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Angel Pope and Papal Antichrist

BERNARD MCGINN

In one of the great purple passages of nineteenth-century English historiography, Thomas Babington Macauley in his review of Leopold von Ranke's *History of the Popes* declared the papacy to be the western institution most worthy of historical study.¹ Accordingly, historians have devoted innumerable pages to the analysis of papal politics, ideology, finances, and many other areas. However, there are still aspects of the history of the papacy that have been seriously neglected.

Following the suggestion of Lucien Febvre in his essay "Sensibility and History,"² it can be argued that the history of the role of the papacy in the religious sensibility of western civilization has scarcely begun to be written. Many chapters in the story of the impact of the papal office on western piety and practice remain obscure or inadequately understood. One illustration of such an area is the role of the popes in late medieval apocalyptic piety. Despite the considerable knowledge at our disposal,³ the absence of a synthetic viewpoint has led to much misunderstanding of the importance and function of this aspect of medieval papal history. The argument of this paper is that the place of the papacy in apocalyptic hopes must be always viewed from a dialectical point of view, an antithesis between hope for a coming papal messiah and dread of a pope who would be man's final enemy.⁴ This antithesis was frequently synthesized, not, of course, into a single figure, but in a single scenario, a dramatic account of the imminent crisis of history. This synthetic picture tended to split apart in the religious quarrels of the sixteenth century when the negative side, the pope as Antichrist, became a favored tool of Protestant polemics,⁵ and the positive pole, the coming holy pope, continued to be popular in Catholic circles in the sixteenth and

1. *Critical and Historical Essays*, Vol. 2 (London: Everyman's Library edition, n.d.), 38–39.
2. Idem, *A New Kind of History and Other Essays* (New York, 1973), pp. 12–26.
3. There is no complete study of the apocalyptic role of the medieval papacy. The fullest discussion is in Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1969), Pt. 4, "Angelic Pope and Renovatio Mundi," pp. 393–508. See also Friedrich Baethgen, *Der Engelpapst. Idee und Erscheinung* (Leipzig, 1943).
4. See Baethgen, 49–51, for remarks on the dual nature.
5. For a survey see Hans Preuss, *Die Vorstellung vom Antichrist im späteren Mittelalter, bei Luther und in der konfessionalen Polemik* (Leipzig, 1906). There was some interest among the Reformers in the positive pole, the notion of the Angel Pope. See Reeves, *Prophecy*, 451–452, 487–490.

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seventeenth centuries. The humorous interest in the “Malachy Prophecies” during modern papal conclaves is its last dim survival.

An unusual feature about the apocalyptic role of the papacy in medieval religious history is that it was never adopted as a part of official papal propaganda. Even the positive side of these hopes was treated usually with silence, occasionally with opposition on the part of those who had always been glad to absorb new titles and job descriptions. No pope ever proclaimed himself the hoped-for Angel Pope, though at least one was so hailed by his contemporaries. A number of pontiffs correctly saw the figure of such a coming reformer as a thinly-veiled attack upon themselves and their conduct in office. Nonetheless, the holy pope of the last days, frequently called the *pastor angelicus*, or Angel Pope, was the creation neither of enemies of the papal office nor of some anonymous popular piety. We can trace the history of its development in the writings of a succession of well-known reformers, papal advisers, and apocalyptic publicists. Its spread to a wide public in late medieval Europe is a sign that the publicists had created what the people needed, a new dimension for their beliefs about the papacy that made sense of the problems of the present and gave them hope for a better future.

The popes came late to their apocalyptic role. There is no hint of any special place for the papacy in the drama of the end for almost the first millennium of Christian history. The earliest mention was a negative one. In 991 at the Synod of Reims in St. Basle, Bishop Arnulf reviewed the sad history of the recent popes and attacked John XV in the following terms:

Reverend Fathers, who do you think he is, this man sitting in the highest chair, dressed in purple and glowing with gold? Doubtless, if he is bereft of charity and blown up and lifted on high with knowledge alone, he is Antichrist seated in the Temple of God and showing himself as if he were God!⁶

Some ninety years later a group of dissident Cardinals echoed him in calling Gregory VII Antichrist.⁷ But these were sporadic notices at a time when a non-historical moralizing interpretation of the scriptural symbols of the end was current.⁸ It is doubtful that they bear much real apocalyptic weight.

6. “Quid hunc reverendi patres in sublimi solio residentem veste purpurea et aurea radiantem, quid hunc, inquam, esse censetis? Nimirum si caritate destituitur solaque scientia inflatur et extollitur, Antichristus est in templo Dei sedens, et se ostendens tamquam sit Deus.” Gerbert, *Acta Concilii Remenses ac Sanctum Basolum in Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Berlin, 1826-). *Scriptores* 3, 672.

7. MGH. *Libelli de Lite*, 2, 383.

8. I am referring to the interpretation of the Book of Revelation begun by the Donatist exegete Tyconius and canonized by Augustine in Book 20 of the *De civitate Dei*. On Tyconius and his influence, see Wilhelm Kamlah, *Apokalypse und Geschichtstheologie* (Berlin, 1935); and Horst Dieter Rauh, *Das Bild des Antichrist im Mittelalter: Vom Tyconius zum Deutschen Symbolismus* (Münster, 1973).

The necessity for the central role of the papacy in the scenario of the events of the end may be explained on the basis of two developments in the history of the papal office in the High Middle Ages: the new visibility of the papacy as a result of the Gregorian Era and the increasing dissatisfaction after 1215 with Rome as an instrument of reform.

The Christian understanding of history is fundamentally teleological in structure—events receive their meaning because they partake in a single great process aiming towards a specific goal. The opposition of good and evil that has marked the course of history since the Fall will culminate in a series of cataclysmic final events in which the Antichrist will nearly destroy the Church before he is annihilated by Christ. Since every present situation finds its ultimate validation in this apocalyptic future, it is not hard to see why the biblical account of the events of the last days was subject to considerable expansion as centuries progressed. As long as the Christian view of history remained teleological, major changes in the structure of society needed apocalyptic validation to show that they were part of God's plan and not ephemeral accidents. If the Christian Emperor was truly God's regent on earth, surely he must have a part in the final events that gave history its meaning. Thus the revolution effected by Constantine's conversion and the history of the Christian Roman Empire between the fourth and the seventh centuries produced the myth of the Last World Emperor, the ruler who would defeat all the worldly enemies of Christianity and voluntarily surrender his power to God before the onslaught of the Antichrist.⁹ Similarly, if the Pope was the universal leader of Christendom as the Gregorians claimed, surely he would not sit idle at the most crucial moment in sacred history. Thus both the Emperor and the Pope came to play key roles in the apocalyptic scenario, roles for which there was absolutely no warrant in either the Scriptures or the patristic tradition. In giving the papacy a position of true leadership in the religious consciousness of Latin Christianity, the Gregorians provided the necessary, if not quite sufficient, cause for the apocalyptic role of the successors of Peter.

The earliest glimmerings of the papacy's role in the drama of the last days comes from the pen of a choleric reformer in the 1160s. Gerhoh of Reichersberg in his *De quarta vigilia noctis*, disgusted by the trafficking in money that had become a part of papal operations since the upheavals of the last century, expressed the hope that pontiffs in a better time to come would be able to avoid such compromises and live lives of true

9. The earliest explicit witness to the legend is the famous Syriac text known as the *Revelations* of the Pseudo-Methodius. The most complete study of these myths remains that of Franz Kampers, *Kaiserprophetien und Kaisersagen im Mittelalter* (Munich, 1895). For a brief introduction in English, see P. J. Alexander, "Byzantium and the Migration of Literary Works and Motifs. The Legend of the Last Roman Emperor," *Mediaevalia et Humanistica*, N.S. 2 (London and Cleveland, 1971), pp 47–68.

poverty.¹⁰ But it remained for Joachim of Fiore in the late twelfth century to create the earliest clear picture of the papal role in the imminent crisis of history.

Joachim's contribution to the pope's apocalyptic role cannot be understood apart from the second major factor referred to above—the crisis of the papacy as an instrument of reform. Joachim himself lived at the beginning of that crisis, and the seeds that he planted grew ever more prolific as the crisis became more evident in the next hundred years.

The papacy had been the major instrument of reform in Christian society since the mid-eleventh century. So successful had its leadership of reform elements in the Church become, that the popes had established themselves as the arbiters of reform. What they approved concerning the purification of the religious life, canon law, sacramental and religious practice, won ready acceptance; what they rejected was inexorably forced outside the institutional church into the realm of sectarian dissidence.¹¹ Since the Schism of Anacletus in 1130, the papacy had been racked with debates over the nature of reform. It was within the context of such debates and at least in part as a contribution to them that Joachim undertook his prophetic task.

The great debate of Joachim's era, the years between the death of Alexander III in 1181 and the accession of Innocent III in 1198, was between an activist view of the papacy, concentrating on opposition to the encroachments of the Empire, and a more pacific viewpoint anxious to accommodate the Emperor and to concentrate on internal questions. Joachim supported the latter position; indeed, he served as a kind of apocalyptic adviser to the peace party in the curia during these years.¹² From the time of his earliest writings the Abbot's vision of the papacy as a "suffering servant," an institution whose providential destiny was not to resist persecution with the weapons of this world, but to suffer, preach and inspire in the coming crisis formed an important part of his theology of history. As his thoughts concerning the three stages of history became clearer, so did his picture of the apocalyptic role of the papacy. The popes were to have a special task at the time of the transition between the present second *status* and its successor, the dawning millennial *status* of the Holy Spirit. The leader, the *novus dux de Babilone*,

10. MGH. *Libelli de Lite*, 3, 509–510. See the discussion in Bernhard Töpfer, *Das kommende Reich des Friedens* (Berlin, 1964), pp. 30–31. The context indicates a more apocalyptic dimension than this passing mention can highlight.

11. The best example in the twelfth century is that of the Waldensians. See the most up-to-date account in Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy. Popular Movements from Bogomil to Hus* (New York, 1976), pp. 67–91.

12. On the political context of Joachim's thought, see Herbert Grundmann, "Kirchenfreiheit und Kaisermacht um 1190 in der Sicht Joachims von Fiore," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 19(1963):353–396; and Bernard McGinn, "Joachim and the Sibyl," *Cîteaux* 34 (1973):97–138.

who would guide the holy remnant through the crisis of transition and the persecution of the Antichrist was to be a pope according to Joachim.¹³ It is even possible, if we can believe Roger Howden's account of Richard the Lionhearted's interview of Joachim in the winter of 1190–1191, that the Abbot of Fiore believed that the Antichrist of this period would also obtain the Chair of Peter.¹⁴ The papacy would not vanish in the coming third state but would be spiritualized and monasticized. The Abbot of Fiore's utopian blueprint for the coming stage, best seen in the diagram known as "The New Disposition of the People of God" from the *Liber figurarum*, centered upon a leader who was at once papal and monastic.¹⁵

Joachim's vision of history in which the crisis of the persecution of the Antichrist would be followed by a time of peace, contemplation and spiritual enlightenment within a monasticized society can be seen as an original variation upon the theme of reform that had been so essential to Christian society since the eleventh century. For the Abbot of Fiore, reform was not essentially man's work in the present but rather the irruption in a new way of the divine life of the Trinity into history. His emphasis on the monastic, the contemplative, the charismatic aspect of the apocalyptic papacy was at once an act of faith in the trans-historical importance of the papal office and a radical critique of the scholastic, activist, bureaucratic papacy of the later middle ages.¹⁶

Innocent III was perhaps the last successful reform pope. His approval of the mendicant orders and his summoning of the Fourth Lateran Council are evidence of the effectiveness of his concern; but his program of reform represents a very different model from that conceived by Joachim, and it is no accident that Innocent, whose Council condemned Joachim's trinitarian views, became the first papal villain in the development of the Joachimite tradition.¹⁷ Innocent's successors in the thirteenth century looked less and less like reformers or men of sanctity and more and more like the able lawyers, administrators and politicians they were.¹⁸

13. E.g., the famous text in the *Liber Concordie* (Venice ed. 1519), f. 56rb.

14. M. Reeves has argued convincingly for the authenticity of this account (*Prophecy*, pp. 6–10), and shown that there are hints of the same belief in the Abbot's authentic works, notably *Expositio in Apocalypsim* (Venice, 1527), f. 168ra. For the text in Roger see his *Chronica* in *Rerum britannicarum mediæ aevi scriptores* (Rolls Series: London, 1858–1911) 3, 78. In the account of this interview found in the so-called Benedict of Peterborough, *Gesta Henrici II et Ricardi I* (Rolls Series) 2, 151, Richard responds to Joachim by identifying the papal Antichrist with the current pope, Clement III.

15. Leone Tondelli, M. Reeves and Beatrice Hirsch-Reich, *Il Libro delle Figure* (Turin, 1953), table 12. See the detailed study in M. Reeves and B. Hirsch-Reich, *The Figurae of Joachim of Fiore* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 232–248.

16. See B. McGinn, "The Abbot and the Doctors: Scholastic Reactions to the Radical Eschatology of Joachim of Fiore," *Church History* 40 (1971): 45–47.

17. Innocent is attacked in the *In Hieremiam* written in the 1240s (Venice ed., 1516, f. 23r).

18. Baethgen, *Der Engelpapst*, pp. 27–28, has seen the importance of this.

The ambivalence that the careers of these men introduced into the public perception of the papacy as a religious institution provided the second key element in the background of the apocalyptic papacy. The popes had risen to their position of eminence by emphasizing the special claims of their office to universal and supreme religious power, but as the exalted position of the office came to be more readily accepted its occupants appeared less and less worthy of the claims. One key element was the question of poverty. In an age that continued to look upon poverty as a central element in the life of perfection, the later medieval popes often displayed openly their personal and institutional wealth. Continual criticism of this lack of poverty was a hallmark of popular dissatisfaction with current popes. The popes' responsibilities demanded that they act like other princes, but their reputation depended on their being something more. As the papacy became increasingly trapped in the web of politics, law and administration that its own success had woven for it, as the popes became less and less the instruments of reform and more and more its opponents, real or imagined, apocalyptic hopes began to provide a refuge in the future from the realities of the present.

Like some of their predecessors, individual thirteenth-century popes were at times identified with the Antichrist, but the accusations gained a new specificity. The struggle between the papacy and the Emperor Frederick II is one of the classic cases of the use of apocalyptic rhetoric in medieval politics. Both Gregory IX and Innocent IV were not slow to equate the persecuting emperor with the beasts of the Book of Revelation; Frederick's polemicists answered in kind. A treatise emanating from the imperial camp in the 1240s spells out the numerical value of *Innocencius papa* as 666, the number of the Antichrist given in Rev. 13:18, and gives a succinct theological evaluation of why the Antichrist *must* be a pope:

It should be known and firmly held by all Christ's faithful that since the Antichrist is said to be contrary to Christ, he will come in that state of life in which he will be most directly opposed to Christ and from which his fall will be the greatest . . . Hence it is necessary that Antichrist appear in the place of the Supreme Pontiff . . .¹⁹

In its own inverted way the treatise could provide no greater affirmation of the importance of the papal office.

At the same time, Joachim's hopes for a coming holy pope continued to find echoes. The term *pastor angelicus* itself is later, not being known until the end of the thirteenth century, but the figure of an imminent

19. "Notandum est cunctis Christi fidelibus et firmiter tenendum, cum antichristus contrarius Christo dicitur, in tali eum statu venturum, in quo maxime adversetur et lapsus illius maxime aggravetur . . . in loco summi pontificis antichristum apparere oportebit . . ." *Fratris Arnoldi De Correctione Ecclesiae Epistola . . .*, ed. Eduardus Winkelmann (Berlin, 1865), p. 20.

reforming pope of the last days was widespread at least three decades before. Many of the images that came to be applied to the holy pope had deep roots in western religious symbolism, but their coalescence into the full-blown figure of the *pastor angelicus* does not seem to have taken place before the dramatic events of the year 1294.

The popular *Super Hieremiam prophetam*, a work pseudonymously ascribed to Joachim but actually written in the 1240s in the midst of the conflict between Frederick and the papacy, predicted that a pope would be killed under the persecuting empire and that “. . . after three days or three years the Good Shepherd and Leader of the House of Israel will arise.”²⁰ In 1267 Roger Bacon wrote that forty years before it had been prophesied that a pope would come who would reform the church, heal the schism with the Greeks and convert the Tartars and the Saracens so that there would be one flock and one shepherd.²¹ The Franciscan chronicler Salimbene told of the expectations that had surrounded the election of Gregory X in 1271. The prophetic verses he cites appear to have been written after 1274 rather than in 1271. They are the earliest explicit reference to the angelic life of the coming pope who would give peace to the world and restore Jerusalem:

About the year one thousand two hundred and seventy-four,
He, the Holy Pope, about forty years of age,
Will appear. The man of angelic life
Will hold to the decrees of Christ.
He will be your dread, O you Giezites!²²

The decade of the 1290s marked a new stage in the hopes and fears regarding the papacy and the real birth of the apocalyptic vision of history that wove both the Angel Pope and the Papal Antichrist into a single scenario that with all its variations remained basic until the Reformation. This evolution grew out of the confluence of the hopes of the Spiritual Franciscans with the strange career of Pope Celestine V.

Since about 1280, the tensions between the rigorists and the accommodators within the Franciscan Order had grown worse. In Provence, in Tuscany, and in Umbria and the Marches definite Spiritualist groups had formed. These groups defended their views regarding absolute

20. *In Hier.*, f. 53ra. “Nescio tamen si post tres dies vel annos resurgat pastor bonus et dux domus Israel.”

21. *Opus Tertium* (Rolls Series 15), p. 86. See a similar passage in the *Compendium Studii* (Rolls Series 15), p. 402.

22. *Chronica* (MGH. SS. 32, 493):

“En circa mille bis centum septuaginta
Tetraque: tunc ille, velut annorum quadraginta,
Sanctus parebit et Christi scita tenebit,
Angelice vite, vobis pavor, o Giezite!”

An earlier version of these verses, without explicit references to Gregory, may be found in a Paris ms. described by Leopold Delisle, *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale* 38, 2 (Paris, 1906), pp. 739–740. See Baethgen, pp. 14–17.

poverty in theory and in practice by an appeal to a Joachite apocalyptic view that saw in St. Francis the precursor of the coming age and that made poverty the distinctive mark of the true *virī spirituales*, the “Spiritual men” who would be the elite of the new era.²³ The Spirituals suffered increasing persecution from the majority party, the Conventuals. Peter John Olivi, the Provençal leader, was censured in 1283, and the Spirituals in the Marches of Ancona spent several years in prison before being allowed to go off on mission to Armenia in 1289. The Spirituals certainly shared in the hopes for a coming holy pope; they may even already have viewed him as a poor and naked hermit who would be discovered hiding in a cave,²⁴ but none of the texts in which this typical picture of the *pastor angelicus* clearly appears can be securely dated before 1294.

The involvement of the curia in late thirteenth-century political questions, especially the dispute between the Angevin and Aragonese powers over southern Italy, had led to a series of protracted interregna between popes during which the divided cardinals were unable to reach the necessary two-thirds majority to elect a new pontiff. The conclave lasting from April 1292 to July 1294 was one of the longest of these. Eventually, probably under pressure from the Aragonese King of Naples, Charles II, the cardinals cut the Gordian knot by unanimously electing not one of their number, but an aged, simple and almost illiterate Benedictine hermit, Peter Murrone, who took the name Celestine V.²⁵ The new pope’s decrees proceeded to wreak havoc with curial administration, but he showed favor to the Spirituals by allowing the group from the Marches, now returned to Italy, to separate from the Franciscans and found a new order, the Poor Hermits of Celestine, under his protection.²⁶ If this was a *pastor angelicus*, the cardinals soon realized his total

23. Some Franciscans had begun to show interest in Joachim’s thought, especially in his notion of the three stages of history and his predictions regarding the *virī spirituales*, in the 1240s. In 1254 this led the young friar, Gerard of Borgo San Donnino, to advance heterodox views about the coming Third *status*. In the ensuing crisis Gerard was condemned to perpetual imprisonment and John of Parma, the Minister General and an ardent Joachite, was compelled to step down. Nevertheless, Bonaventure, the next General, was influenced by Joachite ideas in his own theology of history, and his thought had its mark on Olivi.
24. David Clark in an unpublished paper “Mountain and Cave in Joachimite Prophecy” has suggested that the description of the *pastor angelicus* as a naked hermit found in a cave has roots in a tradition stretching back to Joachim of Fiore’s interpretation of St. Benedict and prevalent in the Joachite tradition. Robert Lerner, in contrast, points to the legend of the holy Pope Gregory discovered as a naked hermit, a story found in the popular *Gesta Romanorum*, chap. 81.
25. For Celestine’s career, consult Baethgen, *Der Engelpapst*; Horace K. Mann, *The Lives of the Popes in the Middle Ages* (London-St. Louis, 1931), Vol. 17; Franz X. Seppelt, *Studien zum Pontifikat Coelestins V* (Berlin–Leipzig, 1911); and *Monumenta Coelestiniana* (Paderborn, 1921); and most recently Arsenio Frugoni, *Celestiniana* (Rome, 1954).
26. These were led by Peter of Macerata and Peter of Fossombrone who changed their names to Fra Liberato and Fra Angelo da Clareno in the new order. The best study is in Frugoni, *op. cit.*, 125–67.

incompatibility with the papal office as it had become by the end of the thirteenth century. Celestine abdicated in December of the same year, rumor had it persuaded by a voice he thought divine, but was actually that of Cardinal Benedetto Gaetani. The same Cardinal Gaetani rapidly succeeded him as Boniface VIII and began a nine-year reign that could not have been more diametrically opposed to that of the unfortunate hermit he kept imprisoned until his death in 1296. Among his other acts Boniface commanded the Celestine Hermits to return to obedience to the Franciscans, but they fled to seek refuge on a Greek island instead.²⁷ During Boniface's pontificate the Conventuals tightened the persecution of the Spirituals. Olivi was posthumously condemned in 1299 and Italian Spirituals like the poet Jacopone da Todi and the preacher Ubertino da Casale were either imprisoned or suspended. Boniface died shortly after his capture at Anagni in 1304 at the hands of agents of Philip the Fair of France and the pope's Italian enemies. He was succeeded by the weak Benedict XI who reigned less than a year. An eleven-month interregnum followed in which pro- and anti-French factions within the College of Cardinals attacked each other vehemently. Finally, in June of 1305, Bertrand de Got, Archbishop of Bordeaux, was elected pope as Clement V. This Gascon could not bring himself to abandon the congenial vineyards of home for the welter of Italian politics. The Avignon Captivity of the papacy had begun.

The sharp contrast between the holy hermit Celestine who favored the Spirituals and the scheming politician Boniface who opposed them was the impetus for the full flowering of the apocalyptic interpretation of the papacy. Among the early texts that use the contrasting figures within one synthetic picture is the obscure *Oraculum angelicum Cirilli*. This was supposedly a revelation on two silver tablets handed over to a holy Carmelite during mass. Cyril had so much trouble interpreting it that he sent it on to Joachim of Fiore who obligingly wrote a commentary. The two texts, perhaps from the same author, have been dated as early as the 1280s, but the 1290s appears far more likely.²⁸ The conflict between the coming holy pope, or *orthopontifex*, and the evil *pseudopontifex* seems to reflect the Spirituals' view of Celestine and Boniface, though the imagery is fittingly obscure.²⁹ That this interpretation of recent papal

27. Angelo's dramatic account of the history of his group up to c. 1317 may be found in his *Epistola excusatoria* edited by Franz Ehrle in the *Archiv für Literatur und Kirchengeschichte* 1 (1885): 521–533.

28. Reeves, *Prophecy*, p. 57, suggests 1280–1290; Töpfer, *Das kommende Reich*, 239–241, gives solid reasons for a date about 1298.

29. Chap. 6 of the *Oraculum* and accompanying *Commentarium* describe the opposition between the two in terms of a Joachite concordance with the careers of Rehoboam and Jeroboam in 3 Kings 12–13. In the same Chapter the coming holy pope is described as “. . . a wondrous bear, moved by the Spirit who comes forth from the rock and hastens to the Queen of Feathers and the New Seer.” See Paul Puir, “Oraculum Angelicum Cyrilli nebst dem Kommentar des Pseudojoachim,” in Karl Burdach, *Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation* (Berlin, 1912), Vol. 2, Pt. 4, p. 282.

history was not confined to the Franciscans is shown by the case of the Dominican Robert d'Uzès whose *Visiones* and *Liber sermonum Dei* composed between 1291 and 1296 bear witness to the opposition of a good and bad pope, Celestine the "Angel of the Church," and Boniface the "Idol of the Church." The Dominican also agreed with the more radical Franciscans in refusing to accept the legitimacy of Celestine's abdication.³⁰

The most important of the papal apocalyptic texts produced during this period were the so-called *Vaticinia de summis pontificibus*. They marked the birth of a new form in western apocalyptic literature. The *Vaticinia* are made up of fifteen short texts with titles and symbolic illustrations. They predict the future occupants of the Chair of Peter down to the coming of the Antichrist. Usually ascribed to Joachim of Fiore, the prophet *par excellence*, they cannot be older than the critical period of 1294–1305,³¹ and are evidence for renewed contact between eastern and western apocalypticism. The researches of H. Grundmann and M. Reeves have shown that both the texts and the illustrations are based upon the so-called "Leo Oracles," late twelfth-century Byzantine prophecies of coming emperors.³²

Despite the admirable obscurity of the individual prophecies, the first six correspond fairly well to the popes from Nicholas III (1277–1280) to Boniface. Celestine appears as a tonsured figure bearing a sickle and a rose with the title "The raising up of poverty, obedience, chastity, temperance; the destroyer of hypocrisy." Boniface bears the title: "The harvest of hypocrisy will be in abomination."³³ The figures that follow are more problematic in terms of both order and meaning, but the final

30. Jeanne Bignami-Odier, "Les visions de Robert d'Uzès, O. P.," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 25 (1955):258–310, especially 279, 290–291.

31. Art historians and students of apocalypticism have not been able to agree on the precise dating of the *Vaticinia*. Grundmann in his ground-breaking article, "Die Papstprophetien des Mittelalter," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 19 (1929):91–93, argued for a date in the summer of 1304 during the course of the Conclave that resulted in the election of Clement V, and suggested that they were produced by Angelo's group newly returned from Greece after the death of the tyrant and anxious to do a little apocalyptic politicking (99–102). Reeves has accepted this dating in *Prophecy*, pp. 193–94, 402; and "Some Popular Prophecies from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries," in *Popular Belief and Practice* (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 107–109, though she admits the possibility of a dating as early as 1294 (p. 107, n. 2; p. 117, n. 1). Bernhard Degenhart in his study of the iconography of the *Vaticinia* places the earliest manuscript witness (Monreale, Bibl. Comm. ms. lat. 402, ff. 1–8), shortly after 1294; see *Corpus der Italienischen Zeichnungen* (Berlin, 1968) 1:221.

32. See articles cited in previous note. On the history of the Leo Oracles, Cyril Mango, "The Legend of Leo the Wise," *Recueil des travaux de l'Institut d'études byzantines. VI* (Belgrade, 1960), pp. 59–93. In the absence of critical editions of either text and their respective iconographic traditions, it is impossible to determine just how far the textual dependence on the *Leo Oracles* extends.

33. These titles are found in a number of early mss., e.g., Vat. lat. 3822, f.6 (without illustrations).

five are clearly angelic popes to come after a judgment done upon the city of Rome.

One of the original features of the *Vaticinia* is the concept of a series of coming holy popes. The same notion is found in a related, if less popular, contemporary text which seems to emanate from the same circles, the so-called *Liber de Flore*. The *Liber de Flore* also contains the earliest appearance of another important element, the combination of the hope for an Angelic Pope with the older myth of the Last World Emperor. It predicts that the first of the four *pastores angelici* will be aided by a French King who will be crowned Emperor, end the Schism, conquer Jerusalem and finish his days as a Franciscan.³⁴ Joachim himself had no place for imperial apocalyptic, and even the Pseudo-Joachite *Vaticinia* concentrated its attention only on the papal office, but it was impossible to keep the Joachite and imperial strands of apocalyptic separate for long.³⁵ Significantly, it was the Francophile versions of the Last Emperor which combined most readily with the completed version of the papal myth, though in the fifteenth century some German variants of the myth involve cooperation between the Emperor and a new pope of his choosing.³⁶

The attempt of the *Vaticinia* to fit the contrasting pair of Celestine and Boniface into a continuous prophetic history and the *Liber de Flore's* joining of imperial and papal apocalyptic hopes are drafts of a scenario that received its theoretical justification in the theology of history created by the great Franciscan Spirituals. This deepening contributed greatly to the popularity of the new scenario in the later middle ages.

In 1297, the final year of his life, Peter John Olivi began work on his *Lectura in Apocalypsim*, the summation of his interpretation of coming history. Olivi did not deny the validity of Celestine's abdication, nor did he identify Boniface with the Antichrist; nevertheless, the main lines of his view of recent history could be said to encourage such interpretations. Despite the Christological emphasis he gave to the purified era of the

34. The *Liber de Flore* has been described and partially edited by Grundmann, "Die *Liber de Flore*," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 49 (1929):33–91. See also Reeves, *Prophecy*, pp. 320–321, 403–406.

35. The nature of apocalyptic thought with its tendency towards the inclusion of new elements aided this process. Baethgen has argued for a strong influence of Imperial myths on the developing notion of the holy pope from mid-century (*Der Engel-papst*, pp. 14–16, 40). See also Reeves, "Joachimist Influences on the Idea of the Last World Emperor," *Traditio* 17 (1961): 323–370.

36. E.g., the Pseudo-Gamaleon text of c. 1439 has an evil French King crowned by the Pope. Then "... the Germans will choose themselves an Emperor from Upper Germany, that is, from the Rhine. He will summon a secular Council at Aachen and will set up a Patriarch in Mainz who will be crowned Pope." See Erwin Herrmann, "Veniet aquila de cuius volatu delebitur leo. Zur Gamaleon-Predigt des Johann von Wunschelburg," *Festiva Lanx. Studien zum mittelalterlichen Geistesleben* (Munich, 1966), p. 115.

Church to come,³⁷ his description of the present conflict between the carnal Church, the body of evildoers within Christendom, and the spiritual Church, the adherents of holiness and poverty, suggested a split in the notion of *ecclesia* that was open to serious misunderstanding.³⁸ Augustine had admitted that both good and evil would exist within the body of the Church down to the end of time; Olivi's distinction of churches could and did lead to a sectarian mentality which opposed the company of the elect, the practitioners of true poverty, to the unresponsive and corrupt administration of the curial Church seen as the abode of the Antichrist.

Two other elements of Olivi's theology of history are of importance: his dual notion of the Antichrist and his synoptic view of papal history. The New Testament had suggested that there would be many Antichrists as well as one final personal enemy of all goodness. Patristic authorities had a variety of views on the Antichrist; some distinguished a Western Gentile Antichrist, the *Nero redivivus*, and his conqueror, the Eastern Antichrist, a Jew of the tribe of Dan born in Babylon who would sit enthroned as God in the restored Temple of Jerusalem.³⁹ Joachim's three-fold pattern of history distinguished between the proximate Antichrist of the end of the second *status*, the seventh head of the dragon, and the final Antichrist who was to come at the end of third *status*, Gog and Magog figured in the dragon's tail.⁴⁰ Olivi distinguished the *antichristus mysticus* from the *antichristus magnus*, the first a false pope who would attack the evangelical way of life begun by Francis, the second a secular ruler, his ally, who would be the final persecutor of the sixth age.⁴¹ But the Provençal thinker also held out hope for more worthy oc-

37. Like Bonaventure before him, Olivi attempted to coordinate the Joachite three-*status* view of history with the commonly accepted theory of the seven ages of the Church. For Olivi the fifth age, that of laxity, overlaps with the sixth age of evangelical renewal. The seventh age corresponds to Joachim's third *status* in many ways; but again like Bonaventure, Olivi emphasizes the activity of Christ, rather than the work of the Holy Spirit. See Raoul Manselli, *La "Lectura Super Apocalypsim" di Pietro di Giovanni Olivi* (Rome, 1955), pp. 165–166; and "La Terza Età, *Babylon e l'Anticristo Mistico*," *Bulletino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo* 82 (1970), pp. 51–58.
38. For discussions see Manselli, "La Terza Età . . .," 62–69; *La Lectura*, pp. 219–223; Reeves, *Prophecy*, pp. 407–408 and especially Gordon Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester, 1967), 1:126–139, who concludes "Olivi was perhaps the supreme example of heterodoxy becoming heresy in others." On Olivi's condemnations, see David Burr, *The Persecution of Peter Olivi* (Philadelphia, 1976).
39. Found in such authors as Commodian (c. 250 ?), *Carmen de duobus populis*, lines 891–936; Lactantius (c. 312), *Institutiones divinae* 7, 16–17, and Sulpicius Severus (c. 400), *Dialogi* 1, 41. On this tradition see Wilhelm Bousset, *The Antichrist Legend* (London, 1896), 186–187.
40. See especially *Liber figurarum*, table 12.
41. See the texts given by R. Manselli in "La Terza Età . . .," pp. 70–77. The comparison of the *antichristus mysticus* with Simon Magus and the *antichristus magnus* with Nero shows that Olivi took his distinction from Joachim (see *Expositio*, f. 168r, mentioned in note 14 above).

cupants of the throne of Peter in the coming seventh age. His *Lectura* claimed that there were three periods in papal history: the first up to the time of Pope Silvester and Constantine, when the popes were poor men after the apostolic model; the second, an era of accommodation stretching from Silvester to the end of the fifth age, when they were allowed to own property; and the third era, the time after the persecution of the *antichristus mysticus*, when they would return to the ideal state of absolute, i.e., Franciscan, poverty.⁴²

Olivi's views were both symptomatic and causative. They were symptoms of the way in which many believers of his and later times, without abandoning their faith in the papacy as the central religious institution of Christendom, were forced to appeal to better popes to come against the popes they knew.⁴³ They were also indicative of the conviction that the papacy could be at once a redemptive and a corrupting institution. A present or future pope might well be the insidious *antichristus mysticus* who would seek to lead the Church astray and prepare the ground for the final *antichristus magnus*. Sheer possession of the papal office itself was no longer a sufficient criterion of divine approbation; the proper, that is, the apocalyptic, understanding of the relation of the papal office to the course of history, was also necessary. This view of papal history was not restricted to dissident bands of Franciscans. Evidence from the first two decades of the fourteenth century indicates that it was readily accepted among some groups of laity as well.

Olivi was a cautious man; he named no names. His colleagues and followers had no such reservations. Ubertino da Casale, who had taught with Olivi at Florence, denied the legitimacy of Celestine's abdication and saw the Mystical Antichrist as consisting in two figures, Boniface VIII with his open evil and Benedict XI with his hypocrisy and deceit.⁴⁴ He also hoped for a coming reforming pope whom he identified with the angel of Rev. 18:1.⁴⁵ In the view of most of the Spirituals, however, the evil Boniface VIII paled into insignificance in comparison with John XXII (1316–1334), the pope who bears the distinction of being the most popular candidate for the role of Papal Antichrist in medieval history. John was responsible for the destruction of the Spiritual Party, an action which could be easily seen as the fulfilment of Olivi's prophecy of the false pope who would attack the evangelical way of life.

Pope John began his career as Antichrist by cooperating with Michael

42. On this periodization see Edith Pásztor, "Giovanni XXII e il Gioachimismo de Pietro di Giovanni Olivi," *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo* 82 (1970): 84–85.

43. Pásztor, 109–11, has rightly seen the fundamental source of conflict between Olivi and John XXII in the question of reform.

44. See his work of 1305, *Arbor vitae crucifixae Jesu* 5, 8 (Venice, 1485), ff. 230rb–33ra.

45. *Arbor vitae* 5, 11, f. 237vb.

of Cesena, the Conventual Minister General, in attacking the errors of the Beguines, as Olivi's Provençal followers both within and without the Franciscan Order were called.⁴⁶ The Apostolic Constituton *Gloriosam ecclesiam* of 1318 spells out their errors:

The first error which issues from the murky workshop of these men is to fashion two Churches, one carnal, weighed down by riches . . . which they assert the Bishop of Rome and the other prelates rule, the other spiritual, clean and thrifty, beautiful with virtues, girt with poverty, in which they alone and their accomplices are contained . . . They also dream many things about the course of the ages and the end of the world. With lamentable vanity they publish much about the coming of the Antichrist whom they assert is now threatening.⁴⁷

Many Spirituals both in Provence and Tuscany were imprisoned; in 1318 four who refused to recant their errors were burnt as heretics at Marseilles. Such persecution only served to convince the Spirituals and their lay followers of the identity of the real Mystical Antichrist. As Bernard Gui, a Dominican Inquisitor who had investigated many Beguines, put it in his handbook, the *Practica Inquisitionis*:

. . . they teach that the Antichrist is dual; that is, there is one who is spiritual or mystical, and another, the real, greater Antichrist. The first prepares the way for the second. They say, too, that the first Antichrist is that pope under whom will occur and, in their opinion, now is occurring the persecution and condemnation of their sect.⁴⁸

Paradoxically, the leaders of the Conventual Party came to adopt the same view of Pope John. After crushing the Spirituals, John reopened the question of Franciscan poverty and in 1324 ruled that the theological cornerstone of the Conventual position, the claim that Christ and the Apostles had owned nothing, was heretical. Michael of Cesena, William of Ockham and others fled to the court of Lewis of Bavaria, John's sworn enemy, from which position of safety they launched their attacks on John XXII, false pope, heretic, and Antichrist.

From these two groups of dissident Franciscans descend the so-called

46. See Manselli, *Spirituali e Beghini in Provenza* (Rome, 1959); Leff, *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages* 1:195–230; and Lambert, *Medieval Heresy*, pp. 197–206.

47. "Primus itaque error, qui de istorum officina tenebrosa prorumpit, duas fingit ecclesias, unam carnalem, divitiis pressam . . . cui Romanum praesulem aliosque inferiores praelatos dominari asserunt; aliam spiritualem, frugalitate mundam, virtute decoram, paupertate succinctam, in qua ipsi soli eorumque complices continentur . . . multa, quae de cursu temporum et fine saeculi somniant, multa, quae de Antichristi adventu, quae iam iam instare asserunt . . ."

Henrici Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (Rome, 1957), #485, 490.

48. "Item, dogmatizant esse duplicem Anti-Christum, videlicet unum spiritualem seu mysticum et alium realem majorem Anti-Christum; et primum dicunt esse preparatorem vie secundi; et dicunt esse primum Anti-Christum illum papam sub quo fiet et sub quo iam fit, ut aiunt, persecutio et condemnatio eorumdem." (ed. Guillaume Mollat, p. 148; trans. from Walter Wakefield and Austin Evans, *Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, (New York, 1969), p. 425.

Fratricelli of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the groups of fervent apocalypticists, active mostly in Italy, for whom the identification of John XXII and his Avignonese successors as Antichrists was a central belief.⁴⁹ One party of these Fraticelli were responsible for the creation of a second series of fifteen *Vaticinia de summis pontificibus*, following the pattern of the first fifteen and still related, though more loosely, to the *Leo Oracles*. The second set also seems to begin with Nicholas III and appears to be historical up to Benedict XII (1334–1342).⁵⁰ It sharpens the contrast between Celestine V and Boniface, bewails Clement's abandonment of Rome, shows John XXII as a man of blood wounding the Lamb of God, and concludes with a fearsome beast, the final Papal Antichrist—a far more pessimistic view of the future papacy than that of the earlier series.

Not only for the Franciscan Spirituals and their successors did the antithetical images of the Angel Pope and the Papal Antichrist exercise their fascination. The turpitude of present popes and the hope for better ones had a wide appeal in many circles. From about 1300 some sectarian leaders came to see themselves in the role of the *pastor angelicus* who would purify the Church. Perhaps the most unusual of these was the version found in a small Milanese group that honored the memory of one Guglielma (died 1282) as the incarnation of the Holy Spirit. One of their number, named Manfreda, was hailed as the *vicaria sancte Guillelme*, the "Vicaress of Guglielma," that is, the Holy Spirit. Along with a female College of Cardinals she was to celebrate Mass and to convert the Jews, heathens and false Christians. Manfreda and her group were burnt in 1300.⁵¹ (Perhaps she should be made the patron saint of women's ordination.)

The Apostolic Brethren, active in northern Italy in the second half of the thirteenth century, were far larger and more dangerous than the Guglielmites. In 1300, Fra Dolcino, the son of a priest from Novara, took over the leadership of the group after the execution of Gerard Segarelli its founder. Under Dolcino the sect became both more apocalyptic and more violent; indeed, with the Apostolic Brethren it can be argued that

49. On the Fraticelli see Franz Ehrle, "Die Spiritualen, ihr Verhältnis zum Franciscanerorden und zu den Fraticellen," *Archiv für Literatur- und Kirchengeschichte* 1 (1885): 509–569; 2 (1886): 106–164, 249–336; 3 (1887): 553–623; 4 (1888): 1–190; Decima Douie, *The Nature and Effect of the Heresy of the Fraticelli* (Manchester, 1934); and Livarius Oliger, "Spirituels," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* (Paris, 1941), 14, pt. 2, cols. 2522–2549.

50. Reeves, "Some Popular Prophecies," p. 118.

51. For the documents, Felice Tocco, "Il Processo dei Guglielmiti," *Rendiconti della R. Accademia dei Lincei. Classe di Scienze Morale*, Ser. 5, 8 (1899): 309–342, 351–384, 407–432, 437–469. See also Gerolamo Biscaro, "Guglielma la Boema e i Guglielmiti," *Archivio Storico Lombardo* 57 (1930), 1–67. On Manfreda as *vicaria*, Tocco, pp. 331–334, 336–338, 340, etc.

we encounter for the first time an apocalypticism becoming revolutionary as Dolcino and his followers fought (or at least were compelled to fight) against forces gathered by the Inquisition.⁵² The remnants were captured after the final battle and cruelly executed in 1307. Dolcino's letters, summarized by Bernard Gui, show that he held to a four-age rather than a three-age theory of history. In the fourth age begun with Segarelli the true Church was restricted to the Apostolic Brethren; the pope, cardinals and all the clergy and religious were the minions of the devil who were to be slaughtered en masse by the coming Last Emperor. According to Gui, "He says that at that time all Christians will be at peace and there will be a single Holy Pope chosen and sent by God in a wonderful manner."⁵³ The letters make a distinction between Dolcino and this Holy Pope; other reports indicate that towards the end of his career he began to see himself in the role.⁵⁴ Dolcino's was not the last eccentric mind to be tempted by the role of the *pastor angelicus*.⁵⁵

The sad history of the fourteenth-century papacy continued to contribute to the spread of apocalyptic hopes for Christendom's central office. Dissatisfaction with the Avignon popes was justly widespread and apocalyptic publicists did much to fan it. Among the most influential of these was the Franciscan prophet Jean de Roquetaillade (c. 1310–c. 1365) who spent the last fifteen years of his life in jail at Avignon for his adherence to the condemned views of the Spirituals.⁵⁶ Jean's numerous writings show the strength of the Francophile mixture of Last Emperor and Angelic Pope first found in the *Liber de Flore*. He believed that the crisis of history was about to begin in 1360 after the pope and the curia had returned to Italy. In about 1365 there would be a schism in the Church and the first of two Antichrists would arise. They would be opposed by the legitimate pope, a poor Franciscan and proponent of reform,⁵⁷ whose protector, the King of France, would become the Last Emperor and perform all the appointed tasks.

Jean's dates may have been incorrect, but his writings provide a

52. Töpfer, *Das kommende Reich*, pp. 318–19, sees Dolcino's military activity as a forerunner of the later peasant revolts. This is denied by Cinzio Violante, "Eresie urbane e eresie rurale in Italia dall'XI al XIII secolo," *L'Eresia Medievale* (Bologna, 1974), pp. 179–183.
53. "... et dicit quod tunc omnes christiani erunt positi in pace et tunc erit unus papa sanctus a deo missus mirabiliter . . ." Bernard Gui, *De secta illorum qui dicunt esse de ordine apostolorum* in *Rerum italicarum scriptores* 9, pt. 5, p. 21.
54. Töpfer, 304, summarizes the question.
55. The Roman Tribune Cola di Rienzo (c. 1314–1354), who learned his apocalypticism from Fraticelli groups in the Abruzzi, may have come to see himself as the coming holy pope, though the evidence is not as clear as suggested by Karl Burdach, *Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation*, Vol 2., pt. 4, 194. For other examples see Baethgen, pp. 47–49; and Reeves, *Prophecy*, pp. 412, 438.
56. The standard work is Jeanne Bignami-Odier, *Études sur Jean de Roquetaillade* (Paris, 1952). See also Reeves, *Prophecy*, pp. 416–418.
57. Jean indicates belief in a succession of Angelic Popes and is the earliest witness to the second series of the *Vaticinia* (see Reeves, "Some Popular Prophecies," p. 118).

surprisingly accurate picture of the crisis that came upon the papacy after his death. In 1378 Gregory XI did return to Rome, but his death in the same year precipitated the dual elections of Urban VI and Clement VII. The Great Western Schism had begun. The stark confrontation between an *orthopontifex* and a *pseudopontifex* had been heralded as early as the time of the *Oraculum angelicum*, and Olivi's *Lectura* had suggested that the Mystical Antichrist would be a pope intruded by schism.⁵⁸ Such prophecies had been repeated in many forms for the past eighty years. Now, although neither pope had the slightest claim to sanctity, the predictions of Angel Pope and Papal Antichrist appeared to have been given ringing confirmation by events.

Two key texts show the importance of the Great Schism for the popularity of the apocalyptic view of papacy. The first is the combined series of thirty *Vaticinia de summis pontificibus*, and the second is the work ascribed to Telesphorus of Cosenza and known as the *Liber de magnis tribulationibus et de statu ecclesiae*. As Marjorie Reeves has suggested, it was apparently in the wake of the Schism that both series of papal prophecies were first combined and the second set placed first. This may seem like a fairly haphazard arrangement, but there was a stroke of genius, fortuitous or intended, in the order.⁵⁹ The prophecies were obscure enough to allow multiple applications to a variety of popes, and placing the second series first could allow the Antichrist figure (number fifteen in the second set) to correspond with the outbreak of the Schism and still leave space for a full tale of fifteenth and sixteenth-century popes including the final *pastores angelici*. The manuscript tradition reflects the popularity of this arrangement. According to my reckoning, there are only thirteen fourteenth-century manuscripts of the *Vaticinia* (eight of the first set alone, three of the second set, and two that combine some elements of both sets), but at least forty-six fifteenth-century copies, generally of the combined form.⁶⁰ The *Vaticinia* remained very popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, appearing in numerous manuscript copies and at least twenty-three printed editions between 1515 and 1670. Anyone who has taken the time to investigate some of these manuscripts cannot help being struck by the ingenious manner in which the aficionados of the *Vaticinia* glossed them in an attempt to keep the prophecies abreast of the most recent developments in papal history.

Telesphorus purported to be a holy hermit writing in 1386.⁶¹

58. Bibl. Angel. ms. 322, ff. 92vb–93rb.

59. "Some Popular Prophecies," p. 119.

60. A critical listing of the mss. of the *Vaticinia* would be a project of great value for the history of medieval apocalypticism.

61. The text appears to be a reworking of an earlier compilation dating from c. 1356–1365. The most detailed study is Emil Donckel, "Studien über die Prophezeiung des Fr. Telesphorus von Cosenza O.F.M. (1365–1386)," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 26 (1933):29–104, 282–314. There is no modern edition.

Whether he was a real historical character and a member of a Fraticelli group in Calabria, the eclectic work that circulated under his name is the summation of the Francophile version of the Last Emperor myth in its combination with the legend of the good and evil popes of the last days. For Telesphorus the Mystical Antichrist will be the German Emperor Frederick III; after his coronation by a false German pope, Satan will be released to persecute the Church until the combined forces of a poor hermit chosen as the *pastor angelicus* and the good French King crowned by the pope as the Second Charlemagne defeat him. They will then battle the Great Antichrist responsible for the Schism of 1378, and after defeating him will reform the Church and regain Jerusalem. The Angel Pope was to have three equally holy successors until the advent of the Final Antichrist in 1433, after which would come yet another millennial period. Telesphorus' work was almost as popular as the *Vaticinia*, perhaps not least of all because like the *Vaticinia* it lent itself to profuse illustration, in this case of a more narrative kind than the symbolic images of the *Prophecies*. There is only one fourteenth-century manuscript (unillustrated) of Telesphorus, but at least twenty-eight full and ten partial fifteenth-century manuscripts remain, many illustrated. The text was printed at Venice in 1516.

The popularity of these works during the time of the Schism, the Conciliar Movement, and even during the Renaissance papacy are evidence enough that the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries continued to find support in the legends that had been created at the end of the thirteenth. The prophetic texts composed in the fifteenth century abound in references to papal antichrists and angel popes. The rhetoric that identified present occupants of the Chair of Peter with the dread Last Enemy was never more effectively used than during the course of the Hussite movement, though the lack of an Angel Pope figure among the Hussites marks a break with the late medieval tradition and an approach towards the split that would take place in the sixteenth century.

The popularity of the apocalyptic image of the papacy in the fifteenth century confirms the contention that since the end of the Great Reform in the twelfth century the papal office had come to have an increasingly ambivalent role in the religious mentality of Europe. The universal importance of the Chair of Peter demanded that the pope be thought to play a key role in the events of the end. Except by Wycliff and the Hussites the position of the papacy was not called into question, but increasing dissatisfaction with the lack of personal and institutional reform on the part of the popes led some thinkers to see their activity as evidence of the work of that Antichrist whom tradition had predicted would be a false teacher sitting in the Temple, that is, the Church. On the other hand, the acceptance of Joachite ideas of a coming ideal state

of the Church on earth led to hopes for an imminent reforming pope, a *pastor angelicus* who would reverse these tendencies.⁶² As the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries progressed, and as the papacy showed itself time and time again the opponent of serious reform, this appeal from the unhappy present to the ideal future became more and more common. It is essential to grasp that such beliefs were an act of faith in the ultimate religious value of the papacy. We can know all we want about hierocratic theory, canon law, papal politics and finances; without some understanding of why Angel Pope and Papal Antichrist loomed so large in the imagination and emotions of many, our grasp of the history of the papacy in the later middle ages would be incomplete.

62. Reeves, *Prophecy*, p. 507, points out that the emphasis on the miraculous choice of the *pastor angelicus* certainly contains a critique of the customary manner of papal election.