscript is dated between the late 14th and early 15th century, it comprises 61 *folii* and also consists of two sections (ff. 1-52v and 53r-61).¹⁴⁷ As many as 19 different hands have been identified in the first section, which, according to the cataloguer, was probably extracted from Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug. 2^o: given the neat separation of the latter in two sections, the first of which presented a variety of scriptures and whose documents were dated to the years of the Council of Pisa, it is reasonable to assume that the first section of Cod 361 was originally part of the second half of Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug 2^o. To support this, Cod. 361 is also a composite manuscript that contains several texts concerning the Council of Pisa: one finds letters of Gregory XII and Benedict XIII along with *consilia* of the Universities of Bologna and Paris, as well as copies of documents issued by the Councils of Pisa and Constance (1414-8). It is therefore likely that the two manuscripts were originally a single one that contained material related to the Western Schism in chronological order from the early years until the Council of Constance. The fact that the Devil's letter in Cod. 361 was not singled out when its section was moved in a new manuscript is telling of the interest that these epistles must have aroused in those who supervised the copying and assembly process of these exemplars. Given the heterogeneity of the material in Cod. Guelf. 32.10 Aug 2^o, it could be that the same happened when the *Epistola Clementis* and the *Invectiva* were copied in the manuscript (remember the title appended to the latter). To stress the interest of contemporaries towards these sources, it is useful to note that a more in-depth codicological research carried out on two manuscripts that preserve another fictitious letter has revealed the employment of a copying strategy aimed at preserving the letter before other, more well-known texts.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Heinemann, *Die Helmstedter*, 292-3. For a detailed description see <http://diglib.hab.de/?d-b=mss&list=ms&id=361-helmst&catalog=Lesser> (last access: 09.12.2022).

¹⁴⁸ Some remarks on the manuscripts and the letter in Bonomelli, "Un trattato," 744-5.

4.1 *Note to the text*

The following edition relies on an negative critical apparatus whose aim is to register the *loci* in which an editorial intervention was deemed necessary to amend the text in order for it to resemble as much as possible the version I believe was set up by the original author. The following pages discuss such interventions, which were purposely limited to unintelligible or corrupted passages in order to curb the apparatus' hypertrophy. The apparatus is organised as follows: the words in italics are those extant in the manuscript – which entails that an editorial intervention to restore the correct form has been carried out – while the standard font is employed to describe the *status* of the passage referred to and to report corrections, addition or expunction of words made by the copyist. Considering that only one hand has been detected in this section, the modifications to the text that are reported as already present in the manuscript are always intended as having been made by the same copyist who transcribed the documents in the first place. Both writings feature passages whose syntax and grammar are often difficult to understand. The fact that they have been transmitted in a *codex unicus* has made the correction of some passages more challenging, as this required some restorations *ope ingenii*, to which I resorted only when I did not have to alter the form of the text. As for the orthography, some interventions have not been reported in the critical apparatus for their irrelevancy to the *constitutio textus*; these include the few misspellings in the use of doubles present in the *Invectiva*, which have been automatically normalised: “oculos” and “oculis” (l. 23 from *oculos* and l. 37 from *oculis*), “cotidie” (l. 63 from *cottidie*), “effrenate” (l. 64 from *efrenate*), “pecuniis” (l. 92 from *peccunis*), “facere” (l. 96 from *facere*). Other similar misspellings were also normalised and excluded by the apparatus, but are revealing of the copyist's German provenance: for the *Epistola* these are “recognoscens” (l. 14 from *reconnoscens*), “vastari” (l. 28 from *fastari*), “vastitati” (l. 41 from *fastitati*), “consuetum” (l. 50 from *consuetum*), to which one must add “iuxta” (l. 16 from *iuxta*). Similar misspellings are also found in the *Invectiva*: “inextinguibili” (l. 49 from *inextingwibili*) and “sed” (l. 107 from *set*). In all other cases I chose to follow to the orthography of the manuscript, therefore I have maintained the typical medieval orthography in words such as “michi”, “nichil”, “dampnandum”. I also refrained from correcting the nexus “ci” into the more classical “ti” (examples of this are “dilecionis”, “diviciis”, “insaciabili”). The letter *y* is often used for *i*: also in these cases no normalisation was deemed necessary, therefore one reads “Dyaboli”, “symonia”, “hypocrisis”, “tytulo”, “Cyceronem”. The critical apparatus also does not feature two passages in which an abbreviation mark has been placed above words which were not abbreviated, both of which are located in the *Invectiva*: l. 18, “asseruit” and l. 34, “poenus”. When additions to the text were necessary for the restoration of some passages, brackets have been employed to restore both single letters and words which help to grasp the significance of wider sections, several of which will be discussed below. Another sign that

was employed in the present edition are the *cruces desperationis*, which are used in one passage of the *Epistola Clementis* (l. 40) and which signal the impossibility of restoring the passage (this will also be discussed below). Two vertical lines have also been employed to mark the page turning, and all the abovementioned signs will be listed at the end of this *note to the text*. Eventually, the only literal biblical quote has been isolated in italics, and the original headings of the manuscript are presented below the titles that were given to the documents.

In the *Epistola Clementis* the scribe commits several minor mistakes that were easy to restore, among which “basilice” (l. 2 from *basalice*), “dilecte”, (l. 11 from *dilecto*), “ab infancia” (l. 8 from *infanciam*). Another intervention occurred on line 10, where I have corrected the pronoun “nostre” into “vestre” in order to restore the meaning of the Devil’s praise to Robert de Genève’s peers. On lines 20-21 one reads: “offerentem munera leto animo suscipisti et manibus vanis venientes perceptibili oculo et corde insaciabili respexisti”, where “vanis” had to be restored from the manuscript reading “variis”, which would make little sense in the description of Clement as having rejoiced for the coming of the one who brought gifts, while he scowled at those who came empty-handed. Another minor intervention was the correction of the infinite “fingere” (l. 24) with the conjunctive form (“fingeres”): although one could oppose that the presence of a participle shortly before this (“recusans”, l. 24) leaves open the possibility that the author employed the same tense to complete the sentence, to opt for a conjunctive is a less invasive correction which maintains the hypothetical attitude of the passage (introduced by “licet”). However, the syntax is not straightforward here and one should assume that the verb “vendicasti” (l. 25) is referred to both the «animas» (on the same line) as well as to the “illatas iniurias” mentioned above (l. 22). Another intervention was the addition (l. 32) of “ut” and “ad”, which parallel the sentence that follows (l. 33: “ut multiplicatos manipulos ad aream”) and restores the meaning of Clement’s effort of bringing more damned souls to the Devil. A corrupted passage that could not be restored comes shortly afterwards (ll. 39-41) when the Devil wishes that all the souls of his enemies be buried in Rome; notwithstanding the expunction of “ad”, which conflicted with the meaning of Clement as having “exposed the city to destruction” (“urbem ... exponeres vastitati”), I could not interpret the abbreviation “oi” extant in the manuscript: while this cannot be “omnia”, the form “omnium”, in addition to requiring the integration of “ubi” before it, would make the passage exceedingly articulate (no less than five genitives would separate “ea ... corpora”) for a letter whose writing style is far from polished. For this reason two *cruces desperationis* have been inserted to signal the corruption.

The *Invectiva* features several words added in the margins or above the line as a consequence of corrections and integrations written by the same hand that copies the text. In one case (l. 1) an addition has been isolated in the critical apparatus because it did not fit in the meaning of the text, while shortly afterwards (l. 28) another addition is extant which is crucial to the

understanding of the text; however, its reading is delicate as the passage is on the extreme edge of the page, which made it partially disappear into the bounding of the quire. The self-corrections of the copyist are “sevisse” (l. 39 from *fecisse*), “antequam” (l. 44 from *numquam*), “patrias” (l. 51 from *patris*), “agnosco” (l. 128 from *nosco*). In some other cases I could not read what was written below the words that were later stricken out as a result of correction (l. 4: “sunt”, l. 70: “videre”, l. 74: “saciendam”). The text also required some more delicate interventions. When the author is exposing Hannibal’s alleged cruelty (ll. 28-31) one of the examples is the building of a bridge with the corpses of roman soldiers, an anecdote which, as stated in the analysis, the author must have taken from Valerius Maximus. The manuscript here has «cornibus», which I have corrected in “corporibus” (l. 29). To say that Hannibal had built a bridge with the javelins of roman soldiers – although the word would be declined as *cornu-us* instead of *cornum-i* – nullifies the aim of exposing Hannibal’s cruelty. However, the word is divided in two as the scribe starts a new line here (cor-nibus) and the letters that remained on the upper line have been deleted and corrected, thus adding “cor” in the margin. While the original word is impossible to read, the dimension of the correction makes one wonder whether this could originally be “carnibus”, that is the flesh (and, by extension, the corpses) of roman soldiers. If this was the case the copyist may have chosen a *lectio facilior* thus perverting the meaning of the passage: this would imply that the error was not present in the tradition, as it is unlikely that two copyists made this same mistake separately. However, I believe it more likely that *cornibus* was already present in the antigraph due to the simplification of the original *corporibus* into *corpibus* which the scribe who set up this copy may have attempted to correct in *cornibus*: only the discovery of a new testimony of the letter will shed light on this.

The section between lines 83-89 is also intricate and probably features several corruptions. Right after an articulated relative construction on Prignano’s lack of judgement towards his nephew, the invective presents the excuses that would theoretically justify the pope’s misbehaviour if only Francesco’s virtues were comparable to those of the greatest among ancient romans. I corrected «in» with “enim” (l. 86) to restore the reference to Prignano’s nephew as the object of this sentence (otherwise, an action against the latter would be entailed here). The following infinite (“videri”) seemingly has no verb related to it: the meaning should be “if, to our eyes, this man <could> look like a new Cato...”. This is why I added a plausible verb in brackets (“potest”) where one would expect this to be in order to make the passage more intelligible. The closing part of this sentence is also not straightforward as the subject seemingly switches to Urban VI, who is chastised for directing all the goods of the Church he could grab to his nephew: maybe a more significant lacuna is extant here. To close on this passage, after the word “notus” (l. 89) the manuscript has “alius natus”, which is also puzzling: it is difficult to ascertain whether the abbreviation in the first word means «alius» or “alias”, but if the latter was the case, a guess could be that these two words are the result of the

inclusion of a gloss which explained the word «notus». Given the uncertainty of this hypothesis, and because it seems evident to me that these words do not confer any significance to the passage, I opted to expunge them from the text. The closing verb of the passage on line 114 also required a small integration («an<n>ectere») to mean that gluttony should not be evaluated on its own, but that “it ought to be related to the others [i.e. sins]”. Shortly afterwards (l. 115) a blank space of about seven words is extant after the word “fortunat”. The meaning of the passage should be: “although envy usually <seizes> the wealth of those of the same or higher grade, you surprisingly cultivate it also towards those who possess less”. I decided to add, in brackets, a possible integration to this lacuna, the infinite “corripere”, whose meaning would restore my interpretation of the sentence and whose length could also fit in the blank space if one considers that the copyist would likely have abbreviated the letters *er* at the end. However, it must be noted that the fact that envy is declined in the accusative makes the presence of a pronoun (“eam”) redundant, but no editorial intervention was deemed necessary here. Eventually, the invective closes with the word “datum”, which I also decided to expunge: this is the first word of the title of the document that follows the *Invectiva* and was therefore probably placed at the end of the latter as a result of a banal mistake of the copyist. Moreover, it would make little sense for an invective to end with a *datatio* that one would expect to find in a letter.

The following signs have been employed throughout the edition:

- <> addition
- || page turn
- † corruption

5. Edizione

Epistola Clementis

Epistola sub typo Dyaboli directa domino Clementi

5 Princeps tenebrarum, speculator acutissimus et subdilissimus, seductor animarum carissimo filio nostro Roberto olim Basalice^a XII Apostolorum presbitero cardinali per dampna<n>dum vicarium cuiusdam crucifixi inimici nostri atrocissimi ordinato, in vexilliferum ministrorum nostrorum electo, ac omnibus aliis cardinalibus, prelati, nobiles, clericis et laycis sequacibus et subditis suis devotissimis, nostram salutem et nostrorum contemptam observanciam mandatorum, cum perfecte dilectionis augmento.

^a *basalice*.

10 *Abissus multa*^a caritas nostra, quam <ab> infancia^b erga fastigium nostre potencie sedulis studiis habuistis et, enutriti in illa, crescente tempore fervencius demonstrastis habere, crescente eciam erga nos vestre^c clare devocionis effectu. Tu igitur specialiter, Roberte dilecte^d, quem nostro lacte nutritum nostris educavimus laribus quemque in teneris annis tuis dignitatibus, honoribus, diviciis et parentela vallavimus, inter omnes filios orbis terre non ingratus filius extitisti, sed gratitudine debita huiusmodi nostra beneficia recognoscens (que nobis fuerunt et sunt placita) queve accepta fecisti libenter^e et cogitacione facere in terris iuxta posse, cum tu inimicus fortissimus inimici nostri crucifixi predicti, eius fallaci spreta gloria, quam promittit, numquam obtemperare voluisti mandatis contrariis^f nostris gestis. Qui immo nostro bacatus amore deliciis te dedisti, servisti libidini et cupiditatem avaricie dilexisti, offerentem munera || leto animo suscipisti et manibus vanis^g venientes perceptibili oculo et corde insaciabili respexisti. Tu eciam nobis graves per Tytum et Vespasianum in Iherusalem illatas iniurias ob crucifixi predicti intuitum et amorem, nuper missus ad Lombardie partes per vicarium crucifixi, eius recusans parere mandatis (licet illa fingeres^h impleturum), sagaciter vendicasti triginta animas uno denario, prout inimici nostri prius contra nos fecerunt, venundando et tecum propterea gentes nostris beneplacitis servientes in destructionem Ytalie, cuius pars non minima contraria est nostris operibus, adducendo et ipsam Ytaliam vastari diligentius procurando. Tu quoque in ipsa, ut eam nostre subiceres dicioni, prout iam fecisti, pro parte dissesiones, divisiones et scandala posuisti et nonnullas civitates, castra et loca insignia per gentes prefatas destrui et vastari fecisti, eorum incolis trucidatis, et <ut> multarum gencium multitudinem <ad> nostrorum fidelium consortia aggregares et ut multiplicatos manipulos ad aream nostri erarii deportares.

35 Tu quoque defuncto Gregorio, nostri sepedicti inimici vicario, arcessitis tibi Ambranensi et Sancti Eustachii necnon Maioris Monasterii ac Lemovicensi, tunc eius cardinalibus, et Petro archiepiscopo Arelatensi et nonnullis aliis fidelibus et devotis nostris et presertim predicto Ambranensi, cuiusdam nostri secreti ministri consorcio continue sociato, cum eis multa secretaⁱ et^j utilia consilia habuisti, ut^k urbem sceleratissimam, nostri nominis inimicam (toi[†] in ea nostrorum maiorum inimicorum devotorum crucifixi prefati corpora requiescant), exponeres vastitati, incipiens Castrum cuiusdam Angeli nuncupati contra dictam urbem et quemdam vicarium crucifixi predicti face-

^a Ps. 35:7.

^b *infanciam*.

^c *nostre*.

^d *dilecto*.

^e added in the margin.

^f *contrarius*.

^g *variis*.

^h *fingerere*.

ⁱ correction from *consecrata*.

^j *consilia et*.

^k *ad follows*.

re rebellari et demum prefatas tuas gentes, magnam gentem prefate sceleratissime urbis interreptam gladio, ad nostram curiam transmittendo studuisti.

45 Postremum, ut nostrum fidelissimum et constantissimum te ostenderes filium, dimissa sepedicta urbe, versus Anagni et civitatem Fundorum, ut gentes illarum parcium ad nostram benivolenciam et obedienciam traheres, te cum predictis et aliis nostris fidelibus transtulisti, quod nobis extitit pre omnibus gracios: ob amorem nostri nominis || te contra prefatum vicarium^a
50 ipsius crucifixi virili animo erexisti et consuetum nomen ipsius vicarii assumpsisti ut scisma, heresim, scandalum nobis gratissima poneres inter credentes nomini crucifixi predicti in omnibus finibus orbis terre et alios at<t>raheres similia faciendi. Et quia hec et multa alia, que longum essent narrare, fecisti et disponis facere animosius in futurum in honorem nostri nominis
55 atque status necnon augmentum devotorum nostrorum atque^b ministrorum magna et multa propterea nostre remuneraciones premia promereris, propter quod tibi p<r>imo et tuis sequentibus atque consiliariis nostris fidelibus supradictis secundum uniuscuiusque status atque decenciam hospita^c

^a written above the line.

^b correction from *propter*.

^c here the text ends abruptly in the manuscript (see above, text on notes 66 and 117).

Invectiva contra Urbanum VI

Epistola contra Urbanum ipsi Urbano directa, sed nescio nomen auctoris, in qua pulchre et valde rethorice deducuntur eius plurima forensia

Inhumane^a homo (nescio enim quo decenciori tytulo valeas insigniri, qui nichil humanitatis possides nisi formam), volenti michi sepius ad te scribere, iam manui calamum apponenti ut te ipsum et tua scelera ostenderem, que ut puto cum lacte suxisti sic illa maxima familiaritate coniuncta sunt^b, et incipienti forte ab uno se aliud opponebat, et – cur id tacerem? – quod principalius tui habebat potestatem querebat, et iterum ab alio et deinde ab alio inchoanti se alia offerebant conquerencia se postponi.

10 Certabant siquidem simul superbia et eius ministra seu executrix crudelitas, avaricia et ab ea descendens symonia, libido, gula, invidia, ira, accidia, ypocrisis, mendacium et alia plurima quibus es undique obsessus et ipsorum quandoque suo iuri invisens se preponi postulabat, vixque michi licuit scribere tanto impediende concursu. Sed mens dicendi pregnans ipsa deprecata est ut sine insultus pavore scribere posset, nec magis fatentur in quo iniciaretur, cum de omnibus sit agendum. Verum, ut omnis livor cessaret, placitum foret

^a *certis* was written in the margin before this.

^b follow some unintelligible words (stricken out).

15 eis ut, missis sortibus, ab illo suo ordine fieret exordium super quod sors caderet sicque non absque murmuracione vix ab eis est extortum.

Et sicut forte equum fuit, super superbiam cecidit prima sors, que michi iuramentis asseruit nullibi tucius, nullibi quiecuis quam in te residere, ubi nullomodo sibi adversantem humilitatem sed nec eius umbram, quamquam
20 diligenter inquirens, cernere potuit. Multos enim superbisce legimus, multos ipsi vidimus sed non multos ex superbia insanisse. Tu autem dum a superbie stimulo agitaris, colorem mutas, os torques spumamque iactas, frontem contrahis, spandis frequencia verba, et oculos accensis lampadibus similes tenes. Et si mihi non credis, oro, in speculo^a te inspice, et tuos gestus pondera cum
25 discrecione. Ego nunc indiscretus sum, cum de discrecione tecum loquor, que ubi sit, aut quem locum in te celat, nunquam scisti.

Offert se superbie tue ministra et executrix crudelitas de se fieri mencionem, postulans que recto iudicio exaudienda est, tametsi crudelis^b. Legimus Hanibalem quod ponte super Gello flumine, Romanis corporibus^c facto, suum transvexerit exercitum, et itinere omnes fessos romanos captivos prima parte
30 pedum succisa relinquerit^d. Si Claudium Neronem tam crudelem fuisse comperimus ut matrem propriam scindi iusserit et Urbem diversis in locis mandaverit incendi, ipsorum || tamen nullus crudelitate ac sevicia te equavit. Sevit Hanibal paganus, poenus, miles in hostes; tu christianus, italus, clericus,
35 non in hostes sevisti, sed in tuos. Quippe quem antiepiscopum Aquilanum feceras, non itinere fesso aut onere, non primam partem^e pedum succidif, sed eum coram tuis ad id intentis oculis gladiis occidi iussisti. Infelix tali animi concitacione, infelicio^g mandato tam crudeli, infelicissimus spectaculo tam horrendo. Ubi vero umquam legimus Hanibalem in commilitones suos se-
40 visse^h ut eos fecerit post diros carceres et tormentorum diversa genera vivos sepeliri quod tu, fama referente, facere non erubuisti de hiis quos prius fratres nominabas. Et si fama falsa sit, infeliciores ipsi in vita, quam mortui sint.

Nero, ut diximus, matrem scindi iussit. Tu non tuam – quam scissam fuisse, antequamⁱ tale monstrum peperisset, fuisset forte expediens – sed omnium christianorum matrem sacrosanctam ecclesiam catholicam non iussisti
45 scindi, sed scidisti, dum animo obstinato ibi sedes, ubi sedere non licet nisi Christi vicario, a quo tu tantum abes^j quantum ab inferno celum et Deus a Sathana. Nero preterea in multis locis urbem iussit incendi. Tu eam totam non materiali igne, quia defuit voluntati potencia, sed inextinguibili rancorum et odiorum igne ipsam Urbem non tantum solam, sed plurimas non tan-
50

^a tu follows.

^b the text from *mencionem* until *crudelis* was added in the margin.

^c *cornibus*, maybe resulting from a correction of *carnibus* (unintelligible and stricken out).

^d the letter *n* was corrected after a rasura.

^e *patrem*.

^f *misisti* follows (stricken out).

^g *tam* follows (stricken out).

^h correction from *fecisse*.

ⁱ correction from *numquam*.

^j *habes*.

tummodo urbes sed et patrias^a et naciones incendisti. Quod si de materiali igne loqui libet, interroga Neapolim commiseram que te produxit, interroga Campaniam Maritimam, Patrimonium, ducatum Spoletanum, Marchiam, Romandiolam, Tusciam, et omnia climata mundi, ad que tua rabies potuit
 55 pervenire: fatebuntur profecto tuas flammam et tuum ferrum se expertas, et in dies amplius experiri. Dicerem postremo Deum omnipotentem interroga, qui cuncta prospicit, cuncta videt. Sed scio nullum fore tibi^b cum ipso commercium, responderet indubie, iam tuorum incendiorum fumum ad suas nares pervenisse.

60 Expectat quid de se dicatur tenax avaricia, quam etsi modis plurimis quasi ex eodem utero tecum natam, arguere non sit grave; paucis tamen peragendis censui, ne epistole modum superem. Fuerunt multi avari, quos veterum auctorum memorat auctoritas, sunt multi quos cotidie intueri licet, sed adhuc neminem tam effrenate cupiditatis fuisse comperimus, qui ad explendum sue voraginis appetitum ad Dei et sanctorum templum scelestas manus
 65 iniecerit.

Tu autem si id fecisti responde, quod si verecun||dia^c motus non respondes, interrogabo gloriosam verginem Dei genitricem Mariam, interrogabo apostolos, martires, confessores et virgines, qui Rome templa habuerunt. Ubi
 70 sunt cruces precise, quas in ipsorum altaribus videre^d solebamus? Ubi vasa argentea, que ad servandas sanctorum reliquias donancium pietas et devocio concesserat? Ubi vestes sacre ministrorum? Ubi predia opulenta^e, que altarium ministris prebebant victum et vestitum? Respondebunt quod tu ad tue avaricie rabiem saciandam^f hec omnia distruxisti. O infelix homo, qui nullum
 75 tibi reservasti patronum in celis, quem sigillatim non offenderes! Nisi forte putes Iohannem Baptistam tibi patrocinio non defuturum, cuius religionem in fidei propugnaculum conditam funditus destruxisti, hiis qui in Rodio sunt redditus subtrahendo et pueros ordinando religionis sue ministros, quos eodem momento professos facis et priores. Aut forte putas ubi presidio fore
 80 inclitam illam atque beatam verginem Claram, cui duas neptes tuas, annis pluribus sibi sacratas, abstulisti atque mortalibus maritis coniunxisti, que^g sponso immortalis se voverunt? Falleris, vir insane, si ab hiis opem speras, quos dirorum piaculorum generibus offendisti. Una forte ratio te poterit excusare, si non tibi, sed inclite prosapie tue, uni superstite nepoti tuo^h thesaurisare te dicas, cui quod fecisti iudicium fuit tuum insanum amorem recti
 85 amoris nescire fines. Digna est indubie excusatio tua si enimⁱ talem virum

^a correction from *patriis*.

^b written in between the lines.

^c *verecuncundia*.

^d maybe preceded by *pro* (hardly intelligible).

^e *opulencia*.

^f this is the result of a correction (the original, stricken out word is unintelligible).

^g *queque*.

^h correction from *tuo*, some words follow (stricken out).

ⁱ *in*.

nobis <potest> videri novum Chatonem, novum Scipionem, novum Cesarem, novum Cycleronem continencia, maiestate, strenuitate et eloquencia, thesauros ecclesiarum et si quos alios potes, confers. Notus^a est homo, tantis^b muneribus dignus, propter quem templa sanctorum liceat spoliare, quem qui^c viderit non mirabitur tali patrono fore nepotem.

90 Venit iam post avariciam symonia, oneratis manibus, dextra pecuniis, leva supplicacionibus, que paucis contenta erit. Unum igitur hac pro summa sic nichil a te, aut ab hiis quos tua doctrina imbuisti, sine auro impetrari posse, omnia cum auro posse obtinere.

95 Sed profert libido in medium, postulans ne silencio pretereatur, cum tercia sors sua fuerit, que nisi inhoneste narrari non potest, et si dicerem honestum, vir bonus censebit quod tu facere honestum ducis. Itaque unum notorium dicam, ceteris silencio datis, quod impudica quevis mulier se facilius a viris abstul|neret, quam tu, vir, a viris: vide quam mite tecum ago, qui uno articulo sum contentus. Tu forte plura et maiora exsp<e>ctabas^d!

100 Ypocrisis, super quam alia sors cecidit, de se loqui orat, quam ab ineunte etate plus quam Deum coluisti; hanc qui te usque modo a cunabulis noverunt, asserunt in puericia, in adolescentia, ac in firma etate et in senili, a te super omnia cultam esse.

105 Quod si multis dicerem exemplis uno tamen permaxime permoveor: quod tu singulis diebus non celebrans, sed prophanans, bis in die te confiteri iactas. Verum esse potest, sed talis est confessor quali indigebas: nichil audit et modicum videt, perinde quod parieti et asino posses confiteri. In hoc prudentem te iudico. Reputent te fatuum qui volunt quod talem confessorem ex proposito elegisti, qui nec tua scelera audit et inaudita corripere nequit.

De gula agendum esset, cuius iudicium non est respectu absentium, sed eorum qui tibi assunt, qui frequencius te Bachi et Cerer<i>s templa frequentare vident, quam Iovis et Palladis, decet vero an<n>ectere aliis.

115 Invidiam que si maiorum aut parium fortunae^e <corripere> soleat^f, tu eciam ad minores heres sicque inusitate genere eam colis, dum si quid boni parvissimum quemcumque videas id aut habere tu cupias, aut optes illum non habere.

Iram que te rodit, et accidiam in qua nichil nisi malum cogitas, subsequenter a sorte retractatas^g, eorum iudicio relinquam, qui te norunt; et frustra de hiis agendum arbitror, quoniam manifeste sunt.

120 Sed quid de mendaciis loquor, cum nunquam verum nisi fortuito et inadvertenter dicere consueveris? Ventremque plenum veritatibus habes^h, ex quo nunquam aliqua veritas emanavit.

^a *alius natus* follows, possibly as a result of later interpolation.

^b *univer* follows (stricken out).

^c maybe *que* (difficult to read).

^d the letter *e* was added in between the lines.

^e a blank space of about seven letters follows.

^f *seleat*.

^g *retractans*.

^h *habeas*.

125 Hiis paucis tecum agere volui, que ex magno acervo tuorum scelerum decerpsi, non ut ita me magnificem, quod ad meum ululatum te mutare existimem, que Demostenis eloquencia aut Cyceronis irrita propositi faceres, sed ut scias omnibus, sicut et mihi, omnia predicta fore nota, tantoque magis aliis qui sensu habundant et intellectu^a, quibus me carere agnosco^b. Et si preter spem eveniret ut te ipsum et errorem tuum recognoscens, ad Deum, qui semper misericors est, recurreres, et clementissimum eius vicarium dominum
130 Clementem pro delicti venia orares, magni pretii sui esset mea oratio, que tuam et sequencium te animas potens esset in spem salutis adducere^c.

^a *intellectum*.

^b correction from *nosco*.

^c *datum* follows (this is probably part of the next writing).

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