

## Papal designations in the context of the Gregorian Reform

Desygncje papieskie w kontekście reformy gregoriańskiej

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**Abstract:** This study looks at a specific aspect of papal elections during the Gregorian Reform: papal designation. In separate steps, the study endeavours to look at both the historical and developmental context of papal designation, as well as the use of papal nomination for individual elections that took place during the Gregorian Reform period. The text also uses an analysis of electoral procedures to evaluate the significance of designation, specifically its actual influence on the decisions made by electoral participants. The designation does not appear to be a procedural and legislative feature but instead more of a practical and legitimising tool for defending a chosen procedure.

**Key words:** papal designation; papal election; *In nomine Domini* bull; College of Cardinals; Gregorian Reform

**Streszczenie:** Niniejsze studium dotyczy szczególnego aspektu wyboru papieża w okresie reformy gregoriańskiej, to jest tzw. desygncji papieskiej. Rozważania skoncentrowane są na historycznym kontekście i ewolucji omawianej instytucji, jak również na zastosowaniu nominacji papieskiej w poszczególnych wyborach, które miały miejsce w okresie reformy gregoriańskiej. W tekście podjęto też próbę oceny rzeczywistego znaczenia desygncji, czyli jej faktycznego wpływu na podejmowanie decyzji przez uczestników elekcji, na podstawie analizy procedury wyborczej. Desygncja jawi się w tym świetle nie jako prawnie określony element obowiązującej procedury, ale raczej jako praktyczne narzędzie, legitymizujące obrany sposób postępowania.

**Słowa kluczowe:** desygncja papieska; wybór papieża; bulla *In nomine Domini*; Kolegium Kardynalskie; reforma gregoriańska

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## Introduction

The Gregorian Reform, which marked the start of a fundamental transformation of the medieval Church in the eleventh century, was reflected in many organisational, theological and legislative affairs. Determining the ideal form of papal election was an important aspect of this. The start of when attempts at reformation began can be linked to the approval of Pope Nicholas II's bull, *In nomine Domini* (1059). A major feature of this new electoral legislation was the transferral of crucial electoral rights to the College of Cardinals or the cardinal-bishops in the first phase. It would take a number of decades, however, before this method of choosing a new pope was fully implemented and adopted by the entire medieval Church (see the decree *Licet de evitanda discordia* adopted at the Third Council of the Lateran in 1179<sup>1</sup>). The outbreak of disputes between the pope and emperor in the second half of the eleventh century (the so-called Investiture Contest) was one reason behind why the postulates of the 1059 electoral decree could not be enforced as the correct and desirable approach, and almost every election until the twelfth century involved highly complex negotiations and the breaching of previous customs.<sup>2</sup> A number of methods for papal election, accepted to a greater or lesser extent, were applied in this regard, many of which were subsequently rejected as being inappropriate. One of the most interesting alternatives was the so-called papal designation, a method by which a potential candidate or, more commonly, candidates for the papacy were proposed by the previous pope. The present study focuses on this specific phenomenon, and in individual steps, we look at both the historical and developmental context of papal designation, along with the use of papal nomination in individual elections that took place during the Gregorian Reform period. The text also uses this analysis to evaluate the real significance of designation, specifically its actual influence on the decisions made by electoral participants.

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding the final adoption of electoral legislation in 1179, see, e.g., Suchánek 2012, 32–35.

<sup>2</sup> I looked in detail at the complicated process of applying electoral provisions in this period in my habilitation thesis; see: Suchánek 2022.

## 1. Attempt to implement a new electoral model – The *In nomine Domini* bull and canonical election

During the first phase of the Gregorian Reform, the issue of papal elections was not dealt with because the crucial personal influence of the main supporter of reforms – Emperor Henry III – could not be dismissed. It was not until Henry's untimely death in 1056 and a long interregnum when his son, Henry IV, was still a minor that the matter came to the fore. The reformist clerics gathering around Hildebrand of Sovana and Humbert of Silva Candida attempted to set up a method for selecting a new pope to eliminate the danger of external intervention, particularly from the Roman aristocracy. The outcome was the bull on papal election entitled *In nomine Domini*, which confirmed the old principle that the selection of Church leaders should be made by the local clergy and people together. At the same time, it added two other elements. First, it confirmed the significance of the emperor's rights, and in particular, it declared a special status for a group in the immediate vicinity of the papacy – the cardinals.<sup>3</sup>

Nicholas II's electoral decree is of fundamental significance in the context of further developments in papal elections. It is at the root of the College of Cardinals' dominant position in selecting a new head for the Catholic Church in a form that was later established as binding. It also led to limitations in the interventions of the Holy Roman emperors and the immediate interventions of the Roman aristocracy. In many regards, it declared that papal elections were ideally an internal Church matter. We can undoubtedly speak about it as one of the symbols of the Gregorian papacy. However, comparing the results of studies looking into this issue in recent decades and analysing individual elections sufficiently demonstrates that, initially, the significance of the legislation was extremely limited, and its actual impact on electoral practice was minimal.<sup>4</sup>

The first explicit reference to the rules established in Nicholas II's time was in documents created in an environment critical of Gregorian Reform

<sup>3</sup> On the origins of the formation of the cardinal college in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, see: Klewitz 1957 and Hüls 1977; for contemporary research see, e.g., Schludi 2014.

<sup>4</sup> For a long time, there are no significant citations of Nicholas II's bull in legislative, diplomatic, and narrative texts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, which would confirm that the discourse at the time was aware of or studied the decree. Suffice to note that the first literal wording of the document in its original papal version dates to the end of the eleventh century, with its amended imperial form dating to a period a few years later, see: Jasper 1986, 9–15.

(see the Synods in Worms (1076) and Brixen (1080)), and the advocates of reform, such as passionate defenders of the Gregorian papacy Bonizo of Sutri and renowned Roman canonist Deusdedit, did not hesitate to oppose the provisions of Nicholas II's bull. Although both groups shared their dislike for the document's willingness to acknowledge the emperor's special rights, this does not change the fact that the bull was not a desirable model for them.<sup>5</sup> Most sources that present the approach in individual papal elections are along the same line. We cannot, then, demonstrate a conscious reference or even utilisation of the models in Nicholas II's bull. Even in the same vein, where the sources provide a number of important clues regarding the course of an election in line with Nicholas II's legislation, specifically for the election of Pope Urban II, this was probably "only" the exploitation of a favourable situation. However, even in the election of Urban II, sources do not make even the slightest reference to Nicholas II's bull.

In the context of all the elections that followed the issuance of Nicholas II's decree on the papal election, this document would appear to be the definition of the core principle and ideals of a free election. Its utilisation, in reality, was limited, at least in terms of binding and determining legislation. A large number of Gregorian clerics and canonists either did not know of the decree, or they did not consider it important and beneficial enough to make use of it in selecting a new pope. As has been noted above, some advocates of reformist changes rejected it directly, placing their hopes instead in older legislation from the eighth century that emphasised the electoral rights of the Roman Church, or they even limited the standard papal election to a number of candidates from among cardinal-priests and deacons.<sup>6</sup> However, their endeavours did not enjoy complete support, either. The practical aspects of the election were certainly influenced by these legal perspectives until a single authoritative legal standard was enforced, forcing electors to seek compromises. These factors also opened up the space for other alternative methods of electoral procedure, including direct papal designation.

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<sup>5</sup> Comments by Krause 1960, 192–194, 207–217.

<sup>6</sup> See: *Anselm II. Bischof von Lucca. Collectio canonum una cum collectione minore*, lib. 2, in: Thaner (ed.) 1965, 161–163: 268–269.

## 2. Papal designations during the period of the Investiture Controversy

If we look through the information given in sources on individual papal elections that took place in the interim period between the issuance of the *In nomine Domini* bull and the signature of the Concordat of Worms settlement (1059–1122), there are three elections where the designation of the candidate or candidates by the previous pope is mentioned.<sup>7</sup> The first pope to designate his successor was Gregory VII himself. The first testimony was given by chronicler Hugh of Flavigny, who recorded the final instructions of the dying pope. When the gathering of bishops and cardinals asked him who he would recommend as the new heir of St Peter, Gregory named three prominent reformist figures – Bishop Anselm II of Lucca, Cardinal Odo of Ostia, and Archbishop Hugh of Lyon.<sup>8</sup> The fact that this was no literary invention of the chronicler but rather a respected tradition within and outside the Gregorian group is evidenced in other testimony. The most extensive is from the pen of the author of the *Chronicle of Monte Cassino*, who mentioned the same event in a different form. According to the Monte Cassino chronicler, the above-noted prelates only came into consideration after the most suitable candidate of all – Monte Cassino's Abbot Desiderius – rejected papal dignity.<sup>9</sup>

Both these passages already reflect the later thoughts of the reformist camp on the events that accompanied the search for a new pope. The presentation of events reproduced by Hugh of Flavigny appears to be more authentic, making use of many unique and original documents that the other authors were not aware of in his work.<sup>10</sup> The second report in the *Chronicle of Monte Cassino* is less reliable because it logically defends its own former

<sup>7</sup> In the election of Paschal II (1099), the designation was based on a single, and unreliable, source, so this cannot be relied upon.

<sup>8</sup> "Dominus noster papa Gregorius [...] unde ipse postea obiit, convenerunt ad eum episcopi et cardinales Romani [...] hec illis verba dedit: Quemcumque horum trium, Lucensem scilicet episcopum, Ostiensem, aut archiepiscopum Lugdunensem habere poteris, in pontificem eligit." See: *Chronicon Hugonis, monachi Viridunensis et Divionensis abbatis Flaviniacensis*, lib. 2, in: Pertz (ed.) 1848, 288–502 (quotation: 466).

<sup>9</sup> *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, lib. 3, in: Hoffmann (ed.) 1980, 65: 447; for analysis, see: Cowdrey 1983, 181–184.

<sup>10</sup> Alfons Becker notes a possible retelling in favour of Hugh of Lyon (i.e., disregarding Desiderius) in his work on Urban II's pontificate, saying that the chronicler may have attempted to favour the group to which he was closest within the reformist school. See: Becker 1964, 81.

abbot and explains why in the end electors favoured the Monte Cassino candidate.<sup>11</sup>

It should be recalled that all four men whom the designation concerned were proven and influential figures in the Gregorian Reform. Bishop Anselm II of Lucca enjoyed the support not just of the pope but was also a protégé of Countess Matilda of Tuscany.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Archbishop Hugh of Lyon<sup>13</sup> and Cardinal Odo of Ostia,<sup>14</sup> who were considered advocates of radical Church reform, also enjoyed considerable respect. Despite their exceptional qualities, however, in the end, none of them achieved papal dignity, although there is no doubt that at least two of them did have that ambition. There are a number of reasons for their failure, and these undoubtedly arose from the prevailing circumstances in which those around the pope found themselves. At the time of Gregory's death, none of them were in the pope's closest company, nor did they become involved in negotiations in the subsequent weeks. In particular, however, they did not take part in electoral discussions in the following months, suggesting that another candidate had emerged early on.

The pope's closest company, comprising the South Italian bishops, some of the cardinals and his partisans among the Roman clergy, were well aware that a "standard" election could not be allowed. Pope Gregory VII had died in exile, and the reformists needed to nominate someone for the papacy who would enjoy significant authority and a powerful base. As such, none of the "ordinary" bishops and cardinals were among the candidates. Fifteen days after Gregory's death, a group of senior representatives of the Gregorian fraction met up under the protection of Abbot Desiderius at Monte Cassino

<sup>11</sup> Gerold Meyer von Knonau gave a detailed analysis of the authenticity of each report, see: Meyer von Knonau 1903, 59–60 and Fliche 1915/1916, 356–380; Alfons Becker also looked into the matter, see: Becker 1964, 79–84. In his basic work on the issue of papal designation, Karl Holder does not doubt the priority of Desiderius's nomination and perceives this as evidence of Gregory's foresight in a complex period, see: Holder 1892, 52–54.

<sup>12</sup> Cinzio Violante gives a biographical profile of Anselm of Lucca (see: Violante 1961, 399–407), while the core work for discovering the figure and works of Anselm of Lucca remains that of Kathleen G. Cushing's (see: Cushing 1998).

<sup>13</sup> Wilhelm Lühé's study (Lühé 1898), while old, is based on sources and remains the core work on the figure of Hugh of Lyon.

<sup>14</sup> There are a large number of academic publications that look at the figure of Odo of Ostia, one reason being that he later became pope as Urban II. Becker's already mentioned core monograph on Pietro Dalena's work looks at the first period of his life (Dalena 1995, 119–144; Fuhrmann 1984, etc.).

Abbey so that they could discuss the situation they were in.<sup>15</sup> The first decision must have been made here that the new pope should be someone with enough power and economic base to gain the necessary political support and take on the financial burden of the long battles for Rome. There was no prelate to be found among the bishop and clerical cardinals, who had bases “only” within their bishop and Church districts.

It is not easy to determine whether the Monte Cassino meeting resulted in a preliminary decision to support the local abbot, Desiderius. If so, Desiderius remained somewhat sceptical about the idea. The author of the *Chronicle of Monte Cassino* claims that he was to call on the cardinals to write to Countess Matilda of Tuscany and invite the three bishops that Gregory VII had named for discussions as soon as possible.<sup>16</sup> Considering Desiderius’s later attempts to avoid papal duties, this may well not be purely fiction. Accepting papal dignity under the prevailing circumstances may well not have been a desirable goal for the cautious Desiderius, and he probably preferred supporting another candidate. For the Gregorian group, however, Desiderius remained more than a frontrunner because he was a capable diplomat with significant powerful support. The abbot had the huge power and economic base of the Monte Cassino Abbey, and he also enjoyed close personal relations with the southern Italian Normans. So if the Gregorians wanted to consider returning to Rome and restoring their positions, Desiderius seemed to be the ideal candidate, and he was much more acceptable to the emperor than any of the other three candidates.<sup>17</sup>

The outcome was an election in which designation did not play a decisive role. Undoubtedly, the sudden death of Bishop Anselm II of Lucca (18 March 1086) influenced the situation, who, in part through the support of Matilda of Tuscany, could have balanced Desiderius of Monte Cassino’s virtues. Electoral discussions were held in Rome under the influence of the cardinals, and their course was reproduced extensively in the Monte

<sup>15</sup> *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, lib. 3, in: Hoffmann (ed.) 1980, 65: 447.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, 447–448.

<sup>17</sup> The *Chronicle of Monte Cassino* speaks of a secret meeting of cardinals with Jordan to secure Desiderius’s support, something the abbot resisted, and he was even said to have asked for an assurance that he would never be forced into the papacy (although this he did not receive). See: *ibidem*, 448.

Cassino chronicle. According to this retelling, enormous pressure was put on Desiderius from the outset to submit to the will of the majority and accept the papacy. The Monte Cassino abbot resisted, however, and in the end, he made the participants promise that they would accept the candidate that Desiderius proposed to them – as such, we can say that this was another designation. Following consultation with the head of the Roman aristocracy, Cencio Frangipane, Desiderius identified Cardinal Odo of Ostia as the most suitable candidate, someone whom Pope Gregory VII had already designated.<sup>18</sup> He was not elected, however, based on a speech by one of the cardinals, who referred to a breach of canon law.<sup>19</sup> His argument may have been based on the fact that he was already running the bishopric in Ostia, something some canonists perceived as an obstacle to taking on another bishopric.<sup>20</sup> In any case, Odo's nomination was rejected, making everyone even more resolute in securing the original proposal for Desiderius. In the heated atmosphere, the Abbot of Monte Cassino finally submitted to the pressure and accepted the papacy.<sup>21</sup>

The second example of designation builds on the above election of Victor III. The pope found it difficult to reconcile himself to his new post, and his death less than two years later was a liberation for him. Advocates of radical Gregorian Reform considered him to be overly compromising, and as such they welcomed the fact that the formerly overlooked Cardinal Odo of Ostia sided with him. At the time of Victor's death, Odo was near to the pope, suggesting the two men had reconciled. Furthermore, shortly before his death, the pope had called all cardinals and recommended Odo of Ostia as his heir (according to Gregory's model).<sup>22</sup> The election of the new pope was held following advance preparations in March 1088 in Campanian Terracina. The cardinal-bishops were responsible for the moderation of the election, all of them taking part in the meeting – besides Odo of Ostia, the bishops of Porto, Tusculum, Albano, Sabina and Segni were also

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<sup>18</sup> See: *ibidem*, 448–449.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, 449.

<sup>20</sup> For more on this issue, see Werner Goez's core study, Goez 1970, 27–59.

<sup>21</sup> See: *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, lib. 3, in: Hoffmann (ed.) 1980, 67: 450.

<sup>22</sup> "Accipite eum in Romanam ecclesiam ordinate meamque vicem in omnibus, quousque id facere possitis, habete." *Ibidem*, 456.

appointed.<sup>23</sup> According to the description of the event given in the *Chronicle of Monte Cassino*, besides the cardinals and Roman clergy and laymen, bishops were also to take part in the election, alongside abbots, mainly from Campania and Apulia, while the transalpine bishops and Matilda of Tuscany also sent representatives. As such, there were around 40 participants.<sup>24</sup> These details are essentially confirmed in the subsequently elected Urban II's letters. This was the first election in which we can infer from sources that the process took place according to the principles laid out in the *In nomine Domini* bull.<sup>25</sup> Considering the subject of our interest, however, I want to focus on the role of designation, which was also applied here.

The election itself was split into two parts. In the first part, on 8 and 9 March, the first official meeting took place, at which, first, the competencies of individual groups and representatives were defined. After this, the participants were informed about the situation, and they likely also focused on the legislative and canon law aspect of the election, although no source mentions this explicitly. Discussions on the electoral rights and priorities of individual representatives may not have been straightforward, and it can be inferred from the text that the debate was heated. In the end, however, representatives of all factions came to the agreement that the new pope would be the candidate who achieved unanimous support.<sup>26</sup> The need for a public declaration of this commitment was likely meant to guarantee that one group would not outvote another and that a united position would be sought. Therefore, it was now very important to acquire strong arguments for one's own candidate. In addition, it is in this first phase that we encounter the emphasis on designation, which the cardinal-bishops made use of to support their own candidate.

Bishop John of Tusculum spoke at the designation gathering, informing the discussion participants that Odo had a double mandate – from both Gregory VII and Victor III – and he asked all those gathered to respect

<sup>23</sup> They are all named by Urban II in his electoral letters (*Littera ad Hugonem Abbatem Cluniacensem de electione sua*, in: Mansi (ed.) 1761, 174), respectively almost identically *Epistola Urbani papae II. ad Salzburgensem aliosque episcopos* (in: Mansi (ed.) 1775, 704).

<sup>24</sup> “[...] cum episcopis et cardinalibus Romanis superius nominatis atque cum nostro abbate Oderisio archiepiscopi, episcopi atque abbates ex diversis partibus numero quadraginta [...]” *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, lib. 4, in: Hoffmann (ed.) 1980, 2: 468.

<sup>25</sup> For more on the election, see: Suchánek 2022, 275–298.

<sup>26</sup> *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, lib. 4, in: Hoffmann (ed.) 1980, 2: 468.

this.<sup>27</sup> This undoubtedly consolidated Odo's status as an electoral favourite, but a mention of a three-day postponement of the final decision also implies some hesitation. The final election took place on Sunday 12 March in a manner that involved some almost ceremonial aspects of the electoral procedure. The different groupings undoubtedly used the three days to consider the election for further negotiations, and now, the results of the electoral agreement were ceremonially put in place. What I consider fundamental, however, is the fact that there is no mention of designation in the election itself. Bishops John of Porto, John of Tusculum and Peter of Albano, evidently on behalf of the cardinal-bishops, declared Odo of Ostia as the nominee they had agreed upon, and they asked the other electors to make a response. The others found the election to be correct and expressed their agreement.<sup>28</sup> Urban II more or less confirms this method in his letters, although he is much more precise in his description of the acts of individual groups of electors.<sup>29</sup> Thus, designation evidently influenced the decision of the electors, yet at the same time, there was no automatic acceptance of the nominated candidate. Rather, the consent of all the components of Roman clerical and lay society had to be acquired, and negotiations took a number of days.

The third example of designation applied to the election of Pope Calixtus II in 1119. This took place during the exile in southern France, where the previous pope, Gelasius II, had travelled out of concern of military intervention from Holy Roman Emperor Henry V. He was accompanied by only a small group of supporters, and when the pope became fatally ill, it was not clear whether the election would take place in France or if it would wait until the return to Rome. In the end, those around the dying pope decided not to wait, and with Gelasius's consent, the election took place at the abbey

<sup>27</sup> "[...] surgens in medium Tusculanensis episcopus retulit per ordinem omnia, que de ordinatione ecclesie vel papa Gregorius antea vel postmodum papa Victor statuerant [...]" Ibidem.

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>29</sup> "[...] petitionem ferens omnium fidelium laicorum nostrae parti faventium clericorum Romae eligentium et religiosissimus abbas Cassinensis omnium diaconorum et R. cardinalis tituli S. Clementis omnium cardinalium, nec non et B. praefectus omnium fidelium laicorum [...]" *Epistola Urbani papae II. ad Salzbургensem aliosque episcopos*, in: Mansi (ed.) 1775, 704. Hugh of Cluny's letter gives an almost identical description, although he specified that the rest of the Roman clergy were represented by the Porto cardinal-bishop, John: "[...] cum Portuensis episcopus omnium Romanorum clericorum catholicae partifaventium se legatum diceret [...]" *Littera ad Hugonem Abbatem Cluniacensem de electione sua*, in: Mansi (ed.) 1761, 174.

in Cluny. In this election, the sources also mention papal designation, and they do so for multiple persons. In a certain sense, designation seems a logical and defensible measure regarding Callixtus's election – even on the eve of Gelasius's death, it was evident to the people assembled there that the circumstances did not permit any further postponement to the selection of the new head of the Latin Church, while at the same time, there was a real danger that the legitimacy of the election would be questioned. Only a small number of cardinals were assembled at Cluny's abbey, and it could not be predicted with certainty how the rest of the Roman elites would act if the pope was elected by just a few refugees, alongside people who evidently were not entitled to vote. Furthermore, the election was to be held outside Rome, and the principal candidates included prelates outside the College of Cardinals and the Roman Church. All these shortcomings could be balanced out through an emphasis on designation, ideally directly from Pope Gelasius II, and some sources do confirm this.<sup>30</sup>

The first complication in terms of possible designation is based on the relatively small number of sources that mention it, as well as differing reports on who was designated. The first mention is made in the *Chronicle of Benevento*, whose author, Falco, claims that Pope Gelasius indicated Cardinal-Bishop Kuno of Palestrina as a suitable candidate. Kuno immediately rejected the nomination, however, and said that the latter actually elected Archbishop of Vienne, Guy of Burgundy, who was a much more suitable candidate.<sup>31</sup> The second source mentioning designation, *Historia Compostelana*, mentions two nominees – Archbishop Guy of Vienne again and also Abbot of Cluny, Pons.<sup>32</sup> Although, in the former source, the author makes

<sup>30</sup> Karl Holder in particular looks at the designation of Guy of Burgundy and other figures, see: Holder 1892, 57–61; from more recent literature, see, e.g., Schilling 1998, 392–394.

<sup>31</sup> “Absit, inquit, omnino absit, ut tanti honoris ponderisque cacumen indignus ego, et infelix, suscipiam, precipue cum auxilio Dei et seculari virtute divitiarum Romana Sedes, temporibus nostris sub persecutionis flagello dedita, defendi oporteat, et muniri! Si vero meis acquiescere velitis consiliis, Viennensem archiepiscopum, virum utique religiosum, prudentisque animi et secularibus ornatum virtutibus, ad tale tantumque patrocinium eligamus.” *Falconis Beneventani Chronicon Beneventanum*, in: D'Angelo (ed.) 1998, 1118.3.7–1118.3.10.

<sup>32</sup> “Defuncto enim Papa Gelasio [...] Romanae ecclesiae cardinales qui aderant una cum episcopis Romanae curiae Ostiensi et Portuensi et cum compluribus Romani populi, quem sibi in Romanum Pontificem eligerent, plenius pertractarent, advenit praedictus Viennensis ecclesiae archiepiscopos et hunc aut Pontium Cluniacensem abbatem, filium Merguliensis comitissae in Romanum Pontificem eligi Papa Gelasius adhuc vivens, iam tamen in confinio mortis positus,

use of direct speech to emphasise the authenticity of the event, particularly to highlight the importance of Cardinal Kuno, the latter source rather refers to the fact that the two figures were discussed in the presence of the pope.

Although historians generally accept Gelasius's designation,<sup>33</sup> there are real questions of how seriously to take both stories. Falco's narrative shows a number of irregularities, which American researcher John Paul Adams points out in his research. First, he questions the reliability of the timing and figures given in the *Chronicle of Benevento*. The author was wrong in the meeting of the English king and pope,<sup>34</sup> and information about the presence of Cardinal-Bishop Peter of Porto in Cluny is also wrong because this senior Church prelate was staying in Rome and was involved in running the Roman Church in the period of the pope's absence.<sup>35</sup> Both these irregularities imply that Falco of Benevento was using not entirely reliable information, making Cardinal Kuno's speech as given in the chronicle unlikely, which also raises questions about the very designation itself.

There is a similar ambiguity in the second case for the nomination of Pons of Melgueil. Although the work's authors refer to the testimony of the Prior of Carrion, a direct participant in the event who was said to have visited Gelasius's court with a message from Bishop Diego of Compostela, the question remains as to what events he was a direct witness to. First, he was very close to the Cluny congregation considering his own monastery and, hence, was no impartial commentator of events.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, we can also show a close connection between Abbot Pons and the environment in which *Historia Compostelana* was produced. If Pons is mentioned as one of the possible candidates, this might not mean his direct designation by the pope, but rather a reflection of discourse towards him at the time. *Historia Compostelana* was produced among Pons's supporters, and relevant paragraphs were likely edited at the time when Pons visited Compostela

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clero ac populo Romano praedixerat." *De rebus gestis D. Didaci Gelmirez, primi Compostellani Archiepiscopi (Historia Compostelana)*, lib. 2, in: Falque Rey (ed.) 1983, 9: 270.

<sup>33</sup> As well as Holder, 1892, 57–60, see in particular: Robinson 1990, 63–64; Schilling 1998, 393–394; Schludi 2014, 226–227.

<sup>34</sup> According to Falco, the meeting took place prior to Gelasius's death, whereas, in fact, it took place during the Synod of Reims.

<sup>35</sup> See: Adams 2016.

<sup>36</sup> The Monastery of San Zoilo in Carrión had close relations with Cluny Abbey, which it based its model of monastic life on; for more, see: García García 2014.

Bishop Diego as legate; this may have influenced a tendency to present him as a possible candidate for the papacy.

Hence, we cannot confirm papal designation with certainty, even for the election of Callixtus. The above testimony of the sources that speak of designation came about under particular circumstances, and there are inherent clear motives involved. The designation may have served as a tool for emphasising the importance of the particular person or for supporting the contested legitimacy of the election itself. Pope Callixtus himself also did not mention it. In his letter to Archbishop Adalbert of Mainz informing him of his election, he said only that his election was the will of the assembled cardinals, bishops, abbots, and other Roman clergy and laypersons. He did not mention designation, and it would have been very unusual if he was to leave this fact out deliberately because it would undoubtedly have helped him in his subsequent endeavour at gaining recognition for his election.<sup>37</sup>

## Conclusions

A view of the presented designation incorporates a number of important aspects. Primarily, an assessment of the evidential value of the sources that mention designation is rather complicated. They represent the primary testimony of a tradition that was formed in the context of the prevailing discourse around electoral assemblies. We cannot responsibly determine, however, to what extent the described content corresponds to reality. Nor can we discount papal designation in any of the cases, although similarly, we lack convincing evidence that it actually happened (at least in the form that the different sources try to claim). I, therefore, believe it is much more important to provide a functional assessment of how designation occurred in the context of papal elections in the period being investigated.

Designation mainly played a supportive role in elections; that is, it served as a suitable argument for defending a candidate's preference. One example would be its use in the election of Urban II, where, although there was a double nomination (from Gregory VII and from Victor III) for Cardinal-Bishop Odo of Ostia, this was only at the start of negotiations, with

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<sup>37</sup> Ekkehardi *Uraugiensis chronica*, a. 1119, in: Waitz (ed.) 1844, 254.

designation not impacting the actual electoral procedure itself. This element can be considered crucial because it demonstrates the limited role of designation – although it can significantly influence the discussions of the electoral committee by considering the authority of the nominating pope, it is not constitutive in nature. This is why it does not resonate for the actual election, leaving the selection to the free decision of the electors.

In this concept, designation is not legally binding but is primarily based on authority and respect for the previous pope. The pope is the guarantor and gauge for the Church going in the right direction, and the issue of commitment to his recommendations is mainly one of morality and obedience. The designation itself is not presented as a legal act (a procedural and legislative element), but rather, it becomes a practical and legitimising tool for defending a chosen procedure. One characteristic of note in the designation passages is the fact that we never hear of recommendations for one particular person. Either the dying pope supports a number of people, or another name is added right after his focus on one particular cleric (usually in reference to the resignation of the original candidate). This again excludes the possibility of linking designation to a commitment to opt for a determined candidate; for the election of Victor III, for example, both Odo of Ostia and the other nominee, Hugh of Lyon, had to yield to the majority dissent of the electors.

For the authors of the texts, the significance of designation was closely linked to the attempt at explaining why a particular cleric had the majority support of the assembled electors or why he was overlooked. This motive is visible, for example, in the *Chronicle of Monte Cassino*, which responded to the designation tradition, supporting the election of the three Gregory VII candidates: Odo of Ostia, Hugh of Lyon and Anselm II of Lucca. In the end, none of them won support, and Abbot Desiderius of Monte Cassino took up the papacy. The subsequent attempt of the Monte Cassino chronicler to increase the legitimacy of its abbot by including a passage adding the ideal nomination of Desiderius to the designation of the above three men would imply this act was of undoubted significance.<sup>38</sup> The recommendations of the current pope were undoubtedly of great worth, and although these

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<sup>38</sup> *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, lib. 3, in: Hoffmann (ed.) 1980, 65: 447.

recommendations were not legally binding, it was desirable to clarify why they were not respected.

There may well have been a number of moments boosting the significance of designation, but almost always, the motive of lending the elected candidate legitimacy was crucial. The second key designation story regarding the election of Callixtus II aims to counter possible objections to the election of a candidate outside the Roman Church, defending the validity of the electoral decision through the active involvement of the dying Pope Gelasius II. All this is supported by the designation of Cardinal Kuno, though he rejects the nomination in favour of Archbishop Guy of Vienne. This strengthens the legitimacy of the election, and it also confirms the new pope's connection to radical reform, which was to be a guarantee of a firm direction for the papacy in subsequent years. In contrast, the mention of a similar designation in favour of Abbot Pons of Cluny was mainly designed to refute the accusation that he had tried to acquire the Holy See for himself as a man of ambition. If he had been nominated by the pope himself, then any reluctance to acknowledge the election of Callixtus was entirely legitimate.

Including stories of designation fulfils more functions in a text than merely being a definition of suitable persons for leading the Roman Church. It can help "orient" the reader so that they can more easily understand the reasons for the election (or rejection) of a particular person. Similarly, it presents the entire context of Church and political relationships and links between important figures at the papal court. In contrast, there is no direct line between designation and election. Electors are the sovereign authority for expressing the final decision, and they can reject a proposed candidate (Odo of Ostia in the first election of Desiderius as Victor III) and accept them (Odo of Ostia in his election as Urban II). Therefore, we must examine designation in the context of presenting the whole course of an election, where it mainly fulfils a legitimising role and gives meaning to all other steps, which eventually leads to the election of the suitable candidate.

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