**Cola di Rienzo, Magician and Prophet**

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Cola di Rienzo’s principal biographer, the *Anonimo Romano*, narrates that at Cola’s death in 1354 a magic mirror of shining steel was found among his personal effects – an object in which the great political figure had reputedly confined a familiar spirit.  The *Anonimo* was not alone in associating Cola di Rienzo, who had sought to restore Rome to its ancient glories, with magic.  In the mountains of Abruzzo, where Cola he once taken refuge with the heretical fraticelli, a longstanding tradition held that he was a magician. This reputation is comprehensible, given his propensity for prophesy, especially of the millenarian kind (he was very close to heretical Spiritual Franciscan currents), as well as his magical-symbolic interpretation of the world and his habitual interventions in it according to magical principles, especially the creative force of words.