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Pope Benoit XIII (1328-1423), although an influential advocate for reforms within the Catholic Church in the middle ages, receives little attention from modern historians. Historians rarely offer more than a brief biography and often neglect to mention at all his key role in the Great Schism. Yet, the very absence of Pope Benoit XIII from most historical narratives of medieval history itself highlights the active role that historians play in determining what gets recorded. In some cases, the choices that people make in determining what does, and what does not, get included in historical accounts reveals as much about the motivations and intentions of the people recording that past as it does about their subjects.

This essay studies one example of this problem, in this case Europeans during the Reformation era who self-consciously manipulated sources from medieval history to promote their own agendas. We can see this in the sixteenth-century translation of a treatise written by the medieval theologian Nicholas de Clamanges (1363-1437. Clamanges was a university professor and served as Benoit XIII’s secretary during the Great Schism in Avignon, France. The treatise, entitled *La Traite de la Ruine de l’Eglise*, was written in Latin in 1398 and was first distributed after Clamanges’ death in 1437. Nearly 166 years later, the original work was translated into French and published in 1564. In all of the surviving sixteenth-century printed manuscripts of Clamanges’ *Treatise*, the pope’s name was removed from the translated text. This essay is aimed at understanding why and how Pope Benoit XIII had vanished from this sixteenth-century account of conflicts within the medieval Church.

This essay concerns itself with the historical memory of Pope Benoit XIII and how the story of his reform-minded efforts became embroiled in a political conflict over a hundred years after Benoit XIII’s death. In the sixteenth-century French Wars of Religion, leaders of the Catholic church and their Protestant opponents wages a series of seven brutal wars against one
another. At the same time, each was engaged in a battle for control over who could tell the histories of the medieval past, as well as what figures were included in those histories.

ARGUMENT

It is my proposition in this essay that the sixteenth-century French King Charles IX was behind the translation and publication of Clamanges' *Treatise* in 1564. After commissioning the publication of this work, the king’s representatives seem to have ordered the removal of Pope Benoit XIII’s name from the entire works. The result was that the Treatise included 43 chapters rather than the original 46. This essay will demonstrate that the crown’s motivation behind the removal of Benoit XIII’s name emerged from the king’s personal vendetta against the pope. At the same time while Benoit’s very existence was problematic for the king, that did not keep Charles IX from using the work of Benoit XIII’s advisor Clamanges in his own struggle against Catholic opponents of the crowing during the Wars of Religion.
## CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

The Trip .......................................................... 1

Introduction ..................................................... 2

Fourteenth Century ............................................ 5

Sixteenth Century ............................................. 7

Clamanges’ Translated *Treatise* ................................ 15

Conclusion ....................................................... 23

Bibliography .................................................... 26
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THE VANISHING POPE

On a trip to Avignon, France, in 1998, my parents decided to show me the Palace of the Popes before we returned to Paris. We just caught the last tour of the day. A young, dark-headed girl welcomed us to the tour, announcing that Avignon had been the home for nine French Popes between 1309 and 1411. As we followed our guide, she told us that at the dawning of the fourteenth century, the Roman Catholic papacy was continually threatened by the French King Phillip the Fair. The king began seizing Church land and started to tax the clergy. When the papacy objected to this, King Phillip invaded Italy and tortured Pope Boniface VIII to keep the pope in line. After the death of Boniface, King Phillip refrained from torturing the newly elected Pope Clement V and instead pressured the pope to move from Italy to Avignon, France and to appoint several French cardinals. In order to house the pope, a large and impressive gothic palace was constructed in Avignon between the years 1335 and 1343.

Each of the nine Popes believed that his stay in Avignon would be temporary. Yet a series of exceptional circumstances forced all nine to remain in the Palace of the Popes, such that the Avignon Papacy lasted nearly a century. During this time there was more than one pope appointed simultaneously – one in Italy and one in France. Each man argued for that he was the “true pope” and represented the Catholic masses of Europe.

As the guide led the tour group through the great reception hall of the Palace and past a portrait gallery of the nine Popes of Avignon, she asked the group if we saw anything strange about the gallery. I responded that there were only eight portraits and not nine. That clearly was not what she was getting at. The guide replied that all of the portraits were in fact of the same man posing in different robes and hats. In fact, the man in each portrait had the same noticeably beak-shaped nose and all of the portraits were painted by the same artist. She had raised an
interesting point, yet she completely ignored my comment about the missing portrait. As the tour moved to the next chamber, I could see our guide mentally counting the portraits as the tour group passed by her. I recounted again and found there only to be eight portraits. When we left the Palace of the Popes, I made a mental note to someday find out what happened to the portrait of the ninth pope, whom I now call the "Vanishing Pope." Soon I would find out that this pope was not only missing from the paintings but had also vanished from a sixteenth-century book that purported to present an account of the Avignon papacy during his reign.

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To understand who the missing pope was, it is important to understand the key players of the Great Schism. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, before the time of the Avignon Papacy, a bitter row had developed between the king of France and Pope Boniface VIII. During this period, King Phillip the Fair launched a strong anti-papal campaign against Boniface VIII and denounced the Pope as a heretical criminal to the French clergy, causing the pope to flee his abode. After the death of the pope, Boniface’s successors settled in an enclave of papal territory in Avignon. The popes in Avignon asserted administrative claims over Church offices, appointing clerics who supported France to Church benefices. In 1377/8, Pope Gregory XI finally returned to Rome. However, his successor, elected later that year, Urban VI proved to be brutal and cruel. French cardinals, who had served Gregory XI, fled back to Avignon and appointed Clement VII as a rival pope. The allegiances of Christendom were now divided between the two popes, Urban VI in Rome and Clement VII in Avignon, a scenario known as the Great Schism.

As the Great Schism approached its third decade, the French crown found itself weakened by military defeats and economic insolvency. Meanwhile, armed gangs, owing their
allegiance to Rome, plundered the French countryside. During this period of chaos, a French humanist and theologian named Nicolas de Clamanges (1363-1437)\(^1\) drafted strongly-worded letters to the French king, Charles VI (1368-1422) hoping to bring attention to what he saw as the Catholic Church’s corruption. After the king ignored his letters, Clamanges decided to draft two treatises in Latin. He wrote the first, *The Treatise on the Ruin of the Church*, between 1398 and 1403, and the second, *The Expose on the Book of Isaiah*, between 1423 and 1426. In these two works, Clamanges intended to bring attention to the corruption rampant in the clergy of the Catholic Church and to hasten the re-unification of the Church.

Clamanges was not the only person expressing his worries to the French king over the situation within the Church. The newly-elected Avignon Pope Benoit XIII (1328-1423)\(^2\) met with King Charles VI and the Roman Pope Clement VII to discuss the possibility that each pope retract his title. When Benoit XIII refused to step down, he lost support from the majority of the clergy and the French king. Pope Benoit XIII not only challenged King Charles VI’s royal authority but openly expressed his desire to excommunicate the king. Nearly one hundred years later, the royal family especially Charles VI’s relative and successor Charles IX (1550-1574) was still bothered by the fourteenth-century pope’s actions. In fact, Pope Benoit XIII’s encounters with Charles IX’s ancestor troubled the king so much that even though he published accounts of these events in his own struggle with the Pope Pius IV (pontiff from 1559 to 1564), he undertook the eradication of any mention of Pope Benoit XIII.

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\(^2\) Pope Benoit XIII is often known in English as Avignon Pope Benedict XIII. Elected as the last Avignon Pope in 1394, his election as pope was complicated by the fact that Rome had already appointed another pope. Benoit died in Spain at the age of 93, still convinced that he was the legitimate pope.
In 1564, two anonymous translators commissioned by King Charles IX’s royal chancellor Michel de L’Hôpital were instructed to translate Clamanges’ first Treatise from Latin into French. There is no reliable evidence that the second Treatise was ever translated. It may be that since the main message of the two works was the same, Charles IX did not see it necessary to translate the second Treatise. The commission ordered that Clamanges’ first-hand accounts of a greedy and fornicating clergy be translated. As we shall see, the first Treatise was printed as part of a propaganda campaign of the king against the militant French Catholics in the mid sixteenth century. Yet curiously, this commission also ordered the cleansing and removal of all descriptions found in the first Treatise of the sometimes hostile interactions between the Pope Benoit XIII and the French King. Clamanges’ Treatise was translated in 1564 to help taint the reputation of the Catholic Church and the clergy. However, these translations were left incomplete to erase Pope Benoit XIII from history by removing all mention of Pope Benoit XIII from Clamanges’ writings.

The sixteenth-century translations of Nicolas de Clamanges’ Treatise demonstrate the measures taken by the French crown in order to eradicate the history of this fourteenth-century Anti-Pope and to manipulate the secretary’s hundred and fifty year old writings in the crown’s struggles against the Catholic Church. In order to prove this, this essay will first examine Clamanges’ intentions in writing his first Treatise. In short, he shared with Pope Benoit XIII a view about what would cure France and the Roman Catholic Church of corruption. Secondly, this essay will turn to the sixteenth century to describe the growing conflicts between the French crown, the leaders of the Catholic Church, the Protestants, and noble-hard line Catholics during the French Wars of Religion that help explain why Clamanges’ Treatise was translated in 1564, and why that translation was altered to remove Benoit XIII from history altogether. Thirdly, it
will examine the three specific changes made in this translation and the passages left in the sixteenth-century translations of his first Treatise. And lastly, from this examination, this essay will explain why Catholic officials might have viewed this translated Treatise as a threat.

In order to understand the intentions behind the sixteenth-century changes in the translation, it is necessary to look back at Clamanges' original Treatise and the influence of its author during the Great Schism. At the time of the election of Benoit XIII as the new pope in Avignon, Nicolas de Clamanges was a professor at the University of Paris. Clamanges supported the new pope, appealing to him, "As the one who no longer occupied a position as one boatman among others, but stood at the rudder of the ship, to act in the interest of all Christendom."3 The keen-eyed Benoit XIII quickly appointed Clamanges as his secretary and was the guide and influence behind the efforts of Clamanges in his writings to reform the Catholic Church. Upon his arrival in Avignon, Clamanges found the Church in a state of downfall. Vice, greed, and corruption were rampant. Clamanges wrote in his first Treatise that the churches were empty and Mass was meagerly attended.4 It was his experience during his residency at Avignon that inspired Clamanges to write both the Treatise on the Ruin of the Church and The Expose on the Book of Isaiah.

In the Treatise on the Ruin of the Church, Clamanges did not call for open battle or all out war against the Church itself, but for reform to be imposed by councils, which would protect the clergy from corruption and hypocrisy. According to Nicolas de Clamanges, reform of the Catholic Church must begin with individual and personal reform, then and only then could there

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3 "En tant que celui qui n’a plus occupe une position en tant qu’un batelier entre d’autres, mais s’est tenu au gouvernail de direction du bateau, pour agir dans l’interet de toute la chretiente": A. Coville, Le Traite de la Ruine de l’Englise de Nicolas de Clamanges et La Traduction Francaise de 1564, (Paris, France: Abbaville Imprimerie F. Paillart, 1936), 57.
4 "Tamquam vac Ecclesia et adstatus calamitose plebs": A. Coville, La Traite, 125.
be institutional reform by the head of its members. The demand for personal reform must, argued Clamanges, come through suffering, purgation and the imitation of Christ.\(^5\) In Clamanges’ eyes, the Catholic Church was infallible only when led by the Holy Spirit.

In his second *Treatise*, which he wrote between 1423 and 1426, Clamanges re-iterated the major points of his *Treatise on the Ruin of the Church*. The true victim of the Schism and the ruin of the Catholic Church was Benoit XIII, whom Clamanges regarded with total esteem.\(^6\) This pope, according to him, was the most virtuous of all the popes appointed in Avignon and was the only true pope. Besides exemplifying Benoit XIII’s greatness in the second *Treatise*, Clamanges insisted on the necessity of understanding the revelations of the Prophets, especially those of Isaiah. He stated modestly that it is not always to the most learned that God confides his secrets, but many times only “to the most humble among us.”\(^7\) It was Clamanges’ position that the “Church must humble itself before it can be rebuilt.”\(^8\) He was convinced that all the evils he saw at Avignon had arisen as a result of the Schism.

Nicolas de Clamanges wrote both *Treatises* with the intention of convincing Catholic leaders to return to prayer, fasts, and processions. By asking for God’s forgiveness and returning to the Church’s humble beginnings, he believed its leaders could bring an end to the Schism and corruption. The *Treatises* were not meant for the common people, but for the Church leaders and theologians to discuss. There is good reason to think that they found an audience: Jean Gerson, the advisor to the Council of Constance (1414-1418), used the *Treatise on the Ruin of the*

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6 “Sanctus ille et Benedictus pontifex, cujus simile non dico pontificem, sed nec hominem mundo vidi...Vir sanctuc Dei et orthopontifex celestique jampridem facta revelation certissimus Christi vicarious Benedictus XIII, nostril nubilosi temoris lurna et decus singular”: A. Coville, *Le Traite*, 98.
Church as a forceful weapon to convince the Council to close the Avignon Papacy and to end the moral decay brought on by the Schism.  

Nearly 166 years after the Great Schism, another conflict between the leaders of the Catholic Church and the French crown had arisen. This conflict emerged as a result of the rise of a Protestant threat and the anxiety among French Catholics about the crown’s apparent willingness to tolerate Protestants. Displeased with the French crown’s actions to the Protestant threat, many hard-line French Catholic nobles formed alliances with the papacy in Rome behind the crown’s back. This alliance led to the bitter struggle between the French crown and the papacy in Rome. Continually head-butting one another, the French crown and the papacy each created opposing systems of book censorship in 1563 in order to stop the flow of Protestant books into France from Geneva. These competing institutes of censorship reflect political agendas of each arguing side and as they sought to outmaneuver the other. Interestingly this struggle also helps explain why the 1564 translations of Clamanges’ Treatise emerged in the form that it did.

Almost as soon as the French Protestant leader John Calvin (1509-1564) found refuge in the Protestant city Geneva, he began organizing a dissenting movement that posed a serious threat to the French crown. Calvin had gone into hiding for fear of persecution back home in France after being labeled as a heretic for openly criticizing Catholic doctrines and rejected the authority of the pope and the Church institution itself. From Geneva, Calvin very quickly helped organize a national religious movement, which led to the first Protestant Church being founded.

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9 The Council of Constance was an ecumenical council considered valid by the Roman Catholic Church. Its main purpose was to end the papal schism which had resulted from the Avignon Papacy: Phillip Schaff, History of the Christian Church: The Sixth Period 1294-1577, (Dallas, Texas: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1998), 78.
in Parish in 1559. This movement threatened not only Catholic dominance in France, but soon threatened the authority of the king as well. The first serious political threat that these French Protestants, or Huguenots, posed to the French crown was the Amboise Conspiracy in March 1560. Huguenots had plotted to kidnap the young French King, Francois II and members of the noble Guise family. Somehow the conspiracy was leaked and hundreds of Huguenots were executed in response. Yet what was clear after 1560 was that the conflict between the French Catholics and the Protestants was growing and rapidly becoming more violent. This failed plot increased the tense atmosphere between the Catholics and the Protestants.

Following the Amboise Conspiracy, the Queen Mother Catherine de Medici had come to the conclusion that the only way to stop an all-out war from ensuing between the Catholics and Protestants was to keep the growing population of angry French Protestants from rioting. Catherine had become regent in 1560, after the sudden death of her son Francois II, because her second son Charles IX was too young to rule. Worried about the French Catholic’s building hostility towards Protestants, Catherine de Medici appointed a moderate chancellor, Michel de L’Hopital, to help her urge a number of measures that granted concessions to the increasingly militant Huguenots.

Catherine thought the best way through this crisis was to negotiate a compromise between the two parties. To this end, in 1561, she called the Colloquy at Poissy. The aim of this colloquy was to find common ground between the Catholics and Protestants of France, which she thought would ease the tensions. But the gulf between the two parties was too wide to be breeched. The heads of the Catholic party in the colloquy continuously attempted to frustrate any

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form of negotiation, viewing a compromise with heretics without Pope Pius IV’s blessing as a
defiance of the pope’s ecclesiastical authority. The failure of the colloquy only further estranged
the two religions. By the end of the year, many in France feared the outbreak of all-out war.

After the assembly at Poissy broke up, Catherine de Medici decided the only way to
prevent war was to create a form of religious tolerance towards Protestants. In January, 1562, the
French crown issued the Edict of Saint-Germain. The new law allowed Protestants to practice
their worship in public outside of towns or privately inside their own homes. Catherine de
Medici hoped that the edict might be successful because it did not threaten the privileged
position of the Catholic Church in France, but still recognized the existence of the Protestant
faith. The Edict of Saint-Germain failed after many discontented hard-line Catholic nobles who
were unwilling to accept even limited tolerance for heretics decided to take matters into their
own hands. Peace between the Catholics and Huguenots lasted only three months before Catholic
nobles, led by the Duke of Guise, massacred several Huguenot worshippers in the French city of
Vassy in March of 1562. This massacre ultimately provoked the first war in the French Wars of
Religion, which began in 1562.13 In response to the bloodshed, Protestants started to seize towns
and killed many Catholics in the process. Fearing that war might drag on, Catherine de Medici
agreed to sign a truce. In 1563, she ordered the Edict of Amboise, which restored peace to France
by again guaranteeing the Huguenots religious privileges and freedoms. The edict also allowed
open and unregulated Huguenot services in the private households of nobles. The Peace of
Amboise guaranteed freedom of conscience, but regulated the rights of worship by social
status.14

13 From 1562 to 1598 there was a total of eight wars in France between the Protestants and the Catholics.
14 R.J. Knecht, The Rise and Fall, 317.
When the Parliament of Paris refused to ratify this new edict, the Queen Mother had Charles IX’s majority declared in August 1563, to counter constitutional opposition in the Parlement of Paris. Parlement had resisted the Edict’s provisions by refusing to register the royal crown’s treaty. The Parlement of Paris was able to achieve this act because in the previous year the Catholic majority had expelled many of the institution’s Huguenot members. Once in power, though, the young king demanded that the Edict of Amboise be registered. This fragile peace was in effect from 1563 to 1566. After 1566, many French Catholic noble families – including the prominent Guise family – abandoned the royal court and refused to return even when Catherine de Medici asked them.

To many French Catholics, the royal edicts and truces of the crown undermined the king’s duty to preserve the Catholic religion, which indicated that anyone who opposed the traditional religion be destroyed. Since the start of the House of Valois’ royal rule in 1328, the king had proclaimed the royal responsibility to support the Catholic Church. By agreeing to tolerate Protestants, many hard-line Catholics were displeased with the actions that the French crown was taking to solve the struggle between the Huguenots and Catholics. The noble House of Guise – leaders among the Catholic extremists – formed an alliance with Pope Pius IV and V and decided to take matters into their own hands.

Members of the House of Guise not only held high positions in the French government, but also developed close ties with Rome. Before the reign of Charles IX in 1562, the Duke of Guise was in control of a majority of seats in the Parlement of Paris and was an influential noble family to the royal crown. Before the first war of the French Wars of Religion, Francis, Duke of Guise, helped provoke the Huguenot massacre at Vassy and was later assassinated by bitter Huguenots. Angered at the loss of a family member and the loss of influential power in the

government, Cardinal of Lorriane – who was also a member of the Guise family – visited Rome in 1563 to secure Pope Pius IV’s assistance for the political ambitions of the Guise family and for support against the growing number of heretics in France.

Pope Pius IV, like the Guise, was deeply disappointed by the French government. He harshly criticized Charles IX’s new religious policies, standing by the belief that the king had no right to pardon convicted heretics.\(^{16}\) Between 1563 and 1564, the pope summoned seven French royals, including Charles IX’s future wife, to Rome to answer a heresy charge. Catherine de Medici opposed this immediately, telling the Pope he had crossed the line of royal privileges. Pius IV didn’t stop here though. He even tried to convince the Queen Mother to dismiss her chancellor from his office, by accusing L’Hopital of “not acting in a good Catholic faith.”\(^{17}\) This was because L’Hopital was behind enforcing many of the edicts of tolerance towards Protestants.

When these tactics failed to work, Pope Pius IV and the Cardinal of Lorraine decided to challenge the crown’s edicts of religious tolerance through religious decrees created by the leading Catholic Church clergy at the Council of Trent, the general council of the Catholic Church that was holding its final set of meetings between 1559 and 1564. First organized in 1545 by Pope Paul III, the Council of Trent was one of the Roman Catholic Church’s most important councils. About 255 members attended each session in Trent to develop, among other matters, a response to Protestantism and to issue numerous reform decrees. Members during the reign of Pope Pius IV included two cardinals, three patriarchs, twenty-five archbishops, 168 bishops, and four papal legates. Nearly two-thirds of the membership was Italian. The purposes of the council were to issue condemnations on heretics, especially those who were Protestant, and to clarify

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Church teachings on a number of disputed or unresolved points that had emerged since the beginning of the Reformation.\footnote{18} 

In 1562, Pius IV prepared a list of forbidden books for the Council of Trent and revised the Church's sacraments, Scriptures, and duties of the clergy. Many of the books found on this list were heretical publications that were flowing into Catholic-dominant cities from Geneva. To help enforce the list of forbidden books, the leader of the French representatives, the Cardinal of Lorraine, and Pius IV outlined in a papal bull a system of papal censorship, the goal of which was to prevent the publication and distribution of Protestant books. On December 4, 1563, Pope Pius IV presented the papal bull "The Ten Rules Concerning Prohibited Books", to the council. Religious books that were to be printed, sold, or distributed to the public in France had to be first examined and approved by the Faculty of Theology at the University of Paris, the Sorbonne.\footnote{19} 

Comprised of bishops, inquisitors, and vicars, the Faculty of Theology had the right to visit all French printing presses whenever they wished. Not only were heretical authors to be punished, but the printers, book sellers, and anyone who was found to possess a book not approved by the Catholic Church could also be severely punished.\footnote{20} 

Shortly after the creation of this papal bull, a list of books issued with a papal imprimatur was announced. The imprimatur offered the Roman Catholic Church's official declaration that a particular book was free from error. A book with a papal imprimatur, therefore, was acceptable for faithful French Catholics to read. Every book had to be thoroughly checked and approved by the Faculty of Theology. An imprimatur could then be granted by the bishop of the appropriate

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diocese in France. Ultimately, this papal bull stated that no religious works could be printed without first being examined by the Faculty of Theology and being approved by the members. 21

The leaders of the Catholic Church were not the only ones concerned with the censorship of new heretical books suddenly flooding into the cities. In January 1561, King Charles IX issued an official complaint, demanding that the flow of Protestant books being sent from Geneva to France be halted. The king’s complaint was ultimately triggered by the conspiracy of Amboise, during which books allegedly coming into France explicitly defended the capture of the French king. 22 To the crown, the printing of Protestant books thus provided an inexpensive but extremely dangerous means of achieving mass circulation for heretical and traitorous ideas.

To expand royal censorship, Charles IX issued an edict in 1563 that forbade the printing of any book that did not bear the royal permission sealed by the royal chancellor, Michael L’Hopital. 23 The terms of this edict were reinforced with the help of a primitive copyright form known as the “privilege” to block the publication of books that were undesirable in the eyes of the crown. This “privilege” allowed a printer permission to print specified books for a certain number of years. Permissions to print certain books were only obtained after a careful examination of the book by the “faculties of theology or medicine”, otherwise known as the Sorbonne at the University of Paris, for works of law or history. 24 After receiving a recommendation, L’Hopital would place the Great Seal on the book.

It is interesting to note that both the Catholic Church and the French crown had the Sorbonne as the judge for their censorship systems. Though both systems appealed to the same body of theologians to judge orthodoxy, the final authority over whether a particular book could

23 Luc Racaut, Hatred in Print, 10.
legally be published lay not with the Sorbonne, but with either the king or the pope. Leaders in Paris and Rome therefore retained the prerogative to either accept or reject the Sorbonne’s recommendation on reviewed books.

Taking this into consideration, the French crown censorship system could grant one book a “privilege,” while the Faculty of Theology requested that the same text be banned or burned, and could disregard the recommendations from the Sorbonne. For example, the Protestants’ hatred for the hard-line Catholic Guise family was voiced in numerous pamphlets. Many pamphlets were printed with the royal approved “privilege” containing the following statement: “Cardinal de Lorraine uses the royal edicts to disseminate treacherous lies.”25 Another example is the pamphlet written by Francois Hotman, known as the Letter to the Tiger of France. Published in 1560, this pamphlet expressed Hotman’s discontented feelings towards Cardinal Lorraine. This book was published after receiving the Great Seal from the French crown but was banned by the Sorbonne shortly after being published.

In theory, the crown could also use its powers of censorship against disaffected Catholics who disapproved of the royal policy of conciliation. This helps explain the crown’s translation of Clamanges’ first Treatise over 150 years after it was written. The purpose of Clamanges’ original Treatise had been to prevent the downfall of the Catholic Church. Nicolas de Clamanges had argued in his Treatise that reformation was possible in the Church and that an all-out battle among the populace and between the crown and papacy was not required to achieve this end. Ironically, the ongoing battle among the populace and between the crown and papacy is exactly what happened during the French Wars of Religion as the Catholic Church moved towards the idea of reformation.

25 Luc Racaut, Hatred in Print, 72.
Implicitly, Pope Pius IV and members of the Council of Trent agreed that the Church needed reforming when they decided in 1543 to outline their new agenda. Pope Pius IV spent eight sessions of the Council of Trent between 1543 and 1564 passing “decrees concerning reform.” All of these decrees passed, on topics ranging from the sacrifice of the mass, to the sacrament of order, from the sacrament of matrimony, to the veneration and relics of saints.\textsuperscript{26}

The ultimate principles of these reforms were to correct the problems of the past and to shift the focus of the attention of Church leaders solely to the future of the Catholic Church. By so doing, Pius IV hoped to stop the battling over histories and the past of the Catholic Church. If the Church did not shift the people’s focus from past to present, the papacy feared that Protestants might continue to emphasize the errors of the Church by digging up evidence from the past like those works written by Nicholas de Clamanges. What Pius IV and the leaders of the Church hadn’t planned on was that the French would use its separate system of royal censorship to help certain writings from the past surface and be translated for the common people to read.

Nicholas de Clamanges’ \textit{The Treatise on the Ruin of the Church} was translated from Latin to French in 1564 by the French crown for two reasons. First, Charles IX had a personal vendetta with long dead Avignon Pope Benoit XIII. Benoit XIII, had, after all, publicly challenged the authority of Charles IX’s ancestor Charles VI and had even openly ridiculed the former king. Second, on a political level Clamanges’ \textit{Treatise} offered leverage in the crown’s struggle against the papacy and hard-line Catholics in the religious crisis engulfing France in the early 1560s, by reinforcing the moral decline of the Church and implicitly presented the French crown as the head of the French Catholic Church. Though the \textit{Treatise} offered the king a powerful tool in struggles against the Church, translating Clamanges’ \textit{Treatise} also presented an

\textsuperscript{26} Reverend H.J. Schroeder, \textit{Canons and Decrees}, 130 – 259.
unintended consequence. From the perspective of Charles IX’s Catholic adversaries, was that it might permit Protestants to arm themselves with the translated writings from the Great Schism, which they might use to point out the lewdness of the Catholic Clergy, or claim that the Catholic Mass was a defilement of what was truly sacred.

Clamanges’ *Treatise* clearly reinforced a message that the Catholic Church was in decay. In the context of the French Wars of Religion the crown had a political reason to reinforce this message. Left out of the translation, however, were the accounts relating to Pope Benoît XIII and the crown’s reactions to this Pope. This omission can be explained by analyzing the nine surviving printed manuscripts which contain *The Treatise on the Ruin of the Church*. The nine manuscripts, all of which are presently conserved in the Bibliotheques Nationales of France, are numbered accordingly to help distinguish one from another and each contains over two hundred numbered folios. Of these nine manuscripts, this research will specifically focus on the seven sixteenth-century edition manuscripts that are the most reliable: No. 347, No. 411, No. 3625, No. 3128, No. 1652, No. 3884, and No. 374.

While seven manuscripts are useful in understanding Charles IX’s reasons for translating certain passages of Clamanges’ *Treatise* -- two manuscripts, No. 2490 and No. 633, are not usable by historians today. Examination of manuscript No. 2490’s folios, which supposedly contain “all of the treatises and letters of Nicholas de Clamanges,” reveals that the *Treatise* is missing entirely. Manuscript No. 633 has been tampered with and entire folios are missing – only a few random pages of Clamanges’ *Treatise* have survived. Since the translations of the *Treatise* are missing or are incomplete in these two manuscripts, it is impossible to evaluate them with the other seven.

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Before examining the content of the remaining seven manuscripts, it is important to note the differences between and the errors made in each. For instance, manuscripts No. 347 and No. 411 date Clamanges’ *Treatise* to the year 1437, which oddly enough is the year of the secretary’s death. Both manuscripts also attribute Clamanges’ works to Jean Gerson (1363 – 1429). Jean Gerson was the chancellor of the University of Paris and was one of the most prominent theologians at the Council of Constance. The Council of Constance was called by King Sigismund to end the Great Schism that had resulted from the Avignon Papacy. This mistake is understandable, since Jean Gerson used Nicolas de Clamanges’ first *Treatise* during a meeting with the Council of Constance (1414 – 1418) in the beginning of the fifteenth century to sway the opinions of the Council’s members. This compilation of Clamanges’ translated *Treatises* contains letters written during the sixteenth century by Charles IX asking that the document be revised. 28

Manuscript No. 1652 contains hundreds of folios, including works by St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine. Placed between the two authors’ works are Clamanges’ letters and *Treatise*. The text for the *Treatise* contains no chapter divisions or explanations for the lack of these divisions. Manuscript No. 3884, on the other hand, is filled with the letters and works of the early Italian humanist Petrarch. 29 Found in the middle of Petrarch’s works is Clamanges’ *Treatise*, though no credit is given to the work’s original author. The title is missing, proper chapter divisions are omitted, and the manuscript was signed and dated: “Finit liber quartus inventivarum Francisci Petrarche. Anno 1474 aprilis die 8.” 30 Manuscript No. 374 has the

28 “...Une belle lettre debordante de la ruine de l’Eglise, mais on, tout en demandant au pape ce qu’il faut faire, il témoigne surtout de son embarrass et de son apprehension”: A. Coville, *La Troite*, 208.

29 Francesco Petrarch was an Italian poet and humanist born in 1304 and died in 1374. According to this manuscript, Petrarch would have had to write Clamanges’ *Treatise* one hundred years after his death.

Treatise begin in folio 208 with only minor variations in the text, though with no chapter divisions.

In manuscript No. 3625, which was translated from Latin, the Treatise is sandwiched in between letters written by Clamanges and has been edited. It is divided into chapters, subjectively chosen by the scribe, which cannot be found in the original text. The translation of the Treatise repeats a majority of the passages but at least three have been removed. In the margins of manuscript No. 3625 is the note that it was copied from the Latin manuscript No. 3128.

The most valuable of the seven manuscripts is No. 3128, which appears to be the most accurate and complete. Besides being the best of the surviving Treatise translations, there are still errors present in the writing – such as is its date and missing passages. On the back of folio 277, the text claims that Clamanges wrote his Treatise “in the year of our Lord 1448.”31 This is obviously a mistake, since Clamanges died in Paris eleven years earlier in 1437. This manuscript originally belonged to Friar Egidius Bidau of Cambrone, for whom the manuscript was copied from the original.32 Upon closer examination of this manuscript, notes made by the copier in the margins suggest that many passages were indeed “forgotten.”

Despite all of these differences between these manuscripts, when they are compared together it becomes apparent that three key passages in each of the seven were left out entirely in the later translation. When examined individually, nothing too out of the ordinary stands out about what isn’t translated. But when compared, each manuscript shows a unique way of dividing the Treatise into chapters. A. Coville, an historian who compiled both the Latin and

French manuscripts for publication in 1936, notes in his introduction that in the original text there are three important passages that have suddenly disappeared in the translations of 1564.\textsuperscript{33} The original \textit{Treatise} is divided into 46 chapters, but in each translated \textit{Treatise} the total number of chapters or divisions has been changed to 43 – which makes the omissions even more obvious.

These three missing chapters provide accounts of Charles VI’s personal conflict with Pope Benoit XIII during the Great Schism. Chapters 39, 42, and 45 are missing in each of the seven examples of \textit{Treatises} as it was translated in 1564. These chapters not only contain reports on the moral decay of the Catholic Church during the Great Schism, which are found in all of the remaining 43 chapters, but they all state Pope Benoit XIII by name.

Each of the three missing chapters tells of a particular event involving the pope and the king. It is in chapter 39 that Clamanges notes that there are still “a few men of God, worthy of being so called, of note, Pope Benoit XIII and Pierre d’Ailly.”\textsuperscript{34} Pierre d’Ailly was a French theologian who studied in Paris at the college of Navarre and obtained his bachelor degree of theology in 1372. After Pierre d’Ailly became part of the faculty of the University of Paris in 1381, the faculty of the university decreed the best way to end the Great Schism was to create a general council. In the presence of the Duke of Anjou and the rest of the King’s council, Pierre d’Ailly supported this effort. When the government of Paris rejected this proposal, the French theologian took part in defending the doctrines of the university and the Catholic Church, and

\textsuperscript{33}"Il importe surtout de signaler dans ce texte primitive ce sont les trios importants passages qu’il est seul a donner et qui ont disparu par la suite. Le premier est au chapitre 39. Nicolas de Clamanges reconnait qu’il y a encore quelques bons ministres de l’Eglise…" A. Coville, \textit{Le Traite}, 30-31.

\textsuperscript{34}"La premiere de ces suppressions fait disparaire le passage on Nicolas de Clamanges, reconnait qu’il y a encore de belles ames dans l’Eglise, et ou il cite uniquement Pierre d’Ailly et Beniot XIII…Il souffrit de graves avaries pour n’avoir point voulu abandonner la cause du pape d’Avignon": A. Coville, \textit{Le Traite}, 45.
petitioning for the canonization of certain French clergy leaders in the name of the king. His success was recognized by Charles VI, who made Pierre d’Ailly chancellor of Notre-Dame and the king’s personal almoner and confessor.

When Pope Benoit XIII succeeded Clement VII in 1394, Pierre d’Ailly was asked by the king to congratulate the new supreme pontiff. The crown’s and the chancellor’s support of the new pope during the Great Schism infuriated theologians at the University of Paris. Members of the university became suspicious of Pierre d’Ailly’s true intentions when he was promoted by Benoit XIII as Bishop of Le Puy in 1395. In response to the new promotion, Pierre d’Ailly was banned from the University’s assemblies.

Shortly after, the faculty members of the University of Paris threatened to withdraw obedience from Pope Benoit XIII unless he stepped down and allowed a new pope to succeed him. In 1403, King Charles VI sent Pierre d’Ailly to Avignon to convince the pope to submit to France’s demands. Instead, the bishop merely provided Pope Benoit XIII with friendly advice and returned to Paris unsuccessful. Angering the members of the University of Paris with his obvious support of Benoit XIII, Pierre d’Ailly retreated to his church in Cambrai in 1408. Submitting to the demands of the French populace, Charles VI and the Parlement of Paris ordered the arrest of Pierre d’Ailly.

Clamanges was in the same position as Pierre d’Ailly, being a faculty member of the University of Paris and a devout follower of Pope Benoit XIII, except that Pierre d’Ailly had an open alliance with the French king. It had been the act of deceiving Charles VI and the members of the University of Paris during the Great Schism that had caused the removal of Pierre

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d’Ailly’s name, along with Benoit XIII’s, in chapter 39. Instead of containing three paragraphs in chapter 39 that discuss d’Ailly and Benoit XIII as in the original, the 1564 translations only have a long paragraph which actually originally belonged in chapter 40.

In chapter 42, Clamanges had gone into detail on the series of unfortunate events that befell Benoit XIII while the Pope was held captive in the Palace of the Popes by mercenaries. In 1398, these mercenaries had been paid by the French crown to sack Avignon and to threaten Benoit XIII until he stepped down. For three months the attackers tried to conquer the pope’s palace through all means: ruse, violence and even fire. When this proved unsuccessful, the fortress was besieged by gangs of mercenaries. Clamanges had written two long paragraphs in this chapter, which span over four pages in his Treatise, while the 1564 translations only contain one long paragraph that actually originally was a part of chapter 43 and spans only two pages.

The last chapter missing from the 1564 manuscripts is Chapter 45; this passage amounted to Clamanges’ personal tribute to Pope Benoit XIII. It detailed the final harsh trials the pope faced while staying in the Palace of the Popes in Avignon. In this chapter, Clamanges had expressed the wishes Pope Benoit XIII had shared with him just before the pope made his escape after four and a half years of being held hostage in his own home. It had been at the urging of the Pope before the evacuation of the Palace that Clamanges had written The Treatise on the Ruin of the Church. In the 1564 translated manuscripts either chapter 44 or 46 replaced chapter 45 completely.

38 “La suppression la plus longue a porte sur la fin du chapitre 42. On a ver que Clamanges y avait amerement deplore les infortunres de Benoit XIII et sa captivite dans le Palais pontifical et adresse’ toute une prosopopee a l’Eglise de France:: A. Coville, La Traite, 46.
39 “Enfin le troisieme passage inedit du texte primitive oeuvre le chapitre 45...Mais il parait bien s’etre contente’ d’ecrire a Benoit XIII une belle letter debordante de la ruine de l’Eglise, mais on, tout en demandant au pape ce qu’il faut faire, il temoigne surtout de son embarrass et de son apprehension”: A. Coville, La Traite, 208.
40 Manuscripts No. 1652, No. 374, No. 3625, and No. 3128 use chapter 44 to replace the missing chapter 45. Manuscripts No. 347, No. 411, and No. 3884 use chapter 46 to replace the missing chapter 45.
The remaining chapters, which were translated in all of the seven surviving manuscripts, offer the personal account of what Clamanges viewed as sins the Catholic Church committed in Avignon and suggests what was needed to reunify the Church. In the 43 translated chapters, Clamanges had argued that the clergy’s minds were prostituted, and that they embraced a life of luxury, wealth and private vices. With the possession of wealth came pride, ambition, and greed. The clergy were given to brawling, drinking, playing dice and fornication. The nunneries were not sanctuaries of God, but had become resorts of unchaste and wanton youth fulfilling their passions.\(^{41}\) Not one out of one hundred clergymen followed their calling, but instead they divided their time between idleness and sensual pleasure.\(^{42}\) To save the Catholic Church, Clamanges’ argument was that a simple return to prayer, fasting, procession, and pastoral care would carry the day.

Knowing what was and wasn’t translated suggests why the French crown was behind both the publication and the abridgement of Clamanges’ *Treatise*. The statements that remain in the translated *Treatises* correspond with the crown’s political incentive of promoting a message of decay in the Catholic Church. While keeping the rest of the *Treatise* intact to provide proof of the Catholic Church’s terrible past, the crown omitted chapters 39, 42, and 45 due to the king’s own personal vendetta against Pope Benoit XIII. In order to prevent Clamanges’ *Treatise* from being used as a propagandistic tool against the French crown, passages that mentioned the crown’s reactions to Pope Benoit XIII’s actions were omitted from the translations.

The omission of the three chapters can also be explained by personal concerns on the part of the king. Descended from the same bloodline as Charles VI, the House of Valois, King Charles IX did not want to publish text that showed his ancestor being ridiculed and challenged

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\(^{42}\) “Les ecclésiastiques ont divisé leur temps entre l’oisiveté et le plaisir sensual”: A. Coville, *La Traite*, 81.
by the pope. Those who had deceived the king during the Great Schism, such as chancellor Pierre d'Ailly and Benoit XIII, and thwarted the efforts of the French crown were removed, along with Benoit XIII's name. Charles IX also erased Clamanges' first-hand accounts of Pope Benoit XIII's besiegement in Avignon, because it was Charles VI who had hired the German mercenaries to attack the Pope's Palace in Avignon.

As mentioned earlier, Pope Benoit XIII had often been at odds with King Charles VI. The pope blamed the king for corrupting and indeed purchasing the favors of the clergy to gain control of the French Catholic clergy. Taking this one step further, Benoit XIII had even recommended the king’s excommunication from the Catholic Church. Charles VI had retaliated by ordering the German mercenaries to force the Pope to leave the Palace of the Popes by any means necessary. After three months of trying, Charles VI finally ordered a siege on the pope’s residence at Avignon. Towards the end of the four and a half year-long siege, the palace had been evacuated, but the hired mercenaries prevented the Pope from escaping by blocking all exits. By removing Clamanges' detailed descriptions of the king’s ordered siege against the pope from the translations, the members of the royal crown hoped to eliminate any historical memory of Pope Benoit XIII.

Within the context of the French Wars of Religion, Catholic leaders may well have viewed the 1564 translation of Clamanges' *Treatise on the Ruin of the Church* as a threat. It was not, however, the removal of Pope Benoit XIII that would have posed a problem for Catholic leaders. In fact, removing Benoit XIII’s name only helped the Church – for Catholic leaders were ashamed of the actions Benoit XIII took during the Great Schism. Leaders of the Catholic Church during the sixteenth century had no interest in remembering the anti-pope Benoit XIII,
particularly because of his refusal to step down as pope to help reunify the Church. To Church officials, this anti-pope was an embarrassment for refusing to decline his position and let a new pope succeed.

This long tradition of sweeping Benoit XIII under the rug by Catholic Church leaders can still be seen in present day. In the Papal Palace at Avignon, Pope Benoit XIII’s portrait was not included amongst the other popes’ portraits. A brochure sold to tourists at the former Palace of the Popes neglects to refer to Benoit XIII at all, even though he stayed at the palace longer than any other pope.\(^43\) It wasn’t until after 1998 did the portrait of the so-called “Anti-Pope” Benoit XIII appear with the rest of the paintings at the palace.

From the vantage point of sixteenth-century Church leaders the message of decay that was translated in the Treatise also posed no threat. After all, Pope Pius IV had already tacitly accepted the fact that the Church had committed wrongs by introducing reforms at the Council of Trent. Rather, from the perspective of Catholic officials, the real threat of the translation of this Treatise was the danger that it might fall into the hands of the Protestants.

Though Pope Pius IV and representatives at the Council of Trent accepted the fact that the Church had sinned during the Great Schism, they still upheld the view that the Catholic Church was the primary authority regarding Mass, sacred images, and the sacraments. Protestants, on the other hand, viewed the Catholic Church as an abomination and held that they no longer had any authority. By arming themselves with the translations of writings from the past, Protestants could challenge the Church’s moral standings. Clamanges’ freshly translated Treatise might have provided Protestants further historical evidence to support their views. The battle of the Reformation had, in other words, become a battle over controlling the past.

The historical memory of Pope Benoit XIII, which was revised by translators in the 1560s, is a specific example of how historical memory is subject to continued re-interpretation. In this case, the messy and complicated historical picture of Pope Benoit XIII during the Great Schism in France was edited into a simple story of a corrupt church that needed to be reformed.
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