Cannibal, Scorpion, Horse, Owl: Institutional Hypocrites and the Early Fourteenth-Century Church

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The status of hypocrisy as a vice has varied historically, but analysis has tended to stress the issue in relation to individuals, rather than institutions. Taking Judith Shklar and Boccaccio as points of departure, this article explores how and why hypocrisy mattered in the context of the early fourteenth-century church. Analysing charges of hypocrisy made by and against Pope Boniface VIII at the papal Curia; Angelo Clareno within the Franciscan Order; and the later Capetian court in relation to the Roman de Fauvel *allows us to see how anxiety about hypocrisy became especially acute across a range of early fourteenth institutions. Contemporaries questioned what their institutions meant and increasingly put their claims to the test, often in heightened apocalyptic terms. In and around the early fourteenth-century church, worry about institutional hypocrisy shows how responsibility was increasingly on trial.*

Does hypocrisy matter? Here is a story that helps to answer the question.[1]

* I want to thank Katy Cubitt and the EHS for the invitation to think about this topic; the conference audience for comments; and discussants at a seminar on conscience and the sources of moral authority organized by Emily Corran and Christophe Grellard at the École pratique des hautes études / L'Institut d'études avancées: Marie Dejoux, Arnaud Fossier, John Arnold, Nicolette Zeeman, Frédérique Lachaud and Ian Forrest. My thanks to SCH's readers for their careful and encouraging suggestions, as well as to Peggy Brown, David d'Avray and Kate Sabapathy for generous readings and discussion. An especial *mille mercis* to Jane Gilbert for grooming my *Fauvel* translations with enormous thoughtfulness. None bear responsibility for the views here. I finally wish to thank the Board of the British Library and the Bibliothèque nationale de France for permission to reproduce the two images. University College London, Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT. E-mail: j.sabapathy@ucl.ac.uk.

[1] On the usefulness of starting with stories for political theory, see Judith Shklar's comments in *Ordinary Vices* (Cambridge, MA, 1984), 228–30.

Studies in Church History 60 (2024), 91–120
doi: 10.1017/stc.2024.4

Once upon a time, in thirteenth-century Paris, there was an upstanding Jewish merchant called Abraham whose gentile friend, Jehannot, yearned for him to convert to Christianity.[2] Finally submitting to his friend's entreaties, Abraham decided to visit Rome to find out about this religion for himself. Hearing this, Jehannot was desperate to dissuade him, knowing just what depravity he would find there. Indeed, at Rome, Abraham found the papal court riddled with the worst sodomitical, simoniacal, gluttonous slave traders you could possibly imagine. On his return to Paris, Jehannot visited Abraham with low expectations, which he confirmed by dark tales. Yet, Abraham said, this horrendous curial behaviour was at such odds with the growing popularity and grandeur of Christianity that he could only deduce that the Holy Ghost, rather than the depraved papacy, was at the root of this splendid religion: he was persuaded to convert. And so they went to Notre Dame, where Abraham was converted, living in Paris happily and prosperously ever after.

This story, the second to be told in Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1349–51, rev. 1370–2), offers an apparently clear answer to the question of whether hypocrisy mattered for the fourteenth-century church: it did not.[3] Boccaccio stresses Abraham's perceptiveness. In Rome, he sees through the ecclesiastical jargon used to veil vice: 'procurations' for simony, 'sustentation' (*substentazioni*) for gluttony. He is not taken in by the depraved hypocrisy of the Curia, yet converts even so. Further, Abraham insists on drawing a striking distinction between the church's revolting human leaders, and the underlying, healthy, metaphysical and physical institution.[4] The result is a palpable win for a fallible church. Does Abraham's response show great maturity, or great stupidity? Should we laugh at him, the church, both – or neither?[5]

In favour of reading Abraham as a mature discerner of institutions might be analysts such as David Runciman who criticize the

[2] I am guessing about the thirteenth century, but the story assumes the Curia is at Rome.
[3] Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed. Vittore Branca, 9th edn (Milan, 2008; first publ. 1951–2), 47–51.
[4] I take institutions broadly as social practices, though my focus here is ecclesiastical organizational forms. For discussion, see Antonia Fitzpatrick and John Sabapathy, 'Introduction: Individuals and Institutions in Medieval Scholasticism', in idem, eds, *Individuals and Institutions in Medieval Scholasticism* (London, 2020), 1–50.
[5] Giuseppe Mazzotta's *The World at Play in Boccaccio's Decameron* (Princeton, NJ, 1986) is a classic exploration.

https://doi.org/10.1017/stc.2024.4 Published online by Cambridge University Press

contemporary world's permanent sirens denouncing the latest hypocrisy, since 'there is no way of breaking out from the hypocrisy of political life, and all attempts to find such an escape route are a delusion.'[6] Abraham's refusal to throw the good religion out with the filthy pope might then look like the discrimination of someone who does not discard the person behind a mask simply because the one does not reflect the other (to use Isidore of Seville's definition of the hypocrite).[7] The management theorist Nils Brunsson would probably endorse Abraham's acceptance of the church's hypocrisy since institutions face multiple conflicting demands, meaning that hypocrisy is both functional and unavoidable.[8] Judith Shklar might note that Abraham, counter-intuitively perhaps, eschews what she called the tempting 'psychic annihilation … of opponents by exposing their hypocrisy', which in fact simply generates an infinite death loop of hypocritical charge and countercharge.[9] Shklar argues rather that charges of hypocrisy are a shared tactical language for public critique where fundamental disagreements about substance mean that antagonists, lacking common ground, 'cannot reach them directly'.[10] Alleging hypocrisy is how we argue around what we cannot argue about.

For Shklar, the cultural dominance of hypocrisy as a vice stems from European religious disputes and an elevation of moral over

[6] David Runciman, *Political Hypocrisy: The Mask of Power from Hobbes to Orwell and Beyond*, rev. edn (Princeton, NJ, 2018; first publ. 2008), 196.

[7] 'Hypocrite (*hypocrita*) from the Greek (i.e., ὑποκριτής "play-actor, dissembler") is translated into Latin as "dissembler" (*simulator*). Such a one outwardly appears as good, while he is evil within, for ὑπο- means "false" and κριτής means "judgment." … The sense of this theatrical hypocritical appearance has been transferred to those who proceed with a false face and pretend to be what they are not. They cannot be called hypocrites from the moment they reveal themselves outwardly.' Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, ed. and transl. Stephen A. Barney et al. (Cambridge, 2006), 220 (X. H. 118–20). On the inside/outside division which recurs below, see Delphine Carron, '*Intus Nero Foris Cato*. Une sémiologie de l'hypocrisie', in Manuel Guay, Marie-Pascale Halary and Patrick Moran, eds, *Intus et Foris. Une catégorie de la pensée médiévale?* (Paris, 2013), 171–83. See also Frederic Amory, 'Whited Sepulchres: The Semantic History of Hypocrisy to the High Middle Ages', *RTAM* 53 (1986), 5–39.

[8] Nils Brunsson, 'Organized Hypocrisy', in idem, *The Consequences of Decision-Making* (Oxford, 2007), 111–34.

[9] Shklar, *Ordinary Vices*, 66–7; also 50, 82 and chapter 2 generally (45–86). For recent evaluations of Shklar, see Samantha Ashenden and Andreas Hess, eds, *Between Utopia and Realism: The Political Thought of Judith N. Shklar* (Philadelphia, PA, 2019).

[10] Shklar, *Ordinary Vices*, 79, also 48.

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physical cruelty which owes much to organized religion.[11] (It is notable that Abraham, converting despite Christian hypocrisy, is Jewish, when the Pharisees' hypocritical piety in condemning Christ was proverbial amongst Christians.[12]) Putting cruelty first instead, as Shklar recommends, comes with a stress on crimes against humans rather than against God, and her broad account of how this shift happened in the West is also a modernizing and secularizing narrative.[13] That makes the theme of hypocrisy especially interesting given the ecclesiastical focus of this volume, which is plainly also an institutional focus.

Any response to the suggestion in *Decameron* I.2 that hypocrisy does not matter may well depend a good deal on our judgement about the central claims of the institution at its centre, the Roman Catholic Church and its officers. It was in this context that the writer Tim Parks recently invoked Boccaccio's story when discussing the highly controversial responses of Pope Pius XII (r. 1939–58) to the Holocaust during the Second World War. 'In my forty years in Italy,' Parks reflected, 'I have never had any inkling that the Vatican's miserable war record, its proven financial corruption, or its coverups of widespread sexual abuse make any dent in the commitment of its supporters.'[14]

The case of Pius XII raises stark questions about institutional hypocrisies and the cruelties they can produce: cruelty and hypocrisy may both come first, here if not always.[15] Perhaps hypocrisy is more corrosive than some modern liberal democratic theorists suggest,

[11] Ibid. 48, 42.

[12] See, for instance, Dante Alighieri, *Commedia*, 1: *Inferno*, ed. Anna M. Chiavacci Leonardi (Milan, 1991), canto 23, ll. 91–123.

[13] Shklar, *Ordinary Vices*, 239–41.

[14] Tim Parks, 'The Pope's Many Silences', *New York Review of Books*, 20 October 2022, reviewing David I. Kertzer's *The Pope at War: The Secret History of Pius XII, Mussolini, and Hitler* (Oxford, 2022) and Michael Hesemann, *The Pope and the Holocaust: Pius XII and the Vatican Secret Archives* (San Francisco, CA, 2022), online at: <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2022/10/20/the-popes-many-silences-tim-parks/>, accessed 1 March 2023. A letter exchange followed: Michael Hesemann and Tim Parks, 'The Silence of Pius XII: An Exchange', *New York Review of Books*, 24 November 2022, online at: <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2022/11/24/the-silence-of-pius-xii-an-exchange/>, accessed 1 March 2023.

[15] See Kertzer, *Pope at War*, 478–9 on Pius's goal to protect the church institutionally. Kertzer's theme of prudent silence (esp. 472–80) recurs below, as does its opposite, verbosity.

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notwithstanding the 'maze-like inescapability' it produces.[16] Parks himself is puzzled, not blithe, about the indifference to ecclesiastical hypocrisy which he perceives. Institutional hypocrisy may need different, or more attentive, handling apart from the individual hypocrisy which is so often the focus of analysis, as the political theorist Dennis Thompson has argued.[17] Even so, some institutional analysts, like Brunsson, endorse the functional value of hypocrisy to groups: organizations saying they are going to do something which they will not, is a way of deferring, possibly avoiding, conflicting demands coming to a head.[18] How adequate an account of Pius XII's response to fascism that produces, I cannot address.

Given the scale effects of institutions, it is worth asking whether, how and where they can be hypocritical. Since institutional hypocrisy involves multiple individuals and elements that are read as a social whole, it poses analytical challenges different from personal hypocrisy (as with questions of institutional racism, sexism, and so on).[19] Thompson suggests that institutional hypocrisy comprises 'a disparity between the publicly avowed purposes of an institution and its actual performance or function. This disparity often develops over time as an institution comes to serve purposes other than those for which it was established.'[20] This, however, raises more questions than it resolves. Are institutions strapped to a doctrinaire originalism? If not, who decides what is legitimate institutional change?[21] What if institutional purposes turn out to be contradictory? And how do we ascertain what those purposes were? Hypocrisy revolves around inconsistencies, between claims, motives and, often, actions. Affirming hypocrisy then entails converting actions into words since the inconsistency which fuels hypocrisy charges can only exist

[16] Shklar, *Ordinary Vices*, 66.
[17] Dennis F. Thompson, 'Hypocrisy and Democracy', in idem, *Restoring Responsibility: Ethics in Government, Business, and Healthcare* (Cambridge, 2004), 209–26.
[18] Brunsson, 'Organized Hypocrisy', 115–16, 118. Cf. Richard J. Evans's discussion of Kertzer and Pius XII: 'Why Did He Not Speak Out?', *London Review of Books*, 19 October 2023, online at: <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v45/n20/richard-j.-evans/why-did-he-not-speak-out>, accessed 12 October 2023.
[19] Cf. Brunsson, 'Organized Hypocrisy', 124, 125.
[20] Thompson, 'Hypocrisy and Democracy', 212.
[21] See David Runciman's discussion, 'Institutional Hypocrisy', *London Review of Books*, 21 April 2005, online at: <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v27/n08/david-runciman/institutional-hypocrisy>, accessed 1 March 2023.

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between logical propositions, not actions.[22] Judging hypocrisy therefore often entails framing actions as statements: 'for the acts argue for the words' as one text, discussed below, says about the Sanhedrim's 'hypocritical' condemnation of Christ.[23] For institutions, this raises the fundamental question of whose action-words count when we want to locate institutional hypocrisy. Finally, are there particular historical moments when institutional hypocrisy becomes a heightened concern, or indeed matters more for a society?

A provisional assessment of attention to hypocrisy between the fifth and thirteenth centuries has been provided by Sita Steckel in an analysis of Latin texts (Table 1). The usual qualifications should be made that her data is drawn from a particular set of texts, focuses on a particular semantic form, and cannot specify contexts nor terms of use. Even so, the increased attention to hypocrisy in the thirteenth century is striking. Steckel argues that concern about hypocrisy increased following the Gregorian 'reform' associated with Pope Gregory VII (1073–85). For her, the 'formation of a polemical society' occurred as more religious elites competed in a battle for authenticity: 'institutional renewal and institutional diversity generated and popularized diagnoses of decay', expressed via hypocrisy.[24]

Steckel focused on ecclesiastical discourses. Thomas Bisson gives an interesting analysis of what he has called clerical critics' 'learned moralising' about lay institutions around 1200, which he suggests was limited both by their conceptual framework and by the pretensions of the institutions themselves.[25] By 1300, certainly, it does not

Table 1. Occurrence of 'hypocri*' in the Library of Latin Texts Series A and B

Century	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th
Occurrences	266	263	95	75	213	13	21	513	959

[22] Raymond Geuss, 'Moralism and *Realpolitik*', in idem, *Politics and the Imagination* (Princeton, NJ, 2009), 31–42, at 36–7.

[23] *Le Roman de Fauvel*, ed. Armand Strubel (Paris, 2012), 670, ll. 5878–96, at 5892 [hereafter: *Fauvel*]. I give page and line numbers (the edition's continuous and separate line numberings require page references).

[24] Sita Steckel, 'Hypocrites! Critiques of Religious Movements and Criticism of the Church, 1050–1300', in Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane and Anne E. Lester, eds, *Between Orders and Heresy: Rethinking Medieval Religious Movements* (Toronto, 2022), 79–126, at 108–11. Table 1 reproduces Steckel's data in ibid. 113 n. 16.

[25] Thomas N. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship, and the Origins of European Government* (Princeton, NJ, 2009), 445–56, 489–99.

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seem necessary to restrict European 'hypocrisy worry' solely to religious institutions, as will be seen. Rather, a broader concern is apparent regarding whether various institutions' internal substance had become dislocated from their external claims. The most explosive proof would be the systematic immolation of the Templars (1307–12) for alleged institutional perversions and hypocrisies.[26] Here, I explore these questions through the fourteenth-century church and the motley collection of creatures of my title. An ecclesiastical cannibal and scorpions lead the way; a lay horse and owl bring up the rear, pointing to wider conclusions.[27] The analysis begins with the alleged cannibal, Pope Boniface VIII (1294–1303).

I. Cannibal

After the infamous attack on Boniface VIII in his hometown of Anagni on 7 September 1303 by the Capetian and Colonna hit squad of Guillaume de Nogaret and Sciarra Colonna, the pope escaped to Rome shaken and sick, dying in the night of 11–12 October.[28] An account of that last night offers a frightening picture of the controversial *Bonifacius* unveiled as *malefacius*: Boniface confesses to having demonic familiars whose orders he follows. Terrible storms and flocks of black birds appear over the house 'of that tyrant'. Boniface denounces the evil spirit encased in his magic ring. His closest companions urge him to confess, but when the eucharist is brought, he is 'extraordinarily indignant, convulsed by the demon, growling and baring his teeth at the man bearing the body of the lord, as if he wanted to devour that priest'. Boniface reddens like the diabolic lion of 1 Peter 5: 8 against whom one should guard.

[26] From a vast literature, I cite Malcolm Barber, *The Trial of the Templars*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2006; first publ. 1978) and Julien Théry, 'A Heresy of State: Philip the Fair, the Trial of the "Perfidious Templars" and the Pontificalization of the French Monarchy', *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures* 39 (2013), 117–48.

[27] Quite deliberately, this article does not contrast 'secular' and 'ecclesiastical' regimes. Religious concerns animated all forms of rule in this period and I have preferred to speak of 'lay'/'princely' rule.

[28] See Henry G. J. Beck, 'William Hundleby's Account of the Anagni Outrage', *CathHR* 32 (1946), 190–220; Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, *Boniface VIII. Un pape hérétique?* (Paris, 2003), 388–90, 393–6. Despite its notoriety, many European responses were interestingly indifferent: Robert Fawtier, 'L'Attentat d'Anagni', *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome* 60 (1948), 153–79; Teofilo F. Ruiz, 'Reaction to Anagni', *CathHR* 65 (1979), 385–401.

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His companions flee, 'rightly thinking him insane, or more truly a devil'. They return, bringing a favoured boy to relieve him 'who he used to hold for his pleasure before and carry in his arms', but 'when he saw the said infant, he went straight for him and seemed to want to devour him, and if he had not been taken away, he would have torn off the child's nose with his teeth'. Soon afterwards, Boniface dies, unconfessed, to the sound of thunderclaps, tempests and dragons vomiting fire over the city.[29]

This image of Boniface as a thwarted cannibal, hungrier for his catamite than for Christ's body, is a malevolence, probably Pietro Colonna's in 1309, during the campaign to condemn Boniface posthumously as a heretic (1306–12).[30] The text provides an exceptionally bad death, the papal hypocrite unmasking himself in his terminal throes. This pope is obviously not what he should be. Because of their partisan hostility, these and the many other accusations are of unresolvable value in determining Boniface's actual actions.[31] They are, however, very useful at revealing the strategy of attack, and the role of hypocrisy within it.

Plainly Boniface's many crimes were crimes per se: heresy, homicide, demonolatry, sodomy. Boniface was accused of straightforward hypocrisy as false piety, but we can say more interesting things than this.[32] The crimes' public resonance came from the wedge they sought to drive between the form of Boniface's office as pope, and his unworthiness as a person,

[29] For this account, see document DS3 in *Boniface VIII en procès. Articles d'accusation et dépositions des témoins (1303–1311)*, ed. Jean Coste (Rome, 1995), 872–5 [hereafter: *BeP*]. I cite document references alone, unless a specific page range is needed. For *Bonifacius-malefacius*, see ibid. 113 n. 1; Paravicini Bagliani, *Boniface*, 95–7; Peter Herde, *Bonifaz VIII. (1294–1303)*, erster Halbband: *Benedikt Caetani* (Stuttgart, 2015), 247–8.

[30] *BeP*, 870–1; Paravicini Bagliani, *Boniface*, 349–66.

[31] See Jeffrey Denton, 'The Attempted Trial of Boniface VIII for Heresy', in Maureen Mulholland and Brian Pullan, eds, *Judicial Tribunals in England and Europe, 1200–1700*, 1: *The Trial in History* (Manchester, 2003), 117–28; Paravicini Bagliani, *Boniface*, 349–66; *BeP*, 895–908. For a superb cameo of Boniface, see Robert Brentano, *Rome before Avignon: A Social History of Thirteenth-century Rome* (London, 1974), 155–64.

[32] Nogaret accused Boniface of doing good works 'hypocritically without love, as is clearly proved by many other evil works, as many other false prophets have done': Pierre Dupuy, *Histoire du différend d'entre le Pape Boniface VIII. et Philippes le Bel Roy de France* (Paris, 1655), 378 and further 380 (the latter also in Coste, *Boniface… en procès*, 481).

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invalidating his claim to the office, and justifying his posthumous condemnation.[33]

Hypocritical deceit was pervasive in the accusations as they became increasingly focused. The initial 1297 written denunciations of Boniface (by Cardinals Giacomo and Pietro Colonna) disputed his legitimate election following Celestine V's forced abdication.[34] Although in their earlier attacks on Boniface the Colonna family had characterized him as a *pseudopresul* or *pseudoprefectus* (third Colonna accusation, 1297),[35] it was with Nogaret's denunciation at the Louvre before King Philip IV on 12 March 1303 that mendacity and falseness became emphatic aspects of the attack. Nogaret's preamble makes much of 2 Peter 2, where Peter's description of how 'there were pseudo-prophets amongst the people' becomes a prediction regarding his contemporary successor, 'which today our eyes perceive to the letter'.[36] 'For,' says Nogaret, 'the prince of perfidy (*mendaciorum magister*) sits on the throne of the blessed Peter, having himself called a do-gooder (*Bonifacium*) when he is in every way an evil-doer (*maleficus*), and thus he takes a false name for himself.…'[37] Accusing the pope of being illegitimately elected, a heretic, simoniac and wholly subversive of the 'state of the church', Nogaret petitioned Philip to press for a general council, arguing that his faith, his royalty and his oath to defend the church obliged him to do so.[38] The absence of the word hypocrisy does not mask its dominance.

A paradox remains, however, around the allegations of papal hypocrisy. Many of Boniface's imputed crimes concerned what he said he believed. Amongst many more, the June 1303 accusations by Guillaume de Plaisans at the Louvre included the accusation that Boniface says he does not believe in the eternal soul, in eternal life, in the eucharist as a sacrament, in sex as more sinful than rubbing your hands together, or in anything Christ or St Peter would say if they came down to earth.[39] There are obviously tensions, to say

[33] On papal office and persons, see Walter Ullmann, 'Leo I and the Theme of Papal Primacy', *JThS* 11 (1960), 25–51, esp. 33–4, 41–4, 47–8, 50.
[34] *BeP*, PR1 (10 May 1297) and PR2 (11–16 May). PR3 (15 June) begins to open out a wider front.
[35] Ibid. 52, 57 (PR3).
[36] Ibid. 112 (A).
[37] Ibid. 112–13 (A): the first extant example of the *Bonifacius malefacius* dyad.
[38] Ibid. 116–20 (A).
[39] Ibid. B8, B9, B11, B13, B20.

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the least, between such statements and Boniface's papal office, opening him to the charge of double-speaking (*bilinguum*).[40] This is more incompatibility than inconsistency. Further, we know these things because Boniface was supposed to have said them in conversation. The Louvre allegations (for instance) did not try to assert that Boniface was secretive about his beliefs: their entire thrust was that they permeated 'public opinion and belief' (*publica vox et fama*).[41] From this standpoint, if Boniface believed what his accusers alleged, then he was telling the truth, not speaking with a forked tongue, still less with false piety. Ironically, partly by virtue of his accusers' desire to hang him high on the bar of public opinion with words out of his own mouth, the one thing Boniface arguably cannot be accused of is hypocrisy, if 'they cannot be called hypocrites from the moment they reveal themselves outwardly'.[42]

The most fitting illustration of this is when witnesses make Boniface himself repeatedly accuse someone else of hypocrisy: Christ.[43] This occurs within two later hearings before Clement V, informally during spring 1310, and then formally in late summer, at Avignon. The accusations come first from friends of Giacomo da Pisa, the banker whose son was allegedly brought to comfort Boniface in his final agonies. We are told that in 1297 Boniface had had an argument with a friend's wife at St Peter's about the decency of the pope playing dice with her. Boniface retorted:

> 'You animal, man has to get whatever good out of this world that he can, since there's no other world than this, and no other life than this.' And then the lady Cola replied and said to him, 'You will die damned and have to account for yourself to Christ and the Virgin Mary.' And Boniface himself replied, in the witness's presence and hearing, 'Christ wasn't [her] son, he was just some clever guy and some hypocrite [*quidam sagax homo et quidam ypocrita*].'[44]

[40] On *bilinguum*, see Gabriella I. Baika, *The Rose and Geryon: The Poetics of Fraud and Violence in Jean de Meun and Dante* (Washington, DC, 2014), 21, 40.
[41] See, for example, *BeP*, B10, B13, B17, B18, B19. There are accusations which Boniface is said to have made publicly (B14 about the French, B19 about simony, B20 about St Peter, B22 about the French as heretics etc.).
[42] *Etymologies of Isidore*, ed. Barney et al., 220 (X. H. 120).
[43] See *BeP*, Q71, Q77, Q88, V116, V315, V335, V354, V378, V403.
[44] Ibid. 533 (Q77), also Q71. This witness, Guglielmo di Pietro da Caltagirone, repeats the argument about Christ just being a clever speaker and no God under formal questioning, but does not use the word hypocrite then (V315).

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Other witnesses repeat the hypocrisy charge later in the summer, when asked formally about Nogaret's allegations that Boniface had mocked and flouted fasting rules, as well as cursing the 'she-ass' Virgin Mary who 'had never been the son of God's mother'.[45] Witnesses from a Tuscan embassy from November 1300 remember a conversation which ended with the non-existence of the immaterial world, the triviality of sexual pleasure, and the Bolognese ambassador, Antonio Gallucci, deducing from the pope's lesson that 'we should just enjoy ourselves then'. Gallucci's conclusion followed a discussion of what the pope meant when he said 'the world has ceased' for a dead Campanian soldier mentioned by a visiting chaplain. The hapless chaplain had suggested that Christ still held the man's soul. Boniface set him straight:

> Idiot—who are you commending his soul to, when Christ couldn't even help himself, how could he help anyone else when he wasn't God, but one clever guy and a great hypocrite [*unus sapiens homo et magnus hypocrita*]?[46]

The attacks on Boniface focused on his individual actions as a pseudo-prelate. Indeed, Boniface, infamous for his statues of himself and his assertions of papal power, worked more than any other thirteenth-century pope against the longstanding project to 'disassociate the transient (physical) person of the pope and the eternal (papal) function', according to Agostino Paravicini Bagliani.[47] It nevertheless remained impossible to avoid hitting the papacy when targeting this pope.

Implications for institutional hypocrisy follow in this article's conclusions. Now I turn from one arguably hypocritical, alleged cannibal at the top of the church's hierarchy to the nest of hypocritical scorpions tormenting a contemporary of Boniface's at that hierarchy's base (at least in terms of formal power): the sometime Franciscan Angelo Clareno.

II. Scorpion

Scorpions plague devout Franciscans in Angelo Clareno's apocalyptic history of his Order, written in the 1320s.[48] Quoting the pseudo-

[45] For Nogaret's articles of accusation, see *BeP*, U1, U2, U3.
[46] Ibid. 715 (V354), elaborated at 705 (V315). See also V335.
[47] Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, *Il corpo del papa* (Turin, 1994), 340–3 (quotation at 341).
[48] I use *Liber Chronicarum, sive tribulationum ordinis minorum di Frate Angelo Clareno*, ed. Giovanni Boccali (Santa Maria degli Angeli, 1999) with Angelo Clareno, *A Chronicle*

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Joachite *Oraculum Cyrilli* (after 1294), Angelo recounts how that oracle describes the enemies of the great Franciscan radical Peter John Olivi (d. 1298) as:

> 'scorpion-like', born and propagated of scorpions, imitators of scorpions. For hypocrites are compared with scorpions because they put on charming faces, say all the right things, and pretend to act out of pure love, so that they can gain human praise and favour and carry out their malign intentions. They sting with their tails and inject poison, corrupting those who hear them through the depravity of their words and actions, tainting those who follow them with hypocritical filth and defilement.[49]

Who were these scorpions?

Angelo was born Pietro da Fossombrone in the Marches of Ancona, perhaps in 1255, and entered the Franciscan Order perhaps in 1270; he died in 1337.[50] In Ancona, debate about whether the Franciscans were sliding away from the substance of Franciscan life was then becoming intense; Angelo would later identify the Second

or History of the Seven Tribulations of the Order of Brothers Minor, transl. David Burr and E. Randolph Daniel (St Bonaventure, NY, 2005). Page references are to Burr and Daniel's translation with Boccali's section references in brackets. There is no satisfactory edition: see Roberto Paciocco, 'Le tribolazioni di Angelo Clareno (in margine alle recenti edizioni)', *Collectanea franciscana* 71 (2001), 493–519. Gian Luca Potestà, 'La duplice redazione della *Historia septem tribulationum*', *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 38 (2002), 1–38, argued for a twofold recension but against this, see Felice Accrocca, '*Filii carnis—filii spiritus*: Il *Liber chronicarum sive tribulationum ordinis minorum*', in *Angelo Clareno Francescano: Atti Del XXXIV Convegno Internazionale, Assisi, 5-7 Ottobre 2006* (Spoleto, 2007), 49–90.

[49] Clareno, *Chronicle*, 132 (§5.43–6). The *Oraculum Cyrilli* is edited by Paul Piur, in *Briefwechsel des Cola di Rienzo*, ed. Konrad Burdach, *Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation*, 5 vols (Berlin, 1912–29), 2: 220–327.

[50] For this and what follows, see Gian Luca Potestà, *Angelo Clareno. Dai poveri eremiti ai fraticelli* (Rome, 1990); David Burr, 'History as Prophecy: Angelo Clareno's Chronicle as a Spiritual Franciscan Apocalypse', in Michael F. Cusato and Guy Geltner, eds, *Defenders and Critics of Franciscan Life: Essays in Honor of John V. Fleming* (Leiden, 2009), 119–38; idem, *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century after Saint Francis* (University Park, PA, 2001), 43–6, 95–6, 279–301; idem, 'John XXII and the Spirituals: Is Angelo Clareno Telling the Truth?', *Franciscan Studies* 63 (2005), 271–87; Sylvain Piron, 'An Institution Made of Individuals: Peter John Olivi and Angelo Clareno on the Franciscan Experience', in Fitzpatrick and Sabapathy, eds, *Individuals and Institutions*, 157–76; idem, 'Extraits de l'*Histoire des sept tribulations de l'Ordre des Mineurs*. Introduction', in Jacques Dalarun, ed., *François d'Assise. Écrits, vies, témoignages*, 2 vols (Paris, 2010), 2: 2565–75.

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Council of Lyons (1274) as a particular pivot.[51] The controversy prompted consideration of whether friars should or could leave the Order if constrained to practise what they thought incompatible with it, such as owning property.[52] Around 1279, the Order imprisoned friars, including Angelo, who argued that current practices already abrogated Francis's template. They were released a decade later by a new minister general, Raymond Geoffroi, who encouraged them to proselytize in Armenia. By 1294, they were back in Italy where Geoffroi encouraged them to petition the ageing monk-pope Celestine V so that they could observe the rule 'without harassment and interference from others … who had fallen from that faithful and pure observance' of Francis. Celestine instead 'absolved' them from 'all obedience to the brothers', instructing that 'to protect the peace and honour of the Friars Minor and the Order they should not call themselves Friars Minor but rather his [i.e. Celestine's] friars and poor hermits'.[53] Strikingly, it was at this point, when this Franciscan was no longer a Franciscan, that he changed his name to reflect his Franciscan commitment, from Pietro to Angelo Clareno, probably after one of Francis's earliest companions, Angelo Tancredi.

Angelo's life thereafter was one of flight and evasion. Celestine's successor-cum-gaoler Boniface VIII rescinded all his decrees, prompting the Poor Hermits to flee to Greece. Angelo returned west only in 1309, where he was protected at Avignon by Boniface's antagonist Giacomo Colonna, following the collapse of Clement V's attempt to find some rapprochement between the Franciscans' extremes. Clement's successor, John XXII (1316–34), pushed Angelo towards another group when he directed him towards Celestine's eponymous Benedictine congregation of 'Celestines'. Angelo avoided this by seeking refuge in 1318 at Benedict's ancient foundation at Subiaco (Lazio), where he wrote both his history and a commentary on the Franciscan rule. Whilst there, he carefully avoided outright disobedience of the leadership while producing a profound critique of the Franciscans' past in his *History*. Renewed papal concern about

[51] Clareno, *Chronicle*, 133, 148–9 (§5.50, §5.270–80). It begins his fifth tribulation (up to Celestine's pontificate and Olivi's persecutions *c*.1294).
[52] For this and what follows, see ibid. 148–58; David Burr, *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty: The Origins of the Usus Pauper Controversy* (Philadelphia, PA, 1989), 28–9; idem, *Spiritual Franciscans*, 43–6.
[53] Clareno, *Chronicle*, 155–6 (§5.384–5, §5.393–8).

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Angelo's group prompted a final flight in 1334 to Naples, where he died at the hermitage of Santa Maria dell'Aspro.

Angelo's *History* is preoccupied by several themes: the problem of recognizing those who are truly Christ-inspired within the Franciscan Order; the failure of many in its leadership to do so; their worldly prudence, elevating nominal faithfulness to Francis's practice over actual adherence to it; and, consequently, a deceitful religiosity which Angelo describes as hypocrisy at key points. All of these generate the apocalyptical momentum of the seven successive tribulations which overwhelm the Order, but whose watershed Angelo thinks he can see coming in 1331. The result is a sharp polarity opposing the (generally powerless) true Franciscans who recognize the real Francis against those (generally powerful) fake Franciscans who do not, but instead persecute practitioners such as Angelo. There are few in-between figures.[54]

Dangerous, fleshly, prudential reason is central to the Order's inversion (cf. Romans 8: 5–8).[55] Angelo's prologue provides 'speeches' from the Order's early days by Christ, Francis, and the seraph who appeared to Francis on La Verna. In one, Francis predicts that:

> the hostile man will try to sow darnel [Matt. 13: 25 – tares] in the religion [*in religione*, i.e. the Order]. Many will enter the religion who will begin to live not for Christ but for themselves and who will follow carnal prudence more than obedience to the faith and to the rule.[56]

He itemizes how this will become apparent (receipt of money, pursuit of formal learning, etc.):

> They will despise as insane [*insanos*] those brothers who desire to adhere to humility and who strive to get to heaven by pure observance of their promises [*observantiam promissorum*]. They will look down on the holy brothers as useless and as of no importance. Instead they will praise those who probe lofty mysteries and those whom they will esteem and consider as wise, and they will laud their prudence.[57]

[54] Bonaventure is one, but even his depiction is pretty brutal: ibid. 119–20 (§4.204–6).
[55] Caesarius of Speyer makes a similar criticism in his *Sacrum commercium*, where worldly *providentia* is the issue. According to Angelo, Caesarius died at the hands of his Franciscan jailors: ibid. 78–9 (§2.93–114).
[56] Ibid. 14 (prologue, §195–7).
[57] Ibid. 15 (prologue, §217–19).

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Such inversions slide effortlessly into false piety and hypocrisy, Angelo says.[58] Hypocrisy in the forms of false humility and piety is the product. The sixth tribulation running from Celestine's resignation (1294), the end of Raymond Geoffroi's tenure as minister general (1296) and Olivi's death (1298), will be characterized by hypocrisy and its perversions. Angelo opens his description of that tribulation with a high denunciation:

> Hypocrisy produces blindness of the mind and heart [Deuteuronomy 28: 28], and deceit is conjoined with vanity. When a hypocrite seeks human favour and praise, envy seeps into his bones, corroding and devouring his insides just as rust does iron, or a moth, clothing [Matthew 6: 19]. In fact those who reveal the truth through their hypocrisy are doubly destroyed. Recognized for what they are, they nevertheless spread their venom like a generation of vipers [Matthew 23: 33; Luke 3: 7].[59]

Unveiling hypocrites comes too late: the damage is already done. The Order is stuffed with such friars, indifferent to Francis's original *vita* yet desirous of its status.[60] An 'anti-Christian fraud' (*antichristiane fraudis*) is the result.[61] During the fifth tribulation, Angelo indeed compares the Anconan spirituals' treatment by their Franciscan brethren as worse or equivalent to the laws and cruelties of Muslims or Mongols (as well as being Pharisaical).[62] More troubling still, these symptoms have clear apocalyptic implications. Such inversions belong to Antichrist. The spirituals' judges:

> make a show of assuming the incorruptible mantle of justice fit for those who offer the eternal sacrifice [Daniel 8: 11–13], so that through malice and depravity they can gain a reputation for holiness and justice. For to establish lies in the place of the truth [*Mendacium enim pro veritate statuere*], to replace zeal for divine praise with zeal for praise of oneself, to make laws based on the caprices and considerations of one's own heart, supporting them with improperly interpreted authorities, is to place the likeness of Antichrist in God's temple even before he

[58] Ibid. 21 (prologue, §299–300).
[59] Ibid. 179, adapted (§6.1–4).
[60] Ibid. 179–80 (§6.16–17).
[61] Ibid. 180 (§6.19).
[62] Ibid. 150, 151, 152 (§5.303, §5.319–21, §5.326).

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> comes [cf. 1 John 2: 18; Daniel 9: 27], introduce his sect before he preaches, and do battle for him before he draws near.[63]

This is not simply hypocrisy as pseudo-religiosity but a transcendental inversion of the ties between things and their names. This is an institution, Angelo says, that hypocrisy has turned inside out, trailing Antichrist in its wake.

Yet it is striking that Angelo, who places institutional false prudence and hypocrisy at the centre of his diagnosis of Franciscan error, is also the friar so fiercely committed to the Franciscan ideal that he cycles through no less than three religious groups in order to adhere to it: the Franciscans, the Celestines (courtesy of Celestine V), and then the Benedictine abbey of Subiaco. In short, is Angelo not the hypocrite?

He seems quite clear on the binding nature of the vow in his commentary on the Franciscan rule: 'it is no small sin to promise the highest life and then, after vowing it, live indifferently and seek that which is imperfect'.[64] Indeed, 'it is illicit for those who profess this religion [*religione*] to leave it or transfer to another [*transire*] on the pretext of seeking a more perfect life, for no one who puts his hand to the plough and then looks backward is worthy of the kingdom.'[65] Likewise,

> since there is nothing more perfect than the evangelical life and rule of Christ, the rule announces to all promising it that it will be absolutely forbidden to them to leave this life [*de ista religione exire*] once that promise has been made, for the rectitude, justice, and sanctity which the evangelical life establishes and imposes represents the ultimate and optimum state [*habet in suppremo et optimo statu*] in regard to action and contemplation, permanence, and perpetual firmness.[66]

This is more ambiguous than it seems, however, since Angelo's weight rests on the adherence to the practice (*religio*) more than the

[63] Ibid, 152 (§5.328-333).
[64] David Burr, ed., *Early Commentaries of the Rule of the Friars Minor*, 3: *Angelo Clareno* (Bonaventure, NY, 2015), 27; Livario Oliger, ed., *Expositio Regulae Fratrum Minorum auctore Fr. Angelo Clareno* (Florence, 1912), 33.
[65] Burr, *Early Commentaries … Angelo Clareno*, 23; Oliger, *Expositio … Angelo Clareno*, 28. Angelo is referring to the second chapter of the *regula bullata*: *Fontes Franciscani*, ed. Enrico Menestò et al. (Assisi, 1995), 173.
[66] Burr, *Early Commentaries … Angelo Clareno*, 58; Oliger, *Expositio … Angelo Clareno*, 63.

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institutional carapace where it is expressed.[67] Wherever he is, Angelo is a Franciscan. His pithiest assertion of this is the *History*'s account of his exchange with John XXII when summoned in 1317 to explain what his group was up to:

> When brother Angelo had come before him, the pope asked whether he was a Franciscan [*an ipse esset friar minor*], and he replied that he was [*quod sic*]. And the pope asked him, 'Why have you then left them?' [*Quare recessit ab eis*?] Brother Angelo replied, 'Holy Father, I have not left them. Ask them why they have rejected me'. [*ego non recessi ab eis, sed interrogate eos quare ipsi repulerunt me.*] And the pope was silent.[68]

Such silences were only temporary however, and if Angelo thought his position self-evident many others did not. In an extended debate during the 1330s, the Galician Franciscan Alvaro Pais (1275/80–1349/50) demanded that Angelo explain how his position could be reconciled with claims to obedience.[69] A stinging illustration of how Angelo's casuistry could be disastrously understood came from less learned southern French beguins, predisposed *towards* the spirituals.[70] Peire Tort was captured by inquisitors at Cintegabelle in April 1322. Interrogated, he said that 'Some say that Antichrist will be an apostate Franciscan … and that it will be Brother Angelo, who is an apostate of the Order of Friars Minor'.[71] To some, Angelo looked like the scorpion.

III. Horse

Boniface and Angelo might appear to be extravagant religious contortionists, unindicative of anything beyond their own extreme

[67] On *religio*, see Peter Biller, 'Words and the Medieval Notion of "Religion"', *JEH* 36 (1985), 351–69.

[68] Clareno, *Chronicle*, 204–5, adapted (§6.356–62).

[69] I lack the space to describe this satisfactorily. See Victorin Doucet, 'Angelus Clarinus, *Apologia pro vita sua*', *Archivum franciscanum historicum* 39 (1946), 63–200; *Scritti inediti di Fra Álvaro Pais*, ed. Vittorino Meneghin (Lisbon, 1969), 54–92, as well as numerous letters in *Angeli Clareni Opera*, 1: *Epistole*, ed. Lydia von Auw, Fonti per la storia d'Italia pubblicate dall'Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo 103 (Rome, 1980).

[70] Southern beguins should be distinguished from northern ones: see Louisa A. Burnham, *So Great a Light, So Great a Smoke: The Beguin Heretics of Languedoc* (Ithaca, NY, 2008), 2–3.

[71] Philippus van Limborch, 'Liber sententiarum', in *Historia inquisitionis* (Amsterdam, 1692), 330. See Burr, *Spiritual Franciscans*, 221–8, 250–1; Burnham, *So Great a Light*, 69–70, 169.

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positions. It is clear, however, that they reflected wider institutional uncertainties.

First, the pursuit of Boniface comprised an attack on the recognized leader of the church by both its own elite (the Colonna family, including cardinals) and a historical lay ally (the Capetian court). It risked discrediting the church and establishing competing power poles undermining the singularity of papal authority. The Colonna were well aware of all this. Anticipating counter-attacks to their July 1297 manifesto against Boniface, they conceded the problem:

> there is nothing worse than to call inquisitors after the truth [i.e. us, the Colonna] schismatics or deem them heretics. For if those seeking truth [i.e. us, the Colonna] are rightly called schismatics, or heretics, clearly truth is rightly called schism or heresy. But this is impossible.[72]

It was indeed truly impossible, but the general point is that in such situations it becomes very difficult for observers to determine who is truth-seeker and who is schismatic, since the right to decide is the issue at stake. How do the faithful decide who is who?

Second, the problems posed by Angelo (in every sense) had wider consequences for the Order. As with the Colonna and Boniface, the issue was where the real Franciscans were. Michael Cusato has shown that it was following *Dudum ad apostolatus* – Clement V's favourable 1310 judgement protecting the spirituals and exempting their leaders from ministers' discipline – that 'the community' emerged as a term for the Order: 'it is a term applied to the Order not by its detractors nor even by the papacy but by the Franciscan leadership itself … the use of the [civil] term *communitas* is a declaration that *they* are the Order', in contrast to those now beyond its jurisdiction.[73] Critiques such as Angelo's changed how the Order talked about itself.

Beyond this we can see that there were broader worries about hypocrisy beyond the church *c.*1300. We pass, then, from cannibal and scorpion, to first my horse, then my owl.

The *Roman de Fauvel* is a satire in which the kingdom of France is revealed to have been turned upside down by everyone's adoration of

[72] *BeP*, 63 (PR3).
[73] Michael F. Cusato, 'Whence "the Community"?', *Franciscan Studies* 60 (2002), 39–92, at 65. Emphasis original.

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Figure 1. Paris, BN, MS français 146, fol. 1[r] detail, 'de torcher Fauvel doucement | Trop i a grant assemblement' (ll. 33–4). Reproduced by permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Fauvel, the 'king of deceit', a jumped-up 'fawn' horse that all want to groom (*torcher*), who wants to consolidate his rule by marrying Fortune, and whose name expresses his corruption (Figure 1):[74]

[74] *Fauvel*, 224 l. 855 ('le roy de fallace'), 128 l. 1 ('torcher'). See generally Jean-Claude Mühlethaler, *Fauvel au pouvoir. Lire la satire médiévale* (Paris, 1994). The MS is digitized online at: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8454675g>, accessed 1 March 2023.

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> Fauvel is made of 'false' and 'veil',
> for his whole Spiel lies
> in well-veiled falsity,
> and honey-sweet trickery …
> From FAUVEL first springs **F**lattery,
> who lords it over all the world,
> and then **A**varice appears—
> she'll groom Fauvel, never fear—
> then **U**npredictability, **V**illainy,
> and last not least, **E**nvy and **L**ily
> Liver. These six ladies, there they are,
> are what is meant, by him, Fauvel.[75]

A first book dates from 1310, with the second originating in 1314, the year after Nogaret's death. 1314 was a convulsive year, seeing the burning of Templar leaders Jacques de Molay and Geoffroi de Charney, more torture and executions linked to the adulteries of Philip IV's daughters-in-law, Philip's own death, and the start of his son Louis X's short reign (1314–16), which included the hanging of Philip's chamberlain Enguerrand de Marigny on charges of sorcery and fraud, followed closely by Louis's son John's even shorter reign (1316) and John's succession by Louis's brother Philip V in 1317, the year the enhanced *Fauvel* was completed. Its origins are impossible to isolate absolutely, but a critique of Philip IV, Louis X and Philip V is generally agreed on, with some encouragement generally attributed to Philip IV's brother, Charles of Valois.[76] The expanded *Fauvel* in the

[75] 'Fauvel est de FAUS et de VEL | Compost, car il a son revel | Assis sus fausete voilee | Et sus tricherie mielee …. De Fauvel descent **F**laterie, | Qui du monde a la seigneurie, | Et puis en descent **A**varice, | Qui de torcher Fauvel n'est nice, | **V**ilanie et **V**arieté, | Et puis **E**nvie et **L**ascheté. | Ces.vj. Dames que j'ai nommées | Sont par Fauvel senefiées.' *Fauvel*, 154 ll. 229–42, 245–52. My free translation, here and below, is indebted to Jane Gilbert's expert dressage. The letters in bold (emphasis added) spell out Fauvel's name. For a poet's riff, see Ian Duhig, *The Speed of Dark* (London, 2007).

[76] For these complexities, see Andrew Wathey, 'Gervès du Bus, the Roman de Fauvel, and the Politics of the Later Capetian Court', in Margaret Bent and Andrew Wathey, eds, *Fauvel Studies: Allegory, Chronicle, Music, and Image in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS français 146* (Oxford, 1998), 599–613; Elizabeth A. R. Brown, '*Rex Ioians, Ionnes, Iolis*: Louis X, Philip V, and the *Livres de Fauvel*', in ibid. 53–72; eadem, 'Philip the Fair of France and his Family's Disgrace: The Adultery Scandal of 1314 Revealed, Recounted, Reimagined, and Redated', *Mediaevistik* 32 (2019), 71–103; Jean Favier, *Un conseiller de Philippe le Bel. Enguerran de Marigny*,

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unique BNF MS français 146, with its visual, musical and poetical additions, is not only a satire of upstarts such as Marigny, but a critique of all powers and organizations undoing themselves, and France, by fawning over Fauvel, thus ushering in the apocalypse:

> Since every king's a liar
> and the rich just flatter,
> prelates burst with vain coquetry
> and fine folk detest the church …
> So I deduce, with all good reason,
> that round the corner comes the season
> when the world must terminate,
> now all sick things pullulate …[77]

Every institution has turned itself inside out. This swingeing critique of a France ruined by deceit, sycophancy and lies came from the deepest Capetian circles.[78] Book II was ostensibly written by Marigny's former chaplain, Gervès du Bus, and continued by a Chaillou de Pesstain. MS 146's script is a bastard chancery, unusual outside that context, its artist (the 'Fauvel Master') also the illuminator of a mirror for princes (*Le somme le roi*) and two royal registers completed under Louis X.[79] *Fauvel* does not worry at hypocrisy simply as false piety run riot. 'Ypocrisie' appears, indeed, as one of Vainglory's daughters, but such personifications do not exhaust this poem's concern with deceit, falsehood, misrepresentation and duplicity. This is plural and pervasive. It reaches its apogee in Fauvel's extended

Mémoires et documents publiés par la Société de l'École des Chartes 16 (Paris, 1963), 193–200.

[77] 'Puisque les rois sont menteeurs | Et riches hommes flateeurs, | Prelas plains de vainne cointise, | Et gentilz gens heent l'Eglise | … Je conclu par droite raison | Que pres sommes de la saison | En quoi doit defenir le monde, | Car toute malice y redonde …': *Fauvel*, 250 ll. 1137–40, 252 ll. 1169–72.

[78] For fauveline France, see *Fauvel*, 156–7, 534–8, 646, 654–6, 660–2, 664, 674, 678–80.

[79] See Armand Strubel, 'Le *Roman de Fauvel*. Une satire du gouvernement royal de Philippe le Bel et de ses ministres', in Bernard Moreau and Julien Théry, eds, *La royauté capétienne et le Midi au temps de Guillaume de Nogaret. Actes du colloque de Montpellier et de Nïmes, 29 et 30 Novembre 2013* (Nîmes, 2015), 157–72. For the 'Fauvel Master', see Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, 'Geoffrey de St-Léger & Son, Gérard De Montaigu, and the "Roman de Fauvel"', in idem, *Illiterati et Uxorati: Manuscripts and Their Makers. Commercial Book Producers in Medieval Paris, 1200–1500* (London, 2000), 203–33 (but underplaying *Fauvel*'s bite at 233).

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mimicry of a courtly love complaint, when protesting against Fortune's rejection of his marriage plea. She retorts that he is 'a sack full of shit'.[80] Hypocrisy, as elsewhere, can be a very thick ethical concept.[81]

Fauvel, then, focuses on the deformations and disorientations arising from mistaking one thing or person for another, because of sycophancy or insecurity:

> [Fauvel] does everything by inversion [*par antifrasin*],
> That's to say, by sheer perversion.
> Everyone needs to steer well clear,
> since in him and in his visage
> you'll see the perfect image
> of all falsity, flattery,
> as well as total idolatry.
> All take lessons at this school
> To render Fauvel their false idol.[82]

Antiphrasis – saying one thing to mean another – runs through *Fauvel*, including its very form as a beast satire.

The 'politics' of *Fauvel* are hard to extrapolate. Philip IV's action against the Templars is praised, yet any wider elevation of kings over popes is critiqued. At the same time, the pope fawns equally over Fauvel. Excavating all this would require another article.[83] What matters here is that *Fauvel* builds on a tradition of critiquing religious institutions for hypocrisy, but transfers and extends this worry to royal and lay spaces:

[80] *Fauvel*, 282–4 ll. 36–43 ('Ypocrisie'); 423–86, 502–13 (the 'complainte de Fauvel'); 492 l. 3851 ('sac tout plain de merde'). See also, for example, 134–5 ll. 1–9 (on hypocritical prelates); 244 l. 1044 (on 'faus semblant' and 'desloiauté'); 270 ll. 1315, 1324 (on Barat, 'fausseté', guille and 'Ypocrisie'); 306 ll. 1611–34 ('Ypocrisie' as false humility); 276–8 (the description of Fauvel's palace); 400–10 ll. 26–30, 43–59 (the reused lay of Philip the Chancellor); 538 l. 4219 ('Ypocrisie' at Fauvel's marriage); 671 ll. 5878–96 (Jews as hypocrites in betraying Christ).

[81] I.e. joining fact and value: Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, new edn (London, 2006; first publ. 1985), 129–30, 140–5.

[82] 'Mainne tout par antifrasin | C'est a dire par le contraire. | Chascun s'en devroit bien retraire | Car en lui et en son viaire | Veons figurer et pourtraire | Touz faus et toute flaterie, Et general ydolatrie; | Touz suivent auy jour d'ui l'escole | De conreer Fauvel l'ydole …': *Fauvel*, 254 ll. 1190–8.

[83] See especially Strubel, '*Roman de Fauvel*', 165–70.

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> Alas, France! Into great ruin
> your beauty now tumbles today
> because of that Fauveline dynasty
> that pleasures in acting evilly!
> They've struck the fleur de lis so hard,
> Fauvel and Vain Glory joined,
> that it totters, so I'd say.[84]

This implies serious expectations about the pretensions of royal institutions as sites of political and moral claims: claims which are therefore vulnerable to charges of hypocrisy.[85] It seems then uncoincidental that hypocrisy figures prominently (verbally and visually) in *Le somme le roi*, that Dominican royal 'mirror' written for Philip III, a version of which the 'Fauvel Master' illustrated for Louis of Bourbon. Philip IV's own 1295 copy exemplifies 'the connections of [its] illuminator 'Honoré' with the French royal crown'.[86] Here, mendicants, hypocrisy and apocalypse again join hands. Its treaty on vices opens with the beast of the apocalypse crushing a saint while a very different Jew from Boccaccio's Abraham genuflects: 'this beast vanquishes the saints and the hypocrites [i.e. the Jews] adore it' (Figure 2).[87] The period indeed appears to be an 'apocalyptic age of hypocrisy', and not only in ecclesiastical contexts.[88]

[84] 'Hé! Las! France, com ta beauté | Vet au jour d'ui en grant ruine | Par la mesnie fauveline | Qui en tout mal met ses deliz! | Hurtee ont si la fleur de lis | Fauvel et Vainne Gloire ensemble, | Qu'elle chancele, ce me semble.': *Fauvel*, 660–2 ll. 5812–18.

[85] See the comments on Bisson's *Crisis of the Twelfth Century* at p. 96 above.

[86] Laurent d'Orléans, *La somme le roi*, ed. Édith Brayer and Anne-Françoise Leurquin Labie, Société des anciens textes français (Paris, 2008), 124–5, 153–4, 178, 287, 325–6; for manuscripts, see ibid. 23–7, 33–42. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS H 106 supra, was Louis's; London, BL, MS Additional 54180, was Philip's. See Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, 'Honoré and the Papeleu Master: The Dissemination of the Illustrated "Somme Le Roi"', in idem, *Illiterati Et Uxorati,* 145–71 (quote at 145).

[87] The image is digitized online at: <https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_54180_fs001r>, accessed 1 March 2023. See also fol. 5^{v} in the same manuscript. BL, MS Additional 54180, fol. 14^{v}, is reproduced courtesy of the British Library Board.

[88] Stressing the ecclesiastical, Richard Kenneth Emmerson and Ronald B. Herzman, 'The Apocalyptic Age of Hypocrisy: *Faus Semblant* and *Amant* in the *Roman de la rose*', *Speculum* 62 (1987), 612–34.

https://doi.org/10.1017/stc.2024.4 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Figure 2. The Beast of the Apocalypse, London, BL, MS Additional 54180, fol 14^{v}, 'Ceste beste senefie le deable'. Reproduced courtesy of the British Library Board.

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IV. Owl

Hypocrisy needs words.[89] Fauvel and Angelo obliged with their persistent self-justifications. As for Boniface, his mere death could not prevent his enemies ventriloquizing even a pope beyond the grave. Inquisitions were machines for verbalizing unorthodoxy or un-orthopraxy, manifesting hypocrisy in cases where public personae were at odds with personal conduct.[90] Almost anyone could be made to speak. Consequently, the ability to withhold speech, and not incriminate oneself hypocritically, was an enormous power. To illustrate this, I close with a figure who knew this, and was central to much of this article's hypocrisy talk, a man whom historians have endlessly ceased to get to the bottom of, precisely because 'he left us neither a single line, nor a single word whereby one could say with certitude what was his and his alone': Philip IV of France (1285–1314).[91] Contemporaries were similarly perplexed, including Philip's enemies, such as Bishop Bernard Saisset of Pamiers. According to one witness during the inquisitions (naturally) into Saisset's misdeeds in May 1301:

> The Bishop of Pamiers said to the witness [Bonetus de Binis] himself,
>
> 'The birds of antiquity made a king, so the stories say, and they made as king a certain large bird called "Duc" [an eagle owl], bigger and more beautiful than other birds, and of absolutely no value, indeed it is the vilest bird there is.' And he said, 'Once the magpie complained about the hawk to the Duc, the said king of birds, and he gave absolutely no reply, but just broke wind [*flavit*].'
>
> And the said Bishop said that our King of France was just like that—he was a very beautiful man of the world, but he didn't know how to do anything, except to look at people.[92]

[89] See n. 22 above.

[90] On the excess of inquisitorial testimony, see John H. Arnold, *Inquisition and Power: Catharism and the Confessing Subject in Medieval Languedoc* (Philadelphia, PA, 2001), 12–13, 75–6, 86, 114–15, 119–23, 224–25, 228.

[91] Robert Fawtier, *L'Europe occidentale de 1270 à 1380* (Paris, 1940), 298. On Philip's speech and silence, see Elizabeth A. R. Brown, '*Persona et Gesta*: The Image and Deeds of the Thirteenth-Century Capetians, 3: The Case of Philip the Fair', *Viator* 19 (1988), 219–46, esp. 219–20, 228–9, 230–1, 233, 236.

[92] Dupuy, *Histoire du différend*, 643–4. See further Joseph R. Strayer, *The Reign of Philip the Fair* (Princeton, NJ, 1980), 262–74.

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The problem of Philip's silences has long preoccupied historians, who have resorted to ingenious lengths to match his actions with the policies and choices of his regime so as to gauge the king's responsibility for, and involvement in them.[93] Arguably, Philip's silences were both tactical and principled. While Boniface's loquacity implies a sense of impunity, Philip's taciturnity guaranteed his majesty, which 'is always surrounded by silence. It accuses silently and therefore is that which guarantees the true'.[94] Like inquisitors trying to correlate external actions with beliefs, historians have therefore tried to triangulate Philip's actions, his avowed intent and his regime's justifications in order to locate the motives – hypocritical or otherwise – behind Capetian responses to challenges such as Boniface VIII or the Templars.[95] The search for 'real' motives certainly risks an infinite historiographical game of whack-a-mole (as Julien Théry has suggested), but in aiming at it we are striking at a real medieval worry, given *Fauvel*'s plain anxieties about hypocrisy at the highest levels of the Capetian regime in Philip IV's wake.[96] If, then, we can see parallel concerns about institutional hypocrisy in distinct princely, mendicant and papal contexts around 1300, it remains to be asked in conclusion what wider explanations might be offered to explain the pattern.

V. Hypocrisy Worry and its Meanings

'Styles in guile change', argued Judith Shklar, and it is predicable that hypocrisy worry should reflect the changing institutional contexts

[93] Most famously in Robert-Henri Bautier's use of diplomatic to argue for Philip's lack of interest in politics in his 'Diplomatique et histoire politique. Ce que la critique diplomatique nous apprend sur la personnalité de Philippe le Bel', *Revue historique* 259 (1978), 3–27.

[94] Jacques Chiffoleau, 'Dire l'indicible. Remarques sur la catégorie du *nefandum* du XIIe au XVe siècle', *Annales. Histoire, sciences sociales* 45 (1990), 289–324, at 309, citing Kantorowicz but without reference. The allusion is perhaps to Ernst H. Kantorowicz, 'Mysteries of State: An Absolutist Concept and its Late Mediaeval Origins', *HThR* 48 (1955), 65–91, at 69.

[95] For the importance of actions as signalling beliefs and inquisitorial thinking about this, see Peter Biller, '"Deep Is the Heart of Man, and Inscrutable": Signs of Heresy in Medieval Languedoc', in Helen Barr and Ann M. Hutchinson, eds, *Text and Controversy from Wyclif to Bale: Essays in Honour of Anne Hudson* (Turnhout, 2005), 267–80.

[96] See Théry, 'Heresy of State', esp. 143 n. 63, for the arguably futile nature of historians' hypocrisy diagnoses. At the same time, he is concerned to discern Philip's motives: ibid. 118, 127.

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which produced evolving practices of deceit.[97] I close with the following arguments, suggesting a wider context for my analysis.

First, a 'reformist' rise in the examination of conscience, intention and casuistry with the pastoral care 'revolution', pivoting around the 1215 Fourth Lateran Council, was a notable feature of the thirteenth century, notwithstanding earlier roots.[98] This generated much energy amongst elites worrying at questions of private and public conduct across a wide range of contexts, from taxation to heresy.[99] Inquisitions into beliefs and motivations raised the prominence of consistent conduct further.[100] An important corollary was that institutions 'pushing conscience', for instance through confession and preaching, consequently themselves came under increased scrutiny. It is hardly accidental that mendicants, especially Franciscans, appear prominently at the centre of thirteenth-century hypocrisy worry.[101]

Second, by 1300, reform projects were not the monopoly of ecclesiastical regimes alone. Princely regimes were making such salvific claims for themselves, and likewise articulated 'rational' inquisitorial techniques for securing them.[102] Channelling Ernst Kantorowicz,

[97] Shklar, *Ordinary Vices*, 71.

[98] For chronology, see Alexander Murray, *Conscience and Authority in the Medieval Church* (Oxford, 2015), 5–16; for reform, see, for example, canons 7, 12, 14, 33 of Lateran IV, and more widely Julia Barrow, 'Ideas and Applications of Reform', in Thomas F. X. Noble and Julia M. H. Smith, eds, *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Early Medieval Christianities, c.600-c.1100* (Cambridge, 2008), 345–62.

[99] As discussed above at pp. 96–7, 113. See, for example, Bisson, *Crisis*, 445–56, 489–99; John W. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes, and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter the Chanter and His Circle*, 2 vols (Princeton, NJ, 1970); Emily Corran, *Lying and Perjury in Medieval Practical Thought: A Study in the History of Casuistry* (Oxford, 2018); Biller, 'Deep Is the Heart'; John Sabapathy, 'Robert of Courson's Systematic Thinking About Early Thirteenth-Century Institutions', in Fitzpatrick and Sabapathy, eds, *Individuals and Institutions*, 199–216.

[100] John Sabapathy, 'Some Difficulties in Forming Persecuting Societies before Lateran IV Canon 8: Robert of Courson Thinks about Communities and Inquisition', in Gert Melville and Johannes Helmrath, eds, *The Fourth Lateran Council: Institutional Reform and Spiritual Renewal* (Affalterbach, 2017), 175–200.

[101] See, for instance, William of Saint-Amour, *De periculis novissimorum temporum*, ed. Guy Geltner (Paris, 2008); *The Opuscula of William of Saint-Amour: The Minor Works of 1255–1256*, ed. Andrew G. Traver, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters Neue Folge 63 (Münster, 2003), 155–78; Rutebeuf, *Œuvres completes*, ed. Michel Zink (Paris, 2001), 'D'hypocrisie', 136–42; 'La complainte de Maître Guillaume de Saint-Amour', 154–64 ; 'Le dit des règles', 168–78; 'Le dit de mensonge', 218–30; 'La leçon d'Hypocrisie et d'Humilité', 296–315.

[102] For princely imitation of ecclesiastical 'reform', see Marie Dejoux, 'À la recherche de la *reformatio regni* dans les royaumes de France et d'Angleterre au XIIIe siècle', in eadem,

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Théry has argued that, in France specifically, this produced a Capetian 'pontificalization' of the crown, aping papal claims and behaviours.[103] Even analysts more sympathetic to Philip IV have argued that he was 'a dogmatic fanatic about French kings' supreme authority'.[104] By the time of the confrontation between Boniface and Philip, others have suggested, 'fragments of a theory of the church' were sparking against 'fragments of a theory of the state'.[105] Distinct institutional powers were locked into a transcendent arms race.

Third, these transcendent claims seem directly connected to apocalyptic charges of hypocrisy. Hypocrisy worry was frequently married to eschatology worry as a function of the claims that institutions were making. Worrying about institutional hypocrisy was a consequence of believing in the integrity of given institutions, precisely because of their claims to transcendent significance.[106] Thus, Bernard McGinn argued that it was essential to grasp that belief in both positive angel popes or negative papal Antichrists was itself 'an act of faith in the ultimate *religious* value of the papacy'.[107] Transcendent claims flowed into an apocalyptic throbbing in both papal and Franciscan cases.[108] McGinn's argument that by about 1300 belief in institutions'

ed., *Reformatio? Les mots pour dire la réforme à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2023), 101–23, and on English Montfortian pretensions and controversies, see David Carpenter, *Henry III: Reform, Rebellion, Civil War, Settlement, 1259–1372* (New Haven, CT, 2023), 357–8, 371, 398–415, and John Sabapathy, 'Gui Foucois, la "réforme", le Midi et l'Angleterre', *Gui Foucois, Pape Clément IV, et le Midi. Cahiers de Fanjeaux* 57 (2023), 299–333, esp. 318–21. For inquisitorial techniques across different sites, see John Sabapathy, 'Making Public Knowledge—Making Knowledge Public: The Territorial, Reparative, Heretical, and Canonization Inquiries of Gui Foucois (ca. 1200–1268)', *Journal for the History of Knowledge* 1 (2020), 1–21.

[103] Théry, 'Heresy of State', 130–1; idem, 'The Pioneer of Royal Theocracy: Guillaume de Nogaret and the Conflicts between Philip the Fair and the Papacy', in William Chester Jordan and Jenna Rebecca Phillips, eds, *The Capetian Century, 1214–1314* (Turnhout, 2017), 219–59, and earlier Kantorowicz, 'Mysteries of State', at (for instance) 67.

[104] Fawtier, *Europe occidentale*, 301.

[105] Gabriel Le Bras, 'Boniface VIII. Symphoniste et modérateur', in Charles-Edmond Perrin, ed., *Mélanges d'histoire du Moyen Âge dédiés à la memoire de Louis Halphen* (Paris, 1951), 383–94, at 394.

[106] How far such comments could be made of contemporary rulership might perhaps challenge Shklar's contention that 'we' inhabit 'an ex-Christian mental universe': *Ordinary Vices*, 240.

[107] Bernard McGinn, 'Angel Pope and Papal Antichrist', *ChH* 47 (1978), 155–73, at 173. Emphasis mine.

[108] See, for instance, ibid. and Burr, *Spiritual Franciscans*, *s.v.* 'apocalyptic expectations'.

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immanent claims was producing apocalyptic projections is worth pausing at. Since lay institutions had also claimed reform agendas well before 1300, McGinn's argument that increasing frustration with reform after Lateran IV fed into the papacy's heightened eschatological profile *c.*1300 might also help to explain apocalypticism around princely regimes.[109] The parallel growth of more generalized apocalyptic worry alongside administrative government may not be coincidental.[110]

As we have seen, *Fauvel* also fretted about apocalypse by fretting about hypocrisy in a princely context which was busy pumping administrative iron. So it was (fourth), entirely in keeping with the pattern of increased ecclesiastical worry about clerical hypocrisy that lay regimes behaving like them should worry about their own institutional good faith. This is what Elizabeth Brown's studies of uneasy Capetian consciences imply.[111] It is what I have suggested *Fauvel* shows. The appearance of *Fauvel* immediately following the Capetian court's monomaniacal pursuit of Boniface and the Templars (moralistic prosecutions of the cloudiest motivations!) is notable, to say the least.

So finally (and fifth), worry about institutional hypocrisy signalled that the credibility of institutions' claims was under wider pressure. Responsibility itself was increasingly on trial.[112] This was so, whether criticism ultimately focused on individual rather than institutional culpability (as with attacks on Boniface), was extended to group criticism (as with Angelo on his own Order), or oscillated in focus (as

[109] McGinn, 'Angel Pope', 157.

[110] Cf. James Given, 'Chasing Phantoms: Philip IV and the Fantastic', in Michael Frassetto, ed., *Heresy and the Persecuting Society in the Middle Ages: Essays on the Work of R. I. Moore*, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions 129 (Leiden, 2005), 271–89, contrasting, but not connecting, the two at 289.

[111] Elizabeth A. R. Brown, 'The Faith of Guillaume de Nogaret, his Excommunication, and the Fall of the Knights Templar', in Laura Andreani and Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, eds, *Cristo e il potere. Teologia, antropologia e politica* (Florence, 2017), 157–82; eadem, '*Veritas* à la cour de Philippe le Bel de France. Pierre Dubois, Guillaume de Nogaret et Marguerite Porete', in Jean-Philippe Genêt, ed., *La vérité. Vérité et crédibilité: Construire la verité dans le système de communication de L'Occident (XIIIe–XVIIe siècle)* (Paris, 2015), 425–45; eadem, 'Philip the Fair and his Ministers: Guillaume de Nogaret and Enguerran de Marigny', in Jordan and Phillips, eds, *Capetian Century*, 185–218; eadem, 'Réflexions sur Philippe Le Bel', *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de France* 555 (2014), 7–24; eadem, 'Moral Imperatives and Conundrums of Conscience: Reflections on Philip the Fair of France', *Speculum* 87 (2012), 1–36.

[112] For the argument in an English context, see Sabapathy, 'Gui Foucois', 321–3.

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with critiques of the Capetian court).[113] It is interesting, perhaps surprising, that the least 'institutional' hypocrisy charges of those analyzed here were those clustering around Boniface VIII himself. We could circle back to Boccaccio here. His Jehannot preferred an institutional reading of curial corruption. One reading of the lesson of *Decameron* I.2 would argue that its apparent demonstration of the church's sacrality, despite its hypocrisy, instead underlines the ridiculousness of Abraham 'deducing' this. By implying that Abraham's logic is risible, Boccaccio also queries whether the church's immanent claims really are institutionally insulated from contamination by its own leaders' culpable conduct. Does the fish rot from the head down, or is the prince misled by bad advisers? Different critics placed the blame for institutional failings at different doors, sometimes personal, sometimes collective. Certainly, the medieval tendency to personify institutions poses interesting challenges for analysts of these institutions. Contemporary critics were well aware that different levels of critique were possible. Either way, hypocrisy did matter.

Hypocrisy worry both relieved and inflamed the itch of institutional credibility in this period. Strictly speaking, Boniface seems guiltless of hypocrisy, given the frankness of his opinions. Yet the allegations levelled at him were deliberately intended to demonstrate the unreconcilable chasm between what he was and what he was supposed to be, to the point that his status at the apex of his institution was indefensible. The plain thrust of those charges was that Boniface was an arch-hypocrite. Even if his accusers, with their forgeries, witness manipulation and embroideries, were the bigger hypocrites, it is hard to see how belief in the institutional church could not be damaged by the scandal of Boniface. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Angelo Clareno was a principled hypocrite who rejected the institutional shell which should house his Franciscan identity in order to better express it inside other religious orders, which Francis himself had rejected. Again, institutionally, it was impossible that this position would not corrode wider confidence in what the Franciscan Order meant, or even where it was. As for Fauvel, he seems the itch run riot. Anxiety about hypocrisy was a thick, red thread tangling up numerous institutions in early fourteenth-century Europe. It is instructive for historians to unravel it.

[113] On the Capetian side, see, for instance, Tilmann Schmidt, 'La condamnation de Pierre Flote par le pape Boniface VIII', *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome. Moyen Âge* 118 (2006), 109–21, and the works by Brown given in n. 112 above.

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