Introduction

THE NARRATIVE of the Schism's beginning is well known. On September 13, 1376, after some seventy years spent in Avignon on the banks of the Rhône, the papacy returned to its natural location, Rome, thereby ending the so-called Babylonian captivity. By 1376, the circumstances that had kept the papacy away from its traditional seat – rebellions in Rome and the Papal States, and the Hundred Years' War – had improved. This freed Gregory XI, who had long been intent on returning the papacy to its historical location, to concretize the move.[1] Pope Gregory died shortly thereafter, on March 27, 1378. The first Roman conclave in close to 100 years – the last one had elected Nicholas IV in 1287 – opened a few days later. Sixteen cardinals were present, of whom eleven were French, four Italian, and one Spanish. Regardless of internal divisions and a noisy crowd planted outside chanting words like "We want a Roman pope – or at least an Italian, if not, we'll cut you to pieces!," the conclave accomplished its task in due time. It chose Bartolomeo Prignano, Archbishop of Bari, as Pope Urban VI. Although a well-qualified curial servant, Urban had never belonged to the College.[2]

Crowned on April 10, 1378, Prignano was rigorous and upright but could also be temperamental and violent. His admonitions quickly displeased most of the French cardinals. Turning against him, they moved out of Rome to settle in Anagni. On August 2, 1378, the non-Italian cardinals publicly questioned his election. On August 9, 1378, they denounced Urban as illegitimate by vice of procedure. The election,

[1] On the Avignon papacy and the Schism, see Joëlle Rollo-Koster, *Avignon and Its Papacy (1309–1417): Popes, Institutions, and Society* (Lanham: Rowman, 2015).
[2] On this violent election, see Joëlle Rollo-Koster, *Raiding Saint Peter: Empty Sees, Violence, and the Initiation of the Great Western Schism (1378)* (Leiden: Brill, 2008); and "Civil Violence and the Initiation of the Schism," in *A Companion to the Great Western Schism (1378–1417)*," ed. Joëlle Rollo-Koster and Thomas Izbicki (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 9–66.

they claimed, had taken place under duress and violence. They labeled the pope *intrusus* (usurper) and anathematized him.[3]

On September 21, 1378, while at the court of Onorato Caetani in Fondi, in the Kingdom of Naples, where they had found refuge, thirteen "rebellious" cardinals entered their own conclave and elected pope Robert of Geneva who took the name Clement VII. Onorato Caetani crowned Clement in Fondi a month later, on October 31, with the papal tiara brought from Castel Sant'Angelo by Gregory XI's former camerlengo, Pierre de Cros, who had joined his side.[4] After learning of the election of his rival, Urban VI responded by remaking his College of Cardinals, naming twenty-five new candidates.

This act confirmed the Schism. For the first time in its history, the papacy had two popes, two courts, and two obediences generated not by external intervention but by its own College. Close to two generations lived and grew accustomed to a double, and later even a triple, papacy. When the Council of Pisa (1409) elected a new pope, it considered the crisis solved by deposing both Clementist and Urbanist popes, who of course rebuked the effort. Clement VII (1378–1394) initiated the Clementist obedience, followed by Benedict XIII (1394–1423, who never accepted his multiple depositions by the Councils of Pisa and Constance). The Urbanist obedience commenced with Urban VI (1378–1389), followed by Boniface IX (1389–1404), Innocent VII (1404–1406), and Gregory XII (1406–1415). The later Pisan obedience commenced with the election of Alexander V (1409–1410), followed by John XXIII (1410–1415). Unity was eventually restored when the Council of Constance (1414–1418) elected Martin V as sole pope recognized by all on November 11, 1417. It had previously deposed the Pisan pope John XXIII in May 1415, accepted the resignation of Gregory XII in July 1415, and again, anathemized Benedict in July 1417, before the initiation of the conclave that named Martin in November.

The Schism has of course attracted historians, but its polarizing character still weighs heavily in the historiography. A definitive answer on who held legitimate rule (the Roman or Avignonese obedience) has never been offered, but Italian historiography gained the upper hand when it legitimized the Italian succession. To this day, any list of succeeding popes will itemize the Italian obedience and not the French, solving *à main levée* a question that is arduous, if not impossible to resolve, and was literally dropped by contemporaries.[5]

To a large extent, the historiography of the Schism has focused on legal, political, and institutional aspects, arguing that this was a crisis of governance at the top that did not

---

[3] The letter of August 2 is found in Baluze, *Vitae* 4: 174. It is translated and analyzed by Walter Ullmann in a chapter entitled "The Case of the Cardinals," as is the August 9 letter. See Walter Ullmann, *The Origins of the Great Schism: A Study in Fourteenth-Century Ecclesiastical History* (London: Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, 1948), 69–89. The August 9 letter is in Baluze, *Vitae*, 1: 450. On the responsibility of cardinals, see Stefan Weiss, "Luxury and Extravagance at the Papal Court in Avignon and the Outbreak of Great Western Schism," in *A Companion to the Great Western Schism*, ed. Joëlle Rollo-Koster and Thomas Izbicki (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 67–97.

[4] On this unusual coronation, see Maria Teresa Caciorgna, "La contea di Fondi nel XIV secolo," in *Gli ebrei a fondi e nel suo territorio. Atti del convegno fondi, 10 maggio 2012*, ed. Giancarlo Lacerenza (Naples: Università degli studi di Napoli "l'orientale", 2014), 76.

[5] See Howard Kaminsky, "The Great Schism," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, c. 1300–1415*, ed. Michael Jones, 7 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995–2004), 6: 674–96; and Rollo-Koster, *Avignon and Its Papacy*, 259–86.

really affect social, confessional, or spiritual life.[6] The recent celebration of the 600th anniversary of the end of the Schism at the Council of Constance, and the years leading up to it, has reinforced this notion by focusing on conciliar theory.[7]

One means to reach contemporaries' understanding of their world is depiction of emotions. Discussing the cardinals' behavior right after the election, Jean Favier uses contemporary witnesses who tested the mood of the election from facial expressions. He states, "The dean of Calahorra said that he saw them [the cardinals] 'happy with good faces.' The Auditor of Contradict Letters Gilles Bellemère, who was a rigorous jurist, saw them pale. The provost of Valencia Gil Sanchez Muñoz saw them sad."[8] Contemporaries were using the familiar language of emotion and theatrics to describe the varied emotional impact of the papal election on individuals. The fact that not all displayed contentment and serenity became a sign of things to come.

Language is another means to access contemporary understandings of the crisis. With a couple of caveats. Medieval ecclesiastical authors, our main sources, were steeped in liturgical practices and may have conceived the Schism in liturgical dramatic terms linguistically; and secondly, text is prone to manipulation. Kenneth Burke, the founder of dramatism, argues that language is a mode of action. "Language is more than simply instrumental: It legitimates, thematizes, and performs social meaning ... a dramatist approach to human intervention mandates an awareness of ourselves as actors speaking in

---

[6] For additional introductions to the topic, see among others, Étienne Delaruelle, E. R. Labande, and Paul Ourliac, *L'église au temps du Grand Schisme et de la crise conciliaire (1378–1449)* (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1962); Paul Ourliac, "Le schisme et les conciles (1378–1449)," in *Histoire du christianisme des origines à nos jours*, ed. Jean Marie Mayeur (Paris: Desclée, 1990), 89–139; and Kaminsky, "The Great Schism," 685–96.

[7] One of the first to focus on conciliarism was Brian Tierney, *Foundations of the Conciliar Theory: The Contribution of the Medieval Canonists from Gratian to the Great Schism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955). Others have joined the legal and institutional approach. To name only a few, see Robert Norman Swanson, *Universities, Academics and the Great Schism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Jean Favier, ed., *Genèse et débuts du Grand Schisme d'Occident: Colloque international, Avignon, 25–28 septembre 1978* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1980); Walter Brandmüller, *Papst und Konzil im Grossen Schisma (1378–1431): Studien und Quellen* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1990); Phillip H. Stump, *The Reforms of the Council of Constance (1414–1418)* (Leiden: Brill, 1994); Paul Avis, *Beyond the Reformation?: Authority, Primacy and Unity in the Conciliar Tradition* (London: T & T Clark, 2008); Heribert Müller, *Die kirchliche Krise des Spätmittelalters: Schisma, Konziliarismus und Konzilien* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2012); Karl-Heinz Braun, *Das Konstanzer Konzil 1414–1418 – Weltereignis des Mittelalters* (Darmstadt: Theiss, 2013); Thomas E. Morrissey, *Conciliarism and Church Law in the Fifteenth Century: Studies on Franciscus Zabarella and the Council of Constance* (Burlington: Ashgate Variorum, 2014); Gabriela Signori, and Birgit Studt, *Das Konstanzer Konzil als europäisches Ereignis: Begegnungen, Medien und Rituale* (Ostfildern: J. Thorbecke, 2014); Ulrich Büttner and Egon Schwär, *(Hi)stories of the Council of Constance Explained by Entertaining Narratives* (Constance: Verlag Stadler, 2014); Martin John Cable, *"Cum Essem in Constantie . . ." Raffaele Fulgosio and the Council of Constance 1414–1415* (Leiden: Brill, 2015). Even recent general histories of the crisis remain focused on the institutional. See, for example, Paul Payan, *Entre Rome et Avignon: Une histoire du Grand Schisme (1378–1417)* (Paris: Flammarion, 2009); and Jean Favier, *Les papes d'Avignon* (Paris: Fayard, 2006).

[8] Favier, *Les papes d'Avignon*, 554.

specific situations with specific purposes."[9] Using language as a mode of action allows us to gauge the impact the Schism had on contemporaries.

The first example occurs sometime in late 1380s Avignon, around the feast of St. Jacob, and is found in Peter of Luxembourg's canonization proceedings, ca. 1387. A certain Peter, who resided in the street between the Churches of the Carmelites and Augustinian, right in front of the Inn of the Red Lion, witnessed a German Saxon, blaspheming against "our pope Clement VII and the entire curia." We have to assume that the German was inebriated. Peter and others – we have to guess – seized him to be brought to court. Upset by the Saxon's words, a papal messenger named Johannes (alias Lerim) hit him on the right side of the neck. At this moment, the German turned around with a knife drawn from under his cape and stabbed Peter between the armpit and left breast. Peter fell to the ground, and the German tried to stab him repeatedly; however, Peter was able to restrain him. Sergeants arrived and eventually took the felon to the court of the Marshall. Peter eventually healed to tell his tale and thank the saint.[10] Peter called the German a *blasphemator*, driving home the severity of the offense. This tale exemplifies the charged atmosphere that loomed over Avignon, when criticizing a pope was equated with blasphemy, and easily led to a street brawl.

Another example comes from Florence. In 1408, while discussing the possibility of supporting a meeting between obediences in Pisa, records were taken of the ongoing debates. Proceedings state that a certain Gionaccio Baroncelli said that "enough had been done for the union of the Church, and that nothing further should proceed; and that for the good of this [Florentine] people he wished that there were twelve popes!"[11] This example reveals how some folks perceived the papacy as a meaningless title and the Schism as a political dispute that had little to do with spirituality. In both examples, language "of the street" played its part in legitimizing and delegitimizing popes. While one could not conceive a rebuke of papal sacredness, the other could not care less. He desacralized the

[9] The definition is provided in Elizabeth Bell, *Theories of Performance* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2008), 95.

[10] *Acta Sanctorum* (Paris, 1867), Julii, vol. 28, 522: 211 ([211]

> Testis XXIV interrogatus, non super articulis, in hujusmodi causa datis, [Vulneratus] sed super dictis & miraculis per ipsum inferius expressis & declaratis. Et primo dixit, quod circa festum sancti Jacobi, anni proxime præteriti, dictus Petrus loquens, existens in carreria, inter ecclesias Carmelitarum & Augustiniensium Avenionis, & ante hostellariam Leonis rubei, quidam Allemandus, nationis Saxo, blasphemabat Dominum nostrum Papam Clementem VII, & totam curiam. Unde cum propter istas diffamationes duceretur ad curiam captus, & quidam Joannes, dictus Lerim, Domini nostri Papæ cursor, percussisset blasphemantem cum alapa super collum a parte dextra: tunc ille percussus, vertens se cum quodam cultello, quem portabat subtus mantellum, percussit dictum loquentem circa mamillam sinistram, inter plicaturam brachii & mamillam; taliter quod gladius intravit per longitudinem indicis manus: quo vulnere illato, dictus Petrus [Col. 0594C] cecidit in carreria, in qua fuit percussus, quia posuit pedem in quadam fovea carreriæ, & tunc ille blasphemator dictum loquentem vulneravit in mamilla dextra, & tertio repercutere cum eodem gladio voluit, nisi ipse Petrus loquens tenuisset manum, tamen ille blasphemator per assistentes perturbabatur, & impediebatur, nec tamen propter hoc desistebat, & tunc servientes curiæ Mareschalli duxerunt utrumque ad curiam).

[11] Alison Williams Lewin, "'Cum Status Ecclesie Noster Sit': Florence and the Council of Pisa (1409)," *Church History* 62, no. 2 (1993): 185.

office by proposing its multiplication by twelve popes – perhaps a reference the twelve apostles. The difficult task of collecting such evidence is still wanting, but it would deliver critical information on how medieval folks saw the crisis from the ground up.

There is absolutely no doubt that contemporaries were cognizant of semantic usage. The *Chronique des quatre premiers Valois* (1327–1393) mentions that in 1381 the bishop of Paris preached a sermon intimating that all who did not believe that the cardinal of Geneva was the true pope would be deemed heretics and schismatics – labels loaded with consequences, physical and moral. There is already an interesting detail here: the *Chronique*'s author was a Norman cleric and Urbanist who referred to Clement VII by his former cardinal's title, rather than by his papal name. This in itself shows his own reservations. Un-naming a pope is a tool that we will encounter in many instances. After this sermon, the university entered into robust discussions and determined that "It was against God, right, and reason, and an error for all Christianity to have two popes. There must only be one, but as long as there are two, they stated that no one should be accused of heresy and schism if they do not believe that Pope Clement is pope."[12] Here is evidence enough that words mattered a lot. The terms "heretics" and "schismatics" were eliminated from the vocabulary of the Schism as a way to pacify rancor and facilitate an eventual reunion. But other labels drove home the severity of the crisis.

A quick survey of the most utilized descriptors during the Schism yields certain words as leitmotifs: "usurper" (*intrusus*) in politics and "body" (*funus* and *corpus*) in liturgy, two terms that will be discussed at length in Chapters 4 and 5. But for now, I will address a third: "plague/pestiferous" (*peste*, *pestilentior*), as nuisance, destruction, scourge, and mortality.[13] Before the 1378 Schism, a review of thirteenth- to mid-fourteenth-century papal letters for the word pest* (leaving declensions open) shows that the word was attached most often to "pestiferous" wars, political enemies, and heresies. For example, in 1264, Urban IV used the term to describe the Greek Schism (*schismaticorum peste*), and then against Manfred, Frederick II's son (*omni peste pestilentior esse possit*).[14] Urban IV in 1264 and Gregory X in 1272 also used the term to lament war (*tristium peste bellorum*).[15]

Examples from the early fourteenth century show that the term was associated with political enemies. In 1304, Benedict XI criticized Florence's interventions in Tuscia (*Tuscie civitatibus peste laborantibus*), and in 1310 Clement V railed similarly against Ferrara (*ut recidiva peste ipsius civitatis*).[16] John XXII favored the term to label heresies. In 1332, he upbraided heretics who swarmed (*pullulantes*) the diocese of Pamiers (*ita quod hac extirpata peste mortifera fides ibidem catholica*), as well as the rest of the Roussillon region (*ut extirpata heresis peste de medio fidelium*).[17]

The arrival of *Yersenia Pestis*, the Black Death or bubonic plague, changed usage. From 1347 on, papal letters used the word for a disease that caused great suffering, a scourge.

[12] Siméon Luce, ed., *Chronique des quatre premiers Valois (1327–1393)* (Paris: Société de l'histoire de France, 1862), 295.

[13] See the definition of "pestis" in Du Cange et al., *Glossarium mediæ et infimæ latinitatis* (Niort: L. Favre, 1883–1887) at Ducange, http://ducange.enc.sorbonne.fr/PESTIS1.

[14] See *Ut per litteras apostolicas*, Urbain IV, (1264) # 000577, 000578, 000778.

[15] See *Ut per litteras apostolicas*, Urbain IV, (1264) # 000852; and Grégoire X (1272) #000035.

[16] See *Ut per litteras apostolicas*, Benoît XI (1304) # 001278; and Clément V (1310) # 006316.

[17] See *Ut per litteras apostolicas*, Jean XXII (1332) #004989, 005007.

Interestingly, first as an adjective (*mortalitatis peste*) and then as a noun (*peste*).[18] A 1373 indulgence *in articulo mortis* from Gregory XI given to the inhabitants of Pisa associates both adjective and noun (*in quibus mortalitatis pestis invalescat, semel tantum durante ipsa peste*).[19]

In essence, contemporaries of the Schism already had the necessary vocabulary to discuss something that was a deadly nuisance causing immense suffering, a disease. We can note that languaging and communicating about the crisis involved physical, sensory perceptions. We are unfortunately unable to continue tracing serially the usage of pest* in the online papal letters database, which ends with Gregory XI, right before the Schism. But other resources are available, such as Cesare Baronio's *Annales ecclesiastici*. While "papalist" and pro-Catholic in response to the Reformation, the *Annales* offer an abundance of primary sources. These corroborate the usage previously highlighted. Before the Schism, the word is used for heresies and diseases. Beghards are labeled pestiferous heretics, as is Wycliffe.[20] Then the Schism became associated with pest, especially in the 1390s, when elections in both obediences showed that the double-headed papacy was here to stay. Pedro de Luna (the future Benedict XIII) is identified as a pestiferous man (*vir pestifer Petrus [d]e Luna*), and the schism became pestiferous (*pestiferi schismatis*).[21]

By the late 1390s, the *Annales* systematically identified the Schism as pestiferous: *pestiferum schisma*.[22] This association brings home the severity of perception. Like the bubonic plague, the crisis was a dangerous, incurable disease attacking the Christian body. The word suggested a sense of physical pain, finality, and powerlessness at fighting the disease. In 1407, when discussions were ongoing between both popes regarding an eventual

---

[18] Among many examples, see *Ut per litteras apostolicas*, Clément VI, # 002074, 003966, 004115, 004426, 004928; Urbain V, # 009464, 024611, 026840; Grégoire XI, 002016, 024244.

[19] *Ut per litteras apostolicas*, Grégoire XI, # 024506 (universis personis utriusque sexus ecclesiasticis et secularibus civitatis et districtus pisan., in quibus mortalitatis pestis invalescat, semel tantum durante ipsa peste, presentis usque ad menses tres et hiis solum qui ex peste ipsa decesserint valituris).

[20] Baronio, *Annales* 26: 228, in 1373 for Beghards, "prasertim de secta Beguardorum, qui alias Turlupinidic untur, sparsit semen pestiferum multiplicis haereticae pravitatis." For Wycliffe, see Baronio, *Annales* 26: (1382) 435, 436, 441; Baronio, *Annales* 26: (1389), 494; and Baronio, *Annales* 27: (1396), 573.

[21] Examples abound, Baronio, *Annales* 26: 353, a 1379 letter of Peter of Aragon, states "Caeterum quanto Ecclesiasticae damno in Aragonia vir pestifer Petrus [d]e Luna permissus sit schismaticae; impietatis venena diffundere, ex dicendis inferius constabit." Then, *Annales* 26: 362 "Exscindi poterant schismatis pestiferi germina;" 366 "et tum Carolum regem misere porrecto a suis lento veneno iutabuisse, cujus praecipue auctoritate antipapa pestilentiae cathedram retenturum . . . qui Clementem papam VII ausu temerario se fecit, excelsis et intrepidis animis respuatis, ejusque virulentis et pestilentissimis suggestionibus . . . in qua sperabat in pestilentiae cathedra"; 373 "ut Petrum de Luna hominem pestiferum aditu in regnum probiberet;" 387 "pestilentia cathedra constabiliret;" 393 "serpentem venenum pestiferum emittentem"; 422 "dictique pestiferi schismatis"; 545 "sub amicorum specie virus pestilentissimum nequitiae inspirantes"; and 572 "pestiferam paritura malitiam."

[22] Baronio, *Annales* 27: 6 (1397), "Nos omnes et singuli sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae cardinales propriis manibus in cedula praesenti scripti, qui dudum vita functo felicis recordationis domino Clemente Septimo congregati pro electione futura in conclavi, ac, prout tenemur, cupientes abolere pesti-ferum schisma," and also 9, 17, 26, 135 (*pestiferum et horrendum schisma*), 156, 170, 171, 237, 241, 277, 293, 295, 304, 336, 345, 418, 420, 431, 444.

solution, the University of Bologna's academics used medical language to address the crisis. They declared solemnly that "'hardening of the heart' had transformed the schism into heresy, and that therefore it was necessary to refuse obedience to both popes as obstinate and heretical."[23]

Additionally, at times during the Schism, certain individuals were described as a scourge. In 1400, the Romans were labeled *pestiferi romani cives*, as was Wycliffe, again, a few years later.[24] Usage of the descriptor eventually spread. At the University of Paris, it was opinions that were labeled pestiferous.[25] And at the end of the Schism, Martin V considered simony *pestiferum et multiforme monstrum simoniae* in a 1418 bull, a description also applied to the Hussite war.[26]

What is left of this semantic exercise is a vocabulary usage that mixed diseases of the flesh and soul and somewhat mitigated agency. If a pestiferous heresy is something one chooses, a pestiferous disease is not. It becomes interesting to note that after 1348, plague imagery had to be taken into consideration when using the word pest* and with it a series of images that linked virulence with lack of human control and agency. Sinners had brought God's wrath onto the human race. And there were no better tools to placate God's wrath than intercessory masses. Contemporary masses, intended to appease God in perilous moments like the plague pandemic, closed the loop linking the Schism to disease. Inspired by Clement VI's *Recordare Domine testamenti tui* against the plague, Clement VII endorsed *Salvos nos fac* in 1392, to end the Schism, and *Exaudi Deus orationem meam* in 1393, dedicated to Church peace. Pius V (1566–1572) renamed the latter *missa pro infirmis* – directly linking Schism and disease.[27] Pestilence, either physical or moral, was God's punishment. The pestiferous Schism was presented as a disease in a social drama that needed human atonement. In Froissart's words, loosely translated, "we know that in the future people will marvel at such things and how the Church could fall in such troubles, and for so long, but it was a wound (or scourge) sent by God to warn the high clergy of its vanities blinded by pride and presumption."[28]

These few introductory comments point to a few of the Schism's historiographical loopholes. As we will see in the following pages, the Great Western Schism has mostly

[23] Lewin, "Cum Status Ecclesie Noster Sit," 183.

[24] Baronio, *Annales* 27: 65, 404.

[25] *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, 3: 497.

[26] Baronio, *Annales* 27: 500, 502.

[27] See Jules Viard, "La messe pour la peste," *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* 61 (1900): 334–38; Valois, *La France*, 2: 403; Robert Amiet, "La messe pour l'unité des chrétiens," *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 28 (1954): 1–35; and Hélène Millet and Catherine Vincent, "La prière pour l'unité de l'Église," in *Le Midi et le Grand Schisme d'Occident*, ed. Jean-Louis Biget (Toulouse: Privat, 2004), 531–70.

[28] The full quote reads:

> Bien sçay que ou temps à venir l'on s'esmerveillera de telles choses et comment l'Église pupt cheoir en tels troubles, ne si longuement demourer mais ce fut une playe envoiée de Dieu pour adviser et considérer au clergé du grant estat et des grans superfluités qu'ils tenoient et faisoient combien que les plusieurs n'en tenoient compte car ils estoient si aveuglés de orgueil et de présumption que chascun vouloit sourmonter ou ressembler l'un l'autre.

> Jean Froissart and Kervyn de Lettenhove, *Oeuvres de Froissart. Chronique*s, vol. 11 (1867–1877, repr. Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1967), 251.

attracted an ecclesiological and political historiography. This historiography has somewhat disincarnated the crisis, focusing on institutions rather than the people behind it. The present monograph will complement this historiography by "incarnating" it, grounding the analysis of the Schism's events within the framework of cultural anthropology. The Schism will be treated as a social drama with its own actors performing this drama. In "Social Dramas and Stories about Them," Victor Turner argues,

> My hypothesis, based on repeated observations of such processual units in a range of sociocultural systems and on my reading in ethnography and history, is that social dramas, "dramas of living," as Kenneth Burke calls them, can be aptly studied as having four phases. These I label breach, crisis, redress, and either reintegration or recognition of schism. Social dramas occur within groups of persons who share values and interests and who have a real or alleged common history. The main actors are persons for whom the group has a high value priority.[29]

Turner further elaborates using a wide range of examples spanning the chronology and geography (from Becket to Watergate). He identifies the four acts of social drama, starting with "the breach of a norm, the infraction of a rule of morality, law, custom, or etiquette, in some public arena."[30] As an expression of division, the breach may be spontaneous or calculated, but it systematically leads to a state where "overt conflict and covert antagonisms become visible. Sides are taken, factions are formed, and unless the conflict can be sealed off quickly within a limited area of social interaction, there is a tendency for the breach to widen and spread until it coincides with some dominant cleavage in the widest set of relevant social relations to which the parties in conflict belong."[31] Turner argues that more basic and durable social structures permeate below the surface of such divisions. The next processual phase is as follows: "In order to limit the contagious spread of breach, certain adjustive and redressive mechanisms, informal and formal, are brought into operation by leading members of the disturbed group."[32] The last phase sees either reintegration or total break.

What does Victor Turner's discussion of social drama based on the Ndembu people of the Republic of Congo bring to the analysis of the major crisis of late medieval Christianity? A lot. Turner's theory allows the Schism to be analyzed within the framework of a sociocultural phenomenon. Because it was a social drama, the Schism followed the processual evolution identified by Turner. The double election of 1378 was its breach, the division of Western Christianity into two papal obediences its crisis, subtractions of obedience and councils its redressive actions, and the election of a single pope at the Council of Constance its denouement and reintegration. The constant substrata that lingered below the surface of the crisis was the opposition between an oligarchic/corporatist curia and the College of Cardinals, which resisted the mounting absolutist pretensions of the papacy.

What does the analysis of the Schism as a cultural phenomenon bring to the Schism historiography? A fresh way of revisiting it by focusing on the means medieval society

---

[29] Victor Turner, "Social Dramas and Stories about Them," *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 (1980): 149.
[30] Turner, "Social Dramas," 150.
[31] Turner, "Social Dramas," 150.
[32] Turner, "Social Dramas," 151.

deployed, the elements it created to solve the crisis as it reacted with the predictability of social dramas. Addressing contemporary studies focused on social drama, Elizabeth Bell concludes, "all of these explorations of contemporary social dramas show how communication and performance are resources for languaging the breach, garnering support for and against the protagonist, resolving the drama through cultural mechanism, and returning the community to normal."[33] The following pages will argue that performance undergirded the Schism's social drama. Scholars have emphasized the performative aspects of medieval society, and of the Church, but up to now, few have linked them to the Schism per se.[34] It seems quite evident that a breach that divided Christian Europe over questions of legitimacy would see the deployment of behaviors aimed at emphasizing or contesting legitimacy. I will argue that the performance of authority and legitimacy guided most responses to the Schism as the crisis processed through its four stages. Performance was attached to the demonstration of power that defined authority. And because medieval society, like the papacy, conceived itself as a body, legitimating performances emphasized the sensorial and sensual.[35] Authority was projected and defined as something that could be seen, voiced, heard, touched, and smelled.

After reviewing the Schism's historiography while reframing it as a social drama (breach, crisis, redressive action, and reintegration), the following chapters will identify specific moments that emphasized the performance of authority during the Schism. Chapters 2 and 3 will focus on the performance of the papacy and responses to it. Chapter 2, "Performing the Papacy, Performing the Schism," will juxtapose elements that may sound incongruous at first: administration and liturgy. But the study of the granting of *bullae* (papal bulls), and of the somewhat rivaling liturgical feasts of the Presentation, Visitation, and the granting of the Golden Rose will underscore the Schism's competing papal performances. Chapter 3, "Images and Responses," will gauge the response to and reception of papal performance during the Schism through illustrated chronicles: Antonio Baldana's *de magno Schismate*, Ulrich Richenthal's chronicle, and the Apocalypse Tapestry of Angers. Treating these three objects as performative receptors will allow us to weigh in on the reactions to papal behavior. Chapter 4, "Conflicting Legitimacy: The Schism and the Rhetoric of Tyrannicide," will visit the world of politics and parallel the discussion of usurpation and tyranny within the ecclesiastical and secular realms. After defining the emic understanding of tyranny, the chapter will ask if authors labeled the pope a tyrant during the Schism. He was not labeled as such, but rather as a usurper. This semantic play minimized directly labeling popes a threat but still emphasized the risks multiple popes presented to Christian society. The response to a "tyrannical" pope who refused to step down for the sake of unity grew into the 1398 French Subtraction of Obedience. Addressed next in the chapter, it

---

[33] Bell, *Theories of Performance*, 110.

[34] For example, John F. Romano, *Liturgy and Society in Early Medieval Rome* (London: Ashgate, 2016); Maureen C. Miller, *The Bishop's Palace: Architecture and Authority in Medieval Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); and Elizabeth McCahill, *Reviving the Eternal City: Rome and the Papal Court, 1420–1447* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

[35] The most obvious legitimation of this bodily metaphor is found in the rationalization of the council of Constance in "Haec sancta synodus" that states, "In nomine sanctae et individuae Trinitatis, Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti. Amen. Haec sanctae synodus Constantiensis generale concilium faciens, pro exstirpatione praesentis schismatis, et unione ac reformatione ecclesiae Dei in capite et in membris fienda"; as quoted by Stump, *The Reforms of the Council of Constance*, xiv.

mirrors specific political events: the 1399 deposition of Richard II and the murder of the duke of Orléans at the Rue Vieille du Temple (1407) by orders of the duke of Burgundy, including Jean Petit's defense of the murderers at the Council of Constance. The chapter will argue that responses to the Schism informed and influenced the political world, drawing parallels between ecclesiastical and secular performances of authority.

Chapter 5, "Finding Unity in Liturgy: Papal Funerals and the Political Theology of the Pope's One Body," will address the liturgical response to the Schism and, again, the search for unity. The chapter will focus on specific ceremonial books (*ordines*) authored during the Schism and tease out what they can teach us about the performance of unity. In the case of Pierre Ameil's *ordo*, his objectification of the papal corpse allowed the performance of liturgical unity. Dead man and effigy, Ameil's papal corpse was the "incarnated" ecclesiastical institution objectified. Finally, Rome and Avignon will anchor Chapters 6 and 7 respectively. The chapters will study the competing Christian capitals with a focus on the performance of authority.

In general, the following approach emphasizes a modern historiography that has outpaced the old divide between genres. At a minimum, social and cultural anthropology can inform institutional history and vice versa. One genre does not exclude the other.

In their recent *The Grammar of Politics and Performance*, Shirin M. Rai and Janelle G. Reinelt investigate the structural similarities between politics and performance. They quite elegantly refer to these similarities as "grammar."[36] They rightly point out that while we often trivialize politics as spectacle and performance, scholarship in, for example, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political studies, has been slow to "discover the nature of the cross-over between performance as a set of behavioural practices and the transactions of these other realms."[37] They add, "the notion that one can study and describe the 'grammar' governing politics (which will always involve performance) as well as the 'grammar' governing performance (which will always involve politics) is a provocative idea which we hope will give rise to further research on the complex and fluctuating relationship between these two terms."[38]

Since grammar is a set of rules and codes created to communicate more easily, the authors identify several markers of politics and performance, or a "set of principles" that can facilitate investigation. First, the evident, both rely on actors and audience: "both politics and performance require publics and exist to affect their constituencies in aggregate form, whether through laws and policies or through providing certain (often aesthetic) experiences in common."[39] Thus, the presence of a public leads performance/politics to be driven by a consciousness and awareness that one is doing something to be observed, within a defined sociopolitical context; it is transactional. As the authors state, "to perform is to be aware of the act of doing something, and to show doing it."[40] There is no better relation between this principle and the papacy than the words of Pope Clement VI (1342–1352), who

---

[36] Shirin M. Rai and Janelle G. Reinelt, *The Grammar of Politics and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

[37] Rai and Reinelt, *The Grammar of Politics*, 1.

[38] Rai and Reinelt, *The Grammar of Politics*, 1.

[39] Rai and Reinelt, *The Grammar of Politics*, 4.

[40] Rai and Reinelt, *The Grammar of Politics*, 4.