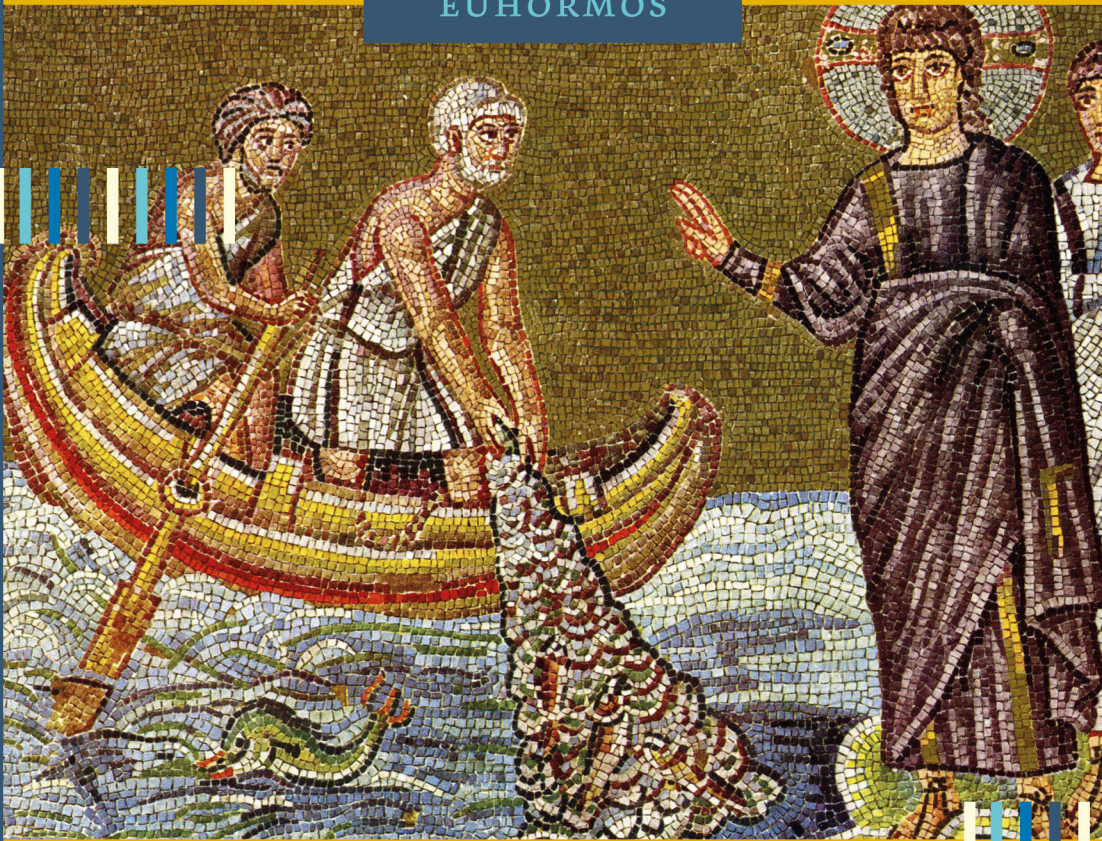


THE EARLY RECEPTION AND APPROPRIATION OF THE APOSTLE PETER (60–800 CE)

The Anchors of the Fisherman

EUHORMOS



Edited by Roald Dijkstra

BRILL

The Early Reception and Appropriation of the Apostle Peter (60–800 CE)

Euhormos

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Foreword

EUHORMOS is an international book series intended for monographs and collective volumes on Greco-Roman antiquity. Specifically, we welcome for publication manuscripts related to the concept of ‘anchoring innovation’ by classical scholars of all disciplines from all over the world. Books in this series will be published as much as possible in Open Access. EUHORMOS is one of the results financed by the Dutch so-called Gravitation Grant (2017), awarded to a consortium of scholars from OIKOS, the National Research School in Classical Studies. See <https://www.ru.nl/oikos/anchoring-innovation>, where we also list earlier results from this research program.

The ancient world saw many examples of change and innovations. The unique accessibility of materials from and about this period in the ancient Mediterranean frequently makes it possible to analyze successful and unsuccessful ‘anchoring’ of change: the various ways in which ‘the new’ could (or could not) be connected to and embedded in what was already deemed familiar. ‘New’ and ‘old’ are mostly not used as objective labels, but also a matter of the perception, framing, and valuation by relevant social groups and actors. ‘The new’ is not restricted to the technical or scientific domains, but can also include the ‘new information’ imparted by speakers through linguistic anchoring strategies; innovations in literature and the other arts; political, social, cultural, legal, military, or economic innovation; and new developments in material culture.

The name ‘Euhormos’ itself is well-anchored. It is the Homeric term for a harbor ‘in which the anchoring is good’, although the careful reader will notice that danger is never far away. This dynamic nature of ‘anchoring’ and the risks involved in it are embraced by our research team as part of the title. For now though we will focus on its auspicious aspect, since we are looking forward to affording ‘good anchorage’ to studies contributing to a better understanding of ‘anchoring innovation’ in Greco-Roman Antiquity.

Ineke Sluiter

Academic Director

Leiden, August 2019

On behalf of the Governing Board of the Anchoring Innovation Program

Preface

In fall 2014, Dr Dorine van Espelo and I were given the opportunity to share a postdoctoral research project on the early papacy at Radboud University, under supervision of Professor Olivier Hekster. We were part of the pilot project of the *Anchoring Innovation* research group, part of OIKOS (National Research School in Classical Studies), which gathered scholars on classical antiquity from all over the Netherlands and from all fields. We worked on widely diverging topics, but we united in our use of the same approach, that of *Anchoring Innovation*. Thanks to a generous grant from the Dutch government, *Anchoring* will continue for years to come.

Our project, *Popes and expressions of Roman power: Anchoring religious politics in periods of change (200–800 CE)*, surpassed the traditional boundaries of antiquity. It aimed at bringing together the too often separated fields of (late) antique and (early) medieval studies, thus reflecting the close collaboration of the chairs in ancient and medieval history at Radboud University.

Thanks to the *Academy Colloquia* grant of the KNAW (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences) we had the opportunity to close our project under perfect circumstances with an international conference followed by a PhD masterclass in the beautiful Trippenhuys in Amsterdam: *Peter, Popes and Politics. Expressions of power in the late antique and early mediaeval world*. We are very grateful to the KNAW and also to the additional sponsors: OIKOS Anchoring Innovation as well as the Institute for Historical, Literary and Cultural Studies and the History Department from Radboud University.

The proceedings of the masterclass, *Anchoring Sanctity*, can be retrieved from the Anchoring Innovation website. The proceedings of the conference are now published in this book, in the open access series of the Anchoring Innovation project. I am very proud, and grateful to the Anchoring board and editors of *Euhormos*, that this volume is accepted as opening volume of this series, although its topic and time scope are not traditionally included in the field of classical studies. I see this volume, therefore, as a symbol of the interdisciplinary and open-minded spirit which has characterised OIKOS and the Anchoring Innovation project from the start.

I would like to thank all participants of the conference for their contribution to an intellectually challenging, but also convivial atmosphere. Most speakers have reworked their paper to a written article published in this book; Els Rose and Carl Springer were willing to add their expertise after the conference and made the volume even more diverse than it already was. I am grateful to Myrthe Spitzen for helping me with the indices. Thanks also go to Olivier

Hekster, who supported Dorine and me whenever it was needed in making our postdoc project a success. Dorine made a career switch after the conference and it was not possible to do the editorial process together. However, this book is very much the product of our shared project. I am very grateful to her for our pleasant collaboration, the good company and her introducing me into the world of medieval studies.

Roald Dijkstra

Nijmegen, September 2019

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Abbreviations

- AE* *L'Année épigraphique*, 1888–. M. Corbier ed.
- AA SS* Bollandus, J. & G. Henschius, et al. 1643–. *Acta Sanctorum* 67 vols (Antwerpen/ Brussel: various publishers, now Société des Bollandistes.
- ANRW* Temporini, H./ Haase, W. (ed.). 1972–. *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter & Co.
- BHL* Socii Bollandiani and H. Fros (ed.). 1898–1986. *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*. 4 volumes. Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes.
- BHG* Socii Bollandiani. 1895. *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*. Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes.
- CBCR* Krautheimer, R. et al. 1937–1977. *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae*, 5 volumes. Città del Vaticano: Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana.
- CLE* Buecheler, F. 1895–1897. *Carmina Latina Epigraphica* I–II. Leipzig: Teubner. Conveniently found at <http://mizar.unive.it/mqdq/public/> or <http://www.manfredclaus.de/>.
- CC* *Corpus Christianorum*. Text series. Turnhout: Brepols.
- ICUR* De Rossi, G. B. & A. Solvagni. 1922–. *Inscriptiones christianae urbis Romae septimo saeculo antiquiores / Nova series*. Roma: Pontificium Institutum Archaeologiae Christianae. Online version available at <http://www.edb.uniba.it/>.
- ILCU* Diehl, E. 1925–1931. *Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres* I–III. Berlin: Weidmannus.
- ILS* Dessau, H. 1892–1916. *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*. Berlin: Weidmannus. Online at [archive.org](http://www.archive.org), inscriptions can also be found at <http://www.manfredclaus.de/>.
- LCL* Henderson, J. (ed.). Loeb Classical Library. Text series, bilingual. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- LP* Duchesne, L. 1886. *Le Liber pontificalis. Texte, introduction et commentaire*. Paris: Ernest Thorin. Two volumes. 1955 Reprinted with new third volume (Paris: Éditions Boccard).
- LTUR* Steinby, E. M. 1993–2000. *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*. Roma: Quasar.
- PL* Migne, J. P. 1862–1865. *Patrologia cursus completus. Series Latina*. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique.
- RAC* Klauser, L. et alii. (ed.). 1941–. *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum: Sachwörterbuch zur Auseinandersetzung des Christentums mit der antiken Welt*. Bonn: Franz-Joseph-Dölger Institut.

- Rep. I* Deichmann, F. W. 1967. *Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage. Erster Band. Rom und Ostia*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag.
- Rep. II* Dresken-Weiland, J. 1998. *Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage. Band II. Italien mit einem Nachtrag: Rom und Ostia, Dalmatien, Museen der Welt*. Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern.
- Rep. III* Christern-Briesenick, B. 2003. *Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage. Band III. Frankreich, Algerien, Tunesien*. Mainz am Rhein: Verlag Philipp von Zabern.
- SC* Sources Chrétiennes. Text series, bilingual. Paris: Cerf.
- TLL* *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae (TLL) Online*. (2009). Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter. <http://www.degruyter.com/view/db/tll>.

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Annewies van den Hoek

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PART 1

Anchoring the Apostle: the Volume and Its Concept



Peter, Popes, Politics and More: the Apostle as Anchor

Roald Dijkstra

*Et iam tenemus obsides
fidissimos huius spei,
hic nempe iam regnant duo
apostolorum principes;
alter uocator gentium;
alter, cathedram possidens
primam, recludit creditas
aeternitatis ianuas.*

Already we hold most trusty sureties for this hope, for already there reign here the two chiefs of the apostles, the one he who called the Gentiles, while the other who occupies the foremost chair opens the gates of eternity which were committed to his keeping.

Prudentius, *Peristephanon* 2.457–64¹



These verses are exclaimed by Rome's greatest “native” saint Laurentius in a poem by Prudentius. By doing so, the Roman saint testifies to the prominence of two Christians saints even more powerful and authoritative than himself: Peter and Paul. Prudentius makes Laurentius praise the apostle Peter in a most honourable way by referring to his extraordinary power: he holds the primary see and controls the doors of heaven.² Both on earth and in the hereafter, Peter

-
- 1 I would like to thank Dr Erik Hermans for carefully reading my text. Thanks also go to all the contributors to the volume for sharing their thoughts on Peter, both in oral and written form. Text and translation of Prudentius: Thomson (1961 [1953]), slightly adapted.
 - 2 See Dijkstra (2018) for Peter as the gatekeeper of heaven in early Christian poetry (and art). For more on *Peristephanon* 2 see Humphries in this volume; more on poetical petrine traditions is found in the contribution by Springer.

is in charge. At the same time, Peter's authority in Rome (and that of Peter's self-proclaimed successors) is enforced by its connection to the Roman local saint Laurentius. These verses are just one example out of many that confirm Peter's prominent position within the religious, political and cultural Christian landscape of late antiquity.

Ever since the first century, Christians have engaged heated discussions about the nature and implications of Peter's special position in the Church (based mainly on Matt. 16.16–19). The historicity of the life of Peter as described in the books of the New Testament and some influential apocryphal texts (mainly the *Acts of Peter*) was hardly ever doubted in the period of our concern (1st–9th century CE). This is the reason why the reception of the apostle is much more important for the history of Christianity than the “historical Peter”.³ The figure of Peter, i.e. the constructed image of a man equal to one of the apostles with this name, mentioned in the gospels but also in many other writings, images and traditions in (late) antiquity and the early middle ages, is the main subject of this book.⁴ In this contribution, the role of Peter as an anchor is explained, contextualised, and related to all the different other contributions this volume consists of.

1 Anchoring the Apostle

Nautical metaphors are not uncommon in the New Testament: Jesus' call of Peter and his brother Andrew – proclaiming to make them fishers of men (*Matt.* 4.19) – is among the most famous examples of this biblical feature. It is another nautical, but not religiously charged, metaphor that is used as a starting point of the investigations towards the figure of Peter in this book: that of Anchoring Innovation. This concept, claiming that innovations have higher chances of success when they are successfully embedded – or anchored – in something known and familiar, has proven to be particularly insightful when applied to the role of Peter in the dynamics of late antiquity and the early middle ages.⁵

3 See for the historical Peter e.g. Hengel (2007²) or Wolter (2015). Clearly, there were dissenting voices that doubted the standard account of Peter's biography, but these critical opinions are only fragmentarily preserved. They were anchored in a “wrong” perception of the apostle, i.e. a version of his life that did not become accepted as legitimate by a majority of Christians and/or the clergy of the Catholic Church, cf. Burnet' contribution to this volume.

4 It is the explicit aim of this volume to surpass the artificial boundaries between (late) antiquity and the (early) middle ages. Nevertheless, the terms are used throughout this book as any other terms would be arbitrary as well.

5 See e.g. Dijkstra and Van Espelo (2017 and 2017a). Other examples of the use of the concept of Anchoring innovation related to power and sanctity can be found in this volume (see especially the contribution by Hekster), but also in the proceedings of the *Anchoring Sanctity*

Shortly after the fisherman from Galilee had left his fishing boat, he became an anchor for many people across the Roman Empire. Traditions around Peter were so strong (i.e. anchored firmly), that already soon after his death people adhered to them and successfully employed them for diverging purposes. As a result, persons from all social strata and backgrounds could have recourse to the same figure: the apostle Peter, martyred in Rome. At the same time, firmly grounded traditions about Peter also restricted his use as an anchor in future times, in a process that Olivier Hekster has characterized as the “constraints of tradition”.⁶ Not everything was possible. One example is the place of Peter’s martyrdom. Whereas Peter’s stay (and subsequent martyrdom) in Rome has aroused much debate in modern scholarship, not even the slightest doubt about Peter’s Roman martyrdom seems to have existed in antiquity.⁷ The tradition was accepted very early and apparently accepted without discussion. No city other than Rome could claim the blood of Peter (and Paul), as Damasus would famously do in his epigram discussed below. The extraordinary prestige of Rome explains why the story of Peter’s Roman martyrdom is first found in Eastern texts or why Western liturgical sources outside Rome do not put less emphasis on Peter’s Romanness (see Rose’s contribution to this volume). It was the uncontested nature of this important tradition of Peter that created an anchor stable enough to become the stronghold of a great variety of other traditions, political claims, architectural accomplishments, visual representations, liturgical developments and literary responses. This was not surprising, since references to great men from the past were abundant both in the Greco-Roman and Jewish tradition. Peter himself was anchored in Moses, the leader of the Jewish people, in early Christian art (see e.g. Dresken-Weiland’s contribution). Moreover, Peter also was first, in several respects: the first man among his fellow disciples of Christ, the first bishop of Rome and the first known martyr in the city. This primacy made him an even more attractive anchor. The following paper by Hekster will further explain some of the anchoring mechanisms at work in late antiquity.

Despite the extraordinary role of the apostle Peter in political, cultural and religious history, modern publications only occasionally approach the figure of the apostle from an interdisciplinary perspective.⁸ This book aims to

masterclass at the Anchoring Innovation website: www.ru.nl/oikos/anchoring-innovation/. See also Hekster (2017) and, for the concept of Anchoring, Sluiter (2017) and Raimondi Cominesi (2019) 24–40.

6 Hekster (2004).

7 See for the modern debate e.g. Zwierlein (2010²) and responses to it, such as Heid (2011).

8 Recent exceptions are the entry for ‘Petrus’ in the RAC (cf. also the entry ‘Paulus’) and the diverse contributions in Bond and Hurtado (2015). Useful are also the proceedings of the 29th ‘Incontro di studiosi dell’antichità cristiana’: s.n. (2001). Popular publications are more

contribute to a better understanding of the role of the figure of Peter with special focus on innovations that found their legitimisation in the apostle.

1.1 *Political Dimensions*

The political dimensions of Peter, both within the church and in power structures outside the religious realm, has (deservedly) attracted much attention in modern scholarship.⁹ Roman emperors had long tried to acquire and sustain their power with recourse to religious figures, both divine and human. The continuation of this practice into Christian times – and related to the cult of Peter – is exemplified by the edict known as *Cunctos populos* from 380, in which the emperors Gratian, Valentinian and Theodosius declare that all the people submitted to them should adhere to the religion that ‘the divine apostle Peter has proclaimed and transmitted to the Romans’.¹⁰ Central to Roman politics was ‘the importance of religious embeddedness in conceiving and constructing positions of power, and the importance of relevant anchors in a society dominated by tradition’, as Olivier Hekster states in his contribution.¹¹ It is important to keep this in mind and to realise that not only power was anchored in the apostle Peter but the method of anchoring itself was a well-known practice of which the roots lay in a distant past.

Peter was a stable anchor, but could certainly be lifted, if necessary: as new traditions around Peter developed, they became part of the generally accepted image of the apostle and could themselves be used as anchors to introduce new traditions and practices, both as part of cult practices or in other domains of society. The case of the title *pontifex maximus* and its appropriation by the emperor Augustus and later, in a different form, by the Roman bishops (before early modern popes started to make use of the original *pontifex maximus* title again) shows the continuation of Anchoring processes from pre-Christian to Christian times. It serves as Hekster’s first case-study.¹² His second case-study of anchoring processes is the city of Constantinople. Here, the emperor

numerous in this respect, e.g. in Dutch: Dijkstra and Van Espelo (2019) and Meijer (2016). Old Saint Peter’s has recently been extensively discussed in McKitterick, Osborne, Richardson and Story (2014).

9 See e.g. Zimmermann and Michalsky (2017), Moorhead (2015) and Demakopoulos (2013).
 10 *C.Th.* 16.1.2: *Cunctos populos, quos clementiae nostrae regit temperamentum, in tali uoluntate religione uersari, quam diuinum Petrum apostolum tradidisse Romanis religio usque ad nunc ab ipso insinuata declarat quamque pontificem Damasum sequi claret et Petrum Alexandriae episcopum uirum apostolicae sanctitatis.* See Delmaire, Mommsen and Rougé (2005) 114–5.

11 Pages 28–29

12 See also the contribution by Curran, discussed below.

Constantine is the central figure.¹³ The first Christian emperor soon acquired a status among Christians that no other Roman emperor was to exceed.¹⁴ However, Constantine was soon also closely linked to the figure of Peter. Together with Paul, the rock of the church would have appeared to the emperor in a dream and (indirectly) effected his cure and conversion.¹⁵ This apostolic link was promoted most evocatively at the end of his reign, when Constantine was presented as a 13th apostle. He received his burial among the cenotaphs of the other apostles in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople.¹⁶ This event also points to the fact that anchoring in the figure of Peter also meant anchoring in the apostolic office. Hekster's two imperial case-studies thus may be read not only as an introduction to the section *Peter and Power*, but also as a methodological introduction to the volume as a whole, since he connects the concept of Anchoring Innovation and its use in the study of politics to Roman imperial power. As such, he outlines the context in which the figure of Peter could become an anchor in the first place.

2 Anchoring Authority: from the East to Rome

The city of Rome is the geographical environment that is most inextricably linked to the apostle Peter.¹⁷ This particular feature of the reception of Peter also explains the close links between him and the representatives of secular and ecclesiastical power. The focus of this volume reflects the predilection for the most ardent apostle of the gospels and the size and number of textual and material testimonies that remain from the western part of the (former) Roman Empire. Whereas there is a clear link between Paul and Rome in the New Testament, in the case of Peter this link is entirely absent. Paul's connection to Rome may have contributed to the emergence of a supposed connection of Peter to that city. The tendency of seeing the two apostles as a pair ("*concordia apostolorum*") certainly contributed to the universal acceptance of Rome's claim to Peter.¹⁸ Another factor was, of course, the prestige of the city of Rome

13 Cf. the contributions by Curran and Friedrichs in this volume. For links between Constantine and Augustus see e.g. Burgersdijk (2016).

14 See e.g. Linder (1975), Wortley (2004) and, most recently, Leithart in Sicienski (2017). Further references in Hekster's contribution.

15 Liverani (2008).

16 Eus. *V.C.* 4.60.

17 See e.g. the contributions by Dresken-Weiland, Friedrichs, Humphries, Rose, and Thacker.

18 Cf. Huskinson (1982), Pietri (1961), and Van den Hoek's contribution to this volume. For a critique of the use of the label *Concordia apostolorum* for images of Peter and Paul together, see the paper by Dresken-Weiland.

itself. As the political and cultural capital city of the empire it “deserved” the presence of the greatest disciple among the twelve as much as Peter “deserved” a place in Rome. At the same time, no other city was able to connect itself to the apostle, or if it did so (Antioch, see below), it was without denying the extraordinarily well-anchored event of Peter’s death in Rome.

The veneration of Peter’s grave or place of martyrdom is retraceable in the archaeological record before the publication of any (known) text that unequivocally deals with his Roman martyrdom. It was the humble start of a cult for the apostle which would soon eclipse most other Christian cults. The location at the Vatican, however, famously mentioned in Eusebius’ *Church History* (3.25) in his reference to the trophies of the apostles Peter and Paul, offered a small meeting place for about forty people only. We have no clue as to the precise social and psychological factors that were at stake when the *aedicula* for Peter was built, which is still situated under the main altar of the basilica for the apostle. Equally intangible remain the function and precise history of the spot *ad catacumbas* along the Via Appia, where Peter and Paul were venerated together.¹⁹

This link has probably never been expressed more concisely and explicitly than by Damasus (bishop of Rome, 366–384) in his famous poem on Peter and Paul that was established in the current San Sebastiano church, at the same location:²⁰ ‘The East sent its apostles, a fact we freely acknowledge. (...) Rome has earned the right to claim them as their own citizens.’²¹ Damasus made explicit what was commonly accepted for a long time already, even in his days: Peter belonged to Rome. Consequently, since Peter belonged to Rome, Roman people in particular could use him as an anchor for numerous purposes. Still, Peter’s origins in the Greek world could not and were not denied.

The largest part of Peter’s life, the part also that is described in the canonical writings of the Bible that were for the most part accepted as such in an early stage, took place in Galilee. This fact resulted in an impressive reception of the figure of Peter in the region. Régis Burnet explores the image of Peter among different Christian groups as it is preserved in several texts that would soon be set aside as apocryphal by influential church leaders. They offer a glimpse

19 See especially the contribution by Van den Hoek, also those by Friedrichs and Thacker.

20 Leo I’s discussion of Peter (and Paul) is another famous example of papal reference to the main apostles: see the contributions by Humphries and Thacker.

21 Ep. 20,3 and 6. For text, commentary and translation see Trout (2015) 121–2 or Aste (2014) 83–4. See also Friedrichs’ contribution to this volume. For the biography of Damasus, see also Reutter (2009). On his epigrams cf. Grig (2017), Dijkstra (2016), 124–9 on epigram 20, and Ságghy (2008), among many others.

of the varied and original early reception of the apostle, before Peter's life became "canonised".

The early and universal acceptance of Peter as a Roman martyr appears clearly from the fact that the Greek *Acts of Peter*, the most ancient source providing the main details of the story of his martyrdom including his crucifixion upside down, were probably written in the East (maybe in Syria), at the end of the second century.²² The text as we have it now probably is a written composition of many other, longer stories about the apostle that once circulated. Many other apocryphal texts mention Peter, but it is the attractive narrative character and its setting in Rome which gave the *Acts of Peter* the success and widespread popularity for which they are known. Naturally, the focus should not be too much on this specific text, since most stories about Peter were spread orally, but the text certainly contributed to the link between Rome and the apostle. Markus Bockmuehl offers an analysis of this important text, as well as of another influential apocryphal text on Peter: the *Gospel of Peter* (second half of the second century). He approaches the texts with a keen eye on the portrayal of Peter's relation to Jewish and Roman power. The Passion of Christ is central to his reading of the *Gospel of Peter*, as well as the complex relationship between the author and the apostle in whose name he wrote. In the *Acts of Peter* it is his combat with Simon the Magician (see below) and the account of Peter's martyrdom as an act of resistance to Roman power that are brought to the fore.

2.1 *Casting an Anchor in Stone*

With the quotation from Damasus' epigram a specific category of texts was mentioned, which had a large impact on society in late antiquity in particular: epigraphical writings. The so-called Roman 'epigraphic habit' waned after the early imperial period, but made a comeback in the late third and fourth centuries, when Christians increasingly discovered the potential of inscribed texts for the promotion of their faith (and themselves).²³ Damasus was not unique in his epigraphical endeavours. Christian buildings were adorned with inscriptions from the very start, as is clear from the famous inscription by Constantine in old Saint Peter's.²⁴ The emperor of course continued a long-standing practice of Roman emperors erecting inscriptions on and in public

22 For a recent analysis of the apocryphal traditions around Peter see Burnet (2014), 220–39 in particular. See also the author's contribution to this volume and that of Bockmuehl and Thacker discussed below.

23 See e.g. Trout (2012), who has published extensively on late Roman epigraphy, and Carletti (2008), also Bolle, Machado, and Witschel (2017).

24 ICUR 2.4092, see e.g. Liverani (2007a; 2014).

buildings. Soon, Christian bishops acknowledged the possibilities of inscriptions too. Whereas the epigrams by Damasus have received a lot of attention, many other inscriptions still remain somewhat in the shadow of literary texts, despite their historical and literary significance. For Thomas Noble, by contrast, the innovative use of epigraphy by Damasus is only the start of an investigation of the epigraphical habit of the Roman episcopate up to Sergius I (687–701), which includes thirty-two churches with non-fragmentary, securely datable papal inscriptions. Naturally, some well-known churches devoted to Peter, notably old St Peter's and San Pietro in Vincoli, are among them. A full discussion of inscriptions cannot but include various other aspects of episcopal responsibilities, such as liturgical duties, architectural endeavours and visual representation (also discussed elsewhere in this volume, cf. the contributions by Friedrichs, Löx, Rose, and Thacker in particular). The use of inscriptions was yet another means by which the popes put their mark on buildings and locations across the city of Rome. References to Peter were part of this effective practice.

The mentioning of offices is an important feature of inscriptions in antiquity. As mentioned earlier, Hekster discusses this case briefly and enlightens its imperial context. John Curran traces the origins of the episcopal office in order to fully understand the meaning of the peculiar papal appropriation of the title of *pontifex maximus*. It is the process of this appropriation rather than the finalizing act itself that deserves our interest. Moreover, Curran rightly points to the ambiguous benefits of Constantine's interventions in the Church. The case of the title *pontifex maximus* shows the various ways in which the concept of Anchoring can be applied. Whereas Hekster sees the use of the title by the popes primarily anchored in its imperial and traditional connotations, Curran emphasises the importance of a passage in the historiographical work of Zosimus in which the papal use of the title is anchored.

3 Verbal and Visual Images of the Apostle and the Quest for a Petrine Map of Rome

Given the intimate link between the apostle Peter's mostly praised biographical events and the city of Rome, it might not come as a surprise that it was in the capital of the Roman Empire that a set of petrine images was developed, from the middle of the third century onwards.²⁵ Most of the images have a

²⁵ Nevertheless, the first known public image of Peter in a narrative context was made in Dura Europos (Syria). Peter was depicted in a Christian house church dated to the middle

strong symbolic meaning related to the funerary context in which the vast majority of them is found. This symbolic meaning can often easily be connected to well-known texts: the arrest of Peter (as the non-violent depiction of his martyrdom described in the *Acts of Peter*) or (the prediction of) his denial of Christ and subsequent rehabilitation (*Matt.* 26.31–35; 69–75, and parallel passages; *John* 21).

Jutta Dresken-Weiland reveals how these images of Peter were anchored in the visual traditions of Rome. The city appears to be extremely important and closely connected to petrine iconography. The primacy of Peter itself and the apostle's possession of the keys of heaven were not a popular subject among the craftsmen and commissioners of early Christian art, but Peter's outstanding position was reflected by a large and hardly paralleled variety of images that referred to different stages of his life. One of the most popular and most intriguing of those images was of course the visualisation of his death in Rome. Markus Löß focuses on this particular image and on its much discussed non-violent nature in particular. Martyrdom was one of the more curious and heavily criticised aspects of early Christianity, which even aroused discussions in its own circles. Images of martyrdom certainly had to be anchored in Rome's visual tradition in order to support their acceptance. The column of Marcus Aurelius is one example of a monumental structure showing images of violence. At the same time, the depiction of Peter's crucifixion was necessarily related to other depictions of Christian martyrdom and to that of Christ in particular, as Löß shows.

Among other scenes, Dresken-Weiland (see also the contributions by Thacker and Löß) discusses Peter's water miracle and the apostle's fight with Simon the Magician. Both are closely related to specific spots in the Roman landscape (see Thacker's contribution in particular) and to the Forum Romanum specifically. As such, they are exemplary for a broader development in late antique and early mediaeval cult of Peter, in which the topography of the city gradually became more closely linked to the memory of Peter. Moreover, these images reveal that the variety of stories in which the apostle played an important role was probably greater than is suggested by the repertoire now known to us. The water miracle scene can function as a case in point: it is an often repeated image, originating in the fourth century, that is part of the so-called petrine cycle, together with the two other widely distributed

of the third century, see Korol (2011) 1622–43. The oldest image of Peter that is known is a charcoal graffito of his head (now barely visible) found during the excavations at the Vatican necropolis, see Liverani and Spinola (2010) 328.

scenes mentioned above.²⁶ The scene shows an apostle who is recognisable as Peter in most cases, because of his curly hair and round beard. With a staff, this figure touches a vertical stream of water falling from a rock. Some men (mostly two) kneel and drink from the water. There are characterised by their *pileus pannonicus*, a headgear that signals them as soldiers.²⁷ The staff or *virga* in the hands of Peter is a clear sign of the miraculous nature that is inherent to the scene.²⁸ An intriguing aspect of this image is the fact that visual sources antedate textual testimonies to this miracle. The *Martyrium beati Petri apostoli a Lino conscriptum* (fifth century) and the *Passio sanctorum martyrum Processi et Martiniani* (sixth century) both post-date the fourth-century images of the water miracle. They tell a story that is clearly related to the well-known image, although they may reflect a different tradition.²⁹ Interestingly, the first written source is pretended to be written by Linus, the traditional successor of Peter as bishop of Rome.³⁰ The second source is most elaborate on the story. It appears that a topographical spot is added to it, which suggests a connection to the Mamertine prison, close to the Forum Romanum:

Tempore quo Simon magus crepuit intus et impiissimus Nero tradidit beatissimos apostolos Christi Petrum et Paulum Paulino uiro clarissimo magistrariae potestatis, eodem tempore Paulinus mancipavit beatissimos apostolos in custodia Mamertini. (...)

Erant autem custodientes eosdem beatissimos apostolos milites multi, inter quo erant duo magistriani melloprincipes, Processus et Martinianus. (...) At vero beatissimi apostoli oraverunt in eadem custodia: cumque orassent, illico beatus Petrus apostolus facto signo crucis in monte Tarpeio, in custodia Mamertini, eadem hora emanaverunt aquae de monte. Tunc baptizati sunt beati Processus et Martinianus magistriani melloprincipes a beato Petro apostolo. Hoc dum vidissent cuncti qui in custodia erant, prostraverunt se ad pedes beati Petri apostoli et baptizati sunt promiscui sexus et aetatis numero quadraginta septem.³¹

26 See e.g. Dijkstra (2016) 346–62, 346–51 in particular, and the contribution by Dresken-Weiland with figure 1.

27 Ubl (1976).

28 Recently on the *virga* as a non-magic motif from classical iconography see Jastrzębowska (2015). To my view, the more down-to-earth provenance of the *virga* does not alter its significance as a magical instrument in early Christian iconography.

29 I will go into more detail in a forthcoming publication provisionally entitled *Lapôtre Pierre et ses miracles de la source*.

30 For more information on the text see e.g. Schneemelcher (1999⁶) 392.

31 *Passio sanctorum martyrum Processi et Martiniani* 1, 3 and 9. Text and discussion in Franchi De' Cavalieri (1953).

It was in the days when Simon the magician burst open from inside and the heathenish Nero delivered Peter and Paul, the most blessed apostles of Christ, to Paulinus, an excellent man with magisterial power. At that time, Paulinus handed the most blessed apostles over to the *custodia Mamertini*. (...) Many soldiers were guarding those most blessed apostles, two *magistriani melloprincipes*, Processus and Martinianus, being among them. (...) And the most blessed apostles have prayed in that prison. And when they had prayed, the apostle Peter made there the sign of the cross in the Tarpeian rock, inside the *custodia Mamertini*, and at the same time streams of water sprung from the rock. Then the blessed *magistriani melloprincipes* Processus and Martinianus were baptised by the blessed apostle Peter. When the other prisoners had seen this, they prostrated at the blessed apostle Peter's feet and they were baptised, different in sex and age; 47 in number.

There are some notable differences between the story and the images that I just described. Most revealing regarding the development of the petrine cult, however, might be the mentioning of specific local Roman spots where this all happened, even if it is impossible to reconcile Roman topography and the designations used in the story entirely.³² I have signalled out this scene because it might help us to consider the many ways in which stories with Peter as the main protagonist could arise. We do not have any certainty about the original order of the development of the story. On the basis of the material now known to us, images of a new petrine miracle (clearly anchored in a similar miracle performed by Moses in the desert and mainly shown in the catacombs) arose in the beginning of the fourth century and were connected to a story about the saints Processus and Martinianus, for whom a church was erected that existed already in the fourth century.³³ This led to a rather extensive story about the two saints, in which Peter played an important role. As was common, Paul was also connected to the story, since he and Peter were supposed to have suffered martyrdom in the same period (if not on exactly the same day). As the tradition grew, the need for a demonstrable place within the city of Rome was felt and the story was connected to the famous prison of ancient Rome: the Mamertine prison. But the order of this development might have been different as well. It is the reciprocal influence of texts, visual traditions and topographical aspects that is most interesting.

32 See, among others, LTUR s.v. Custodia Mamertini.

33 Verrando (1981), 275 in particular.

Peter thus came to be connected to the heart of the ancient city. His widely popular struggle with Simon the magician (mentioned in the *passio* of Processus and Martinianus cited above; cf. also Dresken-Weiland's and Thacker's contribution) was thought later on to have taken place at the Forum too. In this way, the centre of the classical city was claimed for the Christian case, not only by the construction of churches but also by the composition of stories. Peter himself became anchored in the heart of the city. Although his resting place could be found at the Vatican, at the other side of the Tiber, he now entered the topographical key sites of Rome's glorious history. It was here that monuments for the heroes of the pre-Christian past could be found that had been famous for a long time, such as the *Niger lapis* or the statue of Romulus, Remus and the she-wolf.³⁴

In this volume, Mark Humphries also mentions the hut of Romulus on the Palatine hill, in his inquiry into the clash between two visions of history: that of the traditional story of the actual foundation of the city by Romulus (and Remus) and the newly propagated metaphorical foundation of Christian Rome by Peter (and Paul). Whereas Christians sometimes struggled to define the right relation between the two apostles and their reciprocal authority (cf. Van den Hoek's contribution), the case of Rome's traditional founders was much more complicated: the one had killed the other. He even did so in the heart of the Roman city, on the Forum, as Orosius remarks.³⁵ Humphries signals the progressing influence of the story of the Christian foundation of Rome and the receding attraction of traditional foundation myths (at least among Christians) in the fourth and fifth centuries. At the same time, adaptations to the Roman landscape of commemoration reflected this shift of ideas.

Humphries' contribution testifies to the growing importance of poetry in late antiquity.³⁶ Already the first openly Christian poet Juvencus (*fl.* 330), starting the long tradition of Christian verse, paid more attention to Peter in his biblical epic than his biblical source text and poetical strategy required.³⁷ One of his later successors, in the fifth century, was the poet Sedulius. Carl Springer

34 For an excellent discussion of the way in which one could make use of these memorials to strengthen one's power, see Hunsucker (2018) on Maximian and Maxentius, also discussing the *Niger lapis* and statue. For possible locations of commemorative monuments on the Forum see Carandini, Carafa and Halavais (2017) Tab. 21. For the fight over Rome's topography between traditionalists and Christians, see e.g. Schmitzer (2012).

35 Orosius 2.4.4: *Primus illi (sc. Romulus) campus ad bellum forum urbis fuit, mixta simul externa ciuiliaque bella numquam defutura significans*. Text quoted by Humphries in this volume.

36 Cameron (2004).

37 See Dijkstra (2016), 89–95 in particular. Also Müller (2016) 39–61.

shows that the context in which his *Paschale carmen* was written was of eminent importance to a better understanding of the representation of Peter in the poem. Peter's role in the denial of Christ and its aftermath in John 21 (of which the visual expression is discussed extensively in the contribution by Dresken-Weiland) is taken as a case-study to show the poetic latitude which the poet granted himself in his versification of the canonical gospels. Sedulius' view on Peter cannot be separated from that of other poets (e.g. Prudentius: see above and the contribution by Humphries) and exegetes: it was anchored in widespread ideas about the figure of Peter in Christian culture.

Apart from poetry and iconography, the veneration of Peter in Rome also influenced its architectural outlook. The most conspicuous location for the cult of Peter was of course the Vatican, connected to his death. Kristina Friedrichs proposes a three-stage model of architectural appropriation and zooms in on the similarities and differences with the anchoring innovation concept in her analysis of architectural structures commemorating Peter at the Vatican and *ad catacumbas*.³⁸ Both places were created 'from below' and not controlled by any Christian authorities. From Constantine onwards, Peter became an anchor for different members of the Christian community. Naturally, he was not the only anchor. At the end of the fourth century, the apostle Paul became remarkably popular in Rome (cf. the contribution by Van den Hoek); the renewal of the San Paolo fuori le Mura church was only one eye-catching result of this popularity.³⁹ But Peter regained lost ground in the fifth century and St. Peter's became more and more important. During the strife for power between Symmachus and Laurentius, the prestigious image of the church for Peter was effectively used, testifying to the firm anchor that Peter had become.⁴⁰

As we have seen, the absence of geographically traceable petrine spots in the West that were legitimised by the narrative of the New Testament meant that people went out looking for (in particular) Roman places where God's work in the life of the apostle was still tangible. These places could be directly linked to the cult for the apostle, such as the Vatican and the location *ad catacumbas* along the Via Appia, and/or to events in the life of the apostle. In the fourth century, this practice flourished and led to more and more Petrine spots in Rome.⁴¹ The apostle functioned as an anchor for new ritual and liturgical

38 The location *ad catacumbas* is also central to the contribution by Van den Hoek.

39 Eastman (2011), Dassmann (2015a).

40 See e.g. Wirbelauer (1994) 415–6.

41 See for a topographical approach towards Peter's presence in the city e.g. Susman (1964) and Spera (1998), also Cecchelli (2000). Denzey Lewis (2018) points to the dangers implied by the modern phraseology about a "petrine map of Rome" when seen as a preconceived papal construct.

practices that stimulated also new stories that contributed to the existence of a full biography for the figure of the saint (see below).

The Christianisation of the Forum, in which the apostle Peter played a role, as signalled above, made it into a place that attracted ecclesiastical events of political nature.⁴² An example can be found in the eight century, when political turmoil broke out after the death of pope Paul I (757–767). While the pious Stephanus kept watch at the bed of the dead pope, a certain Constantine (!) occupied the papal see and was consecrated in St Peter's. After this *inaudita novitas* better known as Constantine II had been soon dismissed by the *primicerius* Christopher and his son Sergius, with the help of the Lombards, a certain Waldipert proclaimed the presbyter Philip pope. Or rather, the apostle Peter did, as the acclamation of Philip suggests: *Philippum papam sanctus Petrus elegit*. However, the new pope was soon brought back to his monastery (which was a blessing after all, when we compare his fate to that of other papal pretenders) by the aforementioned Christopher and Sergius. Then, finally, Stephanus, the third with this name, became bishop of Rome (768–772; *Liber Pontificalis* 96.11):

Sicque praefatus Christoforus primicerius alio die aggregans in Tribus fatis omnes sacerdotes ac primatus cleri et optimates militiae atque universum exercitum et cives honestos, omnisque populi Romani coetum, a magno usque ad parvum, pertractantes, pariter concordaverunt omnes una mente unoque consensu in persona praefati beatissimi Stephani; pergentesque in titulo beate Cecilie, in quo presbiter existens spiritalem debebat vitam, eum pontificem elegerunt.

Thus, on the next day, the aforementioned *primicerius* Christopher gathered all priests and first-rate clergy and noble men as well as the entire army and honourable citizens and an assembly of all the Roman people, old and young, for consultation at the Three Fates. Together they have all agreed unanimously, of one accord, for the person of the aforementioned most blessed Stephen. And proceeding to the church of blessed Cecilia, where he spent his time serving as a priest, they chose him as their pontiff.

42 See e.g. Kalas (1999); also Diefenbach (2007) and Muth (2012). The *Acts of Sylvester* were another important factor, see e.g. Pohlkamp (2007) 11: '(...) besiegelt der Anonymus der römischen Silvester-Akten mit seiner mythographischen Schlusserzählung die Neugründung der *Roma Christiana* zur Zeit Silvesters und Konstantins auf dem Forum Romanum als dem alten pagan-religiösen Zentrum der Stadt und des Erdkreises.'

Christopher, the man in charge at the time, chose to gather the people at the heart of the ancient city, on the Forum, next to the Curia (which had already been turned into the Sant'Adriano church in the year 630). Nearby, Paul I had built a church to commemorate the prayer of Peter and Paul to God resulting in their demonic competitor Simon the Magician to crash after his (initially successful!) attempt to fly. The prints of their knees were still visible in stone, according to the *Liber Pontificalis*.⁴³

From the conquest of Rome's old political centre it was only a small step to a remarkable political event, that took place in Peter's main church: the coronation of Charlemagne in St. Peter's. From a reconstruction of the events preceding Charlemagne's coronation appears clearly that it was a well-considered act that brought advantages to both pope and emperor, although the latter controlled the situation.⁴⁴ The event testifies to the popularity of the apostle also outside the city of Rome.⁴⁵ The emperor was acclaimed in front of the *confessio* of the apostle.⁴⁶

4 Creating the Apostle's Cult

Throughout the discussion of anchoring practices in the apostle, a legendary biography of Peter has gradually emerged. The need for an "official", written version of such a biography is understandable also given the growing importance of the cult and cult places for the apostle. We already saw the example of the *Acta Petri* mentioned above. However, Roman versions also emerged, such as those of Jerome and the compilers of the *Liber pontificalis*.

4.1 *A Biography for the Apostle*

All these places and memorials related to the apostle had to be connected to a (at least to some extent coherent) biography of Peter. At the same time, this biography was probably also built under influence of petrine locations, since no canonical text provided the essential information about Peter's life after his escape from prison in Jerusalem (*Acts* 12.3–19). Efforts were made to bring the

43 *LP* 95.6. A relic of this kind is still stored in the Santa Francesca Romana church near the Forum. The fight of Peter (and Paul) with Simon the Magician is one of the subjects of Eastman (2019) which, unfortunately, appeared too late to take into account in this volume, but testifies to the ongoing interest in the figure of Peter, his death, and his relationship to Paul.

44 See e.g. Collins (1998).

45 See e.g. De Blaauw (2018), 141 in particular, Favier (1999) 544.

46 *LP* 98.23–4.

essentials together in texts such as Jerome's *De viris illustribus* and of course in the *Liber Pontificalis* that was already cited above. Both texts start off with a (very short) biography of the apostle Peter. Although written in different times (end of the 4th versus first half of the 6th century respectively) and with different purposes, a brief comparison of the two texts may give an impression of the shifting attitudes towards and diverging interests in the apostolic figure of Peter. The texts are linked through the status of Jerome among Christians of the sixth century.⁴⁷ This status is apparent from a letter to Damasus fictitiously signed by the Church father, that precedes the biographies in the *Liber pontificalis*. The papal claim to primacy is made clear from the very beginning by Jerome, who asks Damasus to 'please sum up in orderly fashion all the events around your see from the principate of the blessed apostle Peter to your days'.⁴⁸

Both the *De viris illustribus* and the *Liber Pontificalis* start providing some biographical information about Peter's background. Essentially, this is the period in Peter's life before he entered Rome (birthplace, family, stay in Antiochia). In Jerome's work, Peter's coming to Rome is explicitly described: *ad expugnandum Simonem magum, Romam pergit* (he came to Rome in order to chase Simon the Magician). The *Liber Pontificalis* keeps it short and plain: *hic Petrus ingressus in urbe Roma*. This is different from the reference to Peter's arrival in Antiochia, which is absent as an event in its own right. Only the bare fact of his episcopate in that city is mentioned in both sources. Jerome immediately puts much weight on the way in which Peter died, upside down because of his humble character.⁴⁹ What follows is information about Peter's oeuvre, in which the greater emphasis on apocrypha by Jerome reflects the more pertinent discussion of canonicity in his days (and the ambiguous status of 2 *Peter*). As a document written by the papal chancellery, the anachronistic emphasis on the number of Peter's appointments to ecclesiastical offices in the *Liber Pontificalis* does not come as a surprise. Both sources close with the location of Peter's grave and mention the Vatican and the *Trionfale* area.⁵⁰ However, the *Liber Pontificalis* feels the need to emphasise the ancient roots of this area and mentions (once again) the link to Nero (i.c. his palace) and a temple of Apollo.

47 See for the context in which the *LP* was written and also the role of the figure of Jerome e.g. McKitterick (2009).

48 (...) *ut actus gestorum a beati Petri apostoli principatum usque ad vestra tempora, quae gesta sunt in sedem tuam, nobis per ordinem enarrare digneris*: *LP*, Duchesne (1886) 49 (restitution).

49 *A quo et adfixus cruci martyrio coronatus est capite ad terram verso et in sublime pedibus elevatis: asserens se indignum qui sic crucifigeretur, ut Dominus suus*. Text: Bernoulli (1968 [1895]).

50 See *Triumphalis territorium*, *LTUR* 5: 201–202 (Liverani).

Probably, this extra information indicates a desire to have the apostle surpass the symbols of Rome's pagan past as well as a lack of knowledge about ancient Roman topography in contrast with the living memory to what was there before old St Peter's was built at the time of Jerome. The temple of Apollo is most probably to be understood as a Phrygianum.⁵¹ In this final sentence, Peter's death by crucifixion is mentioned for the first time in the pontifical biography.

The great number of legends about the apostle, growing over time, notwithstanding, even in the sixth century it was the mere fact of Peter's death in Rome that was essential to the claims that were made to the apostle. The location of his grave still mattered, as did his relation to the prestigious past of ancient Rome, of which the remains impressed visitors and inhabitants alike even in the sixth century.⁵²

4.2 *Anchoring the Cult of Peter*

One difference between the two sources has not yet been mentioned: although Jerome provides most information on Peter's death, it is the *Liber pontificalis* that mentions the fact that he died together with Paul.⁵³ In her contribution Annewies van den Hoek delves into the intricacies of the reception of the close relationship between Rome's most important saintly figures. She shows how initial confusion in the (Greek) sources about Paul's possible Roman episcopate ultimately resulted in a widespread preference for the apostle Peter, although Paul's Roman connection is stronger in the most ancient sources.⁵⁴ Literary (canonical, apocryphal and patristic), epigraphical and visual testimonies are all included in her attempt to unravel the development of Peter's popularity over Paul. The different views on the apostle, which were already apparent from the alternative presentations of Peter investigated by Bockmuehl and Burnet, also come to the fore and remind us once again that the anchor that Peter was could only be used effectively when local culture and convictions were taken into account. Van den Hoek shows that Peter and Paul were considered as a pair from the very beginning of Christian cult, but also how many attempts were made to give the one preference over the other.

This is only one aspect of a cult for the apostle that pervaded all aspects of Roman society. Especially from the fourth century onwards, the figure of Peter became virtually omnipresent in the cultural landscape of Christians, in Rome in particular. Alan Thacker shows this development with a bird eyes

51 Liverani (1999) 31.

52 Cf. Diefenbach (2007).

53 *Hic martyrio cum Paulo coronatur*.

54 Cf. also Gahbauer (2001).

view perspective, discussing all important ways in which people came to know the apostle. Starting with some of the apocryphal texts – with a keen eye for the connection of Peter with Paul and the city of Rome – Thacker points to the iconographical, poetic and geographical developments in the petrine cult, focusing on the fourth and fifth century in particular. Thacker shows the general trends appearing from the development in a wide array of different media and practices.

Peter's presence in the cultural and social life of early Christian and mediæval society was not restricted to locations, biographies, images and Christian poetry in classical style. Naturally, Peter was invoked in many liturgical texts, and certainly not only in Rome, as Els Rose shows in her contribution. The importance of Peter's liturgical role is evident: after all, it was on liturgical feast days devoted to Peter, such as those commemorating the traditions around his chair (22 February), his martyrdom (29 June) and his chains (1 August), that people were remembered of the role of the apostle in a most explicit (and festive) way. Peter's denial again plays an important role, since the tears of repentance could symbolise a second baptism. The liturgical record inside and outside Rome (Gaul, Spain) turns out to show an un-equivocal, though not universal, preference for certain (Roman) events from Peter's life that are particularly popular in other fields too, such as his denial (in poetry and iconography; see Springer and Dresken-Weiland in particular), his combat with Simon Magus (see above; also Dresken-Weiland) and his death (Löx). As Rose puts it: 'The choice of sources that underlie the liturgical portrait of Peter shows that every effort was made to add to the innovative quality of Peter's cult, even more so outside Rome than in Rome itself'.⁵⁵

5 The Fisherman as Anchor

Many more examples of the importance of traditions around the figure of the apostle are discussed in this book, making it a truly interdisciplinary collection of papers. Each paper is related to several others, which makes an undisputed ordering almost impossible. The contributions are divided into three sections in the knowledge that other divisions could have worked too. Cross-references between contributions as well as between sections are added in order to present the many intersections more clearly to the reader.

Together the contributions offer a kaleidoscopic impression of the way in which Peter became an anchor for many communities, individuals, and institutions. They could anchor in the memory of the apostle: in a first period this was living memory, but soon it became the memory of a foregone period, that was transmitted orally, in written form and by other means. It was also possible to anchor in the first testimonies of that memory: the documents (supposedly) written by the apostle, buildings dedicated to him, memorials of events in which he played a role, rituals related to the apostle and literary, epigraphical and visual traditions that had been developed around him. The multi-layered “harbour” that has thus come into existence still plays an important role in the anchoring processes that are ongoing within and outside the Church of the present day. This collection of essays describes how the humble fisherman from Galilee has become an anchor for the entire Mediterranean region and beyond, till the present day.

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Ruling through Religion? Innovation and Tradition in Roman Imperial Representation

Olivier Hekster

The relation between men and gods was paramount in the Roman pagan world. Interactions between humans and the divine were the basis on which society was constructed. Where we have a tendency to differentiate between religion and politics, the Romans would not. Everything was potentially dependent on divine intervention. The absence of a single word for religion, was not caused by a lack of importance of the divine, but by its embeddedness in the Roman world.¹ This of course impacted on the way in which exercising Roman power was conceived. Throughout Roman history, divine support was an unalienable part of political supremacy. How that support was expressed was much more flexible. There were very specific cases, like Sulla's highly individual 'divine luck',² but also a more general sense that 'the gods' needed to be behind any action for it to be successful. Bibulus' attempts to invalidate Caesar's consular legislation by watching for omens, for instance, was neither ridiculous nor unfounded.³ If the gods did not agree, surely they would make this clear. Bibulus' apparent popularity suggests that many Romans agreed that Caesar threatened the balance between men and gods, the oft-mentioned *pax deorum*.⁴

To rule in Rome, one needed the gods on one's side. There is even an argument to be made that ruling implied some sort of divine status. As argued by Ittai Gradel over fifteen years ago, worship in Rome was given to placate those who were of importance for the Roman State, whether man or god. Having power implied divine status; divinity was relative. The question, in Gradel's

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- 1 The nearest term, *religio*, means firstly 'scrupulousness', secondly 'conscientiousness', and in third instance 'exactness'. All matters that are relevant to modern understanding of 'religion', but more or less tangentially. Only the fourth and fifth meaning, 'sanctity' and 'an object of worship', are firmly within our range of religious understanding. For the embeddedness of Roman religion, see especially Gasparini (2011) 260–99.
 - 2 On Sulla and the construction and perception of his divine luck, see Eckert (2016) 43–85.
 - 3 For Bibulus and other notions of 'sacred' obstruction in the Roman Republic, see De Libero (1992) 53–68.
 - 4 E.g. Scheid (2001) 25–6. For discussion, see still Linderski (1995) 608–25; 679.

words, was not one of 'zoology', but of gradation within one 'species'. Caesar received temple, priest and the title of *Divus Julius* from the senate. These showed his supreme status. Whether that made him 'a god in an absolute sense' may be disputed, but it certainly put his power in a superhuman perspective.⁵ Beings with clear superior power were rapidly placed in a divine context. This also applied to Roman emperors, many of whom became 'official' gods after their deaths, some of whom claimed divine status during their life, and all of whom claimed an important role in the organization of Roman religion. In the eyes of many Roman subjects the situation may have been straightforward. Roman emperors, at least in the perception of most of these subjects, held absolute power in the greatest empire of the Mediterranean world. They were either gods themselves or supported by the gods.

Even if Roman rulers held superior status, they were not entirely free in their actions. Regular assassinations showed that there were bounds that were only crossed at severe risks.⁶ On the other hand, some rulers acquired such (posthumous) standing, that their behavior became exemplary – making it attractive to explicitly follow in their footsteps. Roman emperors were dependent on support from the various groups that constituted the Roman empire, and acting like a popular ruler boosted chances of a successful reign. Since, moreover, Roman emperorship was effectively a dynastic affair, rulers had to relate to the actions of their ancestors.⁷ This notion of 'exemplarity' was prominent in Rome: behavior and actions of noteworthy men became examples for other men to imitate, and norms by which other men were judged.⁸ Divine examples were often even better than historical ones, and it is striking how often intended changes in style of emperorship were presented as forms of following in the footsteps of specific gods or heroes. Commodus presenting himself as the new incarnation of Hercules comes to mind, as does Nero's close association to Apollo.⁹

In general, precedent was important in Rome, with continuous emphasis on the so-called *mos maiorum* (ancestral custom). Indeed, changes were occasionally blocked by referring to their innovative nature. In a famous edict from 302 CE the emperors Diocletian and Maximian prohibited the 'new' religion of Manichaeism, by arguing that

5 Gradel (2002), esp. 26 and 72.

6 For a convenient overview, see Meijer (2004).

7 Hekster (2015) 320–1.

8 Roller (2004) 1–56; (2009) 214–30. See now Roller (2018).

9 Hekster (2002) 104–11, 117–29; Champlin (2003) 112–44.

... the immortal gods, by their providence, deemed it worthy to ordain and to arrange that the things which are good and true would be approved and established in an undiminished state by the counsel and handling of many good and outstanding and very wise men, things which it is evil to obstruct or to resist, and that the old religion should not be refuted by a new belief. For it is the greatest crime to retract those things that, being set up and defined by the ancients, hold and possess standing and precedent.¹⁰

Similar edicts were issued against upcoming Christianity, to an extent using the same arguments. To counter such criticisms, literary, architectural and religious innovations were often presented as a return to ancestral customs, in order to make them more acceptable to Roman society.¹¹

A good way of satisfying the mental framework which strongly emphasised a 'proper' ancestral way of doing things, was naming specific precedents. Pointing out that one followed actions of one of the exemplary figures in Roman history created a context in which behaviour became more acceptable.

This process can be usefully analysed by making use of the notion of 'anchoring'. This concept describes a subconscious phenomenon regarding the way in which people use cognitive footholds to adapt to new contexts. When confronted by something new, individuals start to think from (suggested) reference points or 'anchors', and then incrementally adjust their view by including additional information. These adjustments typically allow only limited distancing from the original anchor.¹² This gives the initial anchor enormous influence over later perceptions. For instance, the use of the term *princeps* for the first Roman emperor Augustus, triggered Republican precedents in the mind of his subjects. This allowed emperorship to be more easily formulated in terms of the ancestral customs, and allowed the new political landscape to be more easily entrenched in Roman mentality.¹³

This volume focuses on popes and Peter, not on Roman emperors and pagan religion. Still, the two points raised so far in this article – the importance of

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- 10 *Mosaicarum et Romanarum Legum Collatio* 15.3.3; translation Frakes (2012). The Diocletianic edicts against the Christians have not survived in their original forms, but can be reconstructed through the way they are described in ancient literature, noticeably the works of Eusebius.
- 11 See for an extended discussion on this point: Wallace-Hadrill (2008). Cf. Stark (2006) 1–30; Rives (2011) 265–80.
- 12 For the concept of anchoring, see Sluiter (2017) and <http://www.ru.nl/oikos/anchoring-innovation/>. For insufficient adjustment, see Tversky & Kahneman (1974) 1124–31; 1128.
- 13 Hekster (2017a) 47–60. Cf. Moatti (2011) 107–18.

religious embeddedness in conceiving and constructing positions of power, and the importance of relevant anchors in a society dominated by tradition – have direct relevance for Christianity as an upcoming religion, and for popes as increasingly defined leaders within that religion and in society as a whole. An obvious anchor for popes to use would turn out to be the figure of Peter – though there were many alternatives, amongst whom Roman emperors. The extent to which the figure of Peter functioned as an anchor, and the connotations that his name and role brought to mind with different groups of Roman society at different times, is an underlying question within this volume. Peter would turn out to be an important figure to relate to, though his connotations could shift between time and place. Some of these shifts and modes in which Peter was viewed are at the center of subsequent articles. To illustrate how the concept of anchoring can help us to more fully understand the underlying processes, this paper will put forward two case studies, which aim to illustrate the bandwidth within which the contributions to this volume move.

The first case sketches some relevant developments of the title *pontifex maximus*, the importance of which is evident for any work on Peter. It is discussed in more detail in John Curran's contribution to this volume. The second case focuses on the different ways in which the emperor Constantine was linked to 'his' city of Constantinople, particularly as founder of the city. The close symbolic link between emperor and city forms a parallel to the importance of the city of Rome for the cult of Peter and may help us conceptualizing the process of memorialization of Peter at Rome.

1 On the Road to Power: *Pontifex Maximus* as Anchor for Supreme Status

Roman religion did not have a central authority. At the same time, it was recognized that the *pontifices* were the most eminent of the major priestly colleges. They formally supervised the religious life of the Roman state, and all matters not specifically assigned to other priesthoods fell to them. They made sure that nothing was done that could risk the *pax deorum*. The word *pontifex* is often translated as 'bridge builder', but a more likely origin is from the Etruscan *pont* (way/road) making the pontifices 'makers of way'.¹⁴ Though the meaning of the name is disputed, the role of the pontifices as mediators towards the divine was clear.

14 The meaning remains disputed. For an overview of the etymology: Van Haepere (2002) 11–45; *TLL*, vol. X 1,2672, lin. 44–51, s.v. *pontifex*.

Some antiquarian Roman texts argue that originally the college was led by the *rex sacrorum*. Yet, from early on, the most prominent position was that of the *pontifex maximus*, the elected leader of the pontifices. His roles, especially in adjudicating religious behavior, are discussed in John Curran's contribution to this volume. He was almost certainly the most powerful of the Roman priests.¹⁵ Considering the above-mentioned embeddedness of Roman religion, the line between a 'religious' priest and 'political' magistrate was impossible to draw in Roman times. Becoming a priest meant occupying a position of influence. Unlike almost all other such positions of influence in the Roman world, *pontifex maximus* was a position for life. That made it an attractive function for those with ambition, as became clear when Julius Caesar effectively wagered his career on being elected to the position. As Caesar's biographer, perhaps apocryphally, wrote down:

Thinking on the enormous debt which he had thus contracted, he is said to have declared to his mother on the morning of his election, as she kissed him when he was starting for the polls, that he would never return except as *pontifex [maximus]*.¹⁶

By getting himself elected to the pontificate, Caesar gained a prominent position in Rome. Occupying a traditionally important office improved his standing in society.

The situation was somewhat different for Caesar's adopted son Octavian, the later emperor Augustus. After the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, Octavian had effectively gained sole power over the Empire. Unlike Caesar, he did not need a traditional office to rise to prominence. Instead, he needed to explain his power in terms that his subject could understand and accept. Caesar had ultimately be killed by being too openly monarchical. His adoptive son would not make the same mistake. Already before 31 BC, he had started to position himself and his actions within a traditional Roman framework. Religion played an important role in that respect. In 31 BC, for instance, the war against Cleopatra was declared through the newly installed *fetiales* priests. Other priesthoods were likewise restored and transformed in the following years, as were 'some of the ancient rites which had gradually fallen into disuse'. For this period, too, the emperor stated to have restored eighty-two temples which were in need of

15 Festus 198.29–200.4; Gellius, *NA* 10.15.21; Servius. *Aen.* 2.2; Beard, North & Price (1998) I, 55–9.

16 Suetonius, *Caesar* 13. Translation: Rolfe (LCL 38).

repair.¹⁷ Clearly, Augustus linked his power to divine support, as fitted a society so religiously embedded as Rome. In the same context, he also begun amassing positions within the four traditional priestly colleges, and emphasised these positions through, for instance, coinage.¹⁸

Augustus could not, however, claim the position of *pontifex maximus*. After Caesar's assassination, Lepidus had taken the role, and rather than killing the top ranking official for religious affairs, Augustus waited for him to die.¹⁹ When he did, in 12 BC, the emperor unsurprisingly became the new *pontifex maximus*. As shown by John Scheid, this marked a new moment in the emperor's 'religious policy'. Only now did he start to embark on a 'very real reform of Roman ritual tradition'.²⁰ Before, changing Roman religious practice would have been a sign of despotism. Now, it was anchored in his role of supervising the religious life of the Roman state.

The association that people have with specific anchors can, however, change over time. Augustus needed to anchor his actions in tradition, and the role of *pontifex maximus* was ideal for this. That role, however, would become one of the more recognizable parts of the honours and powers that were linked to emperorship. After Tiberius (a year after Augustus' death in 15 CE), Gaius, Claudius and Nero had become subsequent occupants of the position, the link between *pontifex maximus* and emperor was undeniable.²¹ John Curran rightly points out that for any emperor, 'the one title that more than any other signified his capacity to deal with *res divinae* was *pontifex maximus*'.²²

Until the accession of Nerva in 96 CE, new emperors waited till the pontifical election in March to take up the role. From 96 onwards, the supreme pontificate had become so much part and parcel of the imperial office that the emperor took up the role on accession. The title and role was systematically emphasized in imperial statuary, inscriptions and coins.²³ It was deemed so important, that the short-lived emperors Pupienus and Balbinus (reigning in 238 CE) *both* became *pontifex maximus*; a technical impossibility, but apparently an ideological necessity.²⁴

17 Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 31.3; *RGDA* 20.4; Hekster (2017) 54–5, with further references.

18 See, e.g. *RIC I² Augustus* 69 (no. 367) (16 BC); 73 (no. 410) (13 BC); already *RSC* no. 91 (37 BC).

19 Ridley (2005) 275–300.

20 Scheid (2005) 175–93; citation from 177.

21 Musiał (2014) 99–106.

22 Curran in this volume, p. 49.

23 Stepper (2003) 50; Cameron (2016) 139–59; 140; Manders (2012) 133–54.

24 Kienast (2017⁶) 183–5.

The close link between emperors and the title of *pontifex maximus* influenced people's association with the term. Where in Augustus' time, the emperor used the priesthood to anchor his actions in Republican precedent, by the third century, the title would make people think of Roman emperors in general, and Augustus in particular.²⁵ With the growing influence of Christianity, there would be yet another new association. The title *pontifex maximus* would obtain pagan connotations. After Christianity had become the dominant and later official religion of the Empire, this double anchor – to imperial status and Rome's pagan past – would become complicated. Ultimately, it would lead Christian emperors to transforming the role.²⁶ Notably, this was a transformation, not a repudiation of the position. The often-cited statement by Zosimus that Gratian (367–383 CE) refused to wear the priestly garb because it was impious for a Christian to do so, was effectively countered by Alan Cameron's reference to an inscription from 369 CE in which Valentinian, Valens and Gratian used *pontifex maximus* in their titlature.²⁷

These rulers, like the later emperors Valentinian III (425–455) and Marcian (450–457), did present themselves in official documents as *pontifex*, but as *pontifex inclitus*, not Maximus; 'honourable' pontiff rather than the 'highest' one. Curran, in his contribution to the volume, discusses why matters came to a head when they did. For the purposes of this article, it is important to highlight that under Gratian there was a change of course, but not so extreme as is often assumed. The title of the supreme pontificate, apparently, brought with it too many connotations of the pagan past, and had become the wrong anchor for the purposes of imperial rule. Therefore, 'it was decided to change it into something that was new yet closely resembled the old in order to ensure a continuation of the religious authority of the emperor without offending the notoriously strong Roman sense of tradition'.²⁸ A new anchor was created, which was in itself linked (or anchored) to the earlier term. Connotations of terms shifted between time and place, and could be adjusted accordingly. After Christian emperors stopped using *pontifex maximus* in their names, the title would become even more closely linked to pagan emperors. From the

25 Benoist (2009) 33–52; 43–7; Van Haepelen (2003) 137–59.

26 Cameron (2016) 144–7, returning to and extending some of the arguments in Cameron (2007) 341–84. See also Benétos (2017) 208–39; 229–32 for the importance of the title *pontifex maximus* for Constantine. Cf. Curran's contribution to this volume, section 3 in particular.

27 Zosimus, *Historia Nova* 4.36; *ILS* 771; Cameron (2016) 145. See now also Girardet (2018) and see also Curran in this volume, p. 50.

28 Dijkstra & Van Espelo (2017) 312–25; 313–8 for an overview of the recent discussion with full references. Citation from p. 316.

5th/6th century onwards, *pontifex maximus* would bring to mind Roman emperors of old, not current rulers of the empire. This might explain why it would take such a long time for the title to be incorporated into papal nomenclature.²⁹ Only when paganism was no longer a threat, connotations to *pontifex maximus* became wholly unproblematic. That did not necessarily make these connotations positive ones. For that, a re-evaluation of the value of antiquity was needed. Only in the fifteenth century were these requirements met to the extent that popes became *pontifex maximus*. To be the ‘greatest pontiff’ and forming a link to the increasingly appreciated classical past were now positive. That appropriation, finally, would yet again change people’s association to the term, which became a papal, rather than an imperial term – implying direct succession from emperors to popes.³⁰

2 Constantine and Constantinople, Anchoring in Past and Future

An office like the pontificate could change meaning over time in the eyes of Roman subjects. So could the associations with specific individuals. A relevant test case for the purposes of this volume may be the way the emperor Constantine was remembered in Constantinople. Clearly, Constantine’s reputation as a whole is a subject that widely exceeds one section of a paper.³¹ Yet, like Peter, he is a towering individual who dominates early Christianity, and with whom a range of associations are possible. This makes him a useful figure to illustrate how the concept of anchoring may help us understand how changing memories and points of view influenced the connotations people had with a specific individual. For the purposes of this article, we will focus on changes in the way people linked Constantine to the city of Constantinople, which also effected (to an extent) the ways in which the emperor could be used as model for later Christian emperors, and may suggest a framework for ways in which Peter was memorialized in Rome.³²

The link between the emperor Constantine and the later capital of the Roman empire was clear. The new city (formally Byzantium) not only carried his name, but was associated in many ways to the emperor who restored the unity of the Roman empire, and would be Rome’s first Christian emperor. For the purposes of our argument, it is noticeable that Constantinople was in

29 Curran in this volume p. 50.

30 Van Haepelen (2003) 159; Dijkstra & Van Espelo (2017) 320–5.

31 See, for instance, Van Dam (2011) 19–55.

32 Some of the issues in this paragraph have already been set out in Hekster (2011) 47–58.

many ways a monument to the emperor's victory over Licinius at the Battle of Chrysopolis in September 324 CE. Much like Augustus founded Nicopolis to celebrate his Actium victory, so Constantine re-founded Byzantion as *Nova Roma* to celebrate the new unity of empire. In the process, he eradicated the memory of Licinius, whose imperial residence the city seems to have been.³³ Similarly, Constantine had changed the meaning of many monuments in Rome with links to Maxentius. A number of buildings along the Via Sacra in Rome were reshaped (or simply renamed) in Constantine's name, and churches were built in locations that had been important to supporters of Maxentius.³⁴

The monuments and churches in Rome functioned like different anchors in the public space to Constantine, making people think of the new emperor when moving about in the city. Equally, Byzantion became Constantinople, with a plurality of monuments reminding of the new founder. Not all of these monuments were in stone. Constantine also created a new Senate in Constantinople, making this new senate a marker of his influence. In the sole surviving letter of Constantine to the senate, for instance, he addressed it as 'his own senate (*senatui suo*)'. The possessive pronoun is telling.³⁵ Even as traditional an institution as the senate could now remind people of the emperor. Physical monuments were even stronger anchors of imperial power. The palace, columns and statues must have dominated the city space. In Constantinople, furthermore, churches would function as a triple anchor: to the new emperor, to the god who supported him, and to the saints (such as the apostles) which the churches were dedicated to. These churches, furthermore, could act as symbols for Constantine's divine support – showing how the emperor guaranteed the *pax deorum*; much like he did as *pontifex maximus*.

Prime example was the Church of the Holy Apostles, constructed under Constantine just outside the city center. This building forms a clear indication how strongly the emperor aimed to position himself within Christian symbolism, at least towards the end of his life. The Church, as is clear, was dedicated to the twelve apostles. Although only a minor part of the eventual building was constructed under Constantine (a cross-shaped complex was erected under Constantius II), its lay-out and passages in Eusebius testify that the emperor wanted to be buried between the symbolic references to the apostles – effectively becoming a thirteenth apostle.³⁶

33 Stephenson (2009) 193.

34 Drijvers (2007) 11–27; 26–7; Diefenbach (2007) 122–33.

35 Millar (1992) 354 n. 94. Cf. *CIL* 6.1873.

36 Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 4.61–75, esp. 4.64; Mango (1990) 51–62; Dark & Özgümiş (2002) 393–413.

This notion of Constantine as apostle would not take hold. The Eusebian-Constantinian model of the emperor as a *didaskalos* (religious teacher), acting as a prophet or even apostle was fiercely argued against in fourth- and fifth-century Christian literature. As ultimately set out by Ambrose of Milan, the emperor was ‘son of the church, in the church and not above the church’ (*imperator ecclesiae filius ... intra ecclesiam non supra ecclesiam*).³⁷ What Constantine did reach, however, was a role as reference point for later Byzantine leaders and sainthood. Later emperors were hailed as ‘new Constantines’, with the eldest sons of new dynasties (Herakleios, Leo III, Leo V, Theophilos, Basil I) explicitly named after him.³⁸ Constantine was an anchor conveying legitimacy, connected to the notion of a Christian continuation of the Roman empire.

Such an association became intrinsically linked to Constantine as founder of the new capital of the empire. Constantine was the new “first emperor” like Constantinople was the new Rome. Many images show Constantine as founder of the cities. This includes (near) contemporary pieces, like a fourth-century cameo from the Hermitage (figure 2.1), but also later ones, such as the famous mosaic from the Hagia Sophia (ca. 1000 CE), depicting Constantine holding a model of the city (figure 2.2).

Textual sources likewise stress the extent to which Constantine was seen as a founder of the city. More than any emperor was associated with Rome, mentioning Constantine seems to have brought his city to mind – and vice versa. Illustrative is the *Παραστάσεις σύντομοι χρονικά* (‘Brief historical notes’), an overview of existing statues and monuments in Constantinople, dated to between 711 and 728, and mentioning several buildings and statues that had been destroyed or lost by that stage.³⁹ These notes show a Constantinople in decline, nostalgic for its heydays. Noticeably, Constantine had by then become a semi-legendary figure, in many ways akin to how Romulus was viewed in Late-Republican or Early-Imperial Rome. His presence in the cityscape was inescapable: the *Notes* name approximately 200 statues or statue groups by name, 40 of which are deemed to have depicted Constantine, with twelve statues of the emperor on the Forum alone (§ 15). There were statues of him at the S. Theodora, (§ 7), the Forum Tauri (§ 44a), the palatial tribunal (§ 36), and in the Senate on the Forum (§ 43). In the Augusteum, there was an oversize statue of Constantine on a column, possibly the famous statue of Constantine as Sol.⁴⁰

37 Ambrose, *Ad Auxentiam* 36, as noted by Dagron (2003) 148 n. 78. On pp. 127–57 Dagron sets out the debate surrounding Constantine’s posthumous status.

38 Dagron (2003) 149 with references; Magdalino (1994).

39 Cameron & Herrin (1984).

40 § 68, 68a. Cf. § 10, 23, 38, 56.



FIGURE 2.1 Sardonyx cameo of Constantine and the Tyche of Constantinople

But this statue, like other images of Constantine, was interpreted in a Christian context, with the foundation myth of the city explicitly retold as a battle between Christianity and paganism.⁴¹ In the *Παραστάσεις σύντομοι χρονικάί*, the

⁴¹ § 16, §39, §52–59.



FIGURE 2.2
Mosaic in the southwestern
entrance of the Hagia Sophia
(Istanbul, Turkey)

countless statues of Constantine have become places of memory to a remote past; anchors to Constantine as Christian ruler, even making Sol a symbol of Christianity.

Doubtlessly, the many imperial ‘new Constantines’ helped to cultivate this image. The reputation of the original Constantine, after all, was the cognitive foothold from which their subjects started to think about the new rulers and dynasties. Since adjustments to that original anchor were typically limited, the status of Constantine as a model for good Christian emperorship made life easier for his explicit successors.

Concepts and reputations change meaning over time. That is not a new insight, nor one for which the concept of anchoring is necessary. But hopefully this article has given some indications as to how innovations can be placed in more traditional terms, by linking them to anchors; specific terms and individuals who trigger useful associations. Each time such an anchor is used, its associations may shift, with an increasingly intricate web of connotations. How that process played out surrounding the figure of Peter, and how he functioned as an ever-changing anchor for different groups at different times, is what this volume sets out to analyze.

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PART 2

Anchoring the Authority of Peter



From Petrus to *Pontifex Maximus*

John R. Curran

The peculiar journey of the title *pontifex maximus* from emperor to bishop of Rome has been the subject of numerous scholarly treatments.¹ The title's imperial echoes lent to the Renaissance bishops of Rome a grandeur that reflected their ambitions as leaders of their church and as patrons of a city being re-born. As is clear now, however, that journey was by no means as straightforward as was once thought. Above all, scholars have sought to identify when precisely and to what extent the title was laid down by the emperors. Only recently has serious attention been paid to the actual attractions of the title to its Christian holders. The title *pontifex* and, ultimately, *pontifex maximus* has been characterized as an anchor that permitted a change of orientation in the religious, cultural and political life of late Rome by maintaining a crucial connection to a distinguished past.² It will be suggested here, however, that there is more to be said about the nature of this anchoring. To appreciate it fully requires something of a re-calibration of the enquiry, however. Specifically, it requires the simultaneous examination of ancient perceptions of the responsibilities of those who led the early Christian communities alongside those who oversaw the *religio* of Rome. This in turn challenges us to re-calibrate as well our conception of claims made about Peter himself, perceptions of his identity and the development of claims to primacy made by the later bishops of Rome.

1 The “Apostolic” Church

Unlike sectarian Judaism, the movement around Jesus came to require *apostoloi*, bearers of his teaching. Discipleship was not enough. The synoptic Gospels record the commissioning of the Twelve as ‘apostles’ to the settlements of the region with news of the coming Kingdom.³ Luke adds the ‘sending out’ of 70

1 The most significant interpretations conveniently summarised in Dijkstra and Van Espelo (2017) and also Kajanto (1981). See also Hekster's contribution to this volume.

2 Dijkstra and Van Espelo (2017).

3 *Matt.* 10.1–15; *Mark* 6.7–13; *Luke* 9.1–6.

or 72 'others'.⁴ With the releasing of the 'Spirit' after the resurrection of Jesus, however, yet others who had not been disciples perceived themselves to be 'apostles' – most famously Paul of Tarsus. From the outset there was thus an inherent tension between the varying claims to mission. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul famously defended attacks upon his legitimacy: 'Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.'⁵ In his second letter, Paul identified 'super apostles' (*ton huperlian apostolon*) 'Hebrews', 'Israelites', 'Abraham's Seed' by whom he felt challenged (he hoped they would castrate themselves).⁶ He himself denounced 'false apostles'.⁷ The very real tensions of this world explain the distinctive accusation of Clement of Rome that Peter and Paul had both been the victims of 'jealousy [*phthonon*] and envy [*zelos*]'.⁸

It is clear, however, that there were overseers of Christian communities whose status was not that of apostles. Paul's letter to the Philippians, written in the early 50s, was addressed to 'all the *hagioi* ['saints', 'holy'] of Christ who are in Philippi with (*sun*) the *episkopoi* and *diakonoi*.'⁹ Understandably, these figures, important though they clearly were, did not – indeed could not – have the prominence of apostles in Paul's correspondence. But by the time of the pseudonymous *First Letter of Paul to Timothy*, written in the last years of the century, the *episkopos* had become the subject of much more attention. While preserving some of his Pauline characteristics, in particular the requirement that he manage 'his own household (*oikos*) well', the *episkopos* had become a figure who needed to be 'skilful in teaching' (*didaktikon*).¹⁰ 'Timothy' himself was urged to remain in Ephesus where there was a threat from 'myths and endless genealogies that promote speculations rather than the divine training (*oikonomia*) that is known by faith'.¹¹

The developing identity of the *episkopos* is important. As Chilton and Neusner have characterised it, the movement was changing. The 'myths and

4 Luke 10.1–12.

5 1 Cor. 9.1–2 (NRSV).

6 2 Cor. 11.5; 12.11. Challengers: 2 Cor. 11.22.

7 2 Cor. 11.13–15.

8 1 Clem. 5. Cf. 3.4. Cf. also the contribution by Van den Hoek in this volume.

9 Philipp. 1.1. Cf. 1 Thess. 5.12: 'Respect those who labor among you and have charge of you (*proistamenoi*) ... (NRSV)'.

10 1 Tim. 3.1–4. Chilton and Neusner (1999) 59 thought the term meant 'interpretative, magisterial instruction on the basis of the Scripture of Israel'.

11 1 Tim. 1.4.

genealogies' of Paul's *First Letter to Timothy* may be a reference to the genesis of the more extensive records that transformed Christianity from its original experiential nature to something much more exegetical.¹² Some of these texts (above all those that were to constitute the New Testament) promoted Jesus as a teacher (*didaskalos*), admittedly, according to Geza Vermes, of a particularly provocative and unconventional type, but whose teachings required close examination.¹³ The same began to happen to the apostle Peter. In his recent study of depictions of Peter in the apostolic fathers, Todd Still drew attention to the second-century testimony of Papias of Hierapolis, according to whom Peter had been an inspired and engaging *teacher* whose listeners had prevailed upon 'Mark' to set down a record of his teaching, and the document that resulted had been written in Rome.¹⁴ In the same spirit, and doubtless derived from much earlier Christian texts, Eusebius of Caesarea characterized James the brother of Jesus as the first 'episkopos' of Jerusalem, an authority figure, and a depiction consistent with the New Testament's account of Peter, Paul and James in dispute over the Law.¹⁵

Those searching for concrete evidence of Peter in first-century Rome find little to work with but a search of this kind risks overlooking what were the actual priorities of earliest Christianity. In these years, the residence of apostles was of much less consequence than *encounter* with them. As the *eschaton* receded and the Jesus-generation passed away, however, diverse documents and the persisting Jewish Law brought the demand for exegesis and authority in teaching.

If we return to that accusation in *The First Letter to Timothy* against the teaching of Paul, one of the charges levelled at the opponents was that of promoting 'endless genealogies' (*genealogiai*).¹⁶ Luke and Matthew, as well as their near contemporary Flavius Josephus, all included genealogies in their presentation of the authority of their respective knowledge.¹⁷ In the second- and third-generation communities which had hosted apostles of Jesus, 'genealogies' in the sense of the deliberate invocation of the authority – over and above their teaching – of apostles in particular places, of the succession of ecclesial leaders also began to appear. According to Zwierlein, the first clear evidence for

12 Chilton and Neusner (1999) 58.

13 For Jesus as a Jewish teacher, see Vermes (2003) 27–8.

14 Eus. *HE* 2.15.1–2 [= 'Papias 2' in Ehrman]. The 'Markos' of 1 *Clem.* was the same 'Mark', according to Papias (*apud* Eusebius, *loc. cit.*). See Still (2015), 165–6.

15 *Gal.* 2.11–21; *Acts* 15. Eusebius perhaps depended on Clement's *Hypotypypoesis: HE* 2.1.2–3; 7.19.

16 1 *Tim.* 1.4.

17 Jos., *AJ* 2.176–83 on the sons of Jacob.

the assertion that Peter had resided in Rome was provided by Justin Martyr in the middle years of the second century.¹⁸ At around the same time, as George Demacopoulos has shown, more biographical treatments of Peter in the city began to appear in apocryphal *acta*.¹⁹ Irenaeus, arguing that adherence to the true gospels and apostolic tradition that came through apostolic succession guaranteed right thinking, described Peter and Paul identifying and ordaining successors.²⁰ And the *Memoirs* of Hegesippus reported that he had travelled widely and learned exactly the same teaching from all bishops: 'being in Rome I made for myself a succession as far as Anicetus'.²¹ Eusebius preserved a statement from Dionysius of Corinth, writing around the same time as Justin, that Peter and Paul together were the 'founders' (*phutusias*) of the community there.²² Origen named Ignatius as the second *episkopos* of Antioch and Eusebius conveyed the identification of Peter as his predecessor.²³

The famous report of the Roman presbyter Gaius that *tropaia* could be seen on the Via Appia and at the Vatican Hill comes, significantly, from the same mid-second century period and is, I think, to be understood as a topographical manifestation of the same process of formally connecting Christian communities to apostles.²⁴

2 'Every Church Should Agree with This Church on Account of Its Pre-Eminent Authority'²⁵

This more explicit memorialization of apostles in particular places came to impinge on the process of problem-solving. Cyprian's relationship with the bishop of Rome has, in the past, been characterised as a phase in the development of Roman papal primacy; a battle of wills to impose the power of Roman

18 Zwielerlein (2010) 128–33.

19 Demacopoulos (2013) 16ff.

20 *Adv. Haer.* 3.3.2–3 with Gwynn (2012) 879. Cf. Tertullian, *Prescriptions against the heretics* 32: 'Let them [the gnostics] produce the original records of their churches; let them unfold the roll of their bishops, running down in due or succession from the beginning in such a manner as that first bishop of theirs shall be able to show for his ordainer and predecessor someone of the apostles or of apostolic men'. Note that Irenaeus also talks about successions of *presbyters* (3.2.2). Irenaeus also singled out Smyrna as an apostolically founded church, Polycarp having been ordained by John: *Adv. Haer.* 3.3.4.

21 Eus. *HE* 4.22.3. (c. 165).

22 *HE* 2.25.6.

23 Origen, *Hom. In Luc.* 1; Eusebius, *HE* 3.36.1.

24 Eus. *HE* 2.25.6–7.

25 Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 3.3.2.

Christianity. But more recent scholarship has invited us to see that relationship as much more extensive and dynamic, irreducible to a straightforward stand-off between Rome and Carthage.²⁶

According to Demacopoulos, Cyprian's understanding of the reference to the commissioning of Peter as portrayed in *Matthew* 16 allowed him both to acknowledge the Petrine tradition of Rome but at the same time to emphasise the leadership required of every bishop in his own church, declaring that 'the episcopate is one'.²⁷

The correspondence between Cyprian and a number of bishops of Rome reveals him to be, just as he repeatedly states, in fraternal contact with the bishops there. Deciding to report the outcome of the African synod of 253 (at which the *lapsi* were readmitted to the church) Cyprian was not seeking approval but offering views that he hoped might shape practice in Rome.²⁸ His crucial fifty-fourth letter, outlining to Cornelius of Rome recent trouble in Africa, had been sent in response to the suggestion that information requiring correction was circulating in Rome. And Cyprian's correspondence shows bishops of diverse places writing to a number of other bishops about the same issues; Faustinus of Lyons, for example, wrote to both Cyprian and Stephen of Rome about the illegitimate installation of Marcianus and a collection of Spanish bishops sought Cyprian's opinion in contrast to that expressed by the bishop of Rome.²⁹ Only the controversy over re-baptism prompted the startling suggestion that Rome's apostolic heritage was being misrepresented by bishop Stephen – not that an active primacy was being asserted.³⁰

As Geoffrey Dunn has put it, however, the search for papal primacy is a distraction from our appreciation of Cyprian's broader context: 'scholars have turned to Cyprian's treatises to determine his theology of papal ministry in isolation from the practical realities of how he related with the Roman church' – an important observation to which I shall return.³¹

26 Above all, see Dunn (2007).

27 *Ep.* 33; *de unitate* 4–5. Cf. *Ep.* 59 on Felicissimus travelling to 'the throne of Peter, the chief church in which priestly unity takes its source'. See Demacopoulos (2013) 27–28; Bockmuehl (2015); Dunn (2007) 192.

28 *Ep.* 56 with Dunn (2007) 102–6; 195–6.

29 *Ep.* 68 with Dunn (2007) 120–3; *Ep.* 67 with Dunn (2007) 125–33.

30 *Ep.* 74.6 (from Firmilianus, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia): 'they who are at Rome do not observe those things in all cases which are handed down from the beginning, and vainly pretend the authority of the apostles ...'.

31 Dunn (2002) 243.

3 Constantine and After

One of the most enduring assumptions in the scholarship on Constantine is that the advent of a Christian emperor and the full and formal legalization of Christianity were each universally welcomed by Christians. At Rome, unprecedented resources became available to the Christian community: imperial land, revenues and an army of workers to construct the Roman churches of the new Constantinian dispensation. The emperor himself was a dramatic manifestation of God's willingness still to intervene in the world of men and Constantine became an enthusiastic advocate of the faith. The bishops of Christianity in particular now had behind them a patron who would propel them into the front rank of public affairs.

In the first place, there is in fact no reason to think that the Christian community, if left to its own devices, would ever have invented the oecumenical council. As we have seen, while apostolic claims had entered the discourse between bishops in dispute, synodal decisions and letters of communion actually constituted a serviceable system of governance. The oecumenical council amplified the apostolic claims of individual communities to an ecclesiologically deafening level.³² The bishops of Rome were faced with the choice of having consciously to down-play their apostolic claims or formally to assert them on a world-wide scale. Sylvester, perhaps sensing the danger and as he had done with Constantine's council of Arles, deftly excused himself from participation.³³

Second, and in the case of Rome specifically, the 'material establishment' of Constantine was arguably a challenge to the centuries-old Christian facilities of the city. One of the blind-spots of scholarship on fourth-century Rome is its misplaced confidence in reading maps of the distribution of the Christian churches of the city. Plotting the position of churches and attempting to deduce the pace of construction or the visibility of the results overlooks the fact that there was a distinction between what bishops of the city were attempting to do and the plans of emperors.³⁴ It is clear that the milieu of the bishop was where it had always been – in the parishes of the city.

32 And Constantine optimistically declared their decisions to be both divinely inspired and legally binding. See Barnes (2014) 133.

33 Eus. *VC* 3.7.2 (and Soz. *HE* 1.17) citing Sylvester's excuse of old age. He actually lived on for another 10 years. See Pietri (1976) 173–4.

34 For 'slow' pace of building; Bowes (2008) 62; on the 'virtual invisibility' of the churches c. 350: Brown (2012) 246. Thompson (2015) 30 offers a correction in highlighting the role of Roman bishops in shaping the ecclesiastical landscape. Cf. the contribution by Friedrichs on old Saint Peter's in this volume.

Third, from perhaps as early as 318, correct belief became *christiana lex*.³⁵ Unlike the innovation of the oecumenical council, belief as *lex* made available to the Christian community a great ready-made system of problem-solving: the body of Roman law and its institutions. But as Caroline Humfress has observed, the Christian problems could be a rough enough fit with historic Roman legal concepts: ‘the prosecution of illicit Christian behaviour was undertaken through appeals to the same rubrics of criminal law’.³⁶ Heresy, for example, became a *crimen publicum*; defence of the ‘sacrosancta ecclesia catholica’ was a defence of the state itself.³⁷ *Maleficium* became the charge against heretics from the Manichees to Priscillian.³⁸ For Arcadius and Honorius the Eunomian and Montanist heresies were *superstitiones*; Nestorius would be condemned in the same terms.³⁹ And Leo the Great would end up denouncing Priscillian as the heir to the *magi* and *mathematici*.⁴⁰

But one ancient Roman institution more than any other has attracted the attention of historians of the transition from pagan to Christian: the office of the *pontifex maximus*.⁴¹

4 *Pontifex Maximus*

At about the same time that the first of the written Christian gospels was being conceived, Vespasian was receiving formally the powers that would install him as the successor of the most legitimate Julio-Claudians. The 6th surviving clause of the famous *lex de imperio Vespasiani* conferred upon him ‘the right to do whatever things divine, human, public and private [that] he deems to serve the advantage and the overriding interests of the state.’⁴² The one title that more than any other signified his capacity to deal with *res divinae* was *pontifex maximus*.

Possession of the title, as is well known, was for long considered the high-water mark of Christianity’s supercession of paganism. An older generation of scholars believed that the bishops of Rome, beginning with Damasus or

35 *CTh* 1.27.1 with Edwards (2015) 195. Cf. 16.5.1 for *lex Christiana*.

36 Humfress (2000) 129.

37 Idem.

38 Humfress (2000) 136–8.

39 *CTh* 16.5.34 (March 398); *CTh* 6.5.66 (435).

40 *Ep.* 15 [PL 54c 679a] from 447.

41 See also Hekster’s contribution to this volume.

42 *CIL* 6.930.

Siricius, had taken it for themselves after a dramatic repudiation of the title in an interview between Gratian and his fellow pontifices, reported by Zosimus.

Modern scholarship has comprehensively overturned the idea.⁴³ No credible evidence suggests that any late antique bishop Rome declared himself to be *pontifex maximus*. According to Liro Kajanto, the first unambiguous attestation of the title being used by the bishop of Rome was under Pope Eugenius (1431–1447) or, more likely, Nicholas V (1447–1455).⁴⁴ As with the acquisition by the Christian god of the epithets of Jupiter (*deus, optimus, maximus*) at around the same period, the Renaissance popes' appropriation of the title was a classicizing, humanist phenomenon, an expression of cultural and political confidence and aspiration.

Scrutiny has recently returned, however, to the controversial passage of Zosimus.⁴⁵ The latest attested Roman emperors bearing the title were Valentinian, Valens and Gratian, memorialized on an inscription of 369 CE.⁴⁶ According to Zosimus, Gratian repudiated the title as 'not lawful for a Christian' and no emperor can be found holding it again. A pair of recent essays published by Alan Cameron, however, makes it clear that the imperial title *pontifex* did in fact survive but it was now qualified by the adjective 'inclutus/inclitus', suggesting that Gratian had not comprehensively rejected the title but had, in the words of Cameron, 'redefined his priestly authority in less specific terms'.⁴⁷ Cameron considered the adjective *inclutus* to be 'an entirely unspecific, uncontroversial epithet'.⁴⁸ Zosimus is accordingly to be disregarded as a disingenuous, partisan and incompetent witness.

But Cameron and others have struggled to work out precisely why matters should have come to a head during the reign of Gratian. This is because they have not considered who precisely the *Christian pontifex* was.

5 The Christian *Pontifex*

In reviewing the history of the title in the period after Augustus, Cameron pointed out that the *pontifex maximus* 'had no authority over the other colleges' which was why Augustus was careful to make himself a member of each

43 Dijkstra and Van Espelo (2017).

44 Kajanto (1981) 47–8. See now too Dijkstra and Van Espelo (2017) 319–25.

45 *NH* 4:36.

46 *ILS* 771.

47 Cameron (2016) 147. See too Cameron (2007).

48 Cameron (2016) 149.

and every one of them.⁴⁹ It is worth reflecting, however, on the historic responsibilities of the college of pontiffs. Among their duties they, under the oversight of the *pontifex maximus*, attended to the state's calendar, ruled on adoptions, wills and family law, and kept records of significant events. In the words of Beard, North, and Price: 'many of their functions shared a concern with the preservation, from past time to future, of states and rights within families, within *gentes* and within the community as a whole – and so also the transmission of ancestral rites into the future' – a summation of the very extensive responsibilities of the position.⁵⁰

The Greek translation of Augustus' *res gestae* rendered his title 'pontifex maximus' as *archiereus*.⁵¹ The same term (and the very similar *archiereia*) appears in both the New Testament and Clement of Rome's first letter applied to the High Priest of the Jews.⁵² Like the *pontifex maximus*, the High Priest of the Jews stood in closer proximity to the divine, most solemnly illustrated in Jewish worship in the High Priest's role on the Day of Atonement when he alone of all Jews was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies in the Jewish Temple.⁵³ According to E. P. Sanders, the Jewish High Priest was 'in some respects ... only "first among equals"', just like the *pontifex maximus*.⁵⁴ But what some historians have failed to appreciate is that attendant upon their elevated position both the high priest of the Jews and the *pontifex maximus* presided over, and themselves participated in, the regulation and appropriate application of religious law – a very real and routine task.⁵⁵

In the case of the *pontifex maximus*, one prominent current idea is that the role is to be played down.⁵⁶ Françoise Van Haepereen pointed out that the *pontifex maximus* could not exercise his power outside of Rome, but it is to be remembered that that did not stop Pliny consulting Trajan, as *pontifex maximus*, several times on points of pontifical law.⁵⁷ And in 130 CE, petitioners to the college of *pontifices* under the presidency of the *pontifex maximus* sought his permission to transport into Italy a corpse from overseas.⁵⁸ Fergus Millar has

49 Cameron (2016) 139.

50 Beard, North, Price (1998) 26.

51 *RG* 4.7.

52 NT: *Matt.* 26.23 cf. *1 Macc.* 13.42; *1 Clem.* 36.1.

53 Day of Atonement: Sanders (1992) 141–3; Schürer II (1979) 275–6.

54 Sanders (1992) 327.

55 See Grabbe (2010) 45–6: 'although there may have been legal experts who were laymen, the priesthood was still accepted as the custodians and interpreters of the law'.

56 See now Rüpke (2014) 233–53 with Cameron (2016) disagreeing.

57 Van Haepereen (2003) 138. Pliny, *Epp.* 10.49–50; 68–9. See Ando (2007) 443.

58 *ILS* 1792. Cf. *ILS* 1685 for permission granted 'permissu imp.' (seemingly M. Aurelius) for the transport of a dead man's remains to Italy from a northern province.

traced the third-century imperial practice of issuing *subscriptions* showing how emperors *personally* took responsibility for queries on aspects of sacred law.⁵⁹ And, famously, Constantine's decision to re-shape the Vatican necropolis, a serious matter of obvious interest to pontifical law, was certainly facilitated by the emperor's position as *pontifex maximus*.⁶⁰ The relative enthusiasm of individual emperors for the duties is not the issue in this context; nor is the extent to which Roman *religio* might be observed outside of Rome. What is significant is that the *mechanism* for consultation clearly persisted.

These ancient institutions, the High Priesthood of the Jews and the *pontifex maximus* of Rome, and, more specifically, the responsibilities of the posts, help to explain the attractiveness of the term *pontifex* for early Christians using Latin. In Paul's letter to the Hebrews Christ himself is 'a great high priest who has passed through the heavens' but the context is that of the judgement of God.⁶¹ And the *First Letter of Clement*, in a passage that some read as referring to an incipient Christian clerical system, mentions 'special liturgical rites' (*idiai leitourgiai*) that have been assigned by 'the Master (*despotes*)' to the 'high priest (*archiereus*)' over and against the tasks of 'regular priests' and 'Levites'.⁶² In the late second or early third century, when these letters were finally translated into Latin, the term *archiereus* was rendered, quite naturally, as *pontifex*.⁶³

Tertullian, in portraying Christ as a new dispensator of a new Law, referred to him as the *authenticus pontifex dei patris* and *praeputiati sacerdotii pontifex*.⁶⁴ Famously, Tertullian was the first to use the term to signify the Christian *episcopus*. In a much-discussed passage of his *de pudicitia*, written in 210 or 211, Tertullian denounced an *episcopus episcoporum, scilicet* – 'doubtless a' – *pontifex maximus*, who had issued a decree (*edicit*) offering forgiveness for sins of adultery and fornication.⁶⁵ Much discussion has taken place over who precisely this *pontifex maximus* was, and if he is to be identified as the bishop of Rome, does the reference prove that the bishops of the city were

59 Millar (1977) 361: '... what is made clear by the various *subscriptions* of the third century is that by then the emperor in person was giving answers on such questions [sacred law] to individuals ...'.

60 Heid (2007) 412. For later laws regarding tombs, see Curran (2000) 187–88 with Rüpke (2014) 246 denying the relevance of the position of *pontifex maximus*.

61 *Heb.* 4.14–16: *Habentes ergo pontificem magnum, qui penetravit caelos ... non enim habemus pontificem qui non possit compati infirmitatibus nostris.*

62 *1 Clement* 40.5 with Kajanto (1981) 40.

63 Kajanto (1981) 38 and note *pontificatus* for *to hierateuein*.

64 *Adv. Marc.* 4.35.7 (CC 1.640); 5.9.9 (CC 1.690).

65 *De pudicitia* 1.6. See Kajanto (1981) 44–5 on the 'spiteful irony' of the reference. Barnes (1971) 141 argues for the bishop of Carthage as the *pontifex maximus* in question. For general discussions see Brent (2010) 319–20; Brent (1995) 503–35.

already being attracted to the title? As we have seen, we lack the testimony to answer the latter question affirmatively. The much greater significance of the passage, however, is that it set the Christian *episcopus* alongside the pagan *pontifex* and did so precisely as we should expect, in the context of issuing rulings on the application of religious law. It is not, therefore, that the Latin *pontifex* is a simple *translation* of the Greek *archiereus*; it was a reflection of the similarities between the roles of each in adjudicating the laws governing appropriate religious behaviour.

In the 270s, when Aurelian was petitioned by the enemies of Paul of Samosata at Antioch, he made a ruling between them that attracted the praise of Eusebius for its equity.⁶⁶ It would be extraordinary if the Latin-speaking emperor and his staff did not perceive that the various *episkopoi* were at issue over the interpretation of their own religious law; they were in fact identifiably ‘pontifices’.

Following Constantine’s conversion, with Roman law now, as we saw, considering proper/orthodox Christianity to be *lex*, the formal term *pontifex* for a Christian bishop was another of these formal legal ‘fits’ to which Caroline Humfress has drawn our attention. Constantine’s famous remark that he too was a bishop, but of those ‘outside’ the church, reflects his perception of the similarities between his responsibilities as *pontifex maximus* and the bishops’ own as *pontifices* of Christianity.⁶⁷ This is the context in which to understand Constantine’s granting of a judicial role to bishops, from the granting of asylum rights to the full-blown *episcopale iudicium*.⁶⁸ By 360 if not before, the bishop of Rome was routinely being called *pontifex Urbis Romae* or *pontifex summus*.⁶⁹ The title was one more indication of his growing confidence and influence. Michele Maccarone has drawn attention to the prominence of Roman episcopal authority that reached a new pitch with the deployment of the term *sedes apostolica* for the first time in 354 in a letter of bishop Liberius of Rome to Eusebius of Vercelli.⁷⁰ Bishops at the council of Serdica wrote to bishop Julius of Rome *ad caput, id est ad Petri apostoli sedem* and the term moved smoothly into the vocabulary of Damasus.⁷¹ Siricius’ letter *ad Gallos* was couched in

66 Eus. *HE* 7.29.1–30.19. See Millar (1971); Watson (1999) 188–98.

67 Eus. *VC* 4.24. See Angelov (2014).

68 *CTh* 1.27.1 (318) with Gwynn (2012) 881–2.

69 Liberius as *pontifex*: *Coll. Av.* 2 p. 1.1 (Gunther’s edition); Damasus: Pietri (1976) 1607.

70 Maccarone (1991) 280; *PL* 8.1350B.

71 The letter *Quod semper* 1 (9): *CSEL* 65.127. Damasus: *PL* 13.582A (a report to Gratian and Valentinian on the Roman synod held under Damasus’ authority); *praerogativa tamen apostolicae sedis excellit* and *Epigram* 57. The synod of 378 used the term “apostolic see” for the first time. See Chadwick (2001) 318.

'imperious' language and its contents led Pietri to believe that the letter laid claim to the rights of a western patriarch.⁷² The coalescence of the two claims (to 'pontifical' status and to occupation of the *sedes apostolica*) was dramatically signalled by the famous law of February 380: 'It is Our will that all the peoples who are ruled by the administration of Our Clemency shall practice that religion which the divine Peter the Apostle transmitted to the Romans, as the religion which he introduced makes clear even unto this day. It is evident that this is the religion that is followed by the *pontifex* Damasus and by Peter, *episcopus* of Alexandria, a man of apostolic sanctity.'⁷³ The clear ranking of the two bishops was the emperors' recognition of the public claims of the bishop of Rome.

But the rising profile of the Christian *pontifex* of Rome posed a clear dilemma for the emperors; specifically, the situation made the imperial title of *pontifex maximus* look somewhat anomalous. Being a *pontifex maximus* threatened to suggest that the emperor had some kind of superior rank with regard to the bishop of Rome, now calling himself (among other things) *pontifex*. But the emperor's title was historic and there were still duties attendant upon it. The famous episode reported by Zosimus of Gratian's repudiation of the title and Cameron's discovery of the post-Gratianic title of *pontifex inclitus* for emperors into the fifth century was the solution adopted to resolve the delicate situation.

Cameron is unsparing on Zosimus, dismissing his account as without any factual merit, except in the sense that it conveys that *something* happened under Gratian.⁷⁴ But it is to be remembered that for several years at the beginning of his reign Gratian was content to bear the title.⁷⁵ Why did he change his mind? His withdrawal of state subsidies from the ancient cults sometime in 382 suggests an evolving policy, a dramatic deviation from ancient practice. This development was of much greater historical import than the removal of the Altar of Victory, and it would be extraordinary if the pagan senators of Rome were content to accept it without representation. Zosimus' story, however garbled, records a solemn appeal to the emperor Gratian designed to clarify his commitment to the ancient religious traditions of Rome. Cameron argued that the 'pontiffs' mentioned by Zosimus cannot have offered Gratian a priestly robe because the *pontifex maximus* did not wear one is on the one hand

72 'un tono piu imperioso': Maccarone (1991) 291. Pietri (1976) vol. 1.772.

73 *CTh* 16.1.2, an edict to the people of Constantinople. See also Dijkstra's contribution to this volume, p. 6 (including Latin text).

74 Cameron (2016) 150–1; Cameron (2007) 366: 'there is scarcely a word of truth or fact in Zosimus' entire account'.

75 For the dating of the episode, see Cameron (2016) 154–5.

historically unlikely and on the other, even if accepted, does not rule out the possibility of a defiant offering of an appropriately *clean* robe for performing religious duties. Similarly, the idea that pagan senators would not have risked a rebuff from a Christian emperor denies the historical possibility of any kind of principled and courageous act in the face of autocracy then, or, indeed, now. In short, Lellia Cracco-Ruggini is right: there *was* some kind of deputation to Gratian and it courageously forced upon the emperor an historic clarification of his position with regard to the position of *pontifex maximus*.⁷⁶

6 Conclusions

In general terms, the enquiry into the final destination of the title *pontifex maximus* has been conducted with teleological enthusiasm; it has in large part been the search for an agreed *terminus*; whether *post* or *ante*. Much less attention has been paid to some important *processes* along the way. The case advanced in this paper suggests that some familiar working assumptions require re-visiting. It is time, specifically, to move beyond the idea that the title was a simple ‘translation’ of or ‘equivalent’ to titles of office-holders in the Greek-speaking church. As Dennis Trout has shown, the title *pontifex* was only one of a number of titles claimed by the bishops of Rome, as elsewhere.⁷⁷ It is likely, as with the title *pontifex*, that these titles were not carelessly chosen and that we are now invited, much in the rather under-appreciated spirit of Charles Pietri, to look more closely at the bishops of Rome at *work*.⁷⁸ The implications for the concept of ‘anchoring’ are significant. The discourse that achieved the anchoring was the product of labour as well as the conceptualisation of historic cultural and religious institutions, a valuable indication that the process had a number of different dimensions. The idea that this work was unimpeded by the patronage of Constantine is another serious assumption. In fact, the emperor’s sponsoring of the Roman bishop may have made an unwelcome and counter-productive contribution to the often uncomfortable Christian discourse on the relative authority of Peter’s successor. And it is time, finally, to relocate the courage of the last pagans of Rome away from the passionless *re-lationes* of Symmachus to the purveyors of the robes of the real *pontifex maximus* of Rome.

76 Cracco Ruggini (2009) 368: ‘probabilmente con deliberato intento propagandistico’.

77 Trout (2015) 221 for Damasus as, variously, *antistes*, *rector* and *sacerdos*.

78 See Pietri (1991) 220 for misgivings about ‘secularised’ historical outlooks.

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The Multiple Meanings of Papal Inscriptions in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages

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Between the election of Damasus in 366 and the death of Sergius I in 701 a total of eighteen popes placed around seventy more or less legible inscriptions in or near some thirty-two churches or cemeteries inside Rome and in the city's suburbs. The Romans had always had the "epigraphic habit." But in the last decades of the third century and the early decades of the fourth, that habit was much attenuated. There were always more private than public inscriptions. Epitaphs, commemoration of marriages, or temple vows, always outnumbered memorials of legislation or military campaigns. When inscriptions became prominent again in the fourth century private records, and especially epitaphs, once again predominated.¹ But there was something new. The number of Christian epitaphs soared. New too, beginning with Damasus, were public records of Christian content and import. Christians acquired the epigraphic habit with enthusiasm. I shall focus on the papal display of the habit. But I am pursuing a larger theme here; I wish to say something about the controversial "rise of the papacy."²

On the one hand, the papal cultivation of the epigraphic habit of the Roman world was an absolute innovation, at least as far as the papacy was concerned.

1 The scholarship on epigraphy is vast. For fine introductions see: Petrucci (1998), Ramsby (2007), and Handley (2003).

2 This is a huge subject that I can no more than notice here. I am not as skeptical about ideas (that is, the formation of a papal ideology) or the growth of papal institutions as some scholars. For instance, I disagree sharply with Demacopoulos (2013). I disagree in emphasis with Sessa (2012). I by no means accept the wildly exaggerated claims of Ullmann (1970), esp. 1–43. I prefer the more organic and gradualist approaches of scholars such as Caspar (1930) chs. 2–12, Pietri (1991) 219–43, and Maccarrone (1991a) 275–362. I still admire, for both ideas and institutions, Pietri (1976). Valuable on institutions is Saxer (2001) 493–632. There are valuable backward glances in Halphen (1907). For recent treatments see: Friedrichs (2015), Thompson (2015), and Hornung (2015). Papal ideology in the last portion of the period I treat is well presented in Azzara (1997). So, full disclosure: I take very seriously the idea that the popes were self-consciously and increasingly defining the ideological and ecclesiological underpinnings of their office as well as building the public and private institutions necessary to the running of their church in the very years when the inscriptions started and continued to be placed.

Prior to the pontificate of Damasus I (366–384) there is no surviving evidence of epigraphic activity by any bishop of Rome. On the other hand, when Damasus, and then many of his successors, mounted inscriptions around Rome and its suburbs, they were embracing, adapting, appropriating an ancient and established traditional practice. Papal inscriptions could not, would not, have had any meaning or impact if the Roman authorities had not already for centuries announced, boasted of, and taken pride in their achievements by means of epigraphical monuments. And while this essay emphasizes epigraphy, it contextualizes that epigraphy in images, public celebrations, popular assemblies, and construction works. Each of these areas of activity was a central feature of the behavior of Rome's leaders and so papal adaptation of these kinds of activities "anchors" papal innovation in deep, old traditions.

I will attempt to locate the inscriptions in several interrelated historical contexts. I will discuss the popes who put their images in churches, the development of stational liturgies as urban celebrations, the assembling of at least thirty-nine councils in Rome, and the construction or renovation of at least seventy-five churches by no fewer than forty popes. Finally, and somewhat more expansively, I shall discuss what the inscriptions actually say.

Let me conclude these preliminary comments with a few qualifications. I am not going to discuss papal epitaphs, a good many of which survive. They merit study on their own terms but we cannot say for sure, with one exception to which I will come in due course, who is responsible for them and when they were put in place. If, as Michael Borgolte pointed out, the popes had established a necropolis that action would have been a significant sign of institutional awareness and identity.³ But they did not do so. Prior to the third century most popes were buried near St Peter's. In the third century several popes were buried in the catacomb of San Callisto. Fourth-century popes chose, or had chosen for them – we do not know which – sites all around Rome and its environs. Beginning in the fifth century a large majority of popes were buried in or around St Peter's but for many centuries this was not the only site of papal burials.⁴ I am not going to discuss fragments, partly because I have not combed through every corpus of inscriptions to find them all and partly because while their existence and location are potentially significant, they convey imprecise messages. Finally, I will not take time to discuss the source of the inscriptions that figure in my remarks. Some are still in place and are

3 Borgolte (1989), 9–11.

4 Borgolte (1989), 15–75. Most of what is known about papal burials and epitaphs may be found in LP. 1 and in Petrus Mallius (1946), 375–442. This work was composed in the time of Alexander III (1159–1181).

both visible and legible. Some are on slabs of stone, even broken slabs, that are found today far from their original location. Some exist only in various collections prepared at different times during the Middle Ages and the early modern period. It is enough for present purposes to know who mounted a particular inscription, where it is, or was, located, and what it says.

Ramsey MacMullen said this about inscriptions in the high empire but his words seem to me relevant to late antiquity as well: ‘with our chosen words we address our whole community, or posterity itself.’⁵ It is not surprising that before the Constantinian peace of the church Christians did not call attention to themselves by mounting prominent inscriptions. They probably did not dare to address their own community, much less posterity. But it is not obvious that Christians would have chosen to do so in the more secure conditions of the fourth century. Here is MacMullen again: ‘The rise and fall of the epigraphic habit was controlled by what we can only call the sense of audience. In their exercise of the habit, people ... counted on their world still continuing in existence for a long time to come, so as to make nearly permanent memorials worthwhile; and they still felt themselves members of a special civilization, proud (or obliged) as such.’⁶ Here are several points that will recur in my discussion: audience, permanence, memory, and a special sense of identity. Each of these points will require elaboration.

I begin with the location of the inscriptions that can today be read in publications or in some instances *in situ*, or else viewed in museums. Thirty-two churches of widely varying size and distinction were sites of papal inscriptions.⁷ That number is a little deceptive because there are numerous fragments, some displaying a few broken lines and some revealing only a handful of letters. These items would significantly expand the repertoire if we could read, place, and date them with specificity. We have thirty basically illegible fragments from Damasus alone.⁸ In several cases our clue as to Damasus’s responsibility for the relevant inscriptions is their Philocalian lettering. Furius Dionysius Filocalus was a Roman epigrapher who worked in the second half of the fourth century. He created a particularly beautiful and distinctive script.⁹ The number of churches that had inscriptions must have been a good deal larger than we can now account for. Twelve of the churches with inscriptions, 37.5%, are

5 MacMullen (1982) 244. See also Meyer, (1990) 74–96. Meyer emphasizes, perhaps exaggerates, citizenship as the primary explanation for epitaphs. The only scholar to address the papal inscriptions in anything like the way I attempt to do here is Scholz, (2016) 121–35.

6 MacMullen (1982) 246.

7 These will be discussed below with references.

8 Published, along with the legible ones, by Trout (2015).

9 Ferrua (1939) 35–47, Gray (1956) 5–13, and Trout (2015) 47–52.

inside the city and twenty, 62.5%, are in the suburbs. Urban churches with inscriptions tend to be either Patriarchal basilicas, the Lateran and Santa Maria Maggiore, or else title churches, for example San Lorenzo in Damaso, Santo Stefano Rotondo, San Pancrazio, Santi Cosma e Damiano, Santa Sabina, or San Pietro in Vincoli. The suburban churches show a good deal of variety. The patriarchal basilicas of St Peter's, St Paul's, and San Lorenzo sport significant numbers of inscriptions. These churches, although they were outside the Aurelian Walls, were integral constituents of Rome's ecclesiastical life. One might almost view them as honorary urban churches. Otherwise, the great majority of suburban inscriptions were placed in cemeterial basilicas and churches, some above ground and some below, some impressive and some tiny, some extant and some long vanished. Overwhelmingly the suburban churches with inscriptions are mentioned in the pilgrim's guides that began to proliferate in the seventh century.¹⁰ I think this suggests that these inscriptions were seen very often.¹¹ The inscriptions inside the city were sometimes monumental and impressive. They must have drawn the eyes of observers. Many of the urban inscriptions, whether or not they are extant *in situ*, were copied into medieval collections, which suggests that they were objects of real interest. Here we have hints about MacMullen's audience. Erik Thunø adds an important point with respect to audience, particularly where the more beautiful and impressive inscriptions are concerned: They possessed both textual and visual significance which would have made them accessible, albeit in different ways, to both the literate and the illiterate.¹²

Why were the inscriptions put where we find them or where later evidence tells us they were located? I find no surprises in the urban churches that have inscriptions but I must confess to being puzzled that there are not more of them. Not all of Rome's seven hills, or seven ecclesiastical regions, have a church with an inscription, so an attempt to blanket the city's ecclesiastical topography does not seem to offer an explanation. The Lateran is Rome's cathedral church so one might well expect various popes to have put their mark on it. They did so a good many times but almost always in the baptistery or in the oratories connected to the baptistery. In so far as baptism was the fundamental rite of entry into the society of Christians, and the Lateran baptistery was Rome's principal one, might the inscriptions there represent a kind of paternal claim by the popes? Santa Maria Maggiore is newer than the Constantinian

10 Collected in *Codice topografico della città di Roma* (1940–43) 4 vols.

11 I explored aspects of this topic in Noble (2013) 205–17. See also Dey (2008) 398–422. A good introduction remains Birch (1998).

12 Thunø (2007) 19–212, 26.

basilica at the Lateran and the cult of Mary developed slowly at Rome.¹³ Perhaps it is not surprising that it has fewer and later antique inscriptions. The suburban churches sometimes proffer clarity and sometimes do not. St Peter was significant to Rome in so many ways that it is not at all surprising that there are a good many inscriptions in and around his great basilica. But appearances are a bit deceiving. Nine of the twelve inscriptions around St Peter's were mounted by Symmachus who was effectively exiled there for about seven years while Laurentius controlled the city.¹⁴ One almost gets the impression that Symmachus was digging in for the long haul. St Paul's significance is beyond question but his basilica received very few inscriptions. Nearby cemeterial churches got more. Lawrence was Rome's premier post-apostolic martyr so the presence of inscriptions in his basilica occasions no wonder but the tiny number of them does seem odd. Pelagius II rebuilt the basilica in the late sixth century so it is possible that older material was discarded. Damasus prepared epitaphs for his mother and sister at the Cemetery of Marcus and Marcellianus. Apart from commemorations of several of his papal predecessors, to which I shall return, Damasus reserved his elegies for martyrs.¹⁵ Presumably the location of his inscriptions was dictated by the location of the martyr's graves. One would like to know, but simply cannot, why he chose to commemorate the martyrs he did. Victor Saxer and Marianne Sághy have noted that there is some overlap between the Calendar-Codex of 354 and the martyrs Damasus commemorated.¹⁶ That is not much to go on. But Sághy also observes that Damasus was interested in peacemakers and in martyrs who had returned to the faith and church after periods as heretics or schismatics. He also had a fondness for paired martyrs – say Chrysanthus and Daria or Nereus and Achilleus. His successors followed his lead and continued for the most part to commemorate martyrs. Precisely why they chose one martyr over another is not known. Almost every one of Rome's radial roads had churches with papal inscriptions. As with the urban memorials so too with the suburban ones, I cannot discern grounds for a topographical argument.

The location of these inscriptions permits some preliminary conclusions. The popes, beginning with Damasus, were unquestionably putting their name

13 Still authoritative is Klauser (1972) 120–35. See also de Blaauw (1994), vol. 1, 340–41, noting that the dedication of Santa Maria Maggiore by Sixtus III in 432 was the first tangible sign of devotion to Mary in Rome. See too Rubin (2009) 95–96.

14 The story has been told many times. For a good, recent account see Moorhead (2015) 50–60. The fullest treatment is Wirbelauer (1993).

15 For wise words on why popes promoted the cult of the martyr, although not on why Damasus chose the ones he did, see Sághy (2015) 37–56.

16 Saxer, (1984) 59–88; Sághy (2000) 277.

prominently and visibly around the region. Jean Guyon once observed that popes put inscriptions on quite a few churches that were imperial projects or the recipients of significant imperial benefaction.¹⁷ That is true but not all imperial churches got inscriptions and the numbers are not at all even. The fourth and fifth centuries witnessed the inception and then the proliferation of papal building activity and artistic patronage.¹⁸ The chronological span of papal inscriptions tracks well overall with these other kinds of visible, public display. Taken together they illustrate both the triumph of Christianity in the city of Rome and the rising prominence of Rome's bishops. Where Damasus is concerned, I wonder if he was trying, among other things, to assert his legitimacy after the bloody struggle that accompanied his contested election.¹⁹ And perhaps, as Marianne Sághy suggests, he saw the martyrs in particular as a 'medium of divine affirmation for his uncertain position as bishop'.²⁰ Across the fourth century, and with a quickening pace in the fifth and sixth centuries, Rome's bishops made claims about their authority and slowly built institutions to express and exercise that authority. Some scholars assert that for a long time some areas of the city and some noble families were impervious to papal claims, but the claims are there all the same and I think that the inscriptions, alongside artistic patronage and construction, are one manifestation of those claims.²¹ Manuela Gianandrea offers a more subtle interpretation by insisting that in the fifth century we actually witness a kind of collaboration among bishops, priests, devout and wealthy aristocrats, emperors, and imperial officers.²² I will come back to this when I talk about what the inscriptions actually say. Damasus, and then his successors, planted their flags, so to speak, pretty broadly over Rome's suburbs. I see at least two possibilities for thinking about this. First, Damasus made himself, and created an opportunity for his

17 Guyon (1987) 413. Sághy (2000) 278–79 agrees.

18 See most recently and with abundant references Kinney (2017) and Gianandrea (2017), both in Foletti and Gianandrea (2017) 65–97 and 183–216. The chapters by Lucherini, Gianandrea, Guiglia, and Taddei in D'Onofrio (2016) summarize papal artistic patronage and construction work down to Sergius I (687–701). In general see the excellent discussion in Curran (2000) 116–57.

19 The LP 39.1 discreetly passes over the troubles but Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestarum*, 27.3.12–14, Rolfe, ed., vol. 3, 18–20 recounts the details with some relish. For a basic account see Caspar (1930), vol. 1, 196–99.

20 Sághy (2000) 273.

21 For various perspectives on this topic see Sessa (2012) 1–3 and passim; Hillner (2007), 225–61. Several of the articles in the Cooper and Hillner collection (2007) bear on the roles of the aristocracy in fourth- and fifth-century Rome. See also Machado and Humphries (2012) in Grig and Kelly (2012) 136–58, 161–82.

22 Gianandrea (2016): 79–86, 102–105.

successors, to be impresarios of Rome's cult of the martyrs. This may have been a way of creating new Christian identity for Rome and of placing Rome's bishops squarely in the center of the newly forming community. This just might have been a counter-punch to aristocratic opposition within the city or else a sign of growing papal leadership. Second, the *Liber Pontificalis* notes in some detail that Sylvester I, Damasus, Innocent I, and Sixtus III bestowed impressive endowments on several of Rome's churches.²³ The farms and/or revenues that made up those endowments were primarily located in Rome's suburbs. Federico Marazzi's fine study of the patrimony of the Roman Church down to the tenth century tells us a lot about the *Sancta Romana Ecclesia* in the strict sense and about urban churches more generally.²⁴ Chris Wickham's magisterial study of Rome between the ninth and twelfth centuries makes clear the tight and essential bonds between the city and the *agro Romano*.²⁵ At the very time when the popes were proclaiming their presence outside the city, they were beginning to build, renovate, and decorate churches inside the city – and outside too, of course – but from the time of Pope Sylvester down to 891 when the contemporary sequence of the *Liber Pontificalis* breaks off, about 70% of all papal construction and donation was inside the city.²⁶ I offer therefore the hypothesis that the popes were, by marking the suburbs, building relationships that had fundamental physical and material dimensions – which, of course, is not to deny the spiritual and ecclesiastical dimensions that were crucial for the suburban churches.

Thus far the location of the inscriptions. Let me turn now to another path of inquiry: context. I believe that the signed papal inscriptions can be situated within artistic, liturgical, conciliar, and what might almost be called industrial activities. For purposes of this discussion I shall draw evidence from the pontificates running from Sylvester I (314–335) to Constantine I (708–715). I end with Constantine because I believe that with the election of his successor Gregory II the late antique papacy ended and the medieval papacy began. But that is an argument for another day.

At least nine popes – Liberius, Simplicius, Felix IV, Pelagius II, Honorius, John IV, Theodore, Donus, and John VII put images of themselves in

23 LP 34.3–33, 39.4–5, 42.6, 46.3.

24 Marazzi (1998). For a fine appreciation of Marazzi's work see Costambeys (2000), 367–96 (the article is a double review, also taking into account the book by Azzara in n. 2 above). For a superb assessment of literally all the scholarship on the papal patrimonies in late antiquity see Moreau (2006) 79–93.

25 Wickham (2015).

26 I surveyed this activity in Noble (2000) 58–73.

various churches.²⁷ Liberius put his image in an *arcosolium* in the Praetextatus Catacomb, Pelgus II put his in San Lorenzo, Honorius put his in Sant'Agnese, and John VII put one of his three in the Marian Oratory in Old St Peter's. The rest are in the city: Simplicius in Santa Bibiana, Felix IV in Santi Cosma e Damiano, John IV and Theodore in San Venanzio, Donus in Santa Martina, and John VII in Santa Maria Antiqua and Santa Maria in Trastevere. We have very indistinct gold-glass images bearing the names of Julius I (337–352) and Damasus.²⁸ After the fire of 1823 in St Paul's, 41 images survived but they are preponderantly late and repainted. However, the series from St Peter to Urban I (222–230) reveal fifth-century style and there is evidence that Pope Leo I may have inaugurated this series of papal images in the basilica. The later popes were apparently painted in the Middle Ages.²⁹ There were papal images in Old St Peter's too but descriptions of them made before the building was demolished are too imprecise to say whether they were late antique or medieval. Thinking about imperial and consular images provides an opportunity to imagine the significance of popes placing their own images in public places. The scale of these phenomena are of course vastly different. Still, images, like inscriptions, create durable reminders of papal presence. In MacMullen's terms they speak to the present and to the future.

The remote origins of Rome's stationary liturgy may reach back as far as the second century, but the well-developed system that we find in *Ordo Romanus Primus*, which dates from around 700, took shape only in the fifth and sixth centuries.³⁰ Gradually stately processions that were designed for the Lenten season expanded to the whole of the liturgical year. The popes and a number of their high officials, preceded by crosses and banners, garbed in luxurious vestments, and bearing books, liturgical vessels, and relics processed across the city from one neighborhood to another. Leo I provided a full set of vessels for the stations.³¹ Doubtless other popes added to the collection. These impressive processions communicated both authority and prestige. They bore a certain similarity to both military triumphs and official *adventus*. When I think of a stationary procession I am reminded of Ammianus's colorful description of Constantius II parading through Rome – but not of the historian's wicked criticism.³² Be that as it may, Rome saw little imperial pomp after the middle

27 Ladner (1941), Friedrichs (2015) 137–38.

28 Ladner (1941) 30–32.

29 Ladner (1941) 38–57.

30 *Ordo Romanus Primus*, (1960) Andrieu, ed. 67–108. See in general Baldovin (1987) esp. 143–66 for Rome. Friedrichs (2015) 128–36. Rich in interpretive value is Romano (2014).

31 LP 47.6.

32 *Res Gestae*, 16.10.1–21, ed. Rolfe, vol. 1, 242–54.

of the fourth century so when the papal stations began to develop they represented the only game in town, so to speak. No one else, secular or clerical, put himself and in some sense his office on display the way Rome's bishops did.³³ And they did it routinely. At the stations, moreover, the popes preached. We have ninety-six surviving sermons from Pope Leo I (440–461) and we know in almost all cases the days on which they were preached.³⁴ The *Liber Pontificalis* says that Gregory I produced forty homilies on the Gospels, thirty-five on Job, and twenty on Ezekiel.³⁵ In many cases we do not know exactly when these were preached but we do have, from the year 591, a sequence of sermons delivered from April 15 to April 22 at Santa Maria Maggiore, St Peter's, San Lorenzo, and then three at the Lateran.³⁶ All the popes must have preached and it is only an accident of survival that we have today so few of their sermons. Speaking before an assembly of one's fellow Romans was both a privilege and an opportunity from the earliest days of the Republic. Speaking in one after another of Rome's great basilicas was not so very different from erecting signed messages or placing images in those buildings albeit the force of a sermon was evanescent.

Between 314 and 715 popes presided over 39 councils in Rome.³⁷ There was a council about every ten years on average. Of the 56 popes who reigned in these years 31 held no councils, as far as we know, while 25 did hold at least one. Damasus held 6. In 20 cases we do not know how many bishops attended or where they came from. In 19 cases we do know how many bishops attended and in some cases we have lists of signatories. The number of attendees ranged from a low of 5 to a high of 105. The average number of attendees was about 45. The overall list reveals some anomalies. There were no councils between 531 and 595. These were of course extremely difficult years for Italy, marked by the Gothic Wars and then the Lombard incursion. The absence of synodal activity in these years runs parallel to a sharp decline in the number of papal letters. Only 167 letters survive from these years and 99 of them come from Pelagius I (556–561). One has the impression that ecclesiastical business ground nearly to a halt. Still, of the eight popes who reigned during this synodal gap, five of them installed inscriptions. With the decline and eventual disappearance

33 I am sensitive to the fact that Humphries (2007) argues for a more persistent and important imperial presence in the city.

34 Leo I, *Sermones* (1973), Chavasse ed.

35 LP 66.1.

36 Jaffé (1885) vol. 1, 147–48.

37 The following tabulations are based on Jaffé (1885). The conciliar records may be found in Mansi, ed. (1759–65), vols. 3–12. The synods held under Symmachus are published in Mommsen (1894), 393–455.

of Rome's secular institutions, papal synods looked like the only deliberative assemblies in the city. The majority of attendees would have come from *Italia suburbicaria* and their pretty regular appearance with each other and with the popes will have been a significant enhancement and public representation of papal authority. One suspects that the population of the city grew quite accustomed to having visiting ecclesiastical dignitaries in their midst.

Last I come to the construction, renovation, and decoration of Roman churches within and without the city.³⁸ Of the 56 popes under consideration here, 40 built or renovated churches and/or made significant donations to them. A total of 75 churches were built or renovated, 30 in the city and 45 outside. Eighteen churches received donations, 10 in the city and 8 outside. These numbers permit some closer analysis. Between 530 and 555 the *Liber Pontificalis* records no construction, renovation, or donation with the single exception of Agapitus's installation of a library in the monastery on the Clivus Scauri. Things are then pretty grim again until the pontificate of Pelagius II (579–590) who built the great basilica of San Lorenzo, as well as a church at the cemetery of Hermes, and he made some donations. But for the period between 555 and 579 we hear only that Pelagius I began the basilica of Philip and James, or Santi Apostoli, and that John III completed it. We have noticed this same gap before. Every church in the city that has a surviving inscription was also the beneficiary of construction or renovation. Of the 21 churches outside the city that had inscriptions 8 do not preserve evidence of construction or renovation but these are all cemeterial churches and 8 cemeterial churches with inscriptions do in fact show construction. Given this close correlation between construction work and surviving inscriptions, and given that the number of churches with inscriptions represents about 43% of all the churches that reveal construction, I am led to think that we have lost a great many inscriptions. The donation records are mostly pretty straight forward. Liturgical vessels and light fixtures make up the preponderance of items donated by the popes to Rome's churches although we do hear of mosaics. Leo I, the *Liber Pontificalis* says, made significant donations of liturgical paraphernalia because of the "Vandal disaster" (*cladem Wandalicam*).³⁹ Yet we have no such report for Innocent I who was pope when the Visigoths forced their way into the city in 410. Innocent's *vita* does contain one particularly interesting fact. 'A certain illustrious woman Vespina' willed that enough of her jewels should be sold to finance the construction of a basilica in honor of Gervasius and

38 The following tabulations are based on the LP. And see above n. 18.

39 LP 47.6.

Protasius.⁴⁰ Innocent himself then made generous donations to that basilica. A Goth named Valila endowed the church of Sant'Andrea in Catabarbara that Simplicius built, apparently in the 470s.⁴¹ I wonder how many bequests like Vespina's and Valila's stand behind other papal construction or donation projects.⁴² Moreover, these generous acts show that the popes' relations with local notables were not always contentious.⁴³

For yet another time, then, we can see the popes putting their mark on Rome and its suburbs consistently and over a long period of time. The third century had seen the nadir of construction in Rome. Things picked up in the fourth and subsequent centuries, albeit the sixth and seventh centuries were a bit jejune. Yet now the church, indeed the papacy, was the party most responsible for the work. It is true that the three great basilicas of St Peter's, St Paul's, and the Lateran were imperial projects. Still, these three basilicas saw at least 28 papal construction or renovation projects and around 25 papal donations. Rome's populace can hardly have been blind to the fact that the popes were constantly improving the city-scape and putting a lot of people to work. That is patronage on a pretty massive scale. I do not know how many people like Vespina and Valila stood behind the papal projects but it does seem clear that the wealthy and influential no longer directed their evergetism to secular monuments. I suggested earlier that some at least of the papal attention to Rome's suburbs might have had a material dimension. The construction and donation records betray the expenditure of a lot of money and I am confident that a lot of that money was generated in the *agro Romano*. Finally, the very fact that papal officials retained the extraordinary records of construction, renovation, and donation that we now read in the pages of the *Liber Pontificalis* urges us to think that memorialization of papal activity was as high a priority as the activity itself.

Inscriptions, to close the circle, are a key form of memorialization too. Let me now turn to some of the most important things the papal inscriptions actually say. The series of inscriptions begins with Damasus. He placed inscriptions at both major churches and at the cemeteries and tombs of saints and martyrs. I am not aware of any earlier pope drawing attention to these sites. Damasus placed his commemorative poetic inscriptions, usually crafted in the beautiful

40 LP 42.3.

41 A detail preserved in the dedication inscription found in LP 1.250 (CLE 916.1–10).

42 Hillner (2007) 225–32. In the same volume see Cooper 165–89 and Kurdock 190–224.

43 See above for the possibility that collaboration may have been as prominent as contention (p. 63).

Philocalian script, at the following places (I include the ones that are legible and omit the small fragments):⁴⁴

| | |
|--|---|
| Cemetery of Commodilla | Felix and Adauctus |
| Cemetery of San Callisto | Tarsicius, various Saints, Pope Sixtus II, Pope Eusebius, Pope Cornelius |
| San Sebastiano | Peter and Paul, Eutychius |
| Cemetery of Praetextatus | Januarius, Felicissimus and Agapitus, Quirinus(?) |
| Cemetery <i>ad duas lauras</i> | Marcellinus and Peter, Tiburtius, Gorgonius |
| Cemetery of Ager Veranus (=San Lorenzo) | Lawrence |
| Cemetery of Hippolytus | Hippolytus |
| Cemetery of Sant'Agnese | Agnes |
| Cemetery of Priscilla | Felix and Philippus, Pope Marcellus |
| Cemetery of the Jordani | Alexander |
| Cemetery of Traso (= Church of Chrysanthus and Daria) | Maurus, Chrysanthus and Daria, Saturninus |
| Cemetery of Basilla at St Hermes | Protus and Hyacinthus, Hermes |

Damasus mounted a few more inscriptions that will capture our attention later.

His successors often continued the practice. Boniface commemorated Felicity at her cemetery;⁴⁵ Sixtus III celebrated Peter and Paul at San Pietro in Vincoli;⁴⁶ Simplicius fêted Andrew at Sant'Andrea in Catabarbara;⁴⁷ Symmachus commemorated Protus and Hyacinth and also St Andrew at the Vatican Rotunda;⁴⁸ Felix IV dedicated an apsed hall flanking Vespasian's Forum of Peace to Santi Cosma e Damiano (called only "the martyred physicians" in the inscription);⁴⁹ Pelagius I began and John III completed a church dedicated to Philip and

44 All are edited and beautifully translated in Trout (2015). I prefer this edition to the older one of Ferrua (1942). In every instance Trout references Ferrua for the convenience of those who have long used that edition. I quote Trout's translations throughout.

45 LP 1.229. ICUR 8, no. 23394. I did not have continuous access to all volumes of ICUR so I default to the texts published in LP and supply ICUR numbers when I have them.

46 CLE 912.3: *Latin Inscriptions* (2009) Lansford ed. 104–5.

47 LP 1.250; ICUR 2, no. 4106.

48 LP 1.265–66.

49 Ibid. 280.

James; the latter installed an inscription;⁵⁰ Pelagius II honored Lawrence at San Lorenzo;⁵¹ John IV honored the dedicatee at San Venanzio;⁵² as did Theodore at Santo Stefano Rotondo.⁵³ A few of these were of course inside the city – Sant’Andrea in Catabarbara, San Pietro in Vincoli, Santo Stefano Rotondo, and San Venanzio. There is no obvious pattern in these dedications and commemorations.

I will come back to one or two of these commemorations later but for now it can be said that, in general terms, the words of the inscriptions are something like holy boilerplate. They may or may not say something about the circumstances of a particular saint’s martyrdom but usually the inscription merely asks the viewer to be mindful that he or she is in the presence of saint so-and-so. Sometimes the inscribing pope invites the viewer to request the saint’s intercession and sometimes the pope asks the saint himself or herself to intercede for him. In almost all cases the inscription tells the viewer that a specific pope has drawn attention to this or that saint. That is what strikes me as interesting about them. The popes more or less ostentatiously named themselves as the founder or patron or promoter of a saint’s cult.

In a few cases popes used inscriptions to call attention to theological struggles and they portray themselves as defenders of the one true faith. The celebration of the Council of Ephesus in 432 by Sixtus III at his new basilica that we know as Santa Maria Maggiore is well known. The images on the triumphal arch have been the subject of many studies.⁵⁴ Less well known, perhaps, is the inscription that once stood above the front door. There Sixtus wrote ‘Virgin Mary, to you, I, Sixtus, dedicate this new building / worthy gifts to your saving womb.’ There was also an image with two processions of martyrs who were witnesses to the fruit of Mary’s saving womb and Sixtus goes on saying that Mary was pregnant though she knew not man and gave birth with an intact womb.⁵⁵ The Ephesian doctrine of the Theotokos was clearly emphasized here. In San Pietro in Vincoli Sixtus celebrated a certain Philip who was Celestine’s representative at Ephesus where “Christ triumphed for East and West”⁵⁶ In his famous inscription in the Lateran baptistery Sixtus says ‘By a virgin birth Mother Church (*Genetrix ecclesia*) brings forth children’ – another reference to

50 Ibid., 306; ILCV 1766a–b with ILCV 1767.

51 Ibid., 310; second inscription quoted is ICUR 7.18371.

52 Ibid., 330; ILCV 1786a.

53 Ibid., 334.

54 The classic remains Brenk (1975).

55 LP 1.235; ILCV 976.

56 CLE 912.7–8; *Latin Inscriptions* (2009) Lansford, ed., 104 (Latin), 105 (English).

Ephesus.⁵⁷ Silverius prepared an epitaph for Pope Hormisdas at St Peter's. I have not otherwise included papal epitaphs for reasons I mentioned earlier. But this one is especially interesting because Silverius says that Hormisdas, 'Captured by the love of Peter ... you healed the body of the fatherland that had been slashed by schism.'⁵⁸ The reference of course is to Hormisdas's successful conclusion to the Acacian Schism that had separated Rome and Constantinople for decades. There is, I think, a veiled reference to theological contention in Agapitus's inscription for the library he installed in the monastery on the Clivus Scauri. Addressing the books to be placed in the library Agapitus says 'Equal is our thanks to all of them for there was a single holy labor for them all. Their words to be sure were different but there was only one faith.'⁵⁹ Finally, on the altar of San Lorenzo Pelagius II says that God came down to earth to teach his disciples what they in turn should teach. The faithful people offer these gifts, that is the basilica and its furnishings, so that the Roman scepters would be wielded with a celestial hand and the true faith might be free.⁶⁰ If I am not mistaken this is a reference to the Second Council of Constantinople in 553, its condemnation of the Three Chapters at the behest of Justinian I, and the strife that followed that council.⁶¹ The Three Chapters controversy echoed down through the seventh century and Honorius mounted an inscription at the entrance to St Peter's that begins by paraphrasing that of Pelagius II and then goes on to address the schismatic situation in Istria.⁶² Again, the pope defends the true faith.

Finally, I come to the most persistent and interesting set of themes that recur constantly in the papal inscriptions. In different ways the texts celebrate the popes and the papacy, St Peter, the apostolic office, and a particular kind of Roman Christian identity. These inscriptions add both breadth and depth to the kinds of arguments that scholars have long drawn from sources such as papal letters and the *Liber Pontificalis*. Ordinary Roman people never saw a papal letter and never read the *Liber Pontificalis* but they could not have avoided seeing the visible and prominent assertions made in the inscriptions.

Among the persons whom they commemorated, popes took a notable interest in their predecessors. Damasus erected a baptistery at St Peter's and memorialized his famous predecessor. At San Callisto Damasus mentioned by

57 Ibid., 232 (ILCV 1513.7–8): *Virgineo fetu genetrix ecclesia natos / quos spirante Deo concipit amne parit.*

58 LP 1.274; ICUR 2, no. 1450.

59 Ibid., 288; CLE 1842.

60 Ibid., p. 310; ICUR 2, no. 4117.

61 On all of these issues see most recently Chazelle and Cubitt (2007). I do not recall that any author included in the volume mentioned Agapitus's inscription.

62 LP 1.325; ICUR 2, no. 4119. See Scholz (2016) 128–30.

name Sixtus II in two different *elogia* and this was a place whose crypt held the bodies of nine third-century popes.⁶³ In the same place he mounted an *elogium* to Pope Eusebius. Likewise a badly damaged tablet appears to commemorate Damasus' work in facilitating access to the tomb of Pope Cornelius. At San Sebastiano Damasus put up an inscription saying that Peter and Paul had once been buried there. His *elogium* to Felicissimus and Agapitus at the cemetery of Praetextatus mentions their bishop Sixtus whose faith the saints had imitated. Similarly he celebrated Pope Marcellus, who had bravely withstood the attack of Maxentius, at the cemetery of Priscilla. Along the Via Flaminia Damasus memorialized a Marcus that some scholars have taken to be Pope Marcus who reigned briefly in 336.⁶⁴ The inscription in Santa Sabina memorializing the church's foundation mentions Pope Celestine.⁶⁵ Sixtus III blessed the church of San Pietro in Vincoli in the name of Peter and Paul together.⁶⁶ He also placed a slab at San Callisto bearing the names of twenty popes.⁶⁷ Galla Placidia set an inscription in St Paul's thanking 'Pontiff Leo' for renewing her father's work.⁶⁸ Symmachus dedicated an oratory at St Peter's to Andrew "the brother of Peter who suffered dreadfully."⁶⁹ The work was completed by Pope John (II) *Iohannes hoc composuit opus* who added an inscription saying "Peter, gatekeeper of eternity, crowns the *porticus*."⁷⁰ Silverius, as I already noted, commemorated Hormisdas who healed the Acacian schism because of his love for Peter. In his altar inscription at San Lorenzo Pelagius II says that the faith had been preserved "by the power of Peter."⁷¹ Finally, Sergius moved the tomb of Leo I into St Peter's because it had been obscured by surrounding monuments.⁷² Taken together I think these commemorations constitute impressive testimony to a sense of personal and official succession. One important dimension of office is official continuity.

I have mentioned commemorations of Peter several times. In the inscription for his new baptistery at St Peter's Damasus calls Peter 'his surety' and 'the gatekeeper of heaven.' He says, further, that 'as there is one see of Peter so there is one baptism.' And Damasus calls himself *antistes Christi*. Damasus'

63 Webb (2001) 231; Borgolte (1989) 21–24.

64 All in Trout (2015).

65 CLE 312; Lansford (2009), 168: *Culmen apostolicum cum Caelestinus haberet*.

66 CLE 912.3; *Latin Inscriptions* (2009) Lansford ed., 104: *haec Petri Paulique simul nunc nomine signo / Xystus apostolicae sedis honore fruens*.

67 LP 1.236.

68 *Latin Inscriptions* (2009) Lansford ed., 182.

69 LP 1.265–66; ICUR 2, no. 1426.

70 Ibid. 267; ICUR 2, no. 4116.

71 Ibid. 310; ICUR, 2, no. 4117.

72 Ibid. 379; ICUR 2, no. 4148.

inscription at his *titulus* of San Lorenzo in Damaso thanks Christ who ‘wished to grant to me the honor of the apostolic see.’⁷³ At Santa Sabina Celestine ‘possessed the apostolic preeminence and shone forth as the first bishop in all the world.’⁷⁴ As Erik Thunø notes the huge and beautiful inscription on the end wall of Santa Sabina has the word PETRUS right in its middle. This example confirms his point that inscriptions had both textual and visual dimensions.⁷⁵ At San Pietro in Vincoli Sixtus III says ‘I, Sixtus, who enjoys the honor of the apostolic see.’⁷⁶ The Symmachan oratories at the Lateran were completed by John II *quem rite coronat Urbis Romanae pontificalis apex*.⁷⁷ And as I noted, ‘Peter, the gate keeper of heaven, crowns the *porticus*’. In San Pietro in Vincoli John was ‘raised to the pontifical glory’ and so he made an offering to ‘the blessed apostle Peter, his patron.’⁷⁸ Pelagius, again, attributed the preservation of the faith to ‘the power of Peter (*Petri virtute*).’⁷⁹ In his chapel of the martyrs in Santo Stefano Rotondo we read *pastoris summi Theodori*.⁸⁰ And, last, Sergius moved the tomb of Leo I to ‘where the final glory of the pontiff will be greater.’⁸¹ For three centuries popes connected themselves to Peter, heaven’s guardian. They were his successors. They held, his, the apostolic office. They were the world’s first bishop and highest pastor.⁸²

In a closely related theme we can see the popes placing themselves, and being placed, at the head of a particular kind of community. I have already signaled the intimate relationship that popes claimed with Rome’s martyrs. This suggests a kind of bond between Rome’s living and dead, a kind of celestial society whose earthly head was the pope. Damasus says that the ‘glory of the Roman people rejoices in the saints.’⁸³ Who are those people? The Romans, to be sure, but a very special kind of Romans. On three occasions Damasus mentioned martyrs who came to Rome, died there, and became “citizens”: Peter and Paul, St Saturninus, and St Hermes.⁸⁴ Of what polity were they citizens? On the triumphal arch of Santa Maria Maggiore we can still read

73 Damasus, *ep.* 4 and 57.

74 CLE 312.3; *Latin Inscriptions* (2009) Lansford ed., 168: *Culmen apostolicum cum Caelestinus haberet / primus et in toto fulgeret episcopus orbe.*

75 Thunø (2007): 31–32.

76 CLE 912.4; *Latin Inscriptions* (2009), 104.

77 ICUR 2, no. 4116.5.

78 *Latin Inscriptions* (2009) Lansford ed., 102.

79 LP 1.310; ICUR 2, no. 4117.

80 LP 1.334.

81 *Ibid.* 379; ICUR 2, no. 4148.15–20.

82 See Maccarrone (1991).

83 Damasus, *ep.* 25.6.

84 Damasus, *ep.* 20, 46, 48.

XYSTUS EPISCOPUS PLEBEI DEI, 'Sixtus bishop for the people of God'.⁸⁵ Richard Krautheimer observed that this phrase 'has a flavor both Biblical and classical'.⁸⁶ Indeed, it does, not least in its use of *PLEBI* instead of *POPULO*. In Republican times *plebs* referred to the common people, not to the Roman people as a whole. In late Latin the words were synonymous.⁸⁷ I think that Sixtus's use of *plebs* was a deliberate, ideologically inflected anachronism. I heartily agree with Marianne Sághy who speaks of Damasus's 'creative recycling of *Romanitas*'. She goes on to say that the bishop 'sought to anchor his Church and his authority in distinctly Roman 'patriotic' traditions' doing so in part by means of a 'sophisticated and subversive referencing of the past'⁸⁸

Damasus was not alone in doing all this. In the oratory of St John the Baptist at the Lateran we find *HILARIUS EPISCOPUS SANCTAE PLEBEI DEI*, Bishop Hilary for the holy people of God.⁸⁹ Note how Damasus's 'people' have become Hilary's 'holy people'. As noted already, Theodore called himself *pastor summus*. Surely this was the populace within which the martyrs had become citizens and of which the pope was the highest pastor. These are the people referenced in the first line of Sixtus III's inscription in the Lateran baptistery: 'Here from a fostering seed is born a people to be consecrated to heaven.' A few lines further on Sixtus wrote 'By a virgin birth Mother Church brings forth in the river / the children whom she conceives by the breath of God'.⁹⁰ The people of God, the Roman citizens, were the children of Mother Church. But before Sixtus, Damasus had already said this in dramatic, expressive language. In recounting the savage deaths of the martyrs Damasus five times used the phrase *tempore quo gladius secuit pia viscera matris* – 'in the days when the sword hacked at the holy guts of our mother'.⁹¹ Mother here can only mean the church, the holy people, the people intended for heaven, the people whose pastor was the apostolic, the heir of Peter.

In conclusion, I have tried to show how by papal images, liturgical processions, synodal meetings, and by the building, renovating, and decorating of churches the popes put their stamp on Rome and its environs in similar ways over the four centuries following the Constantinian peace of the church. Then I tried to show how the papal inscriptions, by their very existence and location,

85 ILCV 975; LP 1.235. The inscriptions that I print in capitals are found in majuscules. Editions usually reproduce them in capitals.

86 Krautheimer (1980) 49.

87 Lewis and Short (1879) 1386, s.v. *plebs*.

88 Sághy (2016) 314.

89 LP 1.245.

90 *Latin Inscriptions*. (2009) Lansford ed., 232 (I cite his translation from 233).

91 Damasus, *ep.* 17.1, 31.1, 35.3, 43.1 and 46.3.

and by what they actually say, did much the same thing albeit more explicitly, although no less consistently. The inscriptions have been primarily the preserve of technically proficient epigraphers and of literary scholars who study Latin Christian poetry. They have almost never been brought into discussions of the “rise of the papacy” and that rise is in reality the agenda behind my study. In recent decades some scholars have queried the rise of the papacy.⁹² I share their concerns but not their conclusions. Leaving aside the work of the truly great nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars, I think that most of the skeptics have aimed their interpretative weapons at the work of Walter Ullmann. Like them, I too am skeptical about the vast claims that Ullmann made for *The Growth of Papal Government*. Papal government, understood as institutions, did in fact begin emerging as early as the fourth century. The evidence for those institutions cannot be dismissed out of hand. But papal government grew slowly, awkwardly, and all too often in ways that later evidence makes very difficult to trace back coherently into late antiquity. It is well and good to issue dire warnings about teleology. But the papacy is the world’s oldest continuously functioning institution. It did grow and the seeds of its growth were planted in late antiquity. What people really object to in Ullmann’s approach is his insistence that abstract claims to authority and power, usually expressed in ideological and ecclesiological terms, had any real purchase on the late antique world. It is easy to show that papal claims often went unheeded and it is an incontrovertible fact that late antique popes lacked the coercive tools necessary to make good on their grander claims.

But my claim is different. I find no Nicholas I, or Gregory VII, or Innocent III, or Boniface VIII, or Pius IX in late antiquity. Instead, I am claiming that, as a famous American politician once said, ‘All politics are local’. Between the fourth century and the early eighth the popes built a distinctive local community over which they claimed authority on the basis of apostolic succession, pastoral office, and official continuity. I concede that the popes struggled at times to make their authority good in their own locality. George Demacopoulos argues that popes made claims primarily in times of crisis. He is only partly right about that, for he overlooks that claims, in the very broad sense in which I have tried to treat claims, were not exclusive to times of crisis. What is more, times of crisis can be generative of both dynamic claims and decisive actions. I have tried to show that claims and actions ran parallel, were articulated in concrete and not in abstract terms, and proved to be of lasting significance. If the papacy did not “rise” in late antiquity, then when did it rise?

92 See above n. 2 for the literature on both sides of this issue.

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Attitudes to Jewish and Roman Power in the *Gospel* and *Acts of Peter*

Markus Bockmuehl

1 The Complex Peter of Scripture and Reception

Simon Peter's historic footprint in early Christian texts and traditions is one of multiple tensions and contradictions.¹ We have Peter the uneducated fisherman and yet the confident public speaker and miracle worker. The religiously conservative and potentially militant country bumpkin and the outward-looking pioneer of a missionary agenda open to Samaritans and to Gentiles, from Palestine across Asia Minor to Rome. Peter the eyewitness and the pillar, the timid deserter and the martyr, the apocalyptic visionary and yet paradoxically the reposer and guarantor of narrative tradition about Jesus of Nazareth.

This sheer ambiguity and multidimensionality of images, evidence, and texts can be disorientating throughout the history of interpretation reception, whether one begins with Paul's polemical early testimony about Peter in the New Testament letter to the Galatians, or probes backwards from later texts of Roman or Eastern (e.g. Pseudo-Clementine) origin, or for that matter from early modern clashes between traditionalist Catholic and hyper-Paulinist Protestant polemics. In other words, this complex persona of early Christian memory does indeed appear to combine within himself the tensely complementary vectors of pioneering innovation and 'anchored' tradition.

2 Peter as Legitimator of Ecclesial Power?

One still finds Peter popularly interpreted as an implicit legitimator of power – especially the power of a church historically prone to excesses of clericalism

1 I am grateful for perceptive feedback and suggestions from members of the Oxford New Testament Seminar (12 May 2017) as well as from the volume editor Roald Dijkstra and other participants at the "Anchoring Innovation" conference in Amsterdam (29–31 May 2017). Revised 25 January 2018.

and privilege, but also to concordats or tacit collusions with oppressive regimes through the ages. This accusation that the Petrine office serves as a cover for unjustified or abusive assertions of power is by no means an innovation of the 21st century, but dates back to the second or even the first.²

After all, did not already the New Testament's first letter attributed to the apostle deploy him in the service of an instruction to submit to every human institution, from marriage to slavery all the way to the Emperor himself (1 Pet 2.13–3.8)? And did not this same Peter, empowered in Matthew as the key holder of the kingdom of God and the rock on which the church would be built (Matt 16.17–19), go on to take upon himself in the Acts of the Apostles the sort of disciplinary power over life and death that might befit an aspiring autocratic ruler of the church (Acts 5.1–11)?

This brief study provides no occasion to dismantle such facile polarizing scripts for the historical footprint of Peter, which have in any case fortunately fallen out of favour among more thoughtful writers on the subject. Broadly speaking, the Apostle is now rather less commonly depicted as a vacillating irrelevance, a polarizing conservative opponent of the true (read: Pauline) gospel, or for that matter the primarily mythical figment of authoritarian 'early catholic' churchmen. And in relation to Roman power the New Testament Peter advocates both submission to imperial authority *and* resistance to imperial persecution emanating from 'Babylon' almost in the same breath (cf. 1 Pet 2.13–17 with 5.8–10, 13).

It does, however, seem worthwhile to query and problematize the assumption of an early Petrine legitimation of power by examining briefly his portrait in two highly influential second-century documents.

2.1 *Jewish and Roman Power in Early Christian Apocrypha*

Second-century Christian apologists frequently deal with themes like the unreasonableness of pagan religion, the unlawfulness of the Roman treatment of Christians, and the rebuttal of slanderous popular prejudice about Christian immorality – not uncommonly including incest and cannibalism.

2 In the second and third centuries here in view, critiques of Roman or Petrine ecclesial authority occasionally surfaces among writers from Asia Minor in relation to the date of Easter (e.g. Polycrates: Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 3.31.3; 5.24.2) and to the status of the apostolic tombs (the Montanist Proclus in debate with Gaius the Elder: Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 2.25.7). In a less institutionally focused way, the probably Egyptian *Gospel of Mary* is also critical of Peter – though this appears here to concern not his ecclesial authority but his exclusion of Mary Magdalene on the grounds of her sex (as already in *Gospel of Thomas* 114). In the third century, a clearer case in point is the dispute between Cyprian and Pope Stephen about Rome's handling of the validity of heretics' baptism (Cyprian, *Letter* 75.6.2, 16.1, 17.3).

Not many of these relatively intellectual apologetic concerns surface in typically non-elite Christian apocryphal literature, which almost invariably addresses the needs of a more popular audience.³ Nevertheless, the martyrs' acts do share an explicit concern with the experience of persecution.

While the topic of martyrdom itself – including that of Peter under Nero – has been the subject of quite sharp critical debates in recent years,⁴ there is little doubt that the ebb and flow of real or perceived Roman oppression does provide the context in which these texts need to be understood. There were indeed substantial periods of relative calm and tolerance in each of the first three centuries, some ancient and later Christian rhetoric notwithstanding. Yet recent scholarship has also shown the Imperial view of the world to require widespread consent and consensus about the rule of Roman law and Roman culture, including the universal acceptance of an approved state pantheon.⁵ While there is little or no evidence of any concerted Empire-wide action against Christians in the first couple of centuries, irritation at the nuisance and obstinacy of Christian non-participation in this consensus is already evident in local Roman accounts like that of Pliny the Younger (c.61–c.112) in Bithynia, and continues to be a feature of many of the well-known martyrs' acts.⁶ A little later the more sophisticated apologists especially of the third century, like Tertullian or Lactantius, began to appeal more extensively to Roman legal principles of jurisprudence and fair trial.

Actual accounts of persecution in the apocrypha are remarkably unspecific, and tend instead to deploy familiar tropes of imperial oppression in which the individual persecutors appear, whether named or anonymous, primarily as apparatchiks for the brittle and bungling structures of power that they represent and on whose behalf they act.⁷ The character depiction of both Roman and Jewish opponents tends to be flat and hackneyed, typically manifesting little discretion or strength of mind, and these figures are indeed 'fickle, fearful and passionate' rather like the Emperor himself.⁸ Roman officials appear in the popular Stoic caricature as immoderate men governed by their passions

3 Rightly noted by Moss (2015) 381.

4 E.g. Moss (2013) and reviews by Radner (2013) et al.

5 So e.g. the justly influential work of Ando (2000) 407 and *passim*.

6 So also Moss (2015), citing Rordorf (1982), Sherwin-White (1963) and others. It is conceivable that Pliny's account of anti-Christian measures in Bithynia (*Letter* 96) is in part anticipated a little earlier in a text like 1 Pet 4.12–19, also addressed *inter alia* to Bithynia (1.1).

7 Cf. Moss (2015).

8 Moss (2015) 383.

of irrational anger and fear by contrast with Christians, whose conduct is principled but even-tempered and reasonable.⁹

The causes of such hostility and persecution are rarely clear in these writings, but they do sometimes attribute them to resentment or jealousy. The former appears because of the effect the Christian preaching repeatedly has on the conversion of women who then resolve to be celibate and thus incur the wrath of their non-Christian husbands. This is a motif that has rightly been recognized as of symbolic implication for Christianity's affirmation of the spiritual and social status of women. It also has the effect of questioning and reconfiguring Roman marriage conventions as indicative of the Roman social and political order as a whole.¹⁰ A motivation of *jealousy* by contrast tends to arise in relation to *religious* rivals, including false prophets and Jewish opponents.¹¹

3 Two Case Studies: the *Gospel of Peter* and the *Acts of Peter*

My two case studies instantiate and focus these general observations for the case of Peter. One could instead have selected a number of other apocrypha from this period. These two, however, have in their favour a notable degree of influence and popularity. In the case of the *Gospel of Peter* this is documented by a relatively modest but early and sustained basis of ancient citations and manuscript attestation beginning in the second century,¹² while the Petrine *Acts* seem after their second-century origin to have grown and generated a substantial body of ancient manuscripts, translations and highly influential secondary apocrypha including the Pseudo-Clementines.¹³

For present purposes, both texts matter not only for their relative prominence, but because they permit an interesting correlation in the apocryphal Petrine attitude to Jewish and Roman power in the martyrdoms of Jesus and of his apostle, respectively. Although originating from different geographic

9 Moss (2015) 384: 'The passion of the judges is offset by the calmness of the martyr's response. As stubborn as they were, the apostles remain composed. They never match the prosecutor's tone, only his rhetoric.'

10 Cf. Moss (2015) 385.

11 This is evident in the *Acts of Peter* in relation to Simon Magus, and perhaps to a lesser extent in the *Gospel of Peter* in relation to Jewish authorities. But it is also notably relevant in relation to *1 Clement* 5, where 'jealousy' may well mean religious 'zeal'. See Bockmuehl (2010) 114–32.

12 P.Oxy. 2949 and perhaps 4009; early mentions by Serapion in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.12.3–6; Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 10.17.

13 See e.g. Thomas (2003) 40–71 and *passim*; Baldwin (2005; 2008).

and chronological settings in the second century, what makes this correlation interesting is that both documents explicitly articulate their views of Jewish and of Roman authority in the voice of the apostle himself. (This is in contrast to the authorial attributions of a number of other apocrypha, Petrine or otherwise, which may turn out to manifest few specific connections in the texts themselves.)

By way of orientation to these second-century texts that are no longer widely known today, we will set both of them in context before turning to specific passages.

3.1 *The Gospel of Peter*

Like other early Christian apocrypha, the *Gospel of Peter* has attracted lively scholarly debate in recent years, including major new commentaries.¹⁴ Although in antiquity it was in certain circles preserved and read (or at least known about) for several centuries, our knowledge of this text today derives entirely from manuscript discoveries of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The main text fragment was found in 1886–87 in a seventh-century parchment codex in a monastic tomb at the site of Akhmim in Upper Egypt. In addition to a brief extract from what was soon widely accepted as the *Gospel of Peter*, the same codex contained the *Apocalypse of Peter*, parts of the Greek version of *1 Enoch* 1–27 and a martyrdom of St Julian. The *Gospel of Peter*'s original date of composition is now widely agreed to be in the second half of the second century.¹⁵

In terms of its narrative content, our single seventh-century Akhmim MS of the *Gospel of Peter* concerns the story of Jesus' trial and crucifixion and especially the events that follow it. Despite some enthusiastic scholarly advocates, substantive textual continuity with one or (less likely) two second-century fragments from Oxyrhynchus certainly cannot be taken for granted. Much of the overlap with P.Oxy. 2949, for example, depends on reconstructions from the Akhmim text, while the *Gospel of Peter*'s attestation in other papyri is still less likely.¹⁶ Nevertheless, some motifs of a continuous tradition may be detected even in the absence of extensive *verbal* stability between Oxyrhynchus and Akhmim.

14 Foster (2010); Nicklas (*forthcoming*); see previously Kraus & Nicklas (2004; 2007); also Vinzent and Nicklas (2012).

15 Foster (2010) 172 suggests 150–190 CE. The critical issues surrounding this fascinating text are more fully discussed in Foster's commentary and other recent literature. See also Bockmuehl (2017).

16 See my discussion of P.Oxy. 2949 and related fragments in Bockmuehl (2017) 147–50.

The extant story opens with ‘the Jews’ refusing to follow Pilate’s example in washing his hands (*Gos. Pet.* 1; cf. *Matt* 27.24). Interestingly, ‘the Jews’ are here clearly instantiated in the Jewish authorities,¹⁷ at first specifically Herod Antipas ‘and his judges’. Joseph (presumably of Arimathea) asks his ‘friend’ Pilate for Jesus’ body before the crucifixion takes place. But it is Herod who commands Jesus to be taken away with explicit orders to ‘do to him as I ordered you’ (ἴσα ἐκέλευσα ὑμῖν ποιῆσαι αὐτῷ ποιήσατε, 2). And it is Herod who confirms that Jewish unlike Roman law requires the burial of the crucified.

Preparations for the killing are described in remarkably violent terms: the mob continues to ‘drag’ Jesus to the site of the crucifixion, mocking him as they go and exulting in the ‘power’ (ἐξουσίαν, 6) they wield over him.

In the entire discourse Jesus speaks only once, in a striking alteration of the Marcan cry of dereliction from the cross: ‘my power, the power, you have forsaken me’ (ἡ δύναμις μου, ἡ δύναμις, κατέλειψάς με, 19).¹⁸

The account *after* the crucifixion stresses the apostles’ fear of the Jewish authorities and elaborates in great detail Matthew’s story of the Roman guards at the tomb (*Matt* 27.62–66; 28.4, 11–15), identifying the centurion as Petronius, the attachment of seven seals to the tomb, the presence of Jewish elders and priests with the guard, and the nature of the night watch arrangements. An interesting feature of the narrative is the apparent repentance of the Jewish leaders ‘when they realized how much evil they had done to themselves’ (25).

Unlike in any of the canonical gospels, the rolling away of the tombstone by angels on Sunday morning is watched by the soldiers, their centurion Petronius and a number of Jewish leaders (34–37). Famously they also witness two angels exit the tomb supporting a third man and followed by a moving cross that reaches to heaven and confirms that Jesus has proclaimed to those who are asleep (41, see also Burnet’s contribution to this volume).

Several other accounts conclude the story about the bribing of the Roman guard and present an angelic appearance to Mary Magdalene and her friends (50–56). The manuscript breaks off with Peter, Andrew and Levi going back to fishing (58–60) – leaving us to speculate whether a further resurrection

17 This possibility of a more focused understanding of ‘the Jews’ in this text is often denied by commentators (e.g. Foster (2010) 298, 351–53, 414 and *passim*). A number of scholars, however, have in recent years called for a more nuanced interpretation: see my discussion in Bockmuehl (2017) 145–46 and literature cited there.

18 Scholarly explanations of this statement abound, and many plausibly suspect a christological explanation. If Matthew’s Greek translation at 27.46 was deemed problematic, a Gentile scribe attempting to secure a more acceptable interpretation of Matthew’s mysterious Hebrew might well be offered חֵילִי חֵילִי for an attempted vocalization of ἡλι ἡλι with a rough breathing – and hence ‘my power, my power’.

appearance like that at the Sea of Galilee in John 21 may have been intended to follow.¹⁹

In terms of the *Gospel of Peter's* relevance for the apocryphal Peter's relationship to power, perhaps the most important observation is the fact that responsibility for the actual execution of Jesus has more clearly shifted from Pilate and the Romans to 'the people' or 'the Jews', apparently the Jewish leaders, to whom he is in fact surrendered not by Pilate but by Herod Antipas (1; cf. e.g. 5–6, 14, 23).

In the New Testament, for all the responsibility borne by the scheming Jerusalem high priesthood or by the hostile complicity of pliable crowds (whom John too not infrequently calls 'the Jews'), it is Roman soldiers who carry out the crucifixion itself. Even so, the ambiguity of reference to the Jewish authorities in certain New Testament passages evidently engendered a well-known and notorious aftermath in the accusation that it was Jews – 'the Jews' – who murdered Christ. Mark 15.16–24 and Matt 27.26–35 have Pilate handing Jesus over to 'the soldiers' who carry out the mockery and execution, but the grammar of Luke 23.13, 25–26 already appears to envisage the active involvement of 'the chief priests, the rulers and the people,' while John 19.15–18 has Pilate delivering Jesus over to 'the chief priests' who take him out to Golgotha where 'they' crucify him. Even a Pauline letter predating the composition of the New Testament gospels already affirms that 'the Jews ... killed the Lord Jesus' (1 Thess 2.15).

The *Gospel of Peter* takes this trend one step further. The Roman authorities, and Pilate in particular, seem *almost entirely* absolved of responsibility – setting the stage for subsequent Christian legend that went on to paint him even more positively as a convert or even a saint.²⁰ Yet Pilate is only 'almost entirely' absolved: there is an important qualification which we will note in a moment.

Meanwhile, what accounts for the intensification of hostility especially to the Jewish authorities? The most plausible analyses in my view tend to see here an apologetic motive re-appropriating the proto-canonical gospel narratives for the changed circumstances of a second-century context.²¹ On this reading the text sheds light on a setting in which Christians may have experienced Jewish rather than Roman hostility as the greater threat. This is perhaps

19 Cf. Bockmuehl (2017) 226–28 and *passim* on the surprising absence of matching (baptism-to-crucifixion) or rival biographical narrative frames in this and other non-canonical Gospels.

20 Both anti-Judaism and the whitewash of Pilate are taken considerably further in the medieval cycles of Pilate and Nicodemus literature. For further discussion see Bockmuehl (2017) 156–59.

21 Cf. e.g. Henderson (2011) 221–24 (and *passim*); Nicklas (2001).

paralleled in the so-called *Preaching of Peter* (*Kerygma Petrou*), as well as in the Greek *Apocalypse of Peter* (which turned up together with this *Gospel* in the same Akhmim MS). Analogous situations of heightened tension with a Jewish majority have of course been proposed for John's Gospel too.

Despite this possible setting, the picture of 'the Jews' in the *Gospel of Peter* remains in fact strikingly ambivalent: unlike in the New Testament, it is precisely the people of 'the Jews' who beat their breast in the face of the coming judgment as they acknowledge how evil their actions have been (25, 28; cf. Luke 23.48), since the executed 'Son of God' was 'righteous' (6, 9, 29). Indeed this lament for the injustice committed is carried out by 'all the people' (ὁ λαὸς ἅπας, 28). That said, we must note a significant and sustained contrast with the authoritative group of scribes, Pharisees and elders. A few scholars have suspected here a nuanced and deliberate distinction between what is said of the Jewish people and what is attributed primarily to their leadership.²²

Although Peter himself is hardly mentioned by name, he is in fact crucial to this narrator. To some extent his image as a witness and guarantor of the Jesus tradition is nourished by the Marcan and Synoptic narrative itself.²³ But for the *Gospel of Peter* this becomes explicit not just in the ancient title²⁴ but in the first-person narrative voice that speaks both in the plural for the disciples as a whole and in the singular in Peter's own voice. That voice is here deployed to lend the expanded passion narrative the authority of Peter, which in the canonical gospels seems notably absent from the proceedings. Although explicitly stressed in Matthew and implicitly affirmed in Mark, this apostle's presence in the passion seems downplayed and indeed eliminated altogether after his denial.

In general terms this accentuates and authorizes the narrative's more distinctive features – including, for example, some of the more impressively miraculous elements surrounding the resurrection. But more specifically we may also take account of the way in which the narrative voice associates Peter with a standpoint that is notably offset against *both* Jewish and Roman Imperial authority.

22 So most fully Augustin (2015) 279–82 and *passim*; cf. further Nicklas (2014) 35–47, Shoemaker (1999), and Tomson (2001) on anti-Jewish tendencies in other ancient Christian gospel-related apocrypha.

23 Cf. e.g. Bockmuehl (2012) 67–88, 131–41.

24 Although we cannot be certain about the origin of the title, it is explicitly used in the main surviving seventh-century MS from Akhmim. Prior to that one finds reference to a gospel in the name of Peter as early as Serapion of Antioch (c. 190: in Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 6.12.3–6), which may or may not be the same work. Further discussion and references in Bockmuehl (2017) 137–50.

Two passages may suffice to illustrate what I suspect could be established as a feature of the *Gospel of Peter* as a whole.

Section 26 illustrates an attitude of shock, grief, and fear of the Jewish authorities on the part of the disciples, here explicitly said to include Peter in the first person singular ('I and my friends'). Interestingly, although post-crucifixion 'fear of the Jews' is a motif also found in John's Gospel (19.38; 20.19), only the *Gospel of Peter* envisages an actual persecution of the disciples in connection with a specific threat to the Temple.

Most strikingly, Peter and the disciples are in this passage suspected of trying to *set fire* to the Jerusalem Temple (ἐμπρηῆσαι). This motif is patently absent from the New Testament and other Christian sources, but was of course distinctively associated with Vespasian's soldiers in the year 70.²⁵ Perhaps this is a subtle post-70 hint that the real enemies threatening the 'judgment' and 'the end of Jerusalem' (25) were not in fact the followers of Jesus?

Similar sentiments of fear towards Jewish authorities are expressed elsewhere in the text (e.g. 50, 52, 54). Mary Magdalene in particular is said to be afraid of 'the Jews' and even 'to be seen by the Jews' (perhaps again short for the elders and priests) 'because they were burning with anger' (50).

Section 46–50 once again highlight Pilate's assertion of innocence in the matter of Christ's death and places the blame squarely on the shoulders of those who agitated first for the execution and then for the guard at the tomb.

At the same time, however, Pilate appears here to have turned subtly but clearly into a rather more complex and problematic figure, who is by no means roundly exonerated. He clearly offends against his own better knowledge in order to satisfy the political expediency of protecting his Jewish henchmen.²⁶ To be sure, Matthew's compromised Pilate must in some sense stand in the background here (27.11–26). Yet the *Gospel of Peter* goes decidedly further in its distinctive theme of Pilate's active collusion with the Jewish leadership's demand for a cover-up. This seems in salient ways to qualify the earlier emphasis on Pilate's exoneration, request for burial, friendship with Joseph of

25 Josephus, *War* 6.165 (ἐμπρηῆσαντες). Even in the post-Constantinian period there is no substantive evidence of any Christian burning of pagan temples – although the destruction of pagan temples does feature repeatedly in later texts. A spontaneous destruction (not burning) of the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus in response to the preaching of St John already surfaces in the probably third-century *Acts of John* (38–44). This may be an early reflection of that Temple's destruction by fire on the part of Gothic warlords in the year 268, according to the sixth-century chronicler Jordanes (*Getica* 20.107: *Ephesiae Dianae templum ... igne succendunt*, 'they set on fire the temple of Ephesian Diana').

26 See Augustin (2015) 282–84; cf. Omerzu (2007).

Arimathia, etc. If that reading is correct, there is no straightforward political whitewash here.

The second-century *Gospel of Peter* represents an apologetic *relecture* and expansion of the Matthean passion narrative for a possibly Syrian Gentile readership under duress, for whom the gospel's *reinsertion* of Peter's authority as a witness of the passion and resurrection events provided comfort and reassurance.²⁷ In that respect our text falls some way short of this volume's interest in the later deployment of the apostle to legitimise change and innovation in existing as well as new power institutions, whether papal, aristocratic, or imperial.

3.2 *The Acts of Peter*

The late second-century *Acts of Peter* represents a rather different case in several important respects. Critical problems abound in any serious discussion of this puzzling, not to say infuriating, document that mixes the occasional pinch of collective memory with many a pound of wild fancy. The narrative perhaps originated in Rome and underwent subsequent extensive redaction and embellishment in the East, possibly in Asia Minor. Its Greek original survives only in the *Martyrdom* and in a small fragment from Oxyrhynchus (P.Oxy. 849). For present purposes I will treat the *Martyrdom* as essentially dating from the late second century in its content even if not its wording, while allowing that the stable text form of the more complete Latin Vercelli MS more likely dates from the fourth century.

The text highlights Paul's preaching at the start (1.2) and then majors on Peter's attempts to win the church of Rome back from its beguilement by the false prophet Simon Magus. In order to concentrate on the *Martyrdom* account we will here spend less time on the preceding series of paradoxical and exotic miracles: Peter's contest with Simon Magus is replete with such party pieces as a talking dog, a swimming smoked mackerel, the killing of a boy by Simon's word and his resuscitation by that of Peter, a flying contest and a good deal else. Finally a plot on Peter's life is revealed and the fellow believers urge him to leave the city. After initially rejecting the suggestion,²⁸ Peter leaves the city in disguise and famously sees Jesus entering Rome. He greets him with words that in their secondary Latin form have become legendary: 'Lord, where are you

²⁷ Cf. my further comments in Bockmuehl (2017) 144–47.

²⁸ Peter says, 'Shall we act like deserters, brothers?' (9.35.6 ed. Vouaux [1922]), as if reflecting on what the disciples did when Jesus was arrested.

going?’²⁹ When Jesus replies he is due to be crucified again, Peter turns back to the city to face crucifixion carried out upside down at his own request (37–38).

The *Acts of Peter* in one sense exemplifies the sort of approach to power I sketched in the first part of my paper. The *dramatis personae* are stylized and cartoon-like; dramatic spiritual combat against opponents is twinned with resistance and bold argument against unprincipled, cowardly and remarkably inarticulate official representatives of the imperial power of Nero (who is in the fourth-century Vercelli MS simply caricatured as ‘a wicked and bad man’: 1, *hominis impii et iniqui*).

Opposition to Jewish power has receded almost entirely. If Jewish ‘zeal’ played any part in the Neronian persecutions, the *Acts of Peter* knows nothing of it.³⁰ Indeed the only Jewish power that is resisted is the decidedly unorthodox Simon the magician, who is introduced as ‘a certain Jew named Simon’ despite the New Testament’s fairly clear presumption that he was a Samaritan (Acts 8.9). Underlining this Jewish reading of the conflict, the text repeatedly notes that Peter has previously clashed with Simon in Judaea (5, 17). But the apostle confronts no *other* Jews in the *Acts of Peter*, although the Gentile Christian senator Marcellus identifies the contest between Simon and Peter as between ‘two Jews’ (22).

Much more clearly and importantly, though, this is Peter in combat with the quintessential heresiarch and false prophet, protecting the church against his threats of sorcery and magic. And to be sure, the vehemence and violence of this conflict is stressed repeatedly – not least in the senator Marcellus’ shocking dream vision on the eve of the public contest, in which Peter beheads and cuts into pieces a demonic female figure representing the power of Simon Magus (22).³¹ It is not hard to imagine how this ‘proto-orthodox’ image of

29 The original Greek may intend ‘Lord, why have you come?’ or ‘why are you here?’ See Zwierlein (2009) 82–92 and *passim*, noting additional internal support for this reading in the wording of Jesus’ reply in the MS and in Origen. Vouaux (1922) reads Κύριε, ποῦ ᾤδε.

30 Such an allegation may possibly be hinted at in 1 *Clement*, cf. note 10 above: see further Bockmuehl (2012) 110–11.

31 Although necessarily disturbing to contemporary readers, it seems unlikely that the author would recognize any conflict between the destruction of an ‘Ethiopian’ female demon and the evident approval of women’s emancipation in this document. Both female gender and black appearance are commonplaces of ancient demonology, including Onoskelis in the *Testament of Solomon* (4.1–12) and the better attested Lilith, nocturnal queen of demons. Satan is ‘the Black One’ in the *Epistle of Barnabas* 4.9. St Antony was plagued by a black demon, while medieval texts sometimes describe the devil as Ethiopian in appearance. As is well known, the ancient shape of what we would call racism differed in significant respects from its modern equivalents, even if it cannot be straightforwardly reduced to prejudice based on culture and ethnicity rather than on

an all-star, swashbuckling apostle defending the church might in due course be deemed compatible with a re-appropriation of Peter in the service of an emerging moniscopacy, legitimating a new institution even if at this stage it has few means to exercise power except through preaching and charismatic signs. In a limited sense, then, Peter's role here may eventually turn out to be 'anchoring innovation' – especially as these texts are re-appropriated in the fourth century.

More significant, undoubtedly, is the apostolic position being articulated vis-à-vis the power of Rome. The disoriented and backsliding Roman church already appears to have attached to it a number of aristocratic members or sympathizers, above all the aforementioned senator Marcellus. This man has been captivated by Simon's magic and even turns out to be credited with a statue erected in his honour, apparently the one that Justin Martyr also misinterpreted in comparable terms. It was discovered in 1574 on the island in the Tiber, and shown to refer to an Etruscan deity.³² Marcellus returns to the faith in response to Peter's preaching and miracles, and helps advance Peter's cause.

In a dramatic and on any account highly symbolic episode (11), an exorcism destroys a large marble statue of Caesar in the courtyard of the reconverted senator's house. Peter criticizes the shell-shocked Marcellus for being more worried about the political trouble this might cause him than about the salvation of his soul; but the senator's clear expression of faith is nevertheless followed by the miraculous restoration of the statue. This complex story clearly plays at multiple levels, but Peter's political dialectic suggests at one and the same time a radical subversion of imperial power *and* Christianity's capacity to survive and thrive despite that power's continued existence. (A similar dialectic was already noted earlier in relation to canonical 1 Peter; in the next chapter Régis Burnet explores related themes for the Syrian Peter's role in marginal Christian groups.)

Once the contest with Simon Magus gets underway in earnest, it is staged consistently in the face of Roman public opinion and the agents of imperial power: the audience includes 'a multitude' of senators and prefects, aristocratic ladies as well as a wider Roman public. The prefect Agrippa himself proposes the contest and taunts Peter to take charge (23, 25, 26). Although at one level one might suspect here a fourth-century case of brashly hijacking Roman

physical characteristics like skin colour (so classically Puzzo (1964); contrast the key work of Isaac [2004]).

32 Here said to be dedicated to 'Simon the young god' (*Acts of Peter* 10). The correct inscription in fact was discovered in 1574 and found to read *Semoni Sancto Deo Fidio*. Justin (1 *Apol* 26) thought this read (and meant) *Simoni Deo Sancto*, i.e. 'to Simon the holy god'. Also cf. Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 2.13.3; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Procat.* 6.14.

institutions on the side of Christian aspiration, perhaps a more moderate and realistic interpretation should see this in terms of the obstinate brashness under duress that also characterizes the polemic of apologists and martyrs' acts in much second and third-century literature.³³

This public political gambit may sometimes appear with an explicitly *eschatological* justification. Thus in the face of his impending death Peter declares himself obliged to convict a crowd of Roman senators and aristocratic ladies of their bewitched and darkened minds because of his concern about their fate in the judgment to come (28).

I will close this section with two brief illustrations from the *Martyrdom* account. The first pertains to the controversial effect of Peter's preaching in repeatedly recruiting aristocratic women to a life of celibacy and alienating them from their prominent husbands, who in turn resolve to destroy both them and Peter. This is reported in chapter 33 about the four concubines of the prefect Agrippa, a leading *dramatis persona*. Its most articulate statement occurs in relation to the wife of the emperor's friend Albinus in the next chapter (34).

The theme of female emancipation from pagan social structures, sometimes to controversial effect, is a well-known trope of early Christian literature, including several apocryphal Acts. Two small observations on this text may suffice for the present purpose. Let us note (1) the application of this motif to an aristocratic couple who are said to be close to the Emperor, and (2) its effect in causing a public disturbance (θόρυβος) in the imperial capital.

My second, fuller illustration involves a cluster of three texts concerning the interpretation of Peter's crucifixion, which is itself taken as manifesting resistance to Roman injustice. The first concerns the Christian response to Peter's death sentence (36), the second Peter's interpretation of his upside-down crucifixion by appeal to a saying of Jesus with parallels in other apocryphal literature (37–38),³⁴ and the third the divine rebuke of Nero's anger following the apostle's death (41).

The relevance of these texts in illustrating our topic seems fairly self-evident, although there is not time to discuss all three here. In chapter 36, the remarkable public objection to Agrippa's arbitrary miscarriage of justice is met by the equanimity of Peter's assurance that God is sovereign even in this, and that Agrippa's power is merely what might be expected of the imperial genome (his

33 While the trope of Christian martyrs' obstinacy and defiance (*contumacia*) is relatively well attested, attempts to locate in it the legal *cause* of persecution have not been widely followed but were subject to a lively debate between A. N. Sherwin-White and G. E. M. de Ste Croix in the pages of the journal *Past and Present*, 1963–64.

34 Cf. *Gospel of Thomas* 22; *Acts of Philip* 140.

πατρική ἐνέργεια). In chapter 41, Nero's irrational anger is divinely chastened so that the persecution subsides.

The upside-down crucifixion scene in chapters 37–38 merits one additional comment. Its symbolism is clearly of vital importance to the narrator. The dying but surprisingly loquacious Peter finds this to symbolize the demise of the fallen old Adam and the new Adam's subversion of all conventional human values: what natural man assumed to be ugly or inferior or unattractive, Christ has shown to be beautiful and good.³⁵ Like the nail in the middle of the cross, Peter suggests, this transvaluation of social convention suggests a call to repentance – a theme that could play equally well in the second century as in the fourth.

4 Concluding Observations

How should we interpret this remarkably ambiguous material? To support the script of a legitimation of power, one could attempt to filter the texts through the lens of James C. Scott's idea of 'hidden transcripts' of resistance, or adapt the ever-pliable theory of Pierre Bourdieu to envisage an endowment of Peter's leadership with capital that is at once spiritual and by extension political.³⁶

But the evidence in fact remains decidedly intractable and ambivalent, and its utility in the eye of the beholder. Is the *Gospel of Peter's* polemic a crudely ingratiating play on Graeco-Roman anti-Semitic prejudice, or does it attest a vulnerable Christian community finding in the gospel passion narrative solidarity vis-à-vis a Jewish majority leadership that was experienced as hostile and oppressive? And in the *Acts of Peter*, does Peter's struggle against Simon Magus and Nero's officials offer grassroots encouragement to a proto-orthodox community buffeted by external hostility and internal apostasy to persevere in its faith and way of life? Or does that conflict, on the contrary, signify and legitimate an emerging ecclesiastical hierarchy's forceful repression of religious minorities? One could go on.

Although academically fashionable and seductive, an over-theorized discourse of power is not a reliable friend to historical understanding. Too often it turns out to be a many-headed Hydra whose escape from its cage unleashes at least as many problems as it might at first conveniently promise to solve.

35 Cf. Bolyki (1998).

36 Scott (1985; 1990); Bourdieu (1986). The recently widespread assumption of covert anti-imperial scripts in early Christian texts has been usefully queried and probed by Heilig (2015).

Almost invariably it implicates the critic in a vicious circle of awkward questions about his or her *own* hermeneutical use of power, and the concerns which that in turn privileges or suppresses. That way lies a carousel of mirage and resentment, let alone more than a few derivative abuses of power.

Second-century traditions about a Petrine episcopal succession in Rome clearly did eventually go on to service inflated authoritarian claims to papal power. But it is remarkably difficult to instantiate this prior to Pope Leo I in the middle of the fifth century. Possible earlier exceptions, like Pope Victor arguing high-handedly with Polycrates in the second century and Pope Stephen with Cyprian in the third, seem to be precisely that: isolated and exceptional. Conversely, for the first four centuries the Roman church's literature, its liturgy and eventually even its architecture appeal for its apostolic foundation overwhelmingly not to a single Petrine pedigree but to the *twin* heritage of Peter and Paul (see Van den Hoek in this volume). This is clear even in the fourth-century form of the *Acts of Peter* (1–2) but perhaps more patently visible in monuments like the famous late fourth-century inscription of Pope Damasus at San Sebastiano (see Friedrichs and Thacker in this volume), or by implication in the early fifth-century founder's inscription at Santa Sabina (see the contribution by Noble).

Second-century apocryphal Gospels and Acts do not represent Peter as an apostolic prince and ruler. Nor is he one who seeks to co-opt Roman power or allow himself to be co-opted by it. The tendency to present Christianity as culturally, intellectually or politically *salonfähig* clearly begins to feature in some of the second and especially third-century apologists. But it rarely appears in the second-century Apocrypha, which almost invariably served a more grass-roots audience. Their function may well have been something rather more acutely felt than 'the Sunday afternoon literature of the ancient Church' as one of my Oxford predecessors liked to call them a century ago.³⁷ The sheer pastoral urgency of their concerns was too often overlooked in classic historicist treatments written mostly by tenured North Atlantic academics.³⁸

Second-century Christianity in general, and its apocryphal literature in particular, singled out Peter in order to identify itself with the apostolic gospel tradition in the face of perceived, and intermittently real, hostility from Romans and Jews. Connections and analogies with the New Testament events confirmed the meaning and significance of a new generation's experience of such enmity. The texts we have examined do not yet mobilize Peter in the service of

37 Turner (1920) 12. I now suspect I may have been insufficiently critical of this line in Bockmuehl (2017) 235.

38 This is a point rightly stressed in John Curran's contribution to the present volume.

legitimizing an exercise of power – whether for internal ecclesiastical ends or against Judaism, let alone for political power exercised explicitly or implicitly on the side of Empire. There is clearly a process of legitimation, but it is at this early stage the legitimation not of an institution but of a *community* – a minority experiencing at least perceived harassment and, at certain times and places, acute existential danger. There is undoubtedly a concern about power, too, but the explicit rhetoric of the *Acts of Peter* in particular cares consistently about the superior power of God and of Jesus rather than of Satan, Simon Magus or Caesar.³⁹

All this of course is not to deny that some of these texts did in time come to tolerate just such a narrative of inevitable Petrine triumph and the acquisition of papal power – *ex post facto* and in light of Constantinian climate change. But that is a topic for other contributions to this volume.

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39 So e.g. 2, 6, 15, 18, 25–28, 33; contrast 2, 4, 5, 8, 31–32, 36. Matters are less clear in the *Gospel of Peter*, though the cry of dereliction about the ‘power’ that has left Jesus does perhaps imply that this power is God’s – and to be contrasted with the mob’s celebration of the imagined ‘power’ they exercise over him (6, 19).

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Peter, the Visionary before the Pope: Early Receptions of the Apostle in Marginal Communities

Régis Burnet

As the Savior was sitting in the temple in the three hundredth (year) of the covenant and the agreement of the tenth pillar, and being satisfied with the number of the living, incorruptible Majesty, he said to me, 'Peter, [...] there shall be others of those who are outside our number who name themselves bishops and also deacons, as if they have received their authority from God. They bend themselves under the judgment of the leaders. Those people are dry canals.'¹



What a surprise! Whereas everyone is accustomed, because of two millennia of reception history, to see Peter as the first bishop and the first pope, as the faithful guardian of the primacy of Rome, the Nag Hammadi *Apocalypse of Peter* presents him as a dangerous opponent of the hierarchy. How was such a reversal possible? This paper proposes to listen to some voices coming from behind the scenes using the concept of anchoring innovation introduced by Ineke Sluiter.² They tell us a different story, an alternative vision of the great apostle: the story of his appropriation by communities of the margin.

“Communities of the margin” and not “heterodox Christianity” or, worse, “heretic Christians” since no clear orthodoxy was established yet. And even their opponents would not have considered them as “heterodox” since there were only polemical statements in a broader and prolonged discussion. Within a controversy, the closer the opponents are to each other, the more likely they

¹ *Apoc. Pet.* (NH VII) 70.15–20 and 79.22–30, translated by James Brashler and Roger A. Bullard in Robinson (2000) 373.6.

² Sluiter (2017).

are to exaggerate their differences. Sigmund Freud called that inclination *der Narzissmus der kleinen Differenzen*,³ narcissism of little differences.

More than alternative Christians, these communities were indeed alternative readers of the Bible. In the case of Peter, they underline unusual features of the figure of the Galilean fisher. The conventional interpretation of the apostle lies upon a single feature: his status of “head of the Twelve,” or *princeps apostolorum*. These alternative visions stress upon different facets of his personality. The earliest accounts outside the New Testament do not highlight the authoritative side of Peter, but a secondary feature: his role as a visionary. Two canonical episodes demonstrated his visionary abilities: The Transfiguration, of course (Matt 17.1–9, Mark 9.2–9, Luke 9.28–36), but also the Vision of the Animals (Acts 10.9–23). Instead of putting the emphasis on the famous pericope of Matt 16.17–19, they gave more importance to these traditions.

1 The First Steps of a Visionary

1.1 *The Gospel of Peter*

A large amount of bibliography about the Gospel found in Akhmîm in Egypt prevents us from giving a thorough insight into the earliest text of Peter’s Reception, the Gospel of Peter.⁴ Suffice it to say it may be the text mentioned by Serapion of Antioch at the beginning of the third century (although some scholars are circumspect about this identification).⁵ It is an early composition from a Judeo-Christian community of Syria,⁶ presented as authored by Peter, who says “I” at several moments (e.g., v. 26–27 and 59–60). The text relates a vision of three men exiting the tomb:

They saw coming out from the tomb three men, and the two were supporting the one, and a cross following them. And the head of the two reached as far as heaven, but that of the one being led by them surpassed the heavens.⁷

The episode does not show Peter as a visionary per se. Here, the testimony comes from the soldiers witnessing the events⁸ and not from him. Moreover,

3 Freud (1991) 131.

4 See also Bockmuehl’s contribution to this volume.

5 Foster (2006; 2010) 97–115.

6 Foster (2010) 172–3.

7 *Gosp. Pet.* – Akhmîm Fragment 10.39–42, translation by Foster (2010) 408.

8 Mara (1973) 180.

this is not a vision as such, because the events are presented as actual; they are not imaginations through the eyes of the soul. Besides, the staging is peculiar: the character in the middle is not the Son of God in his glory, but a weak figure, who must be sustained and supported. Nevertheless, the gigantic dimensions of the three men do not only have a spectacular value: the size is a theological statement on their authority both in heaven and on earth.⁹ Their presence in a text authored by Peter is a first step in the construction of the figure of the apostle as someone who can tell more things than others.

1.2 *The Apocalypse of Peter*

Whereas the Gospel of Peter did not present Peter as a visionary, the Apocalypse of Peter unmistakably establishes Peter as a seer. Not all the scholars date it from the Bar Kochba's revolt time as R. Bauckham does,¹⁰ but even the more skeptics ones¹¹ assign a Judeo-Christian community in Syria or Palestine as its origin. Even though the text addresses issues from the second century, it kept being read because of its description of hell, a kind of guided tour influenced by both Hellenism and Judaism.¹² The text is a very early step of the reception of the figure of the apostle, before its appropriation by Rome as "the first bishop."

Two passages are essential for our inquiry. The first one reveals the future of the apostle:

I have spoken this to you, Peter, and declared it to you. Go forth therefore and go to the city of the west and enter into the vineyard which I shall tell you of, so that by the sufferings of the Son who is without sin the deeds of corruption may be sanctified. As for you, you are chosen according to the promise which I have given you. Spread my gospel throughout all the world in peace.¹³

The martyrdom of Peter, here firmly established, takes on an eschatological meaning. It is the starting signal of the divine purification of the deeds of corruption. The apostle, now described as the "chosen one," leads the universal proclamation of the Gospel. This role is a piece of clear evidence that the

9 Foster (2010) 419; Mara (1973) 183; Vaganay (1930) 300.

10 Bauckham (1988; 1994).

11 Tigchelaar (2003).

12 Bremmer (2010); Himmelfarb (1985) 45–50.

13 *Apoc. Pet.* 14.4–6, trans. Elliott (2005) 609.

members of the community do not think of themselves as marginal Christians. Their Syrian leader, Peter, was indeed the frontrunner of the Gospel.

The second extract is a paraphrase of the Transfiguration:

And the Lord continued and said, 'Let us go to the mountain and pray'. [...] As we prayed, suddenly there appeared two men standing before the Lord upon whom we were not able to look. 7. For there issued from their countenance a ray as of the sun and their raiment was shining such as the eye of a man never saw the like; for no mouth is able to declare nor heart to conceive the glory wherewith they were clad and the beauty of their countenance. 8. When we saw them we were astonished, for their bodies were whiter than any snow and redder than any rose. 9. And the redness of them was mingled with the whiteness and I am simply not able to declare their beauty. [...] And I drew near to the Lord and said, 'Who are these?' 13. He said to me, 'These are your righteous brethren whose appearance you wished to see'. 14. And I said to him, 'And where are all the righteous? What is the world of those who possess this glory?' 15. And the Lord showed me a very great region outside this world [...] And I rejoiced and believed and understood that which is written in the book of my Lord Jesus Christ. And I said to him, 'O my Lord, do you wish that I make here three tabernacles, one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah?' 43 And he said to me in wrath, 'Satan makes war against you, and has veiled your understanding; and the good things of this world prevail against you. Your eyes, therefore, must be opened, and your ears unstopped that you may see a tabernacle, not made with men's hands, which my heavenly Father has made for me and for the elect'. And we beheld it and were full of gladness.¹⁴

Although the text seems to rely on the Gospel of Matthew, the staging is utterly different. This is not about the transfiguration of Jesus, but the transfiguration of Moses and Elijah. More than teaching on the divinity of Jesus – which was confessed the readers of the *Apocalypse of Peter* –, the text stresses upon the fate of the Jewish Fathers, who shall take part of the glory of God. This transfiguration is a manifesto for Judean Christianity. The passage also aims at correcting the Gospel of Matthew. Messianic movements could interpret Peter's offer to construct tents as a claim to rebuild the tangible Temple. The text replies it clearly: only the celestial tent or the spiritual Temple will be able to stand in the future. And only a visionary attitude can grant access to it:

14 *Apoc. Pet.* 15–16. Elliott (2005) 609–11.

‘Your eyes, therefore, must be opened, and your ears unstopped that you may see a tabernacle’.

2 The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter

The *Coptic Apocalypse of Peter*, found in Nag Hammadi (7th codex, 3rd treatise) is the final step of the interpretation of Peter as a seer. It also sheds light on the struggle of the Petrine community against (at the same time) a baptismal permissiveness, the building of a strict hierarchy and some theological ideas close to Pauline theology.¹⁵ The text comes from a Basilidian community, and we know that Basilides was a student of Glaukias, a disciple of Peter.¹⁶ Even if the Apocalypse was written in Alexandria, the link with Syria is not to be dismissed. Egyptian churches had early relationships with Judean-Christian Syro-Palestinian communities.

2.1 *Peter as a Docete*

In this Apocalypse, Peter is associated with a very strong controversy against the ecclesiastical hierarchy and with Docetism:

I said: ‘What is it that I see, O Lord? Is it you yourself whom they take and are you grasping me? Or who is the one who is glad and who is laughing above the wood and do they hit another one on his feet and on his hands?’ The Savior said to me: ‘The one you see glad and laughing above the wood, that is the Living One, Jesus. But the one into whose hands and feet they are driving the nails is his fleshly part, which is the substitute’.¹⁷

The passage is utterly clear. The motif of the laughter at the Cross is a typical Docete one, according to Irenaeus:¹⁸ Jesus scoffs at his enemies who crucified a fake body, whereas he is hovering, still living, above the Cross, described by the metonymy $\omega\epsilon$, ‘wood’, also known in the New Testament – we can think of \acute{o} κρεμάμενος ἐπὶ ξύλου of *Galatians* 3.13. The theme of the *substitute* alludes to a corporal stand-in without true consistency (hence the Coptic term $\Delta\Delta\text{ΙΜΩΝ}$) and is the key concept for Docetism. Thanks to the substitute, the Savior could

¹⁵ Brakke (2008).

¹⁶ Clement of Alexandria, *Str.* 7.106, 4.

¹⁷ *Apoc. Pet.* 81.7–21, translation Havelaar (1999) 47–9.

¹⁸ Irenaeus, *Adv. Hær.* 1.24.4. Stroumsa (2004).

be seen in the world without any incarnation. He seemed to be in a body, but this body was only a *daimôn*, a ghost.

We can perceive that evolution has taken place within the margins claiming Peter. In this latter stage, the visionary character of the apostle strengthens contempt for the body leading to Docetism.

2.2 *Peter as the New Hero of a Community of the Margin*

Concerning Peter's figure, the Coptic *Apocalypse of Peter* takes a step further from the Greek *Apocalypse of Peter* or the *Gospel of Peter*: the text confirms that the apostle is the true hero of a community of the margin, and not as the glorious leader of the whole church. It begins with a rewriting of the episode of Peter's confession. In the synoptic Gospels, the passage does not end well. Jesus rebukes Peter and calls him Satan. On the contrary, the *Apocalypse of Peter* says:

You too Peter, become in accordance to your name, perfect, just like me, the one who has chosen you. For with you I have made a start for the others whom I have called to knowledge. Therefore, be strong until the imitator of the righteousness of him who called you before – he called you so that you would know him in the worthy way, with respect to the distance that separates (?) him and the nerves of his hands and his feet and the crowning by the ones of the Middle and his body of light – to his likeness (?) in hope of a service because of an earning of honor, as if he is about to reprove (?) you three times in this night.¹⁹

Peter is introduced as the first one of a group of disciples, but not as the foundation stone of the church. He is instead a forerunner, a pioneer of the true knowledge. 'Imitator of justice' or 'imitator of the righteousness' is an expression found elsewhere that designates the Jesus of the Gospels who dies on the cross.²⁰ His passion (the tearing of the nerves, the crown of thorns) will reveal to Peter the true *gnosis*. The Matthean account being rewritten, the mission given to Peter by the Risen One changes its meaning: in this specific community, the revelation of the truth leads to understand that the Jesus of the flesh was a mere simulacrum. The triple denial also radically evolves: it becomes a denial of the carnal nature, and therefore the acknowledgment of the spiritual nature.

¹⁹ *Apoc. Pet.* 71.15–72.5, translation (slightly revised) Havelaar (1999) 33.

²⁰ Havelaar (1999) 81.

The Savior urges Peter to act ‘in accordance to his name’ (ἡΣΡΑΙΗΜ ΠΕΤΡΑΝ), *i.e.*, as *Petros*, the founding stone; hence, the alternative renaming of Simon, now named ΤΕΛΙΟΣ, ‘perfect’.²¹

Nevertheless, Peter is not ready; he is still carnally frightened by deceptive appearances:

While he said these things, I saw the priests and the people running in our direction with stones, in order to kill us; I was afraid that we would die.²²

Peter’s fear of death demonstrates that the path can be long for the “perfect disciple.” He receives thus a second call from the Savior:

‘Peter, I have told you several times that they are blind ones who have no guide. If you want to understand their blindness, put your hands on the eyes with your cloak and say what you see’. But when I had done this, I did not see anything. I said: ‘No one sees (in this way)’. Again he said to me: ‘Do this once more’. Fear in joy came to me for I saw a new light brighter than the light of day. After that, it came down on the Savior. And I told him what I had seen.

[...] And I listened to the priests while they were sitting with the scribes. The crowds were screaming with their voice. When he had heard these things from me, he said to me: ‘Prick up the ears of your head and listen to the things they say’. And I listened again (and) said: ‘You are glorified while you are sitting’.²³

The whole passage is built on the opposition between seeing and hearing: what can be seen or heard has no consistency. When you hide your eyes, you can see the glory of the Lord; you can watch his epiphany. When the ear is closed, the murmur of praise can be distinguished. The believer, and Peter his representative, is invited to see and hear beyond the real world: this is for him the only way to glimpse the true nature of the Savior, the Pleroma. The verb † ΓΟΟΥ (to glorify) is used six times by the *Apocalypse of Peter* in connection with a Pleromatic situation.²⁴

21 We revised the translation of H. Havelaar following the suggestion of Smith (1985) 132.

22 *Apoc. Pet.* 72.5–9, translation Havelaar (1999) 33.

23 *Apoc. Pet.* 72.10–73.17, translation Havelaar (1999) 33–5.

24 Havelaar (1999) 85.

In this way, the apostle was prepared for what he would experience shortly, later on, that day: the arrest and crucifixion.

Be strong, because you are the one to whom these mysteries are given to know them openly, that the one who was nailed is the firstborn and the house of the demons [...]. But he who stands near him is the living Savior, he who was in him before, (in) the one who was seized and he was released, while he is standing gladly because he sees that those who have treated him violently, are divided among themselves. Therefore, he laughs about their inability to see. For he knows that they are born blind.²⁵

The key feature of this account is the distinction between the suffering Jesus and the impassible Savior. The Savior is an agent of the Father, whereas the fleshly body of Jesus is connected to 'a house of demons' (the gap prevents the reader to understand this expression better). Above the cross, the living Savior laughs at their blindness. In this distinction between the two bodies, we should not read the later orthodox Christology of the "two natures":²⁶ the corporal body does not designate the human one. It is instead a trick, a trap to deceive the false brethren:

For many will be partakers of the beginning of our word but they will turn themselves to them again, according to the will of the Father.²⁷

Apparently, the Petrine Christians believed that they lived in a world dominated by cosmic evil rulers and that the other Christians compromise themselves with these evil powers. Do they mean this genuinely, or is it a polemical way of speaking? As shown by the quotation, the opponents in the text are not Pagans nor Jews, nor external enemies, but Christians who at first were "true believers," or "false brethren." The enemy comes from the inside. The end of the *Apocalypse* is particularly interesting. The text reads $\text{ΝΑΙ ΝΤΑϞΧΟΟϞ ΔϞϞΩΠΕ ΖΡΑΙ ΝΖΤḲ}$. Most of the editors translate by 'when he had said these things, he came to his senses'. The literal meaning of the expression is slightly different, 'having spoken; he becomes in himself'. The expression is strange in Coptic and can translate the Greek $\epsilon\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\tau\omicron \epsilon\nu \alpha\upsilon\tau\hat{\omega}$, who express the process of "coming conscious", coming back to earth, awakening. The sense of the expression can

25 *Apoc. Pet.* 82.18–83.3 translation Havelaar (1999) 49–51.

26 Luttikhuisen (2003) 194.

27 *Apoc. Pet.* 73.23–26 translation Havelaar (1999) 35.

be ‘He came to himself’,²⁸ *i.e.*, he came to his *true* self. The amphibology is deliberate. When reality is not in the awakening state but in the vision, the vision becomes a reality. Coming back to oneself does not consist in the awakening but in the ecstasy.

3 Peter Seen by Opponents: the Persistence of an Old Image

Ineke Sluiter, in her article “Anchoring innovation” highlights a cognitive practice in which modernity is embedded in or attached to what is older, traditional and familiar. She also demonstrates that the concept is ambivalent. An anchor can be a way to cling to the past to support novelty. But it can also be a link created by nostalgia or fear of the future, which hinders innovation. Here, the ideological innovation of marginalized communities is rooted in a valued past reflected in the biblical substratum. Peter is this anchor which makes it possible to “connect” the novelty to the time of Jesus. But an anchor can also be a way to resist the flow of change. To secure themselves, people keep memories of little details, in order to get the impression that nothing can change. They are some inliers – to use a different comparison from the one Sluiter borrows from the naval world –, some witnesses of a forgone past.

In the case of Peter, the wind of change may have initially been blowing towards the marginal communities mentioned above, but from the 4th century onwards, it was blowing over larger churches, which were more influential and more institutionalized communities. They imposed the image of the aforementioned “first pope.”

The tracks of the old figure of the visionary were kept in the discourse of the pagan opponents. That is to be expected. Opponents or outsiders always tend to stick to old images to make their caricatures more effective. This is the method used by contemporary TV series when they seek to depict the Catholic Church as an oppressive and threatening institution: they multiply the frightening but utterly anachronistic figures of priests in cassocks kissing the ring of scary prelates. The attestations of the criticism of the non-Christian opponents against Peter are thus scarce but confirm the lasting of Peter’s old image of a visionary.²⁹ At first, the apostle could be confused with his master Jesus. Phlegon of Tralles (2nd c.), a freedman of Hadrian attributed some of Peter’s deeds to

²⁸ Luttikhuisen (2003) 197.

²⁹ All references in Harnack (1922). See also: de Labriolle (1948); Ruggiere (2002).

Jesus: 'some things which really happened to Peter happened to Jesus',³⁰ Origen says. Celsus (2nd c.), on the contrary, does not make the confusion and introduced Peter as a seer, because of his vision of the resurrected Jesus:³¹

A hysterical female, as you say, and perhaps some other one of those who were deluded by the same sorcery, who either dreamt in a certain state of mind and through wishful thinking had a hallucination due to some mistaken notion (an experience which has happened to thousands), or, which is more likely, wanted to impress the others by telling this fantastic tale, and so by this cock-and-bull story to provide a chance for other beggars.³²

The 'other one' to be compared to the hysteria (γυνή πάροιστρος) of Mary of Magdala is indeed Peter, accused of being a daydreamer (κατά τινα διάθεσιν όνειρώξας), a wild-eyed psychic (πεπλανημένη φαντασιωθείς), and, eventually, a liar telling fantastic tales (τερρατεία). All these features belong to the construction of a derogatory image of a visionary.

Porphyry († 305), in his treatise *Against the Christians* (conserved in Macarius's *Apocriticus* 3.19–22)³³ chiefly based his criticism of Christianity on the New Testament (mainly *Matthew* and *Acts*, but also *Galatians*). His critic struggles against the "pillar" apostles, Peter and Paul, because he seems to consider crucial the destruction of their reputations to wipe out the claims of an emergent Catholic Christianity.³⁴ He also knows the above-mentioned *Apocalypse of Peter*, a clear piece of evidence of the permanence of Peter as a seer.

The extant excerpts of the treatise from Emperor Julian *Against the Galileans* keep only one mention of the Apostle, a passage full of caustic irony against the vision of the animals from the *Acts of the Apostles*.

Now if, after the vision of Peter, the pig has now taken to chewing the cud, then let us obey Peter; for it is in very truth a miracle if, after the vision of Peter, it has taken to that habit. But if he spoke falsely when he said that he saw this revelation – to use your own way of speaking – in the house of the tanner, why are we so ready to believe him in such important matters?

30 συγχυθείς έν τοίς περι Πέτρον ώς περι του Ίησου. Origen, *Cels.* 2.14, translation in Chadwick (1980) 81.

31 Koschorke (1978) 51; O'Collins (2012).

32 *Cels.* 2.55, translation in Chadwick (1980) 109.

33 Hoffmann (1994) 53–7.

34 Hoffmann (1994) 172.

Was it so hard a thing that Moses enjoined on you when, besides the flesh of swine, he forbade you to eat winged things and things that dwell in the sea, and declared to you that besides the flesh of swine these had also been cast out by God and shown to be impure?³⁵

Julian, known to be benevolent towards the Jews,³⁶ blames the Christians for abandoning the Law on the basis of stupid visions which occurred in the humble house of a tanner. The Christians are portrayed as gullible dupes naively believing in Peter's fancies.

This mockery of the visionary figure is sometimes combined with disdain of Peter's intellectual abilities. This aristocratic contempt towards the humble origin of the Galilean fisherman is another way to discredit him. Since the former craftsman could not master any intellectual subtlety, he could only rely on his ability to tell lies. Celsus made use of the argument:

Jesus collected round him ten or eleven infamous men, the most wicked tax collectors and sailors and with these fled hither and thither, gathering a means of livelihood in a disgraceful and importunate way. Let us now deal with this as well as we can. It is evident to readers of the gospels, which Celsus does not appear even to have read that Jesus chose twelve apostles, of whom only Matthew was a tax collector. Those whom he muddles together as sailors are probably James and John since they left the ship and their father Zebedee and followed Jesus. For Peter and his brother Andrew, who earned the necessities of life with a fishing net, are to be reckoned not among sailors, but, as the Bible says, among fishermen.³⁷

The Proconsul of Bithynia Sossianus Hierocles (4th c.), in his *Φιλαλήθης λόγος* makes the same claim, according to Lactantius:

He laid into Paul and Peter especially, and into the other disciples, as "disseminators of falsehood," claiming that they were also "untrained and uneducated, since some of them made a living as fishermen": was he put out because fishing had had no commentary from an Aristophanes or an Aristarchus?³⁸

35 Julianus, *Contra Galilaeos* 314D–E. Translation: Wright (1913) 409.

36 Aziza (1978); Teitler (2017) 25–6.

37 *Cels.* 1.61. Translation in Chadwick (1980) 56–7.

38 *Div. Inst.*, 5.2.17, translation in Bowen & Garnsey (2003) 286. See de Labriolle (1948) 307–9.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the readings of these texts, a historical one, and a hermeneutical one. Historically, they witness the alternative reconstruction of the memories of the Apostle Peter by a Syrian group.³⁹ Anchored in the remembrance of Peter's visionary abilities that probably strengthened their own ecstatic experiences, this Syrian Group gradually came into conflict with other Christian groups. The fact that *their* "patron saint" was also appropriated by these groups as the founding stone of their church may have triggered their hostility. For them, this *appropriation* may have been an unbearable expropriation. Does this prove that they were lapsing into heresy? It is an open question. The fact that pagans took over their image of Peter may have speeded up the process. Unfortunately, there is not enough historical evidence to prove it. Traces of the anti-Christian polemic are scarce and do not disclose their sources.

Hermeneutically, the history of the reception of Peter is a case study. It shows that the construction of a biblical figure is a selection of a few distinct features of the literary character. And according to the choice made, the result can be utterly different. If you rely upon the declaration of Jesus on the power of the keys, you build an authoritative and pontifical figure of Peter, but if you focus on the Transfiguration and the Protophany, you get the figure of the seer. Same historical character, different figures.

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PART 3

Anchoring Peter in Art and Poetry



The Role of Peter in Early Christian Art: Images from the 4th to the 6th Century

Jutta Dresken-Weiland

Images of St. Peter belong to the most frequent themes of early Christian art. I do not intend to give a survey of the different scenes in which Peter appears – I only refer to the study of Roald Dijkstra,¹ who has most recently made an exhaustive list of all of them. In the entry “Petrus” of the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, published in 2015, various aspects of the research on Peter, such as Peter as a historical figure, the interpretation of Peter in early Christian literature and Peter in archaeology, were summarized in compact and reliable form.² This enables to focus on the following questions: Which are the sources of the images of Peter? What did inspire them? How do they relate to the various texts under the name of Peter and to the theological discussions connected with his role? Do the images of Peter tell us anything about his role, and why were they created? What is their function?

In answering this kind of questions, the concept of Anchoring Innovation can help. Images are an important aspect of the process of anchoring Christianity: they make Christianity materially present in the world of antiquity. Their innovative character is expressed by the fact that most of the images are created *ex novo*, without re-using pagan prototypes.

1 Peter as the Local “Hero” of Rome

Peter appears in early Christian art since the third century, together with a series of other images taken from the Old or the New Testament.³ Whereas the number of Christian images in the third century is limited, the fourth century

1 Dijkstra (2016) Appendix.

2 See Dassmann, Nicklas, and Wolter (2015).

3 Dresken-Weiland (2011) 126; Dresken-Weiland (2011a) 66 with a survey of Christian images of the third century.

offers a fairly rich choice of images, and three scenes with Peter are among the most frequent images.⁴

Two of them refer to Peter's activities at Rome. One of them is the water miracle, where Peter, detained in the Mamertine prison, the *Tullianum*, strikes the rocks with his rod, receives water and baptizes his two guardsmen (fig. 7.1).⁵ Second in occurrence is the arrest of Peter (preceding the water miracle in the chronological sequence of the events), where Peter is depicted between the two guards and in discussion with them (fig. 7.1).⁶ It is well known that this story is mentioned only in outline and only in non-canonical texts, in the *Passio Petri*, the so-called Pseudo-Linus,⁷ written in Rome between the fourth and the sixth century,⁸ and the *Passio* of the saints Processus und Martinianus, probably composed in the course of the sixth century.⁹ The baptism of the two jailers is alluded to only shortly in Pseudo-Linus, when Processus and Martinianus ask Peter to escape from imminent martyrdom, whereas the *Passio* gives a more detailed description.¹⁰ For the scene of the arrest of Peter, there is no written record.¹¹

4 Dresken-Weiland (2010) 19, 21.

5 See also Dijkstra's and Thacker's contribution to this volume.

6 See also Löß's contribution to this volume.

7 *Passio Petri* 5: 'Even the guards of the prison, Processus and Martinianus, along with the other functionaries and those attached to them by virtue of their office, were making their request, saying: "Master, depart and go where you wish, because we believe that the emperor has already forgotten you. But that most wicked Agrippa, inflamed by love of his concubines and by the extravagance of his own lust, is making haste to destroy you. For if he were attacking you by order of the emperor, we would [already] have the sentence regarding your death from Paulinus, a most illustrious man, from whose keeping you were put into our custody. For after you baptized us believers in the name of the holy Trinity in the nearby Mamertine prison, when a spring and the marvellous sign of the cross had been produced from the rock through prayer, you proceeded freely wherever you wished, and no one caused you any trouble – nor would they now, if the demonic conflagration which is rousing the city had not invaded Agrippa so keenly. For this reason, we beg you, the intermediary of our salvation, to be willing to make us this return: that since you have freed us from the chains of sins and demons, you should go free from the bonds of prison and shackles, whose savagery has been entrusted to us – not so much with our permission as because of our entreaty – for the sake of so many people's salvation.' English translation by Andrew Eastbourne at https://archive.org/stream/ActsOfpseudo-linus/Ps-Linus_djvu.txt (retrieved at 18.01.2018), p. 5.

8 Eastman (2015) 29 thinks that a date after the middle of the sixth century is unlikely and opts for a date in the late fourth or the fifth century.

9 Dresken-Weiland (2010) 119f.; edition: Franchi De' Cavalieri (1953).

10 In both texts, it is the sign of the cross that calls forth the water spring, see Lipsius (1890) 110f., 415.

11 An arrest of Peter is mentioned in *Acta Petri* 38, but there are four soldiers to arrest him and to bring him to Agrippa – the situation is a different one.



FIGURE 7.1 Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano, frieze sarcophagus, *Rep. I* nr. 770

This story is attached to a familiar place: the Mamertine prison and the *Fons. S. Petri* in the centre of Rome,¹² visible and existing for centuries, are the starting points and the pre-existing elements to which Peter's story was attached. Probably, the story was not written down because it was well-known to everyone. The story must have existed no later than the beginning of the fourth century, because it appears on sarcophagi;¹³ probably, it is older, because the water miracle, frequently depicted with the arrest, is already represented on a late-third-century sarcophagus.¹⁴ It is an interesting example of how religious dynamic places and stories could develop independently from ecclesiastic hierarchy.

The iconography of the water miracle comprises a man with a rod striking water from a rock, and two soldiers who render the scene easily recognizable. The motif of the man with a rod in front of a rock is already used a few times for Moses who strikes water from the rocks in the desert (Ex 17.1–6) in third century catacomb paintings.¹⁵ It is not necessary to assume that these three paintings in the Catacomb of Calixtus, dated to the second third of the third century, hidden behind doors in private grave rooms,¹⁶ served as an inspiration for Peter's iconography: the rod and the rock concern the nucleus of both stories and have to be represented imperatively. Although theoretically the creation of this Petrine iconography is possible only on basis of the story, we do

12 Coarelli (1993) 236f.; de Spirito (1995) 261.

13 *Rep. II*, nr. 11 (Capua).

14 *Rep. I* nr. 35. For a different interpretation see e.g. Cascianelli (2017).

15 Dresken-Weiland (2010) 124–31, 146, 332–4.

16 *Cubiculum A 2* (Wilpert [1903] pl. 27,2), *A 3* and *A 6* (Wilpert [1903] pl. 46,1).

not know how many images of Moses' miracle existed which may have been used as a prototype.¹⁷ The relation between Peter and Moses is mentioned in theological texts since the later fourth century,¹⁸ but it may have been much older. The scene of the arrest does not go back to any specific iconographic pattern.¹⁹

The creation and the frequency of these two scenes are clearly inspired by the veneration of Peter in Rome, documented by the veneration of his burial place since the later second century, and expressed in the construction of his basilica by Constantine. Nonetheless it is interesting that these images are particularly popular on marble sarcophagi. The use of these (and other) Peter images on sarcophagi may be interpreted in different ways:

1. The commissioners and the dead buried in such a sarcophagus expected help from the prince of the apostles in the period between death and doomsday and on the day of the final judgement.²⁰
2. It is possible that the water miracle alludes to the baptism of the "owners" of the sarcophagus, because it was practised on deathbed very frequently.
3. A further aspect of the content and signification of these images appears looking at the commissioners and the place of inhumation: The inscriptions of the sarcophagi teach us that members of the upper class more frequently appear among the commissioners of Christian than earlier pagan sarcophagi.²¹ This means that the prince of the apostles probably played an important role for the Roman upper class: the church of St. Peter, the most noble and top-ranking Christian sanctuary of Rome, was also the most prestigious cemetery. A considerable number of sarcophagi was found there, and Peter appears in their iconography very frequently.²² It is striking that Paul, on the contrary, appears on sarcophagi only rarely, although his veneration is documented for example in the graffiti in S. Sebastiano and in the imagery of the Roman gold glasses.²³ I have

17 See for instance an engraved bronze ring in a private collection, which shows 'Moses striking the rock', Spier (2007) 186 nr. R 65, attributed to the later fourth and fifth century, referring to Chadour (1994) 134 nr. 461.

18 Dresken-Weiland (2010) 123f.

19 Dresken-Weiland (2016) 146f.

20 Cf. the graffiti from the Triclia of S. Sebastiano, Binsfeld (2006) 54–67.

21 Dresken-Weiland (2003) 45–7.

22 Sarcophagi with unspecified apostles are not mentioned. One or more scenes with Peter: *Rep.* I: 28, 35?, 41, 52, 53, 57, 85, 674, 675, 676, 677, 679, 689, 919, 987, 1008. See also the catalogue in Dresken-Weiland (2003) 371–81.

23 See Binsfeld (2006) and Morey (1959) 78 with a list of inscriptions which mention Peter and/or Paul. For the graffiti cf. also the contribution by Van den Hoek in this volume.

argued elsewhere that the outstanding veneration of Peter by members of the Roman upper class may be explained by their self-concept. They chose images of the man who was venerated as the founder of the Roman community and successor of Christ, because they saw themselves as the elite of the city of Rome and associated themselves with images of the prince of the apostles who founded the Roman church.²⁴ This is further corroborated by the fact that these images are rare in catacomb paintings, attributed to middle class Christians: the arrest of Peter is not represented at all and his water miracle only rarely.²⁵

Of course, the veneration of Peter and the story of Peter in Rome were appealing to all Christians. This shows the representation of the water miracle outside the funeral realm on objects of daily life: A bronze lamp preserved in the Archaeological Museum of Florence and dated to the fourth century²⁶ may have been used in a middle-class household, also a glass casket from Neuss/Novaesium²⁷ and an incised glass from Obernburg now in Munich.²⁸ The water miracle appears also on gold glasses, which served in different contexts.²⁹

These two Peter scenes are an excellent example of the anchoring innovation process: The Peter stories are attached to a particular place in the centre of Rome, and they were so well-known that they were not written down and left only faint traces in later texts. With this story the images giving Peter, who had certainly been venerated before, the role of a local Roman hero, anchored Christianity deeply in the minds and memory of fourth-century Christians.

The venerated place, the water spring and the prison of Peter had a much longer life than the images: they were still visited by medieval pilgrims,³⁰ whereas images of these two Petrine scenes are mostly limited to the fourth century.

24 Dresken-Weiland (2010) 144–46.

25 In the catacomb of Callixtus, nr. 45, Wilpert 1903, pl. 237 (one soldier); anonymous catacomb of Via Anapo: Deckers, Mietke, Weiland (1994), colour pl. 26 (two soldiers); catacomb of Marcus and Marcellianus: Saint-Roch (1999) 102 fig. 41 (one soldier); Catacomb of Tecla: Wilpert (1903) pl. 234,3 (one soldier); anonymous catacomb of Via Latina: Ferrua (1990) 50 fig. 39 (two soldiers). See the complete list of all representations of the water miracle in Nestori (1993) 214.

26 B. Mazzei, *Lampada con il miracolo della fonte*. In: Donati (2000) 125, 206 nr. 45.

27 Dresken-Weiland (2010) 122 n. 150; Paffgen (2005) 122f.

28 Couzin (2015) 117 fig. 51.

29 L. Vattuone, *Vetro dorato con Pietro nel miracolo della fonte*. In: Donati (2000) 125, 206 nr. 44; Dresken-Weiland (2017a) 51f. Also the water miracle of Moses is represented on gold glasses of the later fourth century: Howells (2015) 106–107 nr. 19.

30 *Fons sci petri ubi est carcer eius* in the Anonymous Einsidlensis, Bauer (1997) 197.



FIGURE 7.2 Kraków, Museum Narodowe, fragment of a sarcophagus lid with Peter and the dog of Simon magus, *Rep.* II nr. 225

2 The Dispute with Simon Magus

Another famous story is Peter's dispute with Simon Magus (*Acta Petri* 9)³¹ also localised in Rome. It is told in the *Actus Vercellenses*, a Latin translation from a Greek manuscript written in the late fourth century in a western scriptorium in Spain or North Africa.³² The story must have been widely known, but only one scene is depicted: Peter with the (speaking) dog of his adversary is represented on a few sarcophagi of the late fourth century (fig. 7.2), and appears only on their lids, what shows that it was considered of minor importance.³³ When the lid is completely preserved, it is combined with the scene of Daniel poisoning the Babylonian serpent.³⁴ Both scenes offer a parallel constructed iconography and it is possible that they were chosen for this reason: both present a miracle story.

It is difficult to explain why this famous dispute, which is later represented in Peter cycles starting from ca. 700 CE,³⁵ is not more popular in early Christian art. Maybe the water miracle was localized better in its well-known "historical" place in the centre of Rome, or the possible reference to baptism included in this scene was more interesting for contemporaries: conversion to Christianity certainly was an important theme in late-fourth-century Rome. Possibly the

31 Nicklas (2015) 417f.

32 Baldwin (2005) 193, 302–14.

33 *Rep.* II nr. 151, 152, 225, III nr. 304, 418.

34 *Rep.* II nr. 151. 152.

35 Weis (1963) 241, 245.

water miracle was in this sense more helpful to “anchor christianity” than a more or less spectacular story that had neither a reference to personal decisions and creed nor an established location.

3 Peter, Christ and the Cock

The third popular and frequently represented Peter scene shows Peter, Christ and the cock (fig. 7.3). The presence of the cock indicates that the image is connected with Peter’s denial, but it cannot be attributed to a definite situation.³⁶ In the announcement of Peter’s denial,³⁷ the cock may illustrate the content of the dialogue between Christ and Peter, but there is no need of an actual cock’s presence. After Peter’s denial,³⁸ Christ is absent. In the assignment of Peter with the pastorate,³⁹ the cock is absent of course, but it refers to the denial of Peter indirectly, when he is asked thrice by Christ. The scene with the cock in early Christian art should therefore be referred to as a multi-layered image.

Iconographically the figures of Christ and Peter refer to the elements of philosophical teaching. With the movement of his right hand, Christ is shown as speaking, whereas Peter grabs his chin or his beard, and thus appears as listening with attention, commitment and consternation. This iconography can be found on pagan sarcophagi of the third and the early fourth century⁴⁰ and was familiar to the contemporary spectator. When the first representations of this scene appeared at the beginning of the fourth century, he must have recognized the reference to philosophical imagery.⁴¹

The use of this iconography is important for the understanding of this scene. In early Christian literature, the denial of Peter was intensely discussed,⁴² even the severity of his mistake. The choice of the philosophic iconography puts Peter’s denial in a widespread and positively connoted context, which is

36 Of course, this scene is located in Palestine, but geography rarely matters in early Christian art.

37 Mentioned by all four evangelists: Mt 26.33–35; Mk 14. 26–31; Lk 22.31–34; Joh 13.36–38.

38 Also mentioned by all four evangelists: Mt 26.69–75; Mk 14. 66–72; Lk 22.53–62; Joh 18.15–25.

39 Only reported in Joh 21.15–18.

40 Ewald (1999) nr. A 28 pl. 16,2 in S. Lorenzo (third century); nr. D 4 pl. 41 in the Palazzo Balestra (end of the third century); nr. D 9 pl. 46,5 in the Museo Nazionale Romano (beginning of the fourth century.); nr. G 17 pl. 90 in the Musei Vaticani (275–280), nr. I 16 pl. 104,5 in the Palazzo Merolli (second half of the third century), nr. I 18 pl.104,5 in San Severino Marche (second half of the third century).

41 One of the first examples is represented on a sarcophagus in Pisa, *Rep.* II, nr. 12.

42 Dresken-Weiland (2010) 148f.; Nicklas (2015) 424f.



FIGURE 7.3 Rome, Ospedale S. Spirito, sarcophagus with Peter, Christ and the cock, J. Wilpert, *I sarcophagi cristiani antichi I*, Roma 1929, pl. 92,1

presentable in a society deeply interested in education, literature and philosophy. I think that this iconography was created to take up the discussions (by theologians and laymen) about Peter's frailty and to create an image which offers a familiar point of contact for Christians and non-Christians. Possibly the beholder could also reflect about personal shortcomings and mistakes.

Looking at theological texts, the scene of Peter, Christ and the cock has been interpreted as an image which stands for the forgiveness of sins, grace and mercy, the hope for afterlife and resurrection.⁴³ The importance of this theme is underlined by its position on sarcophagi: in contrast to the arrest of Peter and the water miracle, which is often placed at the corner, this scene frequently occupies the centre of sarcophagus fronts.⁴⁴ It is one of the few long-living themes which can be found throughout the fourth century and even thereafter.⁴⁵ The arrest and the water miracle appear only rarely after the end of the fourth century.⁴⁶ When the arrest and the water miracle are more or less mere "stories" about Peter in Rome, the scene with the cock transports "content". It presents aspects of Peter's denial in an elegant and familiar form which makes it possible to discuss a negative behaviour of the prince of the apostles and even of the personal life of the beholder.

It is this "content" which is the motivation for creating and depicting this scene: while Christianity was anchored via the images of one of the most important apostles, the less heroic and less exemplary moments should also be illustrated – in a familiar iconography which offered even clues for identification.

Outside of funerary art this scene appears only on ivories and on mosaics⁴⁷ and in cycles of the passion of Christ. In the mosaics of San Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, made in the first quarter of the sixth century, there are two scenes dealing with the topic: the annunciation of the denial with Christ and the cock, and Peter with the maid contesting that he belongs to Jesus' group.⁴⁸ On the ciborium column D in San Marco in Venice, dated to the first half of the sixth century, there are even three scenes: the maid speaking to Peter, who raises his hands in a gesture of defence, Peter grasping his beard while sitting before a column with the cock on top of it, and Peter standing and weeping with a cloth

43 Dresken-Weiland (2010) 146–62.

44 Dresken-Weiland (2010) 155.

45 For byzantine and Carolingian representations see Hahn (1977) 47–61.

46 A late example: ivory plaques in the British Museum with scenes from the *Acts of the Apostles* and the apocryphal water miracle, see Van den Hoek (2013) 304 fig. 2, Koenen (2013).

47 See Post (1984) 168–73.

48 Dresken-Weiland (2016) 148–51.

to dry his tears.⁴⁹ This shows that Peter's "betrayal" was an important theme for Christians from the fourth to the sixth century and also later and that it was worth dealing with it.

4 *Dominus legem dat*

When Christian culture appeared, new images had to be created for new places and contexts. So it is obvious that for the apse of the basilica erected in honour of the tomb of Peter, none of the images that already existed, were adequate; scenes from Peter's life in Rome would not fit the form of an apse, and his death at the cross would not be acceptable in public (neither was the death of Christ).⁵⁰ According to a quasi-generally accepted hypothesis, the "*Dominus legem dat*", the most discussed scene in early Christian art, was created for the apse of St Peter's basilica.⁵¹ The apse mosaic is dated to the reign of Constantine I, according to the various inscriptions in the apse, in the arch of the apse and on the triumphal arch (fig. 7.4).⁵²

The problem of the iconography is that it cannot be linked to written sources. It shows Christ on the paradise mountain between Peter and Paul. Christ has raised his right arm and holds in his left hand an opened scroll, which Peter, who is bent forward while approaching, collects with his cloak. Let us take a closer look at its iconography in order to understand the reasons for the invention of this image for this public place.

This scene is labelled *Dominus legem dat*⁵³ by a series of original inscriptions connected with it.⁵⁴ Christ does not consign anything, because in that case he would be seated, as is known from similar images in imperial iconography. When he hands over something, he does this with his right hand – for example when he gives the keys to Peter.⁵⁵ However, here Christ is standing and has raised his hand, which characterizes him as speaking and proclaiming. This gesture of speech and promulgation is well known from imperial iconography,⁵⁶ but there the emperor never holds a scroll. The scroll and a

49 Lucchesi Palli (1942) 64 Taf. III; Weigel (1997) 280; Dresken-Weiland (2016), 150f.

50 For images of the crucifixion see Dresken-Weiland (2013). On violence in early Christian art see recently Amodio (2016) and also the contribution by Löx in this volume.

51 Arbeiter (2007) 145; Brenk (2010) 55; most recently Brandenburg (2017) 53–61.

52 Liverani (2015) 492–6; Liverani (2016) 1394–96; Brandenburg (2017) 58–61.

53 Essential for the understanding of this scene is Arbeiter (2007) 124–147; Couzin (2015).

54 Arbeiter (2007) 118, 128–132 with n. 278, 133, 145, see also Couzin (2015) 40–43.

55 Arbeiter (2007) 146.

56 Couzin (2015) 26f.



FIGURE 7.4 St. Peter's, Reconstruction of the interior

person taking it over refer to the scene of Moses receiving the law, but the iconography of these two images offers a series of differences. Therefore, one cannot be certain whether this visual quotation is really meant.⁵⁷

For Christ, it is very unusual to be represented as the promulgator; generally, when Christ is represented in Constantinian images, he is either shown as a miracle worker, or as teacher, with his right hand before his chest or next to it, with a raised forefinger and/or middle finger – we have seen this iconography in the scene of Peter's denial. The raised hand with outstretched fingers seems to be limited to this scene.

The roll whose content he is proclaiming probably signifies the gospel, which Christ has nearly finished. As Robert Couzin has pointed out, Jesus' last words in the Gospel, as recorded especially in *Matthew* 28:19–20 and *Mark* 16:14–15, present a parting evangelical instruction to his disciples: to go out into the world and “teach all the nations ... to observe that what I have commanded or taught you” (*Matthew*), or “preach the Gospel to every creature” (*Mark*). In this image, the instruction has become an announcement and the teaching or

57 Couzin (2015) 49–51.

commandments pithily compressed into the “law”,⁵⁸ with Peter who is here presented with special emphasis as the favoured commissioner.

In the context of this promulgation, Peter receiving the opened scroll has a special role; authority and particular importance are adjudged to him, which is also underlined by the cross rod he is bearing. Paul is added as the second apostle of Rome, as he is addressed in theological texts since the second half of the second century;⁵⁹ besides, his figure helps to create a balanced and symmetrical image. For the content of the image, the apocalyptic elements such as the hill of paradise with the four Paradise Rivers and the apocalyptic clouds are important. They show that the promulgation of the law is not only a historical event, but is also time-transcending and simultaneous with the future apparition of Christ at doomsday.⁶⁰

Why has this image been chosen for the apse of St Peter’s? It was seen first of all by the church visitors in a time in which Christianity started its triumphant success. The use of imperial iconography, an imperial gesture of power and majesty in the figure of Christ should be emphasized. Christ proclaims his “law” of faith and salvation and charges Peter, around the tomb of whom this lavishly decorated basilica was constructed, as a privileged missionary. The emperor, whose iconography is used, wants this faith to be taught to all nations. The *Dominus legem dat* thus seems to me an iconography with a strong political overtone.

5 The *Concordia Apostolorum*

Images of Peter and Paul appear also on less eye-catching objects.⁶¹ They are depicted frequently on gold glasses, generally attributed to the fourth century and were mostly produced in Rome.⁶² It has been suggested that these were used in ceremonies in honour of the dead, as the inscriptions insinuate; the

58 Couzin (2015) 45.

59 Van den Hoek (2013) 308 with reference to Irenaeus of Lyon; see also her contribution to this volume.

60 Kaiser-Minn (1983) 331 emphasizes the christological aspect of the scene: ‘die Selbstoffenbarung des kosmischen und endzeitlichen Siegers Christus, des Allherrschers und Gesetzgebers (und -vollstreckers) vor den Aposteln, die zu seinem Dienst bereitstehen’.

61 See a list of the iconographies in the index in Morey (1959) 82. Frequently cited are Huskinson (1982) 51–59 and Kessler (1987) 265–275. For the apostle’s portraits see recently Croci (2013) 48–51; Paneli (2014) 85f.; Felsner (2014) 75–90. Incomplete in respect to non-English literature is Meredith (2015).

62 See recently Howells (2015) 57f.

saints represented were expected to help the deceased in the time between death and resurrection.⁶³ This means that their function is the same as that of the images of Peter on sarcophagi.

The apostolic iconography on gold glasses mostly shows both apostles facing each other. This motif, which is generally labelled as *Concordia apostolorum*, is known since the second century from Roman imperial coinage: two rulers turn towards each other and shake hands, with the addendum *concordia*.⁶⁴ The addendum *concordia*, does not, however, appear on any of these glass roundels. Furthermore, on coins there are never two heads facing each other, but always two persons, the figure of Concordia alone or a single head. One could doubt whether the traditional name is accurate. Looking at the details of the iconography, Peter and Paul are very frequently represented with a crown above them⁶⁵ or with Christ holding a crown above their heads.⁶⁶ “The coronation of the apostles” seems to be a more appropriate modern name. Similar iconography is used also in other contexts: Christ with a wreath or a crown in his hand holds it above other saints’ or a couple’s heads.⁶⁷ For the other images of Peter and Paul, no specification seems to be necessary other than the descriptive designation “heads or figures of the apostles Peter and Paul”.⁶⁸

Obviously this image is a further reminder of the princes of the apostles’ presence in Rome, mentioned already in early texts⁶⁹ – in a group of objects that was certainly much more affordable than a marble sarcophagus.⁷⁰ It also shows that the need and the hope for the apostle’s intercession was widespread and was anchored among a larger group of people. The final destination of the glass roundels as decoration of catacomb *loculi* emphasizes the function of the images in the context of private devotion and confidence in the apostle’s assistance.

The representation of the apostles face to face has nothing to do with the dispute between the apostles in *Galatians* 2:11–14. There is no image which

63 Dresken-Weiland (2017b), 51f.

64 For the iconography of Concordia see Hölscher (1990).

65 Morey (1959) 53, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 67, 242, 267, 277, 396 (?). See now also the tetrarchic relief of embracing emperors, recently found in Nicomedia: Şare Ağtürk (2018).

66 Morey (1959) 50, 58, 66, 241, 286; see recently Howells (2015) 79f. nr. 10.

67 Saints: Morey (1959) nr. 74, 102. Couple: Morey. nr. 29, 109; Howells (2015) 124 pl. 103, 129 fig. 24.

68 For the image of Peter and Paul embracing each other, a theme from the second half of the fourth century, the name *concordia apostolorum* seems to fit better. See Guj (2002) 1873–91.

69 Grünstäudl (2015) 413–414; for the discussion about the Roman Peter-tradition see most recently Gnülka (2018).

70 Howells (2013) 119.

can be interpreted in this sense. In this context, a relief with Peter and Paul in Aquileia should be presented briefly.⁷¹ It is not worked out completely and shows the apostles facing each other, Peter on the left and Paul at the right. Paul holds his mantle from inside with his right hand. A similar motif is found in the famous statue of the Greek poet Sophocles and interpreted as a sign of elegance and erudition.⁷² Whether Peter was to perform a similar movement cannot be decided because the relief was never finished. Paul's reference to erudition shows how important classical culture was for those who created images for the new religion. Unfortunately, we do not know the context for which this relief was commissioned.

6 The Primate

The primacy⁷³ of the Roman church seems to have been no theme for images, apart from the emphasis on Peter and Paul as the (alleged) founders of the Roman church and their shared martyrdom at Rome. A group of statuettes of Peter, for which a chronology in the 5th–6th century has been proposed earlier on the basis of an archaeometric analysis⁷⁴ are now dated to the 19th century.⁷⁵ The *traditio clavium*, which appears since ca. 370 in early Christian art (see fig. 7.5, a sarcophagus fragment from the Campo Santo Teutonico in Rome), is neither depicted frequently nor commented by theologians in the context of primacy.⁷⁶ Therefore, we do not know any images which refer to the primacy of the bishop of Rome; consequently, this subject appears to have been of little interest to Christians in the fourth century. This is the reason why no images referring to it were created.

7 The Research Agenda “Anchoring Innovation”

The concept of “Anchoring innovation” reveals itself a useful tool when reflecting on the invention and the insertion of Peter images in early Christian art. Not all Peter images were successful, only a few were represented frequently. Two successful images, the arrest and the water miracle, refer to local “storytelling”

71 Dassmann (2015) 438: “Apostelkuss”; Dresken-Weiland (2017b) 125.

72 Statue of Sophocles, see Vorster (1993) 154–159, nr. 67 fig. 297–300.

73 Wirbelauer (2016) 156–83.

74 Fourlas (2006) 79–85; (2008) 141–68.

75 Cassitti, Berger, Fourlas (2013) 323–58.

76 Dresken-Weiland (2011) 147–9; Dijkstra (2018).



FIGURE 7.5 Rome, Campo Santo Teutonico, sarcophagus fragment with the *traditio clavium*

about Peter in Rome and make his veneration visible in material culture. In the sepulchral sphere, images of Peter express the hope of the commissioners that the prince of the apostles would help in the hereafter. The invention of the *dominus legem dat* for the apse of St Peter's is an example of the necessity to invent new images for new places and new contexts.

Generally speaking, Peter scenes obviously serve also as a horizontal anchor for Christianity, because they are present in different contexts and in various types of monuments, from small gold glasses to church mosaics. The diversity of Peter images at different times also shows that innovation has to be made constantly, because the durability of images is limited. That is why only few Peter images survive into the Middle Ages.

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The Death of Peter: Anchoring an Image in the Context of Late Antique Representations of Martyrdom

Markus Löss

If you participate in the sufferings of Christ, rejoice;
so that when his glory is revealed, you may also rejoice exultantly

1 Peter 4.13



Already in 1 *Clement* 5, Peter is characterized as a martyr, though his death on the cross is not mentioned here, but in the *Acts of Peter*.¹ This text, most probably written in the late second century (180–190),² describes the death and burial of the apostle Peter in detail (8.4–11.12): the beheading upside down is mentioned and explained following Peter’s last speech to the people, then his death, with Marcellus taking care of the corpse and his inhumation in a large sarcophagus.³ In visual art, Peter’s crucifixion is not depicted before the eighth century. It is the aim of this article to contextualize the depiction of Peter’s martyrdom within the visual culture of Late Antique depictions of martyrdom.⁴ With this goal in mind, it seems useful to start with a short overview of narrative representations of martyrs and their death in early Christian art and to discuss the question of why their death is depicted only rarely. Then we will consider the crucifixion of Christ as a model for all martyrdoms. This will give

1 On the letter of Clement, see Annewies van den Hoek’s contribution to this volume, Thacker’s for the *Acts of Peter*.

2 All dates are CE. On the dating of the *Acts of Peter*, see Zwierlein (2010) 36–7. A slightly later dating (first quarter third century) is also possible, Eastman (2015) 2.

3 This remarkable detail considering Peter’s burial (in a sarcophagus) was kindly pointed out to me by Jutta Dresken-Weiland.

4 In this paper, “martyrdom” primarily refers to depictions of the moment of death, and only secondarily to scenes of passion, which imply the subsequent death without showing it explicitly.

us a better understanding of the key figure of this volume, the apostle Peter, in early Christian art and especially on sarcophagi.⁵

The images of martyrdom are narrative images that show the cruel climax of a saint's life – be it in one single scene or as part of a pictorial cycle. These innovative images on different narrative media helped to anchor the idea of heroic death in Christian identity.⁶ Besides non-narrative images that perfectly fitted traditional, non-Christian Roman art in form and content (e.g. *orantes*, fish, anchors, partly bucolic or maritime images),⁷ the subjects of early Christian imagery were widely based on biblical and apocryphal stories. Convincing and intelligible iconographic solutions had to be found to visualize them.⁸ Still, “innovative” does not always mean, “newly invented”. Rather, iconography that was deeply anchored in Roman visual culture had to be built on and reinterpreted.⁹ Therefore, Christian art gave new meaning to old images, one example being depictions of martyrdom that developed partly out of the iconography of executions. Important steps in this evolution from ‘victim to victor’, as Felicity Harley-McGowan called it, will be discussed in this paper.¹⁰

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- 5 For a general overview on the iconography of Peter in early Christian art, see Dresken-Weiland's contribution to this volume.
- 6 Following N. Mahne I understand a medium to be narrative as long as it stimulates a narrative scheme within the beholder: 'Ein Medienprodukt kann als narrativ bezeichnet werden, wenn es das narrative Schema des Rezipienten zu aktivieren vermag', Mahne (2007) 16.
- 7 According to R. M. Jensen, this traditionalism shows that early Christians shared common virtues with their pagan neighbours. It is of course the advantage of these pictures to leave a theological interpretation open. Nevertheless, when Jensen interprets 'harvesting erotes', a frequent bucolic motif in Roman Art, as 'cherubs harvesting' she overstrains the limits of interpretation a little. According to Revelation 4.6–11 cherubs are characterized by six wings, the erotes have only two, Jensen (2000) 12.
- 8 On the development of early Christian iconography in general, see Klauser (1961); Grabar (1968); Brandenburg (1978); Kemp (1994); Jensen (2000); Bisconti (2000); Bisconti (2002).
- 9 As Grabar (1968) xlvi put it: 'the great majority of its (scil. Christian art's) distinguished features were neither created nor invented by the makers of the first Christian images. Almost everything in their work was dictated by the models they followed.' This view of a limited impact of Christianity on art has been criticized rightly: W. Kemp argues for an imagery with its own syntax and grammar, while using the traditional vocabulary. For the discussion of impact of Christianity on art, see Kemp (1994) 13–7.
- 10 Harley-McGowan (2015) or as Shaw (1996) 312 has put it: 'in order to win, one had to lose'. Still foundational for the iconography of martyrdom remains Grabar (1946) 39–104.

1 Martyrdom as Victory

Except for some written evidence, we know only a few objects or monuments that show the death of a saint in early Christian art.¹¹ Dealing with violent death in Roman society Catharine Edwards states: 'It is notable how few visual representations of martyrdom survive by comparison with written sources. The consumption of such images was perhaps less susceptible to control by the church authorities, whose accompanying commentaries glossed the recitations of martyr acts to the faithful'.¹² This explanation, of course not in the focus of Edwards study, does not seem convincing to me, as the relationship between so-called private and official early Christian art is hard to clarify.¹³ Therefore, I would try to push Edwards' media-critical approach to this phenomenon into another direction. It is well known, that text and image follow different rules and offer different option to guide their recipient.¹⁴ Regarding representations of martyrdom Lucy Grig states a different intensity of the violence rendered in written or visual sources. The majority of the martyr's literature draws a more drastic picture of the violent deaths.¹⁵ Avoiding images of martyrdom in art is not due to a general neglect of violence in Christian art but is specifically related to the context of martyrdom. Cruel scenes are not uncommon in early Christian art, as numerous depictions of the Hebrews in

11 Written sources, as for example a cycle of the life of St. Euphemia described by Asterius of Amaseia (PG 40. 336–337) will be neglected, as it is in some cases hard to tell whether they are describing real pieces of art or whether they belong to the category of ekphraseis that do not necessarily describe a real object. For the literary evidence, see Bisconti (1989); in general for the relationship between ekphraseis and pieces of art, see James & Webb (1991) 1–17. For some evidence of nowadays lost images of martyrdom mentioned in late antique sermons, see Dresken-Weiland (2018) 59–85. For depictions of martyrdom in early Christian art, see DACL 1,1 (1907) 422–446 s. v. Actes des martyres et les monuments figurés (H. Leclercq); not all collected images can still be interpreted as scenes of martyrdom, see van den Hoek and Herrmann, Jr. (2013) 90 fn. 96. Bisconti (1989); Bisconti (1995); Bisconti (2004). Scenes of decollation as a special case of martyrdom have been collected by Charalampides (1983) *passim*.

12 Edwards (2007) 215.

13 See Jensen (2000) 21–4. However, lacking control by church authorities did not hinder a development of subjects that are known for the first time only in private context, for example the old-testament scenes in the Via Latina Catacomb from the first half of the fourth century (L. Kötzsche-Breitenbruch argued for models in illuminated manuscripts). A. Ferrua was sceptical of this hypothesis of model and source. See Kötzsche-Breitenbruch (1976) 103–9 and Ferrua (1991) 159–64.

14 See for example Mitchell (1986) 47–149; Giuliani (2003) 21–37; Muth (2011).

15 Grig (2004) 119.

the fiery furnace (both in catacomb paintings and on sarcophagi) or the killing of the Egyptian First-Born or the (unique) scene showing Samson slaughtering a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass in the Via Latina Catacomb shows.¹⁶ We will come back to this interplay of media further below; the following overview of the visual evidence highlights the potential and limits of a pictorial representation of martyrdom in contrast to a written one as delivered in martyr' acts or passions. It contains all scenes of martyrdom from Rome dating from the fourth and early fifth century, where and when this subject is documented for the first time.¹⁷ This choice is not only reasonable due to the lack of examples from outside Rome, but it connects the chronology and content of pictorial representations of martyrdom to those of Peter's passion as displayed on sarcophagi, discussed in the second part of this article.¹⁸

The earliest surviving depiction of martyrdom derives from the Roman Catacomb of Domitilla. On the column shaft once decorating the tombs of two martyrs, Achilleus and Nereus (fig. 8.1), a relief shows the beheading of a man who is identified by the inscription as Achilleus. There must have been a similar relief on a second column shaft showing his fellow martyr Nereus. Comparing the style of the relief to early Christian sarcophagi, a dating into

16 Andaloro (2006) 154–57 (B. Mazzei).

17 I knowingly omit the scene of Stephen's martyrdom that was once part of the cycle of frescoes on the southern wall of the nave of St Paul's lost in the fire of 1823. Its dating has stirred academic discussion, but most scholars agree that it belongs to the first part of the fifth century, either made in the pontificate of Leo I (440–461) as part of the restoration testified in *LP*. I.239, see Andaloro (2006) 97 and 124 with bibliography) or around 400 (see Kessler (1989) 121–23, with a bibliographical note 11 on the record of the lost frescoes by means of various watercolour copies and engravings from the 17th to the 19th centuries collected in Bib. Vat., *Cod. Barb. Lat.* 4406 and *Cod. lat.* 9843). The scene shows the kneeling proto-martyr, who is being lapidated by the people in his back, thus right before his death according to *Acts* 7.60. Stephen gazes towards the upper corner of the image field, where in a kind of *mandorla* Christ appears to offer his heavenly assistance. Again, the image closely follows *Acts* 7.55–6: "But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.'" Unfortunately, the restoration of the whole cycle in the 14th century hinders an analysis of the original iconography. As some frescoes clearly show a middle Byzantine influence, the medieval impact on the composition and iconographic scheme is hard to distinguish and has been judged differentially. See White (1956); Hetherington (1979) 98 f.; Eleen (1985) 256–258; Tronzo (2001) 470–478; Romano (2002).

18 Of course, Christian art did not only develop in Rome or on the Italian peninsular. The very limited evidence from other parts of the Mediterranean region is only 'an accident of history', Jensen (2000) 20. These circumstances force me to refer mostly to evidence from the city of Rome.



FIGURE 8.1 Column shaft showing the martyrdom of Achilleus, marble, late 4th c. (?), Catacomb of Domitilla, Rome

the late fourth century has been proposed by Fabrizio Bisconti.¹⁹ Achilles is depicted with a *tunica discincta*; he is bending his knees with his arms bound behind his back.²⁰ Behind him, a soldier wearing a *tunica, paludamentum* and a *pileus pannonicus* lifts his arm to strike him down with his sword. In the background above, a laurel wreath on top of a cross indicates Achilles' victory over death.

The combination of victory and salvation seems a promising strategy to develop a convincing iconography of martyrdom in a mono-scenic image – generally “salvific compensation” was necessary to broaden the way for Christianity in “displacing polytheism”.²¹ This strategy can be observed in other early Christian representations of martyrdom, for example on two bronze *bullae* that were found in Roman catacombs and are lost today. Both are known only in modern reproductions (engravings and a lead cask). The first is called *Succesa-vivas*-medallion because of its inscription. It most probably shows the martyrdom of Lawrence (fig. 8.2).²² On one side, the martyr's death is depicted: the martyr, held by two torturers (*tortores*) is already on the gridiron that has been put in front of the judge (*iudex/quaesitor*), who is seated on podium at the left side.²³ Behind the saint, a figure appears that is hard to identify,

19 Bisconti (2004) 180. The pair of columns probably belonged to the architectural frame of the martyrs' tombs commissioned by Pope Damasus in the last quarter of the fourth century; Krautheimer et al. (1937) III 132; contrary to Pergola (1983) 211 f. who interprets the columns as remaining of a ciborium covering the altar of the semi-hypogean basilica; the criticism against the early dating of the church I have summed up briefly elsewhere, see Löx (2013) 209–211.

20 The bending of his knees was interpreted as a sign of Achilles' flight mentioned in the corresponding Dam. *Epigr.* 8, Bisconti (2004) 180. However, a comparable – admittedly not identical – posture appears in other scenes of decollation as on the column of Marcus Aurelius, see below. The bending of the knees seems to be a naturalistic detail as it is of course necessary that the convict lowers his head before he can be beheaded.

21 Elsner (2003) 88.

22 Musei Vaticani, Museo Sacro, Gabinetto dei medagli (lead cask, without Inv.); Rossi (1869) 34–7; Castagnoli (1953); Folliere (1980–82) 69–70 (for probable iconographical fore-runners in monumental art); Bisconti (1995) 252–253; Bisconti (1997) 552–3 with bibliography; Spier (2007) 78 f.; Grig (2004) 180; Visonà (2015) 3–9 (against the identification as a forgery proposed by Fabrizio Bisconti). Maffioli (1998) summarizes the circumstances considering the medallion's discovery and introduces a more reliable engraving and co-findings of the medallion; Maffioli (1999). Due to its bad state of preservation, no photo of the lead cask has been published. I thank Nicola Denzey Lewis for sharing her private photo and for discussing this object with me.

23 Except for the medallion, this scene is known from only one other late antique object, on a fifth/sixth-century fragment of a vase, from Egypt, today in Berlin: Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Ident. Nr. 3574.



FIGURE 8.2 Sucessa-vivas-medallion, engraving of the lead replica of the bronze original already lost in the 19th c.

but is most often interpreted as his soul leaving his body.²⁴ On the more reliable engraving of the medallion, the heavenly hand is coming out of a cloud (fig. 8.3). One can also identify a palm branch instead of a candle as the second engraving has it. The second one is probably based on the lead cask of the medallion and not on the original.²⁵ The piece shows on its other side a person, most probably Lawrence, wearing a wreath and holding a palm branch. He approaches a shrine covered by a baldachin architecture that is carried by twisted columns. The architecture of the shrine precisely resembles the depiction on the ivory reliquary from Samagher that shows pilgrims at Peter's tomb.²⁶ This comparison allows an interpretation of the depiction on the medallion as the shrine of Peter and underlines the object's authenticity that had been doubted by Bisconti.²⁷

24 Merkt (2016) 213–15 doubts whether an average Christian was aware of the body and soul dualism that is articulated in patristic literature. The Sucessa-vivas-medallion seems to hint at a naive understanding of this dualism at least.

25 Maffioli (1998) 193–203, esp. 202 f.

26 Venice, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia, c. 450 (?), see Longhi (2006).

27 Bisconti (1995) 252–53. In a later publication F. Bisconti did not repeat his doubts, but he interprets the shrine as that of Lawrence at the *ager Veranus*, Bisconti and Mazzoleni (2005) 41. Most of Bisconti's arguments had already been refused in short by Grig (2004) 180. Visonà (2015) 3–9 argues for the authenticity of the object and proposes a dating in the late fourth / early fifth century, which, however, must remain hypothetical. As the ivory reliquary of Samagher was only found in 1909, it cannot have served as a model

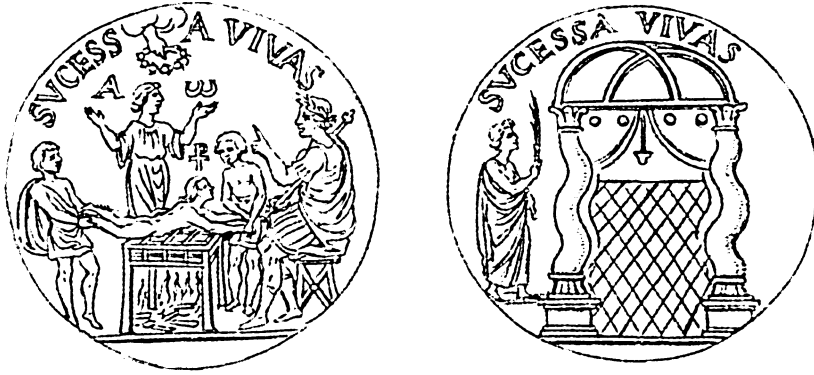


FIGURE 8.3 Sucessa-vivas-medallion, engraving of the bronze original, formerly Coll. di Stampe G. Durazzo

Another small bronze object (fig. 8.4) published by Giovanni Battista de Rossi and now lost shows, on the one side, the multiplication of the loaves and, on the other, a possible scene of martyrdom, or at least of salvation. Here a man – only his torso is depicted – is holding a branch (of victory?) in his right hand; he is rescued by an angel that gives him a helping hand.²⁸ De Rossi interpreted this scene as a depiction of the martyrdom of Vitalis, who was buried alive. But doubts remain, as the inscription reads “EIBW” and the scene is located near water, indicated by a row of reeds below the angel. The two concentric circles around the man’s torso could well be waves. If the scene shows a martyrdom at all (neither *tortor*, *carnifex*, nor *iudex/quaesitor* are present!) it might be that of an unknown saint who had been sentenced to be drowned. Still, the drowning must not imply punishment at all; in this case, the story would not refer to a martyr but simply to a person rescued by God. Martyrdom always goes along with salvation, but obviously, martyrdom is not the only way to salvation.

For another example that connects martyrdom and victory, we leave late fourth century Rome for a moment, to show that this connection was followed

for a supposed forgery of the medallion. Still, the similarities between both depictions are too striking to be coincidental; they should rather be explained by the same model, namely the actual shrine in the basilica at the Vatican Hill. Of course, a rest of uncertainty remains: the twisted columns, as depicted both on the casket and on the medallion, are mentioned in *LP* I.34.16 and were kept as *spolia* (they were high imperial *spolia* already in the Constantinian setting of the shrine of Peter) in the newly built Vatican basilica initiated by Julius II. Consequently, Renaissance artists had some idea of what the shrine once looked like, not least because G. L. Bernini took up the motif of the twisted columns at the new high altar. For a general discussion of the columns in St Peter’s, see Ward-Perkins (1952).

28 Rossi (1872) esp. 10 f.

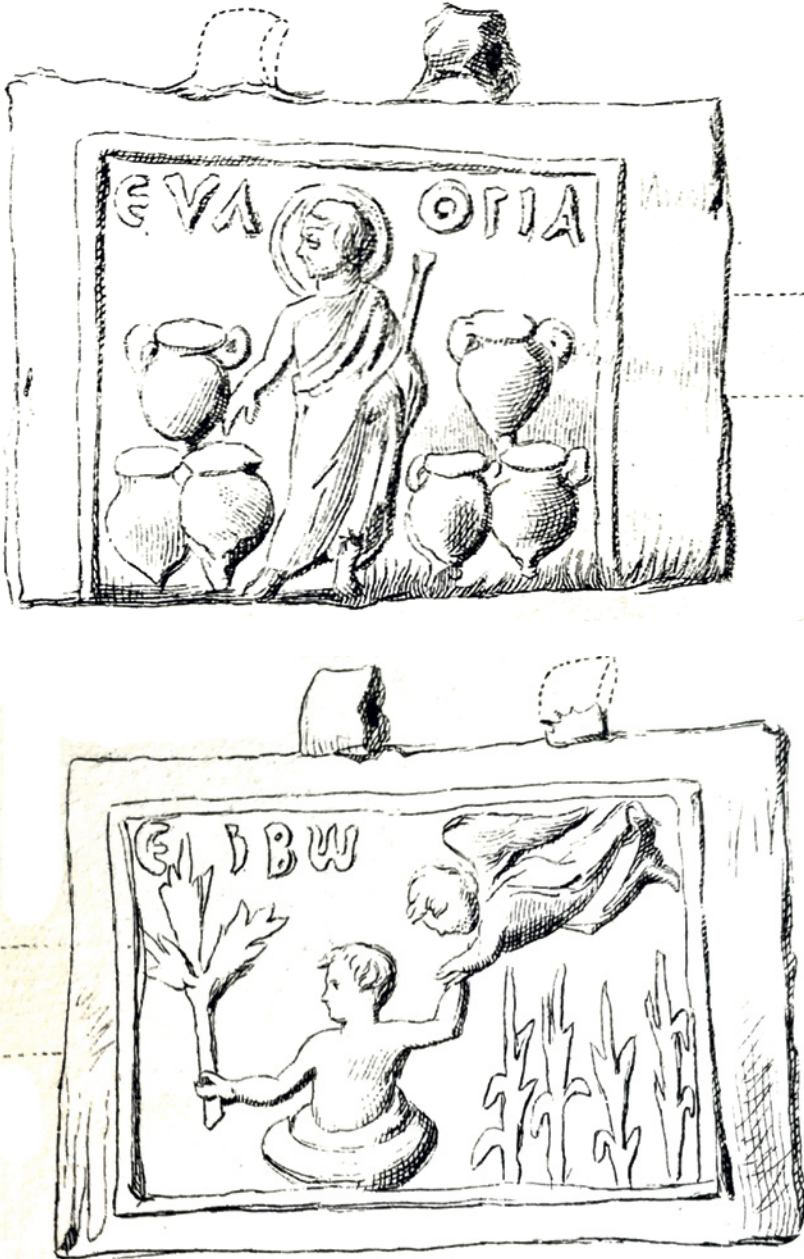


FIGURE 8.4 Enkolpion (sketch, original lost) with multiplication of the leaves and a scene of martyrdom (?), bronze



FIGURE 8.5
Martyrdom of Menas on a pyx, ivory,
6th c., London, British Museum

later. An ivory pyx found at the church of St Paul's (fig. 8.5), probably from the sixth century and of Egyptian origin, shows both trial and execution condensed in one scene, and, in a second scene, the adoration of a martyr.²⁹ The flanking camels identify him as Menas. According to legend, the animals indicated the place where his body should be buried. In an analysis that aims at showing how the martyr – despite being beheaded – was characterized positively, it is important to note the presence of an angel in this scene. The heavenly messenger appears above the kneeling Menas; like the Roman Victoria, he indicates the martyr's victory over death. This moment of divine salvation was modelled on the popular iconography of the sacrifice of Isaac, in fact, the similarity to the scene from the Old Testament lead Giovanni Battista de Rossi to a wrong interpretation of the scene on the pyx as sacrifice of Isaac.³⁰ Still in the sixth century, an image of beheading of an unarmoured person called for an explanation that the Acts of the martyrs could provide easily, as I will point out below. Primarily, we will focus on the iconography of beheadings in non-Christian and Christian contexts, to show that images of martyrdom stand for a meaningful recoding.

1.1 *Images of Beheadings – from Downright Defeat to Glorious Death*

Another early pictorial representation of martyrdom brings us back to the city of Rome. A first example comes from a very special example of private worship. The two registers of frescoes in the so-called *confessio* in the *domus* below

29 British Mus. Inv. No. 1879,1220.1; DACL (1907) 1,1 s. v. Actes des martyres 426 figs. 71–2 (H. Leclercq); Grabar (1946) 76–77.

30 Grabar (1946) 77 with reference to de Rossi (1869) 36. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer for pointing out to me the similarities of both scenes. In general on the sacrifice of Isaac on sarcophagi see Paneli (2001), esp. 140 f. for the parallels between the sacrifice of Isaac and the concept of martyrdom.

the church of Ss. Giovanni e Paolo at the *clivus Scauri* can be dated to the second half of the fourth century or to the beginning of the fifth century.³¹ The interpretation as “private chapel” is generally accepted in scholarship and relies on the imagery and the architectural setting of the small room that can be reached only by a staircase. The room’s main wall has a small niche assumingly for the private worship of a relic of one of the martyrs depicted on the sidewalls. Amongst other depictions, there are two in the upper register that display one of the earliest depictions of martyrdom in Christian art.³² They show, on the left side, the capture and, on the right side, the decollation of three persons (fig. 8.6).³³ In the Christian context of a private chapel, the scene showing the decollation can be interpreted as a scene of martyrdom. The upper part of the wall is destroyed, so only the kneeling three, blindfolded, with their arms bound behind their backs, can be fully seen. Two pairs of legs above them probably belong to their executioners.³⁴ The iconography follows earlier, rare depictions of beheadings in Roman art as e.g. on the Column of Marcus Aurelius in Rome.³⁵ Of course, context and meaning of the pictorial motif could not be more different.³⁶ In the non-Christian context of the column Roman supremacy over the barbarians is visualized more dramatically than ever before in Roman

31 Most scholars favour a late fourth-century dating of the frescoes, see Andaloro (2006) 110 (C. Ranucci). For B. Brenk an even earlier dating (340–380/90) seems possible, see Brenk (1995) 105 f., whereas Bisconti (1998) argues for an early fifth century dating. All proposed datings are based only on the style of the paintings.

32 The central niche is flanked by the depiction of two *togati*. The lower register of the main wall shows a male *orans*. He is flanked by two persons – probably the owner of the *domus* and his wife – in *proskynesis*. On the side walls, the adoration scene continues in the lower register: on the left two *matronae*, the one next to the main wall in a gesture of grief, are directed towards the central wall; on the right: a *chlamydatus* with scroll and a second male (?) person walk in direction of the central *orans*.

33 Brenk (1995); Brenk (2003) 98–105.

34 The discrepancy between three persons being killed and only one being worshipped in the central niche has not yet been explained satisfactorily. Brenk (1995) 99–100 summarizes the proposed identification and finally states: ‘Die crux unserer Malerei besteht darin, dass die Heiligen und Märtyrer nicht beschriftet sind wie das sonst der Fall ist. Der Hausbesitzer hielt es nicht für nötig, die Namen der Dargestellten zu verewigen, denn ihm waren sie bekannt.’

35 For the reliefs of the Column of Marcus Aurelius (scene 20 and especially scene 61), see most recently Beckmann (2011) 148 f. and Griebel (2013) 20. 258–61; 331–4. 338. B. Brenk sees a difference between the depiction in the ‘private-chapel’ and earlier depictions of beheading. He states that in earlier depictions the condemned is grabbed by the scruff of his neck whereas this is not the case in the frescoes on the *clivus Scauri*, Brenk (2003) 101. However, the mentioned reliefs of the Column of Marcus Aurelius clearly show that the supposedly Christian iconography has its origin in Roman imperial art.

36 Grabar (1968) 50.



FIGURE 8.6 Decollation of three anonymous martyrs, fresco, ca. 400, in a 'private chapel' under SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Rome

imperial art. Cruel images were also a traditional part of the Roman triumph and thus a common representation of Roman power and authority.³⁷ However, scenes of decollations or more generally of public punishment – except for arena spectacles where criminals, captives or slaves killed each other or were killed by wild animals – were not common in Roman art at all, whereas they were in political life part of the *summum gaudium plebis* since the republican period.³⁸ Besides the scene on the column of Marcus Aurelius, its forerunner, the Column of Trajan shows some images of beheadings. Scene 45 shows (most

37 Zimmermann (2009) 14.

38 Liv. 9,24. Tert. *de spect.* 1 states the power of pleasures (*uoluptatim uis*) offered by ancient spectacles, see Edwards (2007) 63–8. Still worth reading on Roman cruelty: Kiefer (1933) 66–105. Massacring opponents was still entertaining the masses in the fourth century CE and a reason to praise the Emperor: ... *non solum prouincialibus uestris in caede hostium dederunt salutem sed etiam in spectaculo uoluptatem.* (*Paneg. Lat.* 8,17,1, on Constantine I). In general on punishment in Roman times: Bauman (1996); Cantarella (1991). For late-antique practice, see Krause (2009); Krause (2014) 248–271. On arena spectacles in Roman late antique art, see recently van den Hoek and Herrmann, Jr. (2013) 94–106; 405–34, focussing on ARS dating from ca. 350–430; Puk (2014) 189–202.

probably) Dacian and Roxolanian captives being tortured by Moesian women during the first Dacian war.³⁹ In general, the representation of an outrageous act of violence needs a special motivation and has a peculiar meaning.⁴⁰ In this case, it underlines the barbarian conventions of warfare. In the second scene it is fulfilled by Roman allies, not Roman soldiers themselves. Roman soldiers only present the heads of killed Dacians to Trajan (scene 72), the result of the execution and of the first Dacian war fittingly underlines Rome's supremacy. Scene 140 shows again a beheading, but the circumstances could not be more different. At the end of the second Dacian war the Dacians decided to commit suicide or to behead each other. These rare examples of depictions of execution in Roman art, lead to the conclusion, that killing an unarmoured person is not a convenient option to demonstrate Roman *virtus*.⁴¹ For this reason, barbarians on so-called *Schlachtensarkophagen* bear their weapons, albeit they are always in the weaker and inferior position. In fact, swords, lances, and shields are spread all over these sarcophagi, be it in the hands of the winning Romans, the massacred barbarians or as *tropaia* stressing once more Roman victory. To underline Roman *virtus* the opponent should be characterized dangerous or at least armoured.⁴² Otherwise, it would be more suitable to show mercy and so express another Roman virtue, namely *clementia*.

On the one hand, the clearly inferior position of the convict prevents a positive characterization of the executioner as glorious Roman and explains why executions were not a popular motif in Roman art. On the other hand, the martyr had to be characterized positively despite his physical inferiority, as he was admired for his endurance of pain.⁴³ In the scene of decollation depicted in the *domus* underneath the later church of Ss. Giovanni e Paolo, that is only fragmentarily preserved, this aspect of victory in the moment of death could have been presented in the lost upper part of the fresco. The space would be sufficient to add a sign of victory be it palm branches, wreaths, or a Victoria. Besides, the short cycle, consisting of the arrest, execution and the adoration of the martyr, and its architectural context left no doubt, that the condemned

39 Koeppel (1991) 172 cat. No. 45.

40 Zimmermann (2009) 44.

41 This might explain why in scene 61, showing a beheading on the Column of Marcus Aurelius, it is not a Roman soldier, but a man in Germanic habit who kills the captive. The executioners could be future allies of the Romans as has been proposed by Müller (2009) 61 or he could be even a member of the same tribe as Hölscher (2000) 100 argued. This would underline the brutality of Roman punishment: executioner and executed would share one cruel fate.

42 Muth (2011) 333.

43 In *Acta Ss. Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 9 the martyr is admired by the jailer for her virtue, Edwards (2007) 210.

received a reward for their death, e.g. the one that appeared on the frescoes of the front wall; he is adored by the two flanking persons and the relics (of all three?) were most probably venerated. Once a way to express downright defeat in this context, a scene of beheading fitted now a worshipped person.

1.2 *Suffering Victors: an Iconographical Obstacle*

As mentioned above early Christian literature did not hesitate to describe torture and death in all their horrible details, it even got ahead of descriptions of violence in non-Christian literature.⁴⁴ Fourth-century Christian writers, especially Eusebius, described forms of torture and killing unheard-of before.⁴⁵ Had it been the Stoic ideal to endure pain without showing signs of suffering, the ideal promoted by the Christian martyr literature was to enjoy the suffering.⁴⁶ The *passio Ss. Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, a very early (probably between 203 and 205)⁴⁷ and thus highly influential text for martyr literature, for example underlines 'the joy they (scil. the martyrs) would have in their suffering'; another example is Octavius who draws a picture of a laughing martyr and Pionius walking willingly and cheerfully to his execution.⁴⁸ The texts underline in their last paragraph the martyr's victory over death and thus remember the recipient that the martyrs now join God's glory and that all the torture shows no effect on their body.⁴⁹ In some accounts, the protagonists 'maintain control over their own textual and interpretive destiny' despite all violent hands laid on them.⁵⁰ Pictorial images, especially mono-scenic ones were not able to control their message in such a clear direction. What is more, they had to

44 '... it is particularly the logic of Christian martyrdom which demands an ever increasing amplification of the torments endured by the narrative's victim'. Edwards (2007) 212. 'The greater the violence, the greater the possibility for victory: the more endurance, fortitude, immunity can be shown.' Grig (2004) 66. A non-Christian author with comparable fascination for physical suffering is Seneca, see Edwards (1999).

45 Mendels (1999) 88–90.

46 Zimmermann (2013) 373. For the Stoic ideal, see Perkins (1995) 77–104; Edwards (2007) 147–160.

47 Recently on the *passio* and later (after 450?) *acta Perpetuae*: Kitzler (2015), 14–17 for the dating.

48 *Martyrium Pionii* 21. *Passio Ss. Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 17.1: ... *contestantes passionis suae felicitatem* ... (translated by Perkins (1995) 107). Min. Felix, *Octavius* 37.1 *Quam pulchrum spectaculum deo, cum Christianus cum dolore congredditur, cum aduersum minas et supplicia et tormenta componitur, cum strepitum mortis et horrorem carnificis invidens inculcat* ... (How beautiful a spectacle for God, when a Christian confronts pain, when he is matched against threats, and punishments and torture, when laughing he tramples the noise of death and the horror of the executioner ..., translated by Edwards (2007) 218).

49 *Passio Ss. Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 11; *Martyrium Pionii* 22.

50 Castelli (2004) 103.

overcome an iconographical – also philosophical and theological⁵¹ – obstacle instead, namely to show a venerated person suffering, dying and triumphant at once. Christian scenes of martyrdom are anchored in an iconographic tradition, namely the mentioned depictions of executions in Roman imperial art. As on the column of Marcus Aurelius, the pose is comparable, but the context is very different from any scene of martyrdom.⁵² The executed person is always Rome's enemy and in the inferior position of the loser. The picture intends to visualize Rome's supremacy and the total inferiority of the enemy.⁵³ Thus, a scene of martyrdom that followed the traditional iconographic scheme of an execution could have been irritating to a beholder who was used to seeing in the executed person Rome's enemy and not the positively connoted protagonist of the scene. In written sources, suffering was promoted as a Christian virtue as early as the second century, as Judith Perkins has masterfully shown.⁵⁴ In an image, it is much more difficult to characterize a tortured or executed person as a positive role model. Given the inferior position of the martyr, his final victory over death must be underlined by clear signs, like a palm branch or a wreath, as on the ivory pyx or on the small bronze objects discussed above. In the case of Achilleus on the relief from the Catacomb of Domitilla, it was necessary to add the wreath – that is, the martyr's crown – above the scene of execution, in order to render Achilleus as victorious hero. The clear sign of victory transforms the suffering Achilleus into a winning loser. This combination helped to anchor the innovative image of the suffering Christian hero, the martyr, within the framework of Roman iconography. Different media underlined different aspects of their protagonists; in this case the martyrs' death is only depicted in relief but not described in the epigram that goes along with it.⁵⁵ It gives some rudimentary information on the lives of Achilleus and Nereus and underline their triumph in Christ. Epigram and relief complement one another and are connected in stressing the martyr's victory. The different medial approach can be compared to the rendering of one of the most meaningful scenes in early Christian literature and art: the Crucifixion of Christ.

51 Already in 1958 J. Beckwith stated 'for most pagans the passion of Christ was beyond their understanding', Beckwith 1958, 3. As the passion of Christ is nothing less than the proto-martyrium per se (see below), the salvation of all future martyrs, i.e. the mystery of their victorious death, was equally incomprehensible for early Christians.

52 See Harley-McGowan (2015) 143–47.

53 Grabar (1968) 50. On the development of a Christian iconography of suffering, see Harley-McGowan (2015) 138–51.

54 Perkins (1995). See also Edwards (2007) 207–20.

55 Dam. *Epigr.* 8.

1.3 *The Crucifixion of Christ and the Development of an Early Christian Iconography of Martyrdom*

The depictions of martyrdom discussed above cannot be dated with certainty, but most of them are dated roughly from 350–440. Following others I would like to argue that it is not coincidental that we find the first pictures of the crucified Christ in monumental art at the beginning of the fifth century, namely on the wooden door reliefs at the church of S. Sabina on the Aventine Hill.⁵⁶ Dating from the same period (c. 420/430) and likewise of Roman craftsmanship, the so-called Maskell Ivories, four panels (7.5 × 9.8 cm) today in the British Museum, show the redeemer upon the cross.⁵⁷ In Christ's face you see no pain, while at least on the panel of the ivory casket a dent and a furrow indicate blood and water coming out of his pierced side. The contrast with the dead body of Judas next to Mary and John emphasises that the redeemer is alive and without pain. Both depictions clearly differ from each other, but in both Christ bears almost no signs of suffering and is still alive, and therefore victorious.⁵⁸

Despite its relevance in Christian faith and in the biblical story, the passion of Christ and especially his crucifixion, as the proto-martyrdom, is a topic rarely depicted in art before the sixth century.⁵⁹ This makes it comparable to

56 The connection between depiction of the Crucifixion and scenes of martyrdom has been seen for example by Pace (1993) 356–359. Already Van den Hoek and Herrmann Jr. (2013) 101 proposed: 'Representations of martyrdom at the stake may, in fact, have been as unwelcome to Christian viewers as depictions of the crucifixion were'.

57 London, BM, Inv. No. MME 1856.06–23.4–7. See recently Foletti (2017) esp. 139 for the dating and the Roman origin of the ivory casket; add to his bibliography (140 n. 7) Harley-McGowan (2011a). On both monuments, see Harley (2006) 228–230. General on the doors of S. Sabina, see Jeremias (1980) *passim* (for the crucifixion 60–3, for the dating 105–7); Kemp (1994) 223–262; Foletti and Gianandrea (2016) 11–32 (for an overview of research on the doors).

58 'The peculiar intensity with which early artists insisted on Christ's unbending body and glaring eyes indicates their desire to depict Christ unaffected by his Crucifixion.' Kartsonis (1986) 33. For the iconographical differences, see Jeremias (1980) 62. Still in the sixth-century, elements of pain are missing in the so-called Rabbula Codex (Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Cod. Plut. I 56, fol 13r., dated 586), which testifies to an independent development of the crucifixion in the Byzantine iconography. In contrast to the western evidence Christ is wearing the purple *kolobion* of an early Byzantine emperor and is distinguished with a golden nimbus, see Deckers (2005) 54.

59 History of Art has dealt with this phenomenon repeatedly and offered different explanations for it; they have been summarized concisely by Jensen (2000) 133–137. A tempting one has been put forward by Martin (1955) and Grillmeier (1956). Both see the for a long time unsolved dispute about Christ's two natures as a possible explanation for the late introduction of an imagery of the redeemer upon the cross. This idea has been enhanced by Kartsonis (1986) 38: 'If this is correct, then the image of Christ alive on the cross may be successfully interpreted as a response to the difficulty of buttressing visually the doctrine

the representations of martyrdom: In both cases, the exposure to pain (either stressing the suffering on or the enduring of pain) and the violent death are a relevant theme in literature but are avoided in pictorial representations.⁶⁰ In early Christian times, the worldly life of Christ might have been more important to express his redemptive work than later on, as argued by Eduard Syndicus; however, this does not explain, why on sarcophagi that show scenes of Christ's passion, the crucifixion itself was not depicted.⁶¹ The small group of so-called passion sarcophagi was in fashion from ca. 340–400 and shows Christ's arrest, Christ before Pilate, Christ receiving the crown of thorns (in fact transformed into a coronation scene, as it shows no signs of suffering!)⁶² and Christ carrying the cross; his death itself was not depicted.⁶³ Instead, the empty cross appears, often flanked by two sleeping guards as on a tree sarcophagus in the Vatican.⁶⁴

of the two natures and their continuous hypostatic union during the Death of Christ. The chosen iconographic solution dealt successfully with this dilemma, for it created no doctrinal conflicts: if taken literally, the moment represented in these early Crucifixions preceded the Death of Christ, thus enabling the artist to avoid direct confrontation with the complexity of its death, whose theological definition was still incomplete. Moreover, an allegorical interpretation was ... equally satisfying from an Orthodox viewpoint. It succeeded in recalling the Passion of the human nature of Christ on the cross while confirming that throughout its duration Christ's divinity remained "awake". See also Jensen (2000) 151–54. General on representations of the crucifixion in late antique and byzantine art: Reallexikon zur Byzantinischen Kunst 5 (1995) col. 284–356, s. v. Kreuzigung Christi (M. Mrrass); Jensen (2000) 130–55; Harley (2006); Jensen (2007). For a short summary, see Deckers (2005) 50–62. The sixth-century evidence comes not so much from Rome, where we find it in S. Maria Antiqua (front wall of the apse, 705–7), but from Syria. The iconography found its way to the west on numerous pilgrim flasks and other souvenirs, Jensen (2000) 13; Chorikios *Laudatio Marciani* I (= *or.* I 75) mentions a painted cycle including the crucifixion in the Church dedicated to S. Sergios in Gaza. It is the earliest evidence for an image of the crucifixion in the eastern Mediterranean. Representations of the dead redeemer upon the cross appear regularly only from the tenth century onwards, Jensen (2000) 135.

60 The passion of Christ is for example relevant in Origen, Melito of Sardis or Tertullian, Jensen (2000) 136.

61 Syndicus (1962) 103.

62 Deckers (2005) 51.

63 Jensen (2017) 68–73. Recently J. Dresken-Weiland interpreted a piece of a frieze sarcophagus (Mus. Vat. Inv. 31530) as a unique depiction of the Crucifixion, Dresken-Weiland (2013) esp. 140–142. Still, doubts remain, as the figure of the redeemer on the cross itself is missing, and the remaining parts of the garment of Christ (?) cannot easily be reconstructed as part of his loincloth (*subligaculum*). General on dating, composition, and style of the passion sarcophagi Gerke (1939); Saggiorato (1969).

64 *Rep.* I 61.

The cross is combined with the crown of victory, transforming the sign of suffering into a symbol of triumph (*crux invicta*).⁶⁵

Before these examples from Rome, there is only evidence from *gemmae* that were commissioned much more often on demand than standardized sarcophagi. They were most probably produced in workshops in the East. A bloodstone from the late second or early third century shows a crucified Jesus with spread legs, even naked (fig. 8.7).⁶⁶ As a magical object it was only visible to a very restricted range of people, foremost its owner himself. Its limited iconographic outreach may be one reason why this “experimentation”⁶⁷ was not able to establish an iconographic tradition of the crucified redeemer.

Jeffrey Spier has proposed a mid-fourth century dating for another gem. The so-called Constanza Carnelian (fig. 8.8) shows a gathering of the apostles flanking a central cross with a nude figure of Christ.⁶⁸ In analogy to this, the later images of the crucified Son of God from the first third of the fifth century remained an unfollowed innovation in early Christian art. Later images of Christ upon the cross, as they appear more frequently from the sixth century onwards, do not follow them.⁶⁹ This trend to experimentation with new iconographic solutions can be detected in the images of martyrdom as discussed above. Like the Crucifixion, they do not establish an iconography of martyrdom already in the fifth century but remain exceptions. The Christians of the

65 Simultaneously the crucifixion as form of capital punishment runs out of use in course of the fourth century, see Krause (2009) 327. Various authors labelled the cross a Christian *tropaion* amongst them Iust. Mart. *apol.* 1 55; Tert. *apol.* 16.1 and *adv. Marcionem* 4.20; Eus. *vita Const.* 18.8 and Aug. *civ.* 18.32, see Harley-McGowan (2015) 137 f. On the cross as a symbol of victory in Christian art, see Dinkler (1967) and Jensen (2000) 148–50. On the cross as Christian symbol in general, see Viladesau (2006) 42 f. and fundamentally Jensen (2017).

66 London, BM, Inv. No. PE 1986,0501.1. Michel et al. (2001) No. 457 (with bibliography); Spier (2007) No. 444; Harley-McGowan (2008) 217 f. J. Sanzo recently published an early-seventh-century Coptic manuscript (Brit. Lib. Or. 6796), in which the motif of the spread legs reappears, Sanzo (2016) fig. 2. The gem was considered to be a forgery among others by Dinkler (1967) 75 f. and Maser (1976) 272 f., who was followed by RAC II (1981) 293 f. s. v. Glyptik (J. Engemann). Engemann has recently revoked his doubts on the authenticity of the gems as the representation of the crucifixion shows a detail that could not have been known to modern forgers, Engemann (2011) 208 and 211. The arms of Christ are bound, not nailed to the horizontal beam: this has been proven to be a late antique practice by archaeological evidence. See Dresken-Weiland (2010b) 34. Jensen (2017) 78 remains sceptical on the third-century dating.

67 Harley-McGowan (2011b) 219.

68 J. Spier bases his dating upon the form of the letters and the carving style, Spier (2007) No. 444. The stone has been studied recently by F. Harley-McGowan, who is convinced of its authenticity. Harley-McGowan (2011b).

69 Jeremias (1980) 62 f. The sixth-century evidence relies mostly on objects related to pilgrimage to sites in the Holy Land as *ampullae* or reliquaries. See Jensen (2017) 86–9.



FIGURE 8.7 Intaglio showing the Crucifixion of Christ, bloodstone, late 2nd or 3rd c., from Syria (?), London, British Museum

first four centuries after Christ's death 'could use words to describe the passion' but 'may have considered a visual presentation of Christ's suffering too disturbing or too powerful once given concrete form'.⁷⁰ What Robin M. Jensen concludes for avoiding images of Christ's death seems a tempting explanation for the lack of images of dying martyrs. However, was this equally valid for images of Peter's death to which we now turn?

70 Jensen (2000) 153 f.



FIGURE 8.8 Intaglio showing the Crucifixion of Christ, carnelian, 4th c. (?), London, British Museum

2 Peter Reflecting Christ: a Passion without Suffering

In the first part of the fourth century, Peter's iconography is not yet fixed, but the apostle can be identified by context. From the mid-fourth century onwards, he also is identifiable by his short beard and hair style.⁷¹ It is not a surprise that Peter appears often both in monumental art and in the minor arts (for example, on the bottom of gold glasses): his tomb was venerated in Rome from at least ca. 160 onwards and its cult had its heyday after the building of the Constantinian basilica, he had a prominent role within the Gospels, the *Acts of the Apostles*, and the *Acts of Peter*, and he was seen as *vicarius Christi* for the church and the city of Rome.⁷²

71 General on the iconography of Peter: Dinkler (1938/39) 5–80; Sotomayor (1962); De Bruyne (1969) Bisconti (2001); RAC 27 (2016) 427–55 s. v. Petrus III (Ikongraphie u. Kult) (E. Dassmann); for a bibliography, see also Koch (2000) 182 and Dresken-Weiland (2010a) 128–30.

72 The great majority of gold glasses have been found in Rome. Others have been exported, especially to the Rhine provinces, where in Cologne a small local production could be

Non-narrative representations outnumber the narrative scenes from the life of Peter that will be our focus.⁷³ Images of Peter are not as frequent in catacomb paintings as on sarcophagi where we find many narrative representations of him:⁷⁴ the water miracle,⁷⁵ Peter and the cock,⁷⁶ the apostle's arrest,⁷⁷ and, more rarely, Peter and the dog of Simon Magus,⁷⁸ Peter with Ananias and Sapphira,⁷⁹ the raising of Tabitha,⁸⁰ Peter reading,⁸¹ and finally (only once), the liberation of Peter from prison.⁸²

established. Nüsse (2008) 253; Howells et al. (2015) 58, for a distribution of gold glass find spots, see the map on p. 54 (fig. 14).

- 73 The following overview can be short as two other contributors of this volume, Jutta Dresken-Weiland and Roald Dijkstra, both have dealt extensively with this topic, Dresken-Weiland (2010a) 119–61. Dresken-Weiland (2011) *passim*; Dijkstra (2016) 310–24. See also Dresken-Weiland's contribution to this volume. On chronology and for an interpretation of scenes of the passion of Peter and Paul (not together with Christological scenes) on passion sarcophagi, Gerke (1939) 209–215; Saggiolato (1968) 99–131.
- 74 Dresken-Weiland (2010a) 21.
- 75 *Rep.* I 6, 11, 14, 15, 17, 20, 22, 23, 39–45, 52, 67, 73, 85, 86, 97, 100, 135, 153, 221, 241, 253, 255, 332 (Moses?), 369, 372, 417 (Moses?), 421, 422, 425, 431 (Moses?), 442?, 526, 533 (Moses?), 541–3 (Moses?), 552?, 621, 624?, 625, 636, 638, 651, 665, 673, 674, 677, 680 (allegorical lambs), 748, 768 (Moses?), 770–2, 807, 867, 919 (in combination with Peter's arrest), 932, 934, 935 (Moses?), 946, 951, 990, 991, 1007, *Rep.* II 11, 12, 30, 32, 51, 54, 58, 62, 65, 98 (in combination with Peter's arrest), 101, 203, 204, 250; *Rep.* III 32–4, 36–40, 49, 53, 60, 121?, 146, 172, 218 (in combination with Peter's arrest), 221, 225, 305, 352, 359, 388, 453, 460, 479?, 493, 511 (in combination with Peter's arrest), 581, 594, 609. Not in all cases, as indicated by a question mark, decision can be made whether the water miracle is conducted by Moses or by Peter. On the one hand the military dress of the drinking figures is a clear indicator for Peter, on the other there exist representations of Peter, identified by an inscription, that do not contain drinking figures at all, e.g. on a gold glass in the Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Matt et al. (1969) fig. 51.
- 76 Together with Christ: Lange (1996) 104–106; *Rep.* II 12, 108, 124, 138; *Rep.* III 34, 36, 37, 38, 52, 55, 58–62, 83, 86, 118, 125, 153, 155, 203, 222, 273, 277, 297, 364, 365, 399, 413, 427, 497–9, 511, 523; *Rep.* IV 46. Only Peter and a cock: *Rep.* II 124; *Rep.* III 71, 365, 427, 498 (lid), 597.
- 77 *Rep.* I 6, 7, 11, 14, 15, 17, 22, 39, 40, 42, 44, 57?, 61, 94, 215, 220, 221, 241, 369, 398, 434 (?), 507, 621, 625, 636, 674, 680, 694, 770, 771, 772, 910, 915, 932, 1007; *Rep.* II 11, 12, 19?, 21, 30, 58, 65, 96, 100, 120 (*Martyrium Pauli?*), 142, 203, 204; *Rep.* III 33, 36, 37, 40, 55, 60, 147, 148, 168?, 218, 221, 222, 416, 460; *Rep.* IV 5 (Strikingly two man, one bearded the other beardless, take the arms of the *orans* depicted in the centre of this fluted sarcophagus. The composition corresponds to the scene of Peter's arrest, but here the gesture indicates support and not arrest), 6, 54, 58, 57, 74, 119. In some cases the arrest and the water miracle are concentrated to one single scene: *Rep.* I 919; *Rep.* II 98; *Rep.* III 218, 511; *Rep.* IV 46, 55, 150.
- 78 *Rep.* II 151, 152, 225; *Rep.* III 304, 418.
- 79 *Rep.* I 463?; *Rep.* III 158, for other fragments, see Dijkstra (2016) 320 n. 95.
- 80 *Rep.* III 68, 201? (lost fragment), 497 (left side), for other rare and uncertain examples, see Dijkstra (2016) 323 n. 107.
- 81 *Rep.* I 262, 943; *Rep.* III 515 in combination with his arrest: *Rep.* III 35, 38, 40, 51, 273, 359, 557.
- 82 *Rep.* II 122.

Out of this variety of representations, especially the scene of Peter's arrest can allude to his martyrdom.⁸³ It is often depicted on frieze sarcophagi of the first half of the 4th century. As the arrest is commonly combined with the water miracle, it cannot refer to the first arrest of Peter together with John in Jerusalem (*Acts* 4. 1–3), but the one in Rome.⁸⁴ Thus, the apostle's arrest depicted on the sarcophagi is the starting point of the story of his passion and should be understood as a reference to his death on the cross, since this last aspect of the narration was never explicitly depicted in early Christian art. On the great majority of sarcophagi, the soldiers in the scene of Peter's arrest do not even carry a weapon: the aspect of violence is limited to the soldiers' catching at Peter's arms. It is the military costume, especially the *pileus pannonicus* on the many early examples (310–360) and usually also the *paludamentum* on the later passion sarcophagi, that makes the scene easily recognisable and provides its (limited) aggressive connotation.

We will focus on the rare cases in which one of the soldiers is armed (*Rep.* I 6, 57?, 61, 215, 680, 771).⁸⁵ On the sarcophagus of Iunius Bassus (*Rep.* I 680), the arrest of Peter is paralleled both typologically and ideologically by that of Christ before Pilate. Both scenes flanking the central *Dominus legem dat* can hint at the following suffering and death of their protagonists. The sarcophagus shows Christ's arrest on the right of the central niche and Peter's on the left. In both scenes, the soldier that rests his arm on his sword forces the protagonist to move on. The aspect of violence is reduced but perceivable.

According to Guntram Koch a fragmentary column sarcophagus (*Rep.* I 57) is an example for a more violent solution to depicting Peter's arrest (fig. 8.9). It shows in its central niche a *Dominus legem dat* scene, on the right of which is depicted Christ before Pilate (in two niches) and, on the left, two soldiers discharging a short-bearded man in *tunica* and *pallium*, whose arms are bound behind his back. The soldier next to him raises a sword in his right hand. The weapon is nowadays almost entirely lost, but its pommel can still be recognized. I do not know of any other representation of Peter's arrest in which the

83 Grabar (1946) 15; Dresken-Weiland (2010a) 140 f.; Dresken-Weiland (2011) 151.

84 Gerke and Koch speak of an arrest in Palestine or a first arrest, Koch (2000) 184 f. According to Gerke (1939) 210 the scene was connected to the water miracle, albeit this is located in the Roman *carcer* at least in the late fourth century (?) version of the *Acts of Peter* (attributed to Pseudo-Linus), see Zwierlein (2010) 431 and Dresken-Weiland (2011) 131 (with further reference).

85 I refrain from adding *Rep.* II 120 to this small group. Given its fragmentary state of preservation, an interpretation as scene of Peter's arrest is problematic for two reasons: 1. It shows two soldiers side a side whereas in all other certain scenes of Peter's arrest, the soldiers are flanking the apostle. 2. The drawn sword in the hand of one soldier is a feature that is very uncommon for the arrest of Peter, while it is typical for the martyrdom of Paul.



FIGURE 8.9 Fragment of a sarcophagus with columns (*Rep.* I 57), marble, late 4th c., Vatican, Museo Pio Cristiano

apostle's arms are bound behind his back, whereas this is a common detail for the martyrdom of Paul, as stated by Koch.⁸⁶ Both, the bound arms and the risen sword, seem to favour an interpretation as martyrdom of Paul as proposed by Umberto Utro.⁸⁷ Still, considering the dating at the end of the fourth century, when the iconography of Peter and Paul had already been well established, an identification with Paul, seems problematic for two reasons:⁸⁸ beard and hair-style contradict this interpretation, as does the absence of the column with the rostra that regularly appears in the background of scenes with Paul.⁸⁹ The authors of *Repertorium* I simply speak of a "bärtiger Apostel" not suggesting any identification either with Peter or Paul. Still, the unusual, explicit depiction of a violent gesture, namely the rising of the sword, needs to be explained. The scene is next to the central scene showing a youthful Christ on a hill from which flow the four rivers of paradise. On the left of the middle scene, that is, symmetrical to the scene depicting the arrest of the undefined apostle, Christ

86 The martyrdom of Paul is depicted on some passion sarcophagi (*Rep.* I 61, 26?, 184, 201, 212, 215, 667, 680; *Rep.* II 120 (?); *Rep.* III 211, 297 (in two scenes: 1. the martyrdom itself and 2. Paul with a rope around his neck showing his arrest by Tamiri), 416, 498, 569) see also Koch (2000) 188.

87 Utro (2009c) 189 No. 62. Utro assumed that on the missing parts of the sarcophagus front the martyrdom of Peter could have been depicted. For the iconography of Paul in early Christian art, see Bisconti (2001); Uggeri (2010) 228–237; Utro (2011); *RAC* 26 (2014) 1229–1250 s. v. Paulus IV. Ikonographie u. Kult (E. Dassmann).

88 In the first part of the fourth century the iconography of the apostles is not that strict on sarcophagi, but the narrative context helps identifying them, Kollwitz (1936) 54–55; Dinkler (1938/39) 37 fn. 5.

89 See for example *Rep.* I 212; *Rep.* III 297, 569.



FIGURE 8.10 Tree-sarcophagus (*Rep.* I 61, “Lateran Sarcophagus 164”), marble, 2nd third of 4th c., Vatican, Museo Pio Cristiano

is represented as being escorted by two soldiers to Pilate. One of the soldiers next to Christ carries a spear. The risen sword may have been added to repeat the composition of the scene showing Christ before Pilate.⁹⁰

On “Lateran Sarcophagus 164” (*Rep.* I 61, fig. 8.10) and on *Rep.* I 215, the presence of the sword can be explained by the symmetrical representation of the martyrdom of Paul. Whereas in the case of *Rep.* I 6 (fig. 8.11) and 771, the sword cannot be explained by the composition, but maybe by the early date, as Gerke observed a more violent character in the earlier depictions. There are examples of frieze sarcophagi on which Peter’s face shows clear signs of anger against the soldiers (fig. 8.11), whereas on the passion sarcophagi he is ready to accept his fate like a philosopher (fig. 8.10).⁹¹ Still, there are other examples that help to underline the importance of a balanced composition underlining the typological correspondence between Peter and Christ:

On a sarcophagus from the late fourth century (*Rep.* I 58),⁹² we find again scenes related to the Christ’s passion combined with those of the passion of Peter (fig. 8.12). The passion of Christ is represented by the scenes showing Christ on his way to Pilate, who washes his hands. This scene is paralleled by the washing of Peter’s feet through the hands of Christ on the left side of the sarcophagus’ front. Peter’s arrest parallels that of Christ, who is flanked by two

90 Scenes showing the rising of Lazarus and the water miracle are often also arranged at the corner of sarcophagi with one single frieze for compositional reasons, see Dinkler (1938/39) 24. In addition, iconographical details as the *rotulus* with an inscribed christogram in the hands of Christ and Peter connect both ideologically, cf. De Bruyne (1969) 60 fig. 9 and 10.

91 Gerke (1939) 210 f.

92 Dresken-Weiland (2010a) 140 f.; Dresken-Weiland (2011) 151.



FIGURE 8.11 Frieze sarcophagus (*Rep. I 6*; “Lateran sarcophagus 161”), marble, 1st quarter of 4th c., Vatican, Museo Pio Cristiano



FIGURE 8.12 Sarcophagus with columns (*Rep. I 58*), marble, late 4th c., Vatican, Museo Pio Cristiano

soldiers. One of them holds a spear in his hand. Correspondingly, the soldier preceding Peter carries a cross over his left shoulder. Here, the cross is not only the attribute of Christian victory but also the tool for the apostle's future martyrdom;⁹³ it makes this scene one of the rare narrative images from late antiquity that explicitly refer to the apostle's death on the cross. There are only four other sarcophagi with similar iconography: two in Rome (*Rep.* I 189 and 667), one in Nîmes and another in St.-Maximin-la-Ste.-Baume (*Rep.* III 412 and 498).⁹⁴ On *Rep.* I 667, spear and cross appear together in the scenes (Christ in front of Pilate / Peter on his way to crucifixion) flanking the central cross that ends in a Chi-Rho decorated with a *corona* by the princes of the Apostles. Here the assimilation of Peter and Christ was so suggestive that Orazio Marucchi who first published the piece mixed the protagonists in the scene left to the centre: instead of Peter and the soldier with the cross, he erroneously recognized Christ and Simon of Cyrene.⁹⁵ On the examples from Gaul, instead of the spear we find a *vitis* in the hands of the soldier proceeding Christ on his way to Pilate. On *Rep.* III 498 (fig. 8.13) and on an unfinished sarcophagus with columns (*Rep.* I 189), the cross in the scene of Peter's arrest – or better Peter on his way to crucifixion – can be explained by the scene to the left of it. It shows the martyrdom of Paul. The apostle is depicted with his head sunk and the soldier drawing his sword to decapitate Paul in the next moment. Paul's decollation is never depicted but is hinted at by both the lowering of his head (although this might also be a sign of resignation or more probably of stoic endurance as proposed for Peter on the passion sarcophagi) and the drawn sword of the soldier.⁹⁶ In analogy, the cross next to Peter marks his imminent death. Corresponding

93 On the cross as attribute of martyrs in early Christian art, see Schäfer (1936). Schäfer did obviously know only scenes, in which Peter carries the cross by himself. In comparison with a sixth-century ivory plaque (USA, Bryn Athyn, Pitcairn collection) that shows the apostle holding the cross on the paradise hill he concludes that the cross in Peter's hands on passion sarcophagi would never refer to his own but only to Christ's passion, see Schäfer (1936) 80 f. and for the ivory plaque Volbach (1952) No. 134.

94 On some sarcophagi showing a *Dominus legem dat* Peter carries a cross over his left shoulder: *Rep.* II 149–150 (cross decorated with gems), 152, 383, 389, 390; *Rep.* III 25 (cross decorated with gems), 120, 428 (cross decorated with gems), 465, 499 (cross decorated with gems), 642. *Rep.* V 23. On a fragment showing Peter probably as a witness of a miracle by Christ he also carries a cross (*Rep.* V. 153), according to J. G. Deckers as a symbol of his passion already overcome. As it shows Peter in a narrative that took place before his death, the cross is also a symbol for his future martyrdom.

95 Saggiorato (1962) 49; Marucchi (1927) 266.

96 *Rep.* III 297 (scenes on the far left and right), 416 (? only known in a sketch), 498, 569 (fragment, combination with Peter uncertain). According to Saggiorato (1968) 98 Paul bows his head to receive the final strike.



FIGURE 8.13 Sarcophagus with columns (*Rep.* III 498, so-called sarcophagus of St. Mary Magdalene), marble, last third of 4th c., St. Marie-Madeleine, St.-Maximin-la-St.-Baume

to the combination with the passion of Christ (with or without spear), Peter's arrest still implies his future death on the cross.

The scene of arrest is frequently combined with the water miracle during Peter's imprisonment, a scene not known from the *Acts of the Apostles* but from the *Acts of Peter*.⁹⁷ As Jutta Dresken-Weiland has argued, this combination underlined the moment of conversion of the guards and the focus of the scene lays on the conversation between Peter and the soldiers that led to their final conversion.⁹⁸ She convincingly refuses the interpretation recently offered by Martine Dulaey, who put the scene "dans le cadre des images baptismales".⁹⁹ In many examples of this representation, the mostly unarmed soldiers hold

97 Bisconti (2001) 396 f. Scenes of arrest (especially of Jesus, Peter or Paul) were a suitable visual strategy to show Christian exclusivity by depicting the conflict with pagan authorities. Another good example is the iconography of the three Hebrews in front of Nebuchadnezzar. For a general discussion of this visual rhetoric of invective against paganism by Christian heroes as examples of the true faith, see Elsner (2014) esp. 342–347. See above n. 83.

98 Dresken-Weiland (2010a) 162. See also Dresken-Weiland's and Dijkstra's contribution to this volume.

99 Dulaey (2008) 344; Dresken-Weiland (2011) 135. 138.

Peter's wrist.¹⁰⁰ Dulaey calls this gesture 'suppliant' and refers to a sarcophagus with scenes showing the Israelites crossing the Red Sea.¹⁰¹ It must be noticed that here it is only children that are taken on their wrist. Therefore, the gesture cannot be compared with the arrest of Peter. In scenes showing Christ's arrest or Christ before Pilate on passion sarcophagi or on the lower register of the lid of the fourth-century Brescia casket the same gesture is depicted. In this context a gesture of assistance does not make any sense. On the contrary, these comparisons underline the aggressive character of the scene of Peter's arrest: it is by no means suppliant.¹⁰²

Dulaey is also puzzled by the direction the soldiers take: in 39 cases depicting the arrest of Peter, they are moving away from the scene with the water miracle, whereas in only four pieces they are moving towards the font in the *carcer Tullianus*.¹⁰³ Dresken-Weiland explained this with the general direction of narration in late antique art moving from left to right.¹⁰⁴ Another possible solution could be to understand the scene as representing not the moment before Peter's imprisonment, but immediately before his crucifixion, when the soldiers are leading Peter out of prison (the place of the water miracle) towards the place of his execution.¹⁰⁵ The rare scenes in which one of the soldiers carries a cross, both to be found on passion sarcophagi (*Rep.* I 189 and *Rep.* III 498, here fig. 8.13), favour this interpretation. Maybe the two fragments on which one soldier carries a sword¹⁰⁶ in his hand hint towards the same interpretation and some scenes traditionally interpreted as the arrest before Peter's imprisonment are showing him on his way to his crucifixion. A weapon implies always the possibility of using it, in this case to force the apostle to move to his place of martyrdom.

100 Dulaey (2008) 314–8. Only in rare cases, the soldiers do not even touch Peter at all (*Rep.* I 14, *Rep.* II 100, 96 and *Rep.* III 297).

101 Dulaey (2008) 316. *Rep.* I 188 (Lot, too badly preserved to allow a comparison with the arrest of Peter); *Rep.* II 146. *Rep.* III 41 (Red Sea).

102 A definite gesture of assistance can be seen in *Rep.* III 41, showing again a representation of the flight of the Israelites. Among his fellows, an old Israelite clearly holds on to the two younger men. He accepts their helping hand, which is not the case in the scene of Peter's arrest. Peter does not lay his hand in that of the soldiers. On the contrary, the soldiers take him at his upper arm or at his wrist.

103 Dulaey (2008) 313.

104 Dresken-Weiland (2011) 135 n. 44.

105 Stuhlfauth (1925) 101–4 called this scene Peter on the way to his 'Richtstätte' (place of execution). A concise classification of even four different scenes (I a 'Verhaftung', I b 'Gefangenschaft', II a 'zur Richtstätte', II b 'auf der Richtstätte') as proposed by Stuhlfauth (1925) 72–125 seems not justified regarding the only minor differences between them, see Dijkstra (2016) 351–52.

106 *Rep.* I 287 und *Rep.* I 6.

For all that, Peter is never harmed by his guards and shows no signs of bodily pain. Arrest and water miracle, both part of Peter's passion, are reflecting the Christological scenes on the passion sarcophagi. Here and there the protagonists do not suffer, their violent death is not depicted. This ideological connection between Christ and his first apostle is mirrored in the symmetrical composition of many sarcophagi. The scenes of the apostle's passion without suffering emphasize other qualities than the scenes of martyrdom do.

3 Concluding Remarks or: Neither Victim nor Victor

Regarding the martyrdom of Peter the question "victim or victor?" remains open or rather, it is not addressed at all, as the focus on the sarcophagi lies elsewhere. The figure of the apostle had ideologically, and thus also iconographically, more to offer than the martyrs in the cases discussed above. It was the martyrs' merit to endure their suffering and to die for their Christian faith. In the case of Achilleus and Nereus basically nothing is known about their lives. It is their death that matters and that was depicted, albeit only rarely, for the reasons explained above. In contrast, Peter was a more colourful figure who is paralleled with Christ: he is depicted as a wonder worker, as in the scene showing the raising Tabitha or the water miracles. As the death of Christ, the apostle's death is only hinted at. Even in the *Acts of Peter*, that tell us about the apostle's crucifixion, his suffering on the cross is neglected.¹⁰⁷ Bodily pain and its endurance, a crucial aspect in the lives of the martyrs, is of no importance in Peter's life. Consequently images of him focused on other aspects, such as his miracles, the *concordia apostolorum*, or the *Dominus legem dat*. When at the end of the fourth century these sarcophagi got out of use, an iconography of Christ's crucifixion and of martyrdom stood at its beginning, and developed only slowly in the following centuries. From the sixth century onwards, images of Christ's crucifixion became more common under the influence of souvenirs from the Holy Land, but depictions of martyrdom remained rare.¹⁰⁸ In Rome a dead saint, still without signs of his torture or violent death, was depicted for the first time in the second quarter of the eighth century in the frescoes in the Catacomb of Calepodius showing the burial of pope Callixtus.¹⁰⁹ It took almost another hundred years to come up with a representation of decapitated

107 *Acts of Peter* 9.1 tells us that he started preaching right after being put upon the cross, the painful procedures has no effect on Peter.

108 Jensen (2017) 62–64.

109 Minasi (2009) 83.

martyrs in the cycle of frescoes in the transept of S. Prassede dating to the pontificate of Paschalis I. (817–824).

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Romulus and Peter: Remembering and Reconfiguring Rome's Foundation in Late Antiquity

Mark Humphries

1 Introduction: the Celebration That Never Was

On 21 April 348, nothing happened.¹ This is an exaggeration, of course: surely something must have happened somewhere on that date. Rather, on 21 April 348 something significant and apparently long-expected did not happen. This was so unusual that it called for detailed comment in the epitome of Roman imperial history written a decade or so later by Sextus Aurelius Victor. In the course of his account of the emperor Philip the Arab (244–249), Victor observed that the millennium of Rome's foundation on 21 April 248 had been the occasion for a visit by the emperor and his son, who engaged in acts of architectural patronage and hosted grand celebrations to mark this important milestone.² How striking, therefore, was the omission of any similar celebrations a century later for the 100th anniversary of the city's foundation.³ Indeed, Victor felt he could discern a pattern in history. First, the events (or non-events) of 348 happened in the time of another Philip, one of the consuls of that year.⁴ Furthermore, Victor reports prodigies and portents observed before the millennium in 248,

1 I am grateful to the symposium organisers for their invitation and subsequent help, as well as to the audience at the colloquium for their contributions. Roald Dijkstra deserves special thanks for his editorial advice (and saintly patience). The discussion of Prudentius owes much to the discussion of his *Peristephanon* at the reading group of *KYKNOS: The Research Centre for Ancient Narrative Literature* at Swansea University. The references below could be expanded hugely, given the current bibliography on the subject; I have opted, therefore, to cite mainly recent works, in which references to older studies may be chased up. Omission here involves no value judgement.

2 Aur. Vict., *Caes.* 28.1: *Igitur Marcus Iulius Philippus Arabs Thraconites, sumpto in consortium Philippe filio, rebus ad Orientem compositis conditoque apud Arabiam Philippopoli oppido Romam veneret; exstructoque trans Tiberim lacu, quod eam partem aquae penuria fatigabat, annum urbis millesimum ludis omnium generum celebrant.*

3 The closest the reigning western emperor, Constans, got to Rome in 348, it seems, was Milan on 17 June: *CTh* 10.14.2.

4 Fl. Philippus, praetorian prefect of Oriens: Bagnall, Cameron, Schwartz, & Worp (1987) 230–1.

including the appearance of female genitals on a slaughtered pig, that clearly pointed to ‘the decadence of later generations and the aggravation of vices’.⁵

For Aurelius Victor, then, one of the markers of his age was that Rome was, through this act of non-commemoration, seemingly cut adrift from the traditional story of its origins. There is reason to suppose, however, that in spite of his complaint, the foundation of Rome continued to be celebrated in the city in the fourth century. The list of festivals contained in the *Chronograph of 354* – so dating to just six years after the omission about which Aurelius Victor complains – clearly lists the *natalis Urbis* on 21 April.⁶ Meanwhile the existence of the preserved hut of Romulus (*casa Romuli*) on the Palatine hill is noted in the fourth century regionary catalogues, and in dismissive remarks by Jerome and Ambrose of Milan.⁷ And at the beginning of the century, the emperor Maxentius (306–12) had advertised his devotion to Roman traditions by showing the twins and the wolf on his coins, and by naming his son Romulus.⁸

Yet even if memory of Rome’s foundation by Romulus was still preserved, the fourth century was a period in which a very different story of Rome’s foundation, as an apostolic see established by Peter, was beginning to achieve currency. If, instead of looking back a century from 348 to the time of Philip the Arab we look forward another hundred years to the time of Valentinian III (425–455), we have a very emphatic statement of that origins story in a famous law issued by the emperor in July 445 that sought to shore up the authority of Pope Leo at Rome in opposition to the overreaching metropolitan claims being made in the Gallic Church by bishop Hilary of Arles.⁹ Valentinian (or, rather, the quaestor who composed the law on his behalf) began by invoking God’s protection for himself and for the empire. He then stated his support for papal supremacy, prefacing it with a statement of the three props of Roman authority, against which there should be no opposition: ‘the primary merit of

5 Aur. Vict., *Caes.* 28.2: *Et quoniam nomen admonuit, mea quoque aetate post mille centesimus consule Philippo excessit nullis, ut solet, sollemnibus frequentatus: adeo in dies cura minima Romanae urbis. Quod equidem denuntiatum ferunt illo tempore prodigiis portentisque; ex quis unum memorare brevi libet. Nam cum pontificum lege hostiae mactarentur, suis utero maris feminarum genitalia apparuere. Id haruspices solutionem posterorum portendere vitiaque fore potiora interpretati.*

6 *Fasti Philocali*, ed. Mommsen (1893) 262. The festival is preserved also in the calendar of Polemius Silvius a century later: *ibid.*, p. 263.

7 *Curiosum Urbis Rome* and *Notitia Urbis Romae*, ed. Jordan (1871) 557; Jerome, *Prologus in Didymi libro de Spiritu sancto: Illico ego uelut postliminio Hierosolymam sum reuersus et, post Romuli casam et ludicrum Lupercal, diuersorium Mariae et speluncam Saluatoris aspexi.* Ambrose, *Ep.* 73.32: *pastorales casas auro degeneri renitentes.*

8 Cullhed (1994) 47–9.

9 *Nov. Val.* 17 (8 July 445).

the apostolic see of St Peter, who is the first of the apostolic crown; the dignity of the city of Rome; and the authority of a sacred synod.¹⁰

These views echo a reappraisal of Rome's founding that had been voiced by Leo himself in sermons delivered on the feast of Peter and Paul on 29 June early in the 440s. In 441, for example, he had remarked of the apostles:

These are your holy Fathers and true shepherds, who gave you claims to be numbered among the heavenly kingdoms, and built you under much better and happier auspices than they, by whose zeal the first foundations of your walls were laid: and of whom the one that gave you your name defiled you with his brother's blood.¹¹

This statement makes it abundantly clear that Leo has in mind Peter and Paul as (re)founders of a specifically Christian Rome. Moreover, it explicitly opposes them to Rome's mythic founders, Romulus and Remus: the latter had been inferior shepherds when compared with the apostles, and their foundation act was stained by fratricidal violence.

Here, as in so many things, Leo was developing a tradition, not inventing one *ex nihilo*.¹² It is likely significant that in articulating an alternative version of Rome's foundation, he is appealing to stories that resembled each other (twin founders) and that had a long history (commemoration of Peter and Paul at Rome predates Leo's assertions by at least two centuries); in other words, he is 'anchoring' his innovation in a firmly established tradition.¹³ Even so, the striking opposition of Peter and Paul to Romulus and Remus warrants further exploration. In this paper, I will tackle the issue as follows. First, I will review the foundation of Rome and its commemoration as it was articulated in the fourth and early-fifth centuries. This will show that there was no single, agreed narrative, and, furthermore, that the associations with fratricide were already regarded as problematic. Secondly, I want to look in rather more detail at some instances of how this foundation story was rewritten in the years around 400

10 *Nov. Val.* 17 pr.: *sedis apostolicae primatum sancti Petri meritum, qui princeps est episcopalis coronae, et Romanae dignitas civitatis, sacrae etiam synodi firmasset auctoritas.*

11 Leo, *Tract.* 82.1: *isti sunt sancti patres tui verique pastores, qui te regnis coelestibus inserendam multo melius multoque feliciter condiderunt, quam illi quorum studio prima moenium tuorum fundamenta locata sunt: ex quibus is qui tibi nomen dedit fraterna te caede foedavit.*

12 For earlier developments, Huskinson (1982) remains a classic study; see now also Demacopoulos (2013) 13–38. For the importance of martyr cult to the emerging papacy, see most recently Trout (2015) 1–47. For the importance of Peter and Paul in the context of relationships between bishop, emperor, and senate, see now Thacker (2012).

13 Demacopoulos (2013) 44, 49.

by looking at the Spanish poet Prudentius, who on a number of occasions juxtaposes myths of early Rome with explicit statements that this had been superseded by a new Christian foundation and dispensation. By such means, I aim to shed some light on the process by which late antiquity saw a recasting of Rome's foundations, in which Romulus and Remus were replaced by Peter and Paul.

2 Romulus in Late Antiquity: Contested Traditions and Commemorations

The *Liber de Caesaribus* of Aurelius Victor with which I began is one of a number of abbreviated histories surviving from the late antique period. While Victor began his narrative with the accession of Augustus, others, such as Eutropius and Festus, both writing in the reign of Valens (364–378) went further back, to Rome's earliest days. Of these, Festus' work is extraordinarily abbreviated, and its account of Rome's foundation does little more than note that Romulus came first and ruled for 37 years.¹⁴

Rather more detail can be found in Eutropius' slightly earlier *Breviarium*. His version reads:

The Roman Empire (than which human memory can recall scarcely any smaller in origin or greater in its growth throughout the whole world) derives its origin from Romulus, the son of Rhea Silvia, a Vestal Virgin, and, as was believed, of Mars. He was brought forth in one birth with his brother Remus. While leading the life of a robber among the shepherds, at the age of eighteen he founded a small city on the Palatine Hill on the eleventh day before the Kalends of May [21 April], in the third year of the sixth Olympiad, in the three hundred and ninety-fourth year after the destruction of Troy, according to those who give the earliest and latest dates.¹⁵

14 Festus, *Brev. 2: Romulus regnavit annos XXXVII.*

15 Eutropius, *Brev. 1.1: Romanum imperium, quo neque ab exordio ullum fere minus neque incrementis toto orbe amplius humana potest memoria recordari, a Romulo exordium habet, qui Reae Silviae, Vestalis virginis, filius et, quantum putatus est, Martis cum Remo fratre uno partu editus est. Is cum inter pastores latrocinaretur, decem et octo annos natus urbem exiguam in Palatino monte constituit XI Kal. Maias, Olympiadis sextae anno tertio, post Troiae excidium, ut qui plurimum minimumque tradunt, anno trecentesimo nonagesimo quarto.*

The next chapter adds, after an account of Rome's earliest territorial expansion (including the rape of the Sabine women), an account of Romulus' death (or, rather, disappearance) and deification, followed by an interregnum by the senators (this last detail is also found in Festus). Eutropius' account essentially summarises earlier traditions,¹⁶ such as those found in Livy, but it is striking not just for what it includes, but also for what it omits. There is no mention at all of the death of Remus, and the accusation of fratricide against Romulus, that would be such a feature of Leo's sermonising about the superiority of Peter and Paul over the twins. In fact, Remus just quietly disappears from the narrative.

But this is only one of several versions of the Romulus and Remus story that was circulating in the fourth century. A brief consideration of some others will show something of their variety, as well as the ways in which they dealt with the difficulty presented by the fratricide. The so-called *Chronicon Urbis Romae* preserved in some manuscripts of the *Chronograph of 354*, and likely a work of the first half of the fourth century, reports that the Remus killed by Romulus was the last king of Alba Longa.¹⁷ At the other end of the fourth century, another variant, which similarly side-steps the issue of fratricide, is found even in the Christian Jerome's Latin version of Eusebius' *Chronological Canons*: having noted the foundation of Rome on the *Palilia* (21 April: sometimes found as *Parilia*) and adding that the day is still kept as a festival, it states that Remus was killed not by Romulus but by Fabius.¹⁸ Another text probably from the second half of the fourth century, the anonymous *Origo Gentis Romanae*, seems to reflect a certain anxiety about the fratricide narrative. After its account of the rivalry of Romulus and Remus it remarks:

In truth, Licinius Macer in Book I instructs us that there was a baleful outcome of that dispute, for indeed Remus and Faustulus, abiding in that very place, were killed. In contrast, Egnatius in Book I relates that not only was Remus not killed in the dispute but also that he lived longer than Romulus.¹⁹

16 On the repetitiveness of these traditions about early Rome, see Smith (2011) 23–4.

17 Ed. Mommsen (1892) 143–4. On the name and date of the work, see Burgess (2012) 351. For discussion of its complex historiography, see Salzman (1990) 52–6.

18 Jerome, *Chron.* ed. Helm, 152: *Roma Palilibus, qui nunc dies festus est, condita. Remus rutro pastorali a Fabio Romuli duce occisus.*

19 *Origo Gentis Romanae* 23.5–6: *At vero Licinius Macer libro primo docet contentionis illius perniciosum exitium fuisse; namque ibidem obsistentes Remum et Faustulum interfectos. Contra Egnatius libro primo in ea contentione non modo Remum non esse occisum sed etiam ulterius a Romulo vixisse tradit.* Discussion in Momigliano (1958) 68.

Such anxiety about the death of Remus was by no means new, and had been apparent, for instance, in literature of the late Republic and the age of Augustus.²⁰ Clearly, the fourth century saw no diminution in these concerns.

If accounts of the 'historical' Romulus and Remus present us with an array of different versions of their story, reflections on their commemoration are no more straightforward. As noted above, Aurelius Victor's account of Philip the Arab's commemoration of Rome's millennium carried with it an expression of regret that the eleventh centenary was not celebrated in like fashion, and that this portended Roman decadence. By contrast, Eutropius' account of the commemoration of Rome's millennium, while noting its magnificence, makes no such nod forwards to the failure of fourth century emperors to observe the later centenary.²¹ However, there is another author who does provide a more contentious account of the celebration of Rome's millennium and of its significance, and plainly does so from religious scruple.

Writing towards the end of the decade following Alaric's sack of Rome in 410, the Spaniard Paulus Orosius, in his *Seven Books of Histories against the Pagans*, gives a famously tendentious account of human history and the Christian God's role within it as part of an apologetic narrative that defended Christians from accusations that it was their abandonment of Rome's ancestral religions that had led to the fall of the city into Gothic hands.²² His account of the celebrations in 248 must rank among the more spectacular of his fictions:

997 years after the foundation of the City, Philip was made the 23rd emperor after Augustus. He made his son, Philip, his co ruler and reigned for seven years. He was the first of all the emperors to be a Christian, and after two years of his rule the 1000th year after the foundation of Rome was completed. So it came to pass that this most preeminent of all her previous birthdays was celebrated with magnificent games by a Christian emperor. There can be no doubt that Philip dedicated the gratitude and honour expressed in this great thanksgiving to Christ and the church, as no author speaks of him going up to the Capitol and sacrificing victims there as was the custom. Nevertheless, the two Philips died in a mutiny and through Decius's treachery, though in different places.²³

20 Wiseman (1995) 143–50.

21 Eutrop., *Brev.* 9.3. *His imperantibus millesimus annus Romae urbis ingenti ludorum apparatu spectaculorumque celebratus est.*

22 Van Nuffelen (2012).

23 Orosius, 7.20.1–4: *Anno ab urbe condita DCCCCLXVII Philippus uicensimus quartus ab Augusto imperator creatus Philippum filium suum consortem regni fecit mansitque in eo annis septem. Hic primus imperatorum omnium Christianus fuit ac post tertium imperii*

The tradition that Philip was a Christian was by no means new, and is found in other works, such as Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, but there is no mention there that it had any impact on the celebration of Rome's millennium.²⁴ This seems to be wholly Orosius' unique extrapolation from the sources at his disposal. In that respect, it equals his remarkable assertion that Jesus was born at the time of a Roman census so that he could be enrolled as a Roman citizen.²⁵

Orosius goes to some lengths to present an idealised depiction of Philip and his son. There is no mention whatsoever that Philip the elder came to the throne through the murder of Gordian III, a feature mentioned by Aurelius Victor; nor is there any mention of the Philips' deification, as mentioned by Eutropius.²⁶ In short, Philip and his son are depicted in such a way as to remove any stain of impiety from them. Indeed, they are themselves presented as victims of their wholly pernicious pagan successor Decius, who, as a final act of vengeance against them, initiated a purge of the Christians they had favoured.²⁷ Thus, Orosius' account of Rome's millennium represents a carefully crafted Christian version of it, which suited his wider argument that the Roman empire had been decreed as an instrument of God's will in human history.

Moreover, this description of the millennial celebrations can be linked to Orosius' account of Rome's foundation, which makes clear the nature of the pollution that Philip's Christian commemoration needed to expunge:

The city of Rome in Italy was founded by the twins Romulus and Remus. Romulus at once ruined the reputation of his reign by murdering his brother and immediately followed this crime by another of equal cruelty. He gave as a dowry to the Sabine women, who had been seized and bound in shameless wedlock to the Romans, the blood of their husbands and parents. After killing first his grandfather Numitor and next his brother Remus, Romulus seized the sovereign power and founded the city. With blood he dedicated the kingdom of his grandfather, the walls of

eius annum millesimus a conditione Romae annus impletus est. Ita magnificis ludis augustissimus omnium praeteritorum hic natalis annus a Christiano imperatore celebratus est. Nec dubium est, quin Philippus huius tantae deuotionis gratiam et honorem ad Christum et Ecclesiam reportarit, quando uel ascensum fuisse in Capitolium immolatasque ex more hostias nullus auctor ostendit. Ambo tamen quamuis diuersis locis tumultu militari et Decii fraude interfecti sunt.

24 Eus., *HE* 6.34.

25 Orosius 6.22.6–8; 7.3.4.

26 Aur. Vict., *Caes.* 27; Eutrop., *Brev.* 9.3.

27 Orosius, 7.21.2. The story derives from Eusebius, *HE* 6.39.1.

his brother, and the temple of his father-in-law; and he assembled a band of criminals by promising them exemption from punishment. His first battlefield was the Forum of the City, a fact signifying that foreign and civil wars, always interrelated, would never cease.²⁸

It is quite clear that here we are dealing with the sort of negative appraisal of Romulus and Remus to which Leo was appealing a few decades later when he compared Rome's founding twins so unfavourably with the apostles Peter and Paul.

From both secular and avowedly Christian perspectives, then, the story of Romulus was a topic for debate in the fourth and fifth centuries. It is tempting to wonder if the misgivings expressed by secular sources somehow echo the ripples of Christian polemic about the story; the available sources make this difficult to demonstrate with certainty, and, in any case, we have seen that disquiet about Romulus' crime can be found already in the late Republic. Even so, the Christian interventions on the debate perhaps reflect wider concerns to criticise aspects of the maintenance of age old traditions as part of Rome's heritage, a strategy visible at the end of the fifth century in the attack mounted by Pope Gelasius I (492–496) on the continued celebration of the Lupercalia.²⁹

3 From Romulus and Remus to Peter and Paul in the Poetry of Prudentius

In the same year that no emperor celebrated Rome's eleventh centenary, 348, the Spanish poet Aurelius Prudentius Clemens was born.³⁰ Like others of his countrymen, he found favour with the Spanish emperor Theodosius I, which brought him to Rome, where he was able to visit the shrines of the martyrs.³¹ Towards the end of his life, he edited his various poems for publication, furnishing them with a preface that gives details of the year of his birth, of his

28 Orosius 2.4.1–4: *Urbs Roma in Italia a Romulo et Remo geminis auctoribus condita est. Cuius regnum continuo Romulus parricidio imbuit, parique successu crudelitatis sine more raptas Sabinas, improbis nuptiis confederatas maritorum et parentum cruore dotavit. Itaque Romulus, interfecto primum avo Numitore dehinc Remo fratre, arripuit imperium urbemque constituit; regnum aui, muros fratris, templum soceri sanguine dedicavit; sceleratorum manum promissa impunitate collegit. Primus illi campus ad bellum forum urbis fuit, mixta simul externa ciuiliaque bella numquam defutura significans.*

29 McLynn (2008) esp. 172–5 on the importance of such rituals to the city's 'heritage industry'.

30 Prudentius, *Praef.* 24: *Saliae consulis.*

31 Harries (1984) 69–73.

education, and of his political career. Now, contemplating his mortality, he asked that his sinning soul shed its frivolous ways, and that his voice should honour God, fight heresy, expound the Catholic faith; he also encouraged Rome to follow this lead:

Trample on the rites of the heathen, strike down your idols, O Rome, and devote song to the martyrs and praise the apostles.³²

As is well known, a number of Prudentius' poems offer meditations on Rome's history,³³ and in this section I want to suggest ways in which they elaborate on this theme and offer reflections on the role of the apostles Peter and Paul in, effectively, a re-foundation of Rome that is superior to that of Romulus and Remus. I will concentrate on his two most overtly political works, the *Peristephanon Liber*, a collection of hymns on martyr cult which, even if it focuses on cults from his native Spain, also provides a number of accounts of Roman martyrs, including Peter and Paul; and secondly, the two books of anti-pagan verse polemic *Contra Symmachum*, a refutation of the arguments of the pagan senator Q. Aurelius Symmachus, which highlights the superiority of Peter and Paul in a Christian reconfiguration of Roman history.³⁴

Prudentius' *Peristephanon* comprises a collection of hymns on various martyrs, many of whom came from Spain, particularly Calahorra (Calagurris) and Zaragoza (Caesaraugusta), likely candidate for Prudentius' *patria*.³⁵ Yet amid this account of Spanish martyrs are scattered some of witnesses to the faith from other parts of the Roman world, and chief amongst those are a number of saints from Rome itself. These include the redoubtable virgin Agnes (*Perist.* 14), Hippolytus (*Perist.* 11), and, perhaps most famous, Laurentius, who goads his tormentors, who are roasting him on a gridiron, to taste his seared flesh to check if he is cooked or not (*Perist.* 2.401–8); significantly, there is a twin narrative of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul (*Perist.* 12). Many of these hymns present their tales in a fashion that represents a refashioning of Roman history and identity, a process that is neatly summed up by the opening line of the poem on Agnes which remarks that 'The sepulchre of Agnes is in the home

32 Prudentius, *Praef.* 40–2. Translations are taken, sometimes with emendation, from Thomson (1949–1953).

33 See Gnilka (2012) for Prudentius' understanding of Roman constitutional history (highlighting problems arising from the transmission of his text).

34 For the possibility that the two books were written separately and then combined into one work, see Harries (1984) 73–80.

35 Hershkowitz (2017) 12–13.

of Romulus'.³⁶ Evocations of Rome's distant, ancient past are found also in the hymn to Hippolytus, where pagan Rome is described in terms of its foundation from Troy.³⁷

In Prudentius' view, however, these ancient identities are to be wiped clean with the advent of Christianity. The hymn to Lawrence provides some striking examples. It opens with a clear statement of this theme: 'Ancient mother of temples, already Rome is dedicated to Christ; victory and the triumph over barbarian rites through Lawrence's leadership.'³⁸ The text goes on to remark that the blood spilled in Lawrence's martyrdom is superior to that shed in any Roman conquest, making Rome's greatness a specifically Christian achievement. There is an implicit link too with the extinction of blood sacrifice at Rome: following Lawrence's martyrdom, the statues of the ancient gods, washed clean of their sacrificial stains, will shine forth as harmless images (*aera innoxia*).³⁹ This recalibration of Rome's history is pursued in the famous exchange between Lawrence and his tormentors, in which the city's greatness is presented as a consequence of God's plan for humankind. Lawrence, on the gridiron, prays for mercy for the 'city of Romulus', and remarks that:

The Father, creator of earth and sky and founder of this city [*auctor horum moenium*], ... has set the sceptre of the world on Rome's high citadel, ordaining that the world obey the toga of Quirinus and yield to his arms, that you might bring under one system of laws the customs and observance, the speech and the character and worship of nations which differed among themselves; lo, the whole race of men has passed under the sovereignty of Remus, and usages formerly discordant are now alike in speech and thought. This was appointed so that the authority of the Christian name might bind with one tie all the lands everywhere.⁴⁰

This rewriting of Rome's destiny in Christian guise also looms large in the two books Prudentius wrote as a condemnation of pagan cult in his *Contra*

36 *Perist.* 14.1: *Agnis sepulchrum est Romulea in domo.*

37 *Perist.* 11.6: *cum coleret patrios Troia Roma deos.*

38 *Perist.* 2.1–4: *Antiqua fanorum parens, / iam Roma Christo dedita, / Laurentio uictrix duce / ritum triumphas barbarum.*

39 *Perist.* 2.481–484, with commentary and parallels in O'Hogan (2016) 140–4.

40 *Perist.* 2.416–432: *auctor horum moenium, / qui scepra Romae in uertice / rerum locasti, sanciens / mundum Quirinali togae / seruire et armis cedere, / ut discrepantum gentium / mores et obseruantiam / linguasque et ingenia et sacra / unis domares legibus! / En omne sub regnum Remi / mortale concessit genus, / idem loquuntur dissoni / ritus, id ipsum sentiunt. / Hoc destinatum, quo magis / ius christiani nominis, / quodcumque terrarum iacet, / uno inligaret uinculo.*

Symmachum. The idea that Rome's destiny had been decreed by God is repeated in terms very similar to those found in the *Peristephanon*:

God, wishing to bring into partnership peoples of different speech and realms of discordant manners (*discordes linguis populos et dissona cultu*), determined that all the civilized world should be harnessed to one ruling power and bear gentle bonds in harmony under the yoke, so that love of their religion should hold men's hearts in union.⁴¹

In both works, Rome's destiny to world empire, and its civilising mission – concepts familiar to any reader of Virgil or the Elder Pliny – are emphatically Christianized.⁴²

Just as Prudentius makes Lawrence ascribe the pre-eminence of 'the toga of Quirinus' and the 'sovereignty of Remus' to the work of the Christian God, so too Rome itself was set under the tutelage of an alternative pair of founders, Peter and Paul. In the hymn to Hippolytus they are pre-eminent as safeguards against error and guarantors of unity:

Let the faith be strong in its unity, the faith that was established at the very outset of the church, and which Paul, alongside the chair of Peter, holds fast.⁴³

By the time Prudentius was writing, in the 390s, Rome was home to two great basilicas of the apostles, as the early church of St Peter's on the Vatican was joined by Theodosius' dedication of St Paul's on the Via Ostiensis.⁴⁴ The hymn in the *Peristephanon* to the apostles makes clear references to these churches,⁴⁵ while also noting the emerging precedence of Peter over Paul: Peter was martyred a year to the day before Paul, while on the feast of the saints, in which the *plebs Romula* is fully involved, attention is devoted first to Peter, and then to Paul.⁴⁶

41 *C. Symm.* 2.586–91.

42 See esp. *Perist.* 2.421–4 (*ut discrepantum gentium / mores et obseruantiam / linguasque et ingenia et sacra / unis domares legibus*) and *C. Symm.* 2.586 (*discordes linguis populos et dissona cultu*). For Prudentius' ideological transposition of the climax of the *praeparatio evangelica* from the Constantinian to the Theodosian age, see Gnilka (2015) 171–5.

43 *Perist.* 11.31–2: *Vna fides uigeat, prisco quae condita templo est, / quam Paulus retinet quaque cathedra Petri.*

44 For the church, and its relation to Prudentius' verse, see Liverani (2012). For the importance of Peter and Paul to the Theodosian dynasty, see Lønstrup Dal Santo (2015) 106–9.

45 Discussion in O'Hogan (2016) 160–4.

46 *Perist.* 12.21–4 and 55–66.

This association of Christian Rome with its apostolic (re)founders is explicit also in the *Contra Symmachum*. Even if the two books were written separately, in the form in which they were edited for publication by Prudentius himself, they were furnished with prefatory hymns to the apostles. The first book's preface deals with Paul, and contains a further evocation of the image of Rome's imperial expansion in Christian guise, but this time the subjugation of the barbarians to Roman rule is recast as submission by the Romans themselves to Paul's preaching:

Paul, the herald of God, who first with his holy pen subdued the wild hearts of the Gentiles and with his peaceable teaching propagated the knowledge of Christ over barbarous nations that followed savage ways, so that the untamed pagan race might come to know God and reject its own rituals.⁴⁷

Just as Paul came to Rome after enduring a storm, so Rome, after the tempests of paganism, would come to redemption through Christ, a process in which Paul acted as 'saviour of the race of Romulus'.⁴⁸ Similar imagery is evoked in the preface to book 2, which focuses on Peter and the storm on the sea of Galilee, where the apostle's faith was tested, and nearly faltered, until he expressed true faith in Christ. In that respect, Peter's experience can be seen as standing for the *populus Romanus*, whose faltering before the Christian gospel echoed Peter's uncertainty, and who had had their faith tested by a tempest, in this case the storm of Symmachus' eloquence.⁴⁹ Moreover, as the second book of the *Contra Symmachum* progresses, it stresses that it is faith in Christ that endures and points the way to the future, and that Rome's earlier religious history, from the time of Romulus, was inconstant and shifting, not least because gods allowed peoples who had worshipped them previously to be conquered by Rome.⁵⁰ The era of Romulus is held up as an example of the absurdity of those who demand that Rome hold fast to the traditions of its ancestors.⁵¹ As Prudentius observes, this would require, amongst other things, a return to a foraging, pre-agricultural lifestyle, or a decision to reside once more in flimsy

47 *C. Symm., praef.* 1.1–6: *Paulus, praeco Dei, qui fera gentium / primus corda sacro perdomuit stilo, / Christum per populos ritibus asperis / inmanes placido dogmate seminans, / inmansueta suas ut cerimonias / gens pagana Deo sperneret agnito*; see O'Hogan (2016) 76 for the imperial echoes.

48 *C. Symm. praef.* 1.80: *Salvator generis Romulei*.

49 *C. Symm. praef.* 2.56–8.

50 *C. Symm.* 2.488–577.

51 *C. Symm.* 2.277–8: *quidquid rudibus mundi nascentis in annis mos habuit*.

huts of the type used by Romulus and Remus themselves.⁵² On the contrary, Rome's history since the days of Romulus had been one of constant change.⁵³ Only through faith in Jesus Christ, could Rome realise its true destiny, an idea that Prudentius articulates through a speech delivered by Roma herself: here she extolls the recent victories won under Christian standards, which make her vow to shut the temples, end sacrifices, and 'no longer permit evil spirits know the citadels of Romulus' (*ne quis Romuleas daemon iam noverit arces*); instead, allegiance should be paid alone to God and Christ.⁵⁴

4 Conclusions

The poems of Prudentius reflect a decisive shift in the perception of Rome's origins, in which the primordial foundation under Romulus (and Remus) was effaced by a new narrative that prioritised Peter (and Paul). We have seen that already by the fourth century, the story of Romulus and Remus presented Roman authors with a problematic vision of the city's origins, in which the foundational act was stained with the blood of fratricide. This was a difficulty that authors sought to confront by various means, ranging from passing over it in silence (as Eutropius did) to denying it outright (as, for example, in the *Origo Gentis Romanae's* quotation of Licinius Macer). How any of this relates to the non-commemoration of 348 is difficult to judge, but by the early fifth century, Orosius' account of Rome's origins, when read in the light of his narrative of Philip the Arab's Christian celebration of Rome's millennium, suggests that for some Christians a rejection of the foundation tale by Romulus and Remus was desirable.

That rejection is plain by the time of Leo the Great, as is the anchoring of Rome's foundation narrative in another story, that of Peter and Paul. That this was already developing by c. 400 is clear from the significant echoes of this new foundational narrative, and its explicit opposition to the version with Romulus and Remus, in the poetry of Prudentius. His testimony is particularly valuable because, by virtue of the poet's Spanish origins, it represents the views of an outsider. Yet his recalibration of Rome's origins was no misinterpretation of a viewer from the outside: this is demonstrated by topographic changes between the mid-fourth and mid-fifth centuries that echo the vision found in Prudentius. These are signalled most strongly by the engagement of emperors

52 C. *Symm.* 2.282–302.

53 C. *Symm.* 2.303–8.

54 C. *Symm.* 2.709–68.

with the city of Rome, and they point to the increasing importance of Peter in particular, and especially his tomb and basilica on the Vatican, in such interactions. In 403–4 and again in 407–8 – and therefore within a decade of Prudentius' praises of Rome's apostolic foundation – the emperor Honorius (395–423) visited Rome, and during these sojourns went to the Vatican basilica.⁵⁵ Honorius' first visit to Peter's shrine seems to have been made as a thank-offering above all for the repulsion of Alaric's Goths from Italy, and in a gesture of gratitude to the apostle, the emperor deposited his diadem on the basilica's altar.⁵⁶ Later in the century, the many Roman visits of Valentinian III (425–55) saw imperial participation in the liturgy at the Vatican.⁵⁷ The rising profile of St Peter's in ceremonial terms reflected the church's increasing importance as a locus of imperial display: under Honorius, an imperial mausoleum was erected beside St Peter's, associating the church very firmly with the Theodosian dynasty in the west, several of whom were buried there.⁵⁸ Also in the first half of the fifth century – either under Honorius or, perhaps more likely, under Valentinian III – a new imperial residence seems to have been constructed on the Colle Pincio overlooking the Campus Martius, and on a sightline with St Peter's across the river.⁵⁹ Such ceremonial and spatial shifts towards the Vatican complex suggest that if Romulus and his foundation of the city were indeed becoming less important in the fourth and fifth centuries, then a wholly new set of commemorations was beginning to command attention, this time clustered around Peter as the new founder of a new Christian (but still imperial) Rome.

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55 On the visits, see Gillett (2001) 137–41.

56 Aug., *Cum pagani ingrederentur* 26: *Venit imperator ... Posito diademate, pectus tundit ubi est piscatoris corpus*; id. *Enarr. in Ps. 65.4: Melius est ut Romam cum venerit imperator, deposito diademate, ploret ad memoriam piscatoris, quam ut piscator ploret ad memoriam imperatoris*. For discussion of the historical and topographical contexts, see Frascchetti (1999) 261–3, and Liverani (2007).

57 Humphries (2012) 170.

58 See, most recently, McEvoy (2013), citing earlier bibliography.

59 Humphries (2012) 173–4; for an overview of the archaeology, see Jolivet & Sotinel (2012).

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Sedulius' Peter: Intention and Authority in the *Paschale carmen*

Carl P. E. Springer

Authorial intent is a notoriously difficult issue for interpreters of all texts in general and of ancient texts in particular.¹ How can readers today get a clear sense of what an author may have wanted to say so long ago, writing in a language and inhabiting a world of thought so different from their own? Indeed, it is no easy matter even when one is studying the works of living authors who are writing in their readers' own languages, especially if they do not care to shed any particular light on their motivations to write, or offer deliberately misleading or inadequate explanations, or pursue their literary projects with a degree of real or feigned innocence. With these caveats in mind, I want to explore here a possible purpose which Sedulius may have intended his Latin biblical epic, the *Paschale carmen*, to serve for his contemporary readers. All too often, this poem has been approached as though it were written in a contextless vacuum, without any purpose or point and its author regarded as little more than a 'grandiloquent' rhetor who had 'a large measure of literary ambition', but 'nothing to say'.² I assume instead that Sedulius may have had real, pressing reasons for writing his poem and suggest here that one of them was to "anchor" (to adopt the nautical imagery Sedulius himself uses in his second prefatory letter to Macedonius) his readers and himself more securely to the authoritative figure of the apostle Peter.³

Judicious use of biographical information can be helpful for those seeking to understand an author's background, education, and motivation, and need not necessarily lead us into the predictable trap of the "biographical fallacy," whereby a literary work is reduced to little more than a product of

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- 1 See Farrell (2017). In his *The Death of the Author*, Roland Barthes provocatively suggested that authorial intentions or "origins" matter far less than a literary work's readerly "destination;" see Springer (2013) xlii.
 - 2 Curtius (1973) 462. If contemporary Christological or ecclesiological issues are ignored by the modern reader, it is not surprising that this poem would be easily dismissed (as Curtius does) as a sort of overgrown paraphrastic exercise, filled with tired rhetorical *topoi* that have lost whatever relevance they might once have had.
 - 3 Springer (2013) 218–21.

its circumstances.⁴ Of course, it is true that in comparison with the wealth of information we possess about most modern authors, we know far less about ancient authors in general and Sedulius in particular. But we can be fairly sure of one thing about Sedulius: some sort of edition of his works was produced by a Roman consul (Turcius Rufius Apronianus Asterius) who served in 494.⁵ This gives us a *terminus ante quem* and a geographical clue. We are provided with further, albeit less certain, biographical details in later traditions: Sedulius was a native of Rome, a layman or a cleric, who wrote his works in Greece after teaching in Italy, during the time when the reigns of Theodosius II and Valentinian III overlapped (425–450).⁶ Many of these details, to be sure, are found in manuscripts written centuries later and may have been constructed (on the basis of possible hints in the texts themselves) by medieval readers eager to assign responsibility for the composition of such well known works as the *Paschale carmen* or the hymn *A solis ortus cardine* to some kind of historical personage. But while the reliability of this later biographical material may be less secure, most of it is not necessarily in conflict with the actual historical evidence we possess (the fact of the Roman consul's "edition"), and it seems as perverse to ignore it as it would be to rely mindlessly upon it in making interpretative decisions.

What does Sedulius himself have to say about the poetic assignment he has set himself? He suggests that it is a fairly straightforward one, namely, to translate texts held sacred by Christians into the 'honeyed' language of verse.⁷ Sedulius' biblical epic fits into the long Roman tradition of taking works originally written in Greek and "translating" them into Latin. These "translations" are not mindlessly innovative, but neither do their authors seem to have felt overly constrained to be faithful to their "originals." Virgil and other Augustan poets try to improve on their Greek models as they write for their new, Latin-speaking, audiences. Something of the same kind of instinct may be said to animate the biblical poets of Late Antiquity. Certainly, their poems are not mere literary exercises. Juvencus, Proba, Sedulius, and others had loftier, more vatic, ambitions than schoolboys writing verse paraphrases as a

4 On the so-called "biographical fallacy" associated with critics such as Hippolyte Taine, and for a nuanced defense of such criticism, see Leon (1957).

5 See Green (2006) 142–3, on some of the questions raised by Asterius' "edition".

6 Both Aldhelm and Paschasius Radbertus claim a Roman provenance for Sedulius; Springer (2013) xvi. McDonald's suggestion that Sedulius must have been from the south of France (or northern Spain or Italy) was based on limited iconographic evidence and has since been 'adequately refuted'; Green (2006) 137–80. The idea that Sedulius was Irish is based on a confusion with his ninth-century namesake, Sedulius Scotus.

7 *Ep. ad Mac.* 1 (Springer [2013] 212).

class assignment.⁸ Sedulius' stated aim is to retell the *clara miracula Christi*, which he does in four books, focusing on Jesus' miracles and life, while giving shorter shrift to his teachings (the first book of the *Paschale carmen* retells Old Testament miracles that might be seen as foreshadowing Jesus' own). His biblical epic, written in dactylic hexameters, is a direct challenge to the *gentiles poetae* (*Paschale carmen* 1.17), following the literary precedent set by Juvencus, who explicitly took on Homer and Virgil (see the preface to *Evangeliorum libri*, 9–10), whose own epic poems functioned as a sort of Bible for the ancient Greeks and Romans.

So, even though Sedulius adheres to the Christian Scriptures much more closely than Virgil does to Homer, the *Paschale carmen* does not simply reproduce one or all of the Gospels in another language and literary medium, despite what Sedulius himself may suggest about his fidelity to the four evangelists. Any reader of this poem who comes to it expecting to find a Gospel (or a harmony of the Gospels) fairly literally transposed into verse will quickly discover that Sedulius permits himself considerable poetic latitude as he verifies the words of the evangelists whom he apparently venerates (*Paschale carmen* 1.355–68). And this is why, by considering the ways in which Sedulius expands, abbreviates, ignores, or supplements these scriptural texts, we may reasonably hope to gain some sense of what he himself, whether consciously or unconsciously, intended his poem to be and to do. To fully appreciate that distinctiveness, of course, it is also important to situate Sedulius' poem within its own literary-traditional context and historical *Sitz im Leben*. How does his retelling of Gospel episodes compare with those of his poetic predecessors as well as earlier or contemporary biblical exegetes? How might his interpretations reflect the immediate perspectives and concerns of his own fifth-century contemporaries?

Nowhere in his descriptions of the characters who surround Jesus in the *Paschale carmen* may Sedulius' own distinctive poetic voice and ideological agenda be more discernible than in his representation of Peter, with the possible exception of Judas.⁹ Let us examine briefly an incident in the *Paschale carmen* (5.79–82 and 104–12) where Sedulius' depiction of the colorful fisherman turned disciple departs in significant ways from his canonical prototypes: Peter's denial of Jesus (Matt. 26.69–75; Mark 14.66–72; Luke 22.56–62;

8 The biblical epics of Late Antiquity received relatively scant scholarly attention until Reinhart Herzog's ground-breaking study in 1975, *Die Bibelepik der lateinischen Spätantike*. Since then there has been a steady increase of scholarship devoted to works such as Juvencus' *Evangeliorum libri* and Sedulius' *Paschale carmen*.

9 See Deerberg (2011).

and John 18.25–7). Sedulius offers an explanation for Peter's disappointing performance under pressure that goes beyond anything suggested by the evangelists: when Jesus predicts that Peter will deny him, Sedulius explains that he does so not by way of rebuking him for lack of faith, but rather as a prediction that his disciple will be afraid: *Non reprobando fidem, sed praedicendo timorem* (*Paschale carmen* 5.82). Christ is not casting doubt on Peter's ultimate loyalty. Rather, Peter is going to suffer from an unavoidable, momentary lapse caused by an untypical bout of fear. Sedulius' Peter is otherwise largely unafraid, even when walking on the waves of Galilee.¹⁰ That Christ's prediction is one which Peter will have no choice but to fulfill can be gathered from the poet's parenthetical observation: 'since what Christ had said could not pass undone' (*quoniam transire nequiuit / infectum quod Christus ait; Paschale carmen* 5.105–6). Once Peter's divine Lord had predicted something, it would have to happen. It is almost as though Peter is a pawn in this particular set of circumstances; even if he had wanted to confess Jesus, it would have been impossible for him to do so after such an authoritative prophecy.¹¹

Upon returning to his senses after the rooster's cries, Sedulius' Peter quickly repents of his act of denial, which, Sedulius says, he had committed mindlessly or even forgetfully (*immemor*). The poet clarifies this point in the *Paschale opus*, Sedulius' own prose paraphrase of the poem. Peter did not set out (*non studuit*) to deny Christ; his denial was the result of his being naïve and ignorant. It was really a case of forgetfulness (*oblivionis*).¹² The kind of forgetting that Sedulius has in mind here is that of the man in James 1.24 who looks at his reflection in the mirror and upon going his way, immediately forgets (*oblitus*

10 In *PC* 3.219–29, Sedulius describes Peter trying to walk on the Sea of Galilee with Jesus, without making any mention of the fact that, according to Matthew, Peter grew very afraid (*validum timuit*) and began to sink. Instead the poet emphasizes Peter's trust in Jesus and his uninterrupted (*semper*) acknowledgment of him as Christ. Our last view of Peter is as a confident *pelagi viator* gliding effortlessly 'over the glassy fields'. There is no hint of timidity here at all. In Matthew's account, by contrast, the episode ends with Jesus criticizing Peter's lack of faith (*modicae fidei quare dubitasti*), after Peter begs Jesus to save him from drowning. In Sedulius' recounting of the episode in the hymn *A solis ortus cardine*, Peter, not Jesus, is the central focus of attention; see Homey (2013) 199–238.

11 Cyril of Alexandria (348–444) explicitly rejects such an interpretation: 'We do not say that the denial took place in order that Christ's words might come true. We say rather that his object was to forewarn the disciple ...' *Commentary on Luke, Homily* 149; transl. in Just (2003) 348. So does Chrysostom in *Homily* 82.3; transl. in Simonetti (2002) 252: 'Therefore Jesus resisted Peter, not compelling him to a future denial – God forbid! But he left him destitute of his help, convicting human nature'.

12 *Igitur et Petrus apostolus Christum negare non studuit, sed in obliuionis casum simpliciter et ignoranter incurrit* (*Paschale opus* 5.9; CSEL 10, 280).

est) 'what manner of man he was'.¹³ In fact, it was his recollection of 'the magnificent example of his own faith' that prompted Peter's swift recovery. Peter recalled suddenly that he was the sort of man whom 'fear was unable to separate from Christ', not under any sort of threat of peril. After all, this was the same man whose faith had moved to hasten across the waters to join Christ, 'unmoved by any fear of death'.¹⁴ It is only now, after the spell-binding prophecy has been fulfilled, that Peter is able to remember who he really was, the steadfast and fearless confessor of Christ. To be sure, his denial was still a transgression for which Peter had to be forgiven, but Sedulius goes to some lengths to offer his readers a sympathetic explanation of why one of the most important of his followers could possibly have denied Jesus at the moment of his Lord's greatest need.¹⁵

Among his contemporaries or near-contemporaries in Late Antiquity, Sedulius was not alone in his efforts to exculpate Peter, or at least diminish the extent of his fault. One ingenious interpretation, proffered by 'some people with a soft spot in their hearts for the apostle Peter', was that when Peter said: 'I do not know the man', he meant that he only recognized Jesus in his divinity, not his humanity. Jerome (347–420) calls such an interpretation 'frivolous' and points out that if true, it would mean that Jesus, who predicted the denial, was a liar.¹⁶ Juvencus, a contemporary of Constantine, one of the most

13 After his denial Peter remembered (*recordatus est*) Jesus' prediction (Matt. 26.75), but Sedulius seems to have a different kind of forgetting and remembering in mind here. On the relationship between sin and forgetting, see Trice (2011) 162. Chrysostom offers much the same explanation in *Homily* 85.1–2; transl. in Simonetti (2003) 269: 'And he was not even aware of his own lying. Luke says that Christ looked upon him, and this made it clear that he had denied him and was not even aware of how far he had fallen into forgetfulness'.

14 *Nam qui sese mori uelle cum Domino plena deuotione promiserat, alienus ab eius uideri consortio sub quolibet periculo non ferebat. Prompserat enim inter cetera magnificum suae credulitatis exemplum, quod eum a Christo nec exitio posset segregare formido, ad quem media festinando per maria rapidos dudum se praecipitauit in fluctus, nulla uicinae mortis trepidatione deterritus* (*Paschale opus* 5.9; CSEL 10, 280–1).

15 In PC 5.104 Sedulius calls him *senior*, a word which means literally "older" or "rather old", but most likely describes Peter's pride of place amongst the disciples (see Matt. 16.18–9) and not just his physical age. Proba uses the same adjective to describe Peter in her *Cento* (642–7), possibly, it has been suggested, in reference to the *Quo vadis* legend; see Dijkstra (2016) 116–7.

16 'I know that some people with a soft spot in their hearts for the apostle Peter have interpreted this passage to the effect that Peter did not deny God but man, and what he meant was "I do not know the man, because I know God." The wise reader realizes how frivolous this interpretation is, for those who thus defend the apostle make the Lord guilty of a lie' (Jerome's *Commentary on Matthew* 4.26,72–75; transl. in Simonetti [2002] 269–70). Sedulius mentions Jerome in his first letter to Macedonius; see Springer (2013) 214.

influential earlier poets whom Sedulius followed, praises Peter as *praesolidus* (1.422), *stabilis* (3.271), and *fortis* (3.273; 3.534).¹⁷ In *Cathemerinon* 1.57–64, another Christian Latin poet, Prudentius (348–c. 413), suggests that even though Peter was technically a *negator*, nonetheless he was *iustus*; even at the point of denial his ‘mind remained innocent’ (*mens maneret innocens*).¹⁸ In his Greek poetry, Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 329–390) depicts ‘Peter more positively than in corresponding passages in the Bible’.¹⁹

Not all of Sedulius’ contemporaries (or near-contemporaries) were as uncritical of the great apostle’s failure. Cyril of Alexandria (376–444) spoke candidly of Peter’s ‘miserable act’ which ‘arose from the affliction of human cowardice’.²⁰ John Chrysostom (c. 349–407) bluntly calls him a ‘cringing denier’ of Christ.²¹ Already in the fourth century, Eusebius of Caesarea (263–339) had recognized that the negative portrayal of Peter in the Gospels might actually serve to support their veracity, since why would propagandists for a cause include such incriminating details about one of their key founders if they were fabricating a purely made-up foundation mythology?²²

So, why might Sedulius have wished to minimize Peter’s failings? If Sedulius was a native of Rome, it would not be surprising for him to have a special

17 Dijkstra (2016) 90.

18 Dijkstra (2016) 208. There can be little doubt that Sedulius must have been influenced by Juvenius, if not Prudentius as well. See Costanza (1985).

19 Dijkstra (2016) 182. Sedulius does seem to be somewhat familiar with the Greek language (*PC* 1.185–7) and mentions the work of Origen, the Greek theologian, in his second letter to Macedonius; see Springer (2013) 218. For a fuller discussion, see Springer (1988) 60–1.

20 *Commentary on Luke, Homily* 149; transl. in Just (2002) 349.

21 *Homily* 85.1; transl. in Oden and Hall (1998) 220. Augustine is especially severe: ‘See how the pillar of greatest strength has at a single breath of air trembled to its foundations. Where now is all that boldness of the one who made promises and who had such overweening confidence in himself beforehand?... Is this the way to follow the Master – to deny his own discipleship? Is this the way one lays down his life for the Lord – frightened at a maidservant’s voice that might compel us to the sacrifice?’ (*Tractates on the Gospel of John* 113.2; transl. in Elowsky [2007] 277). Whether Sedulius actually read and responded to the works of earlier or contemporary Christian exegetes is difficult to determine. Where there are similarities of interpretation, the poet may have been influenced by oral traditions (e.g. sermons) or the written works of other theologians now lost, or he may have arrived at the same conclusions independently. Where there are differences, these, too, may be indirect or undeliberate.

22 Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospel* 3.5: ‘Note how they [the disciples] handed down in writing numerous charges against themselves to unforgetting ages, and accusations of sins, which no one in later years would ever have known about unless hearing it from their own voice. By thus honestly reporting their own faults, it is reasonable to view them as relatively void of false speaking and egoism. This habit gives plain and clear proof of their truth-loving disposition’; transl. in Oden and Hall (1998) 220–1.

interest in burnishing the image of the saint so closely associated with his own city. Even though his death is only hinted at in the vaguest of terms in the Gospel of John (21.19), there was a well known legend about Peter's death by crucifixion in Rome. According to this legend, as Peter was leaving the city of Rome to avoid arrest and certain death, he met Jesus going into the city. When he asked his Lord where he was going (*Quo vadis?*), Jesus responded that he was going into the city of Rome to be crucified. Rebuked, Peter came to himself, reversed his course, and returned to the city, where he ended up being crucified upside down.²³ Along with Paul, Peter figured prominently in the ecclesiastical art of Rome in Late Antiquity (see Dresken-Weiland's and Löß's contributions to this volume), often depicted as flanking Jesus on either side, as they are in the mosaic in the apse of Santa Pudenziana (late fourth or early fifth century). Eventually his authority superseded that of Paul, at least in the Roman imagination.²⁴ He is the disciple upon whose testimony at least one of the evangelists (Mark) was thought closely to rely. He is the rock upon which Christ promised to build his church (Matt. 16.18). And he is the one whose see the bishop of Rome supposedly occupies.²⁵

If Sedulius did live and write his poetry between 425 and 450, he would have been a contemporary of Leo I (440–461), one of the most powerful of the early popes. In the late fourth and early fifth century, the bishopric of Rome was enhancing its prestige and extending its reach, and Leo played an important role in the process.²⁶ The authority of the bishopric of Rome relied heavily on its association with the chief of the disciples, the apostle who holds the keys to the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16.19). Leo was successful in expanding the claims of the bishopric far beyond the immediate city of Rome, based in part on its association with Peter.²⁷ If, as has been argued, Sedulius' poem has a 'clearly anti-Nestorian theological agenda', it would make special sense to exalt

23 In the apocryphal *Acts of Peter* 35; ed. James (1924). The *Chiesa del Domine Quo Vadis* stands at the supposed spot today on the Appian Way.

24 On the connection between the apostle and the city in general, see O'Connor (1969).

25 Significantly enough for the poetic tradition, Peter plays an important role in a work heavily influenced by Sedulius, Arator's *Historia Apostolica*, a sixth-century biblical epic read aloud in Rome by its author, at the request of Pope Vigilius; see Deproost (1990). See Green (2006) 321, on the "virtual" assimilation of Peter and Vigilius in Arator's poem. Hillier (1993) devotes the first chapter of his book to the relationship between Arator and Vigilius.

26 On the growing emphasis on the 'fundamental Petrine doctrine' in the West, see Hornung (2015) 57. On the importance of Peter for Leo, see Moorhead (2015) 19–32.

27 The edict of Valentinian III (June 6, 445) was especially important in legitimizing the claims for the primacy of the bishop of Rome based upon its linkage with Peter; see Robinson (1905) 72.

Peter, thought to be the episcopal predecessor of Leo at Rome.²⁸ Leo's "Tome" played a crucial role at the crucial council of Chalcedon (451) as the bishops assembled there crafted a definitive response to Nestorianism.²⁹

We may also be able to use internal evidence to shed light on how Sedulius might have expected his first readers to respond to his portrayal of Peter. It is essential, of course, to distinguish "audience" from "readers." In the first book of the poem (*Paschale carmen* 1.17–59), Sedulius seems to be addressing pagans (or half-hearted Christians) as he exhorts them to abandon the *mendacia* and *figmenta* of traditional pagan philosophy in favor of the truthful content of his scriptural poem (see also *Paschale carmen* 4.304). But it would be a mistake simply to take Sedulius "at his word" in this case, as some have recommended, and ignore other (and more likely) readers.³⁰ The stated audience of a poem may be the product of an author's wishful thinking or, may indeed, be purely fictional.³¹ In fact, we know that Sedulius had specific Christians in mind as he was writing the poem. In his first prefatory epistle to the presbyter Macedonius he mentions some of them by name, e.g., Syncretica, a *sacra virgo* and *ministra*, Ursinus, an *antistes*, etc.³² These, along with Macedonius, are far more likely to have been his actual readers, and like Macedonius (to judge from the way in which Sedulius describes them), they were already well established Christians, and not pagans at all.³³

Sedulius' account of the aftermath of Peter's denial may offer us a clue as to how he would have wanted Macedonius and others whose names he mentions in the letter to him to read this poem. After his resurrection, when Jesus appears to his disciples on the shores of Lake Tiberias and they have eaten breakfast, he proceeds to ask Peter three times whether he loves him. Each time Peter responds in the affirmative; each time Jesus tells him to feed his lambs (or sheep). The only Gospel account of this episode (John 21:15–19) does

28 Green (2006) 239–44.

29 When Leo's "Tome" was read at Chalcedon (October 8, 451), it was enthusiastically received by the bishops, who are said to have exclaimed: 'Peter has expressed this through Leo!' (Moorhead [2015] 27).

30 Mazzega (1996) 16.

31 Ong (1975) 405–27.

32 Springer (2013) 214–6. Sedulius refers to one of the members of Macedonius' circle as 'my Gallianus', suggesting a close personal relationship between them. On the "Romanness" of this and other names in Sedulius' first letter to Macedonius, see Green (2006) 140.

33 The conflict with paganism was not nearly so controversial in the fifth century as were theological controversies with heretics. Christological issues in particular were highly charged and divisive. Sedulius attacks the heresies of Sabellius and Arius by name in the first book of the *Paschale carmen* (1.299–325).

not make the forgiveness of Peter explicit, but Sedulius leaves no doubt on that score:

... Then the shepherd who loves
to increase his sleek flocks, entrusted the sheep in every respect
to the good workman, and he entrusted his lambs to him too.
He gave him these admonitions three times, so that the recent offence
of his triple denial might be removed by the same number.

Paschale carmen 5.411–5

This scene comes very near the end of Sedulius' poem. It is followed almost immediately (*Paschale carmen* 5.422–38) by Jesus' final instructions to his disciples (cf. Matt. 28.18–20) and his departure from them into heaven (cf. Acts 1). This is an important moment in the process of transferring Jesus' own pastoral authority to his disciples. Jesus was already referred to by Sedulius as 'the good shepherd' (*pastor ... bonus*) early in the first book of this five-book poem (*Paschale carmen* 1.83). In the third, central, book of the *Paschale carmen*, Sedulius again refers to Jesus as the 'good shepherd'.³⁴ These references to Jesus as shepherd, along with the description of him as *pastor* when he forgives Peter here near the end of the final book of the *Paschale carmen*, suggest that the idea of Jesus as a good shepherd is an important one to the poet. Why otherwise would it be repeated so often and at such important points in the poem? In the Gospels there is only one passage (John 10.11–16) in which Jesus calls himself 'the good shepherd'.

In the first instance in which Sedulius' Jesus is referred to as a good shepherd, the poet himself is praying for success with his poetic enterprise and asks for guidance on the path that leads to where the *pastor bonus* preserves his pleasant sheepfold. In Book 3, Sedulius is describing how Jesus commissions the disciples, including Peter, to go out to minister to his *greges*. He is himself the *pastor bonus* (*Paschale carmen* 3.167–8). In the final reference to Jesus as shepherd in book 5, however, Sedulius transfers the adjective. Here Jesus is referred to as 'the shepherd who loves', not 'the good shepherd', even though it is Peter who has been affirming repeatedly that he is the one who loves Jesus. But now it seems that Jesus loves, too. And then, significantly, Sedulius goes on

34 The word *pastor* occurs in the central line, the 167th of the 333 lines in this central book of the poem. In the middle of the fourth book (154) the 72 disciples whom Jesus sends out are described as sheep. Roughly in the middle of the fifth book (220), Sedulius describes Jesus as the shepherd who gathers in his sheep to his heavenly sheepfold; see Mazzega, *Sedulius*, 169.

to describe as *bonus* the disciple whom Jesus is singling out here to carry on his pastoral work. On the verge of his ascension to heaven, the shepherd 'who loves to increase his flocks' is making Peter a good shepherd, too, to serve as pastor to his flock in his own stead.

The good shepherd had become a veritable iconographic fixture in Christian churches and catacombs by the first half of the fifth century (although it was to disappear soon thereafter).³⁵ The sheep-tending and feeding metaphor is a venerable one (see, e.g., *Acts* 20.28–9), and over time it became inextricably associated with clerical functions. In his first prefatory letter to him, Sedulius describes Macedonius himself as a shepherd: 'for some you became a role model for salvation; on seeing others you made them sheep in the fold of your flock; others you fed....'³⁶ He is not simply Sedulius' literary patron. Nor are those around him part of a literary circle only. This is a flock of believers, tended and fed by a spiritual shepherd who derives his own authority from Jesus through Peter. The bond of Christian faith connects this congregation to each other and to their immediate spiritual leader, Macedonius, the presbyter, linking them to Peter and ultimately to Jesus himself, who is the 'chief shepherd' of 'the flock of God' (1 *Peter* 5.2–4). As he makes clear in his letter, Sedulius sees himself as a member (or potential member) of this particular flock, craving the pastoring of Macedonius. At the same time he is himself a shepherd of sorts, too, who aims to feed his readers with the Gospel.³⁷ Sedulius' *Paschal Song* is food, as he suggests in the preface (the Eucharistic connotations are hard to miss), because its subject is Christ, the paschal lamb, who takes away the sins of Peter and Macedonius and Sedulius. Just as food nourishes the body, so Sedulius' spiritual food, his paschal feast, may have been meant, most immediately, to strengthen the links that connected the body of Christ that had assembled itself around its Petrine pastor, Macedonius.³⁸

Did Sedulius himself really come from Rome? Was he really interested in enhancing the prestige of the apostle upon whom the bishop of Rome depended for his authority? Did he really intend for Macedonius and his flock to read this poem as we have suggested? These questions may never be answered definitively. What we do know for certain, however, is that some medieval readers thought that Sedulius came from Rome and was a contemporary of Pope Leo. We also know that of the poets of Late Antiquity, Sedulius was among the most

35 Ramsey (1983) 375–8.

36 Springer (2013) 216.

37 Hence, perhaps, the confusion in the later tradition as to whether Sedulius was a layman or a cleric.

38 Jesus himself is not only shepherd but sheep, the lamb of God who is sacrificed for the sins of the world (PC 2.148–9 and 5.356).

popular throughout the Latin Middle Ages. Regardless of how Sedulius may have hoped that his poetic effort would be received by Macedonius and his congregation (or how it actually was received when published in Rome in the late fifth century), it is hard to imagine that the poet would have been disappointed had he known how widely circulated this poem, set in Palestine, was eventually to become over so many subsequent centuries among so many other flocks of Catholic Christian believers (and their pastors), wherever they may have been in Western Europe, “anchored” to the apostle whom they believed to be the first bishop of Rome.³⁹

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39 On the continued popularity of the poem up into the early modern period and the wide distribution of manuscripts across Western Europe, see Springer (1995) 5–6. In the *Paschale opus* (CSEL 10, 191), Sedulius cites Virgil's reference to Rome in *Ecl.* 1.26–7, as he contrasts the heavenly Jerusalem with earthly cities.

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PART 4

Anchoring the Cult of Peter



Peter without Paul: Aspects of the Primordial Role of Simon Peter in an Early Christian Context

Annewies van den Hoek

In the last quarter of the fourth century bishop Epiphanius of Salamis, the staunch defender of Christian faith and tireless campaigner against heresy – whether actual or presumed – made the following statement in his *Panarion*:

ἐν Ῥώμῃ γὰρ γεγόνασι πρῶτοι Πέτρος καὶ Παῦλος οἱ ἀπόστολοι αὐτοὶ καὶ ἐπίσκοποι, εἶτα Λίνος εἶτα Κλήτος εἶτα Κλήμης, σύγχρονος ὢν Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου, οὗ ἐπιμνημονεύει Παῦλος ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἐπιστολῇ. καὶ μηδεὶς θαυμαζέτω ὅτι πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἄλλοι τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν διεδέξαντο ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων, ὄντος τούτου συγχρόνου Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου.¹

For in Rome first the apostles Peter and Paul themselves were also bishops, then Linus, then Cletus, then Clement, who was a contemporary of Peter and Paul, whom Paul mentions in the *Letter to the Romans*. And no one should be surprised that others before him received the episcopacy from the apostles, though he was a contemporary of Peter and Paul.

By the fourth century the apostles Peter and Paul had stellar reputations and were established as founders of the Roman church and anchors of its prestige. Rome had a long tradition of being anchored in figures who were perceived as a duality, first of all, the twins Romulus and Remus, who are best known as the mythological founders of the eternal city.² Though of Greek origin, Castor and Pollux, also known in Latin as the Gemini or Castores, are another couple solidly anchoring the traditions of Rome.³ It should not come as a surprise therefore that the two most prominent apostles were cast in this dual role as well. The reference to both of them, however, as *bishops* of Rome is rather unusual. Epiphanius repeated the idea several times, mainly as an argument in defense of the apostolic succession of church leaders in Rome. Of course, the

1 Epiphanius, *Pan.* 27.6.2–3.

2 See Humphries' contribution to this volume.

3 See Van den Hoek (2017).

appeal to authority and legitimacy could already be heard some two hundred years earlier by authors such as Irenaeus of Lyons and Clement of Alexandria, who promoted the *κανών τῆς πίστεως* (*κανών τῆς ἀληθείας, κανών ἐκκλησιαστικός*, and there are more elaborate terms as well).⁴ The Latin equivalent was *regula fidei* or *regula ueritatis*,⁵ a rule for measuring faith and faithful allegiance to the Christian cause, which for Irenaeus and Clement primarily consisted of the agreement between the Septuagint and the nascent New Testament as an instrument for the right interpretation of scripture. In addition, the *κανών τῆς πίστεως* was a rhetorical device in a most competitive religious environment; a measuring rod that was employed polemically against related groups, who under the same Christian banner did not seem to adhere to the same rulings and thus were denied legitimacy.

Although uncommon, Epiphanius may not have been alone in naming both Peter and Paul *bishops* of Rome. Another important theologian and historian two or three generations his senior could have inspired his statement. Eusebius of Caesarea starts his first book of the *Ecclesiastical History* in the very first sentence covering a full page that the clear purpose of his work was to write about the succession of the sacred apostles, thus reconstructing Christianity from its origins.⁶ Subsequently in book three, when dealing with the episcopal successions in Alexandria in the time of Nerva and Trajan, Eusebius drops a few names from Rome:

ἐν τούτῳ δὲ Ῥωμαίων εἰς ἔτι Κλήμητος ἠγγεῖτο, τρίτον καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπέχων τῶν τῆδε μετὰ Παύλον τε καὶ Πέτρον ἐπισκοπευσάντων βαθμόν. Λίνος δὲ ὁ πρῶτος ἦν καὶ μετ' αὐτὸν Ἀνέγκλητος.⁷

At that time, Clement was still in charge of the Romans – also he being three steps back from those there who after Paul and Peter exercised the office of *episkopos*. Linus was the first and after him came Anacletus.

4 κατὰ τὸν τῆς ἀληθείας κανόνα γνωστικῆς παραδόσεως; κατὰ τὸν εὐκλεῆ καὶ σεμνὸν τῆς παραδόσεως κανόνα, see Van den Hoek & Mondésert (2001) 60, note 1.

5 Tertullian, *Praescr.* 12; 13; 26; *Pud.* 8; and *passim*.

6 Eusebius, *HE* 1.1.1.

7 Eusebius, *HE* 3.21; for βαθμός, see *LSJ* s.v.: of a genealogy, ἀπωτέρω δυοῖν β. two steps farther back, i.e. farther back than one's grandfather. The translation of Rufinus reads: *qua tempestate in urbe Roma Clemens quoque tertius post Paulum et Petrum pontificatum tenebat* (At that time in the city of Rome also Clemens held the episcopacy in third place after Paul and Peter).

It is not totally clear from Eusebius' Greek whether or not Paul and Peter are included in the τῶν ... ἐπισκοπευσάντων, but Epiphanius may have understood it this way. However, there seems to be little substance to the idea that Paul ever was named a bishop, let alone, bishop of Rome.⁸

After the close pairing of Peter and Paul in early sources, it is striking to see that the two often appear as individuals in the fourth century, with the emphasis usually on Peter. Just to give a few examples: when Constantine ordered new churches to be built in Rome, the one on Vatican hill was much larger and more splendid than the one for Paul on Via Ostiense. The latter seems to have been a rather small enterprise, cramped into a narrow space between two roads.⁹ Only in the late fourth century did the emperors close one of the roads constricting the space for Paul's church and build a virtual replica of St. Peter's, with five aisles and a transept.

Not only in large church building activities but also in smaller-scale figurative arts a similar preference for Peter appears to have existed.¹⁰ Christian sarcophagi give this impression strongly. Although Paul is certainly not absent, Peter is much more frequently represented; his image can be seen not only on representations of his arrest and martyrdom (as with Paul) but in a variety of scenes, such as the miracle of the rock with soldiers drinking and the denial scene with the rooster, to mention just a few.¹¹ When Peter performs the water miracle and strikes the rock, he appears as the successor of Moses; this visual tradition has its base in popular stories, such as later versions of the *Acts of Peter*.¹² For Paul such biblical pre-figurations do not seem to have been developed by artists, writers, or story-tellers. Admittedly, there were miraculous stories in the reception history of Paul's life as there were in the narratives of Peter. The nexus of Peter and Moses, however, has a different theological flavor and points perhaps at a re-enactment of old biblical stories in a new Christian environment, comparable to something like the *Praeconium Paschale* in a

8 Irenaeus simply writes that "Peter and Paul in Rome are evangelizing and founding the church," *Adv. Haer.* 2.1.2: τοῦ Πέτρου καὶ τοῦ Παύλου ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελιζομένων καὶ θεμελιούντων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. Cf. *Adv. Haer.* 3.3.2. See also Ps. Ignatius, *Ep.* 3.10.2: ἐν Ἀντιοχείᾳ γὰρ ἐχρημάτισαν οἱ μαθηταὶ Χριστιανοί, Παύλου καὶ Πέτρου θεμελιούντων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν (For in Antioch the disciples were called "Christians," when Paul and Peter were founding the church).

9 See Eastman (2011) 24–7.

10 See Dresken-Weiland (2011) 126–152, with extensive bibliography and her contribution in this volume.

11 See Provoost (2011). Peter Lampe also has given statistics on the frequency and variety of Petrine scenes on Roman sarcophagi; Lampe (2015) 273–317, esp. 294–303, and Table 3, 316–17.

12 See Jensen (1992) 395–398; Jensen (2019).

liturgical context. Images of Peter as Moses are also common in Roman catacomb painting – and it is not always easy to distinguish whether Moses or Peter was intended.¹³ Peter Lampe remarks that ‘Peter can be depicted without Paul, but the apostle from Tarsus almost exclusively appears together with Peter.’¹⁴ Moreover, when they are depicted together the honor of receiving the scroll of the law goes to Peter.

In yet a different art form, the more down-to-earth material of clay, we also see the apostle Peter as a clearly defined type. In contrast to sarcophagi and catacomb paintings, the objects are not very elite; they consist of small ceramic lamps from North Africa. Peter’s image dominates on lamps, although the two apostles also appear *together* on other ceramics from this area, as on platters and bowls. I should add that this form of art can be easily replicated since it is mold made, and the lamps are particularly abundant.¹⁵ As with the sarcophagi and catacomb paintings, one could reinforce these observations with numerical data, which make clear that Peter as a stand-alone is much more frequent.¹⁶

What should we make of this? Why is Peter more popular than Paul on a variety of materials in the fourth century? Scholars engaged in the early Christian visual arts have pointed out that the upper classes associated themselves more comfortably with Peter. Referring to sarcophagi on which Peter’s posture and gestures echo those of philosophers, Peter Lampe writes: ‘Thus, the upper-class Roman owners of the sarcophagi like to associate themselves with Peter. Peter was learned like a philosopher and endowed with power and authority.’¹⁷ Jutta Dresken-Weiland states that: ‘the sequence of images of Peter is a peculiarity of the sarcophagi and can be explained by the will and the self-concept of the commissioners, who very often were from the upper class of society.’¹⁸ Others suggest that there may have been a difference between the visual and literary sources in this respect. Peter would have taken up more prominence

13 Bisconti (2000) 44–5.

14 Lampe (2015) 290.

15 Meg Armstrong has made a thesaurus of applied motives on African Red Slip ware, which is still useful for tabulation, although rendered somewhat obsolete by recent discoveries: Armstrong (1993); for images, see Van den Hoek and Herrmann (2013) 324; 542.

16 On sarcophagi and catacomb painting Provoost counts about four times as many images in the cycle of Peter as in the cycle of Paul; Provoost (2011) 1.138 and 141.

17 Lampe (2015) 303.

18 Dresken-Weiland (2011), 63–78, in the English summary preceding the article; see also 72: ‘Die besondere Verehrung des Petrus lässt sich durch das Selbstverständnis der stadtrömischen Oberschicht-Christen erklären; es war ihnen wohl angelegen, dass sie sich als Angehörige der stadtrömischen Eliten Bilder des Mannes auf ihre Gräber setzten, der als Gründer der römischen Gemeinde und als Nachfolger Christi ebenfalls in einer führenden Rolle verehrt wurde.’

in the visuals and Paul is more cited in texts, particularly in poetry.¹⁹ From a fourth-century perspective, these observations seem legitimate, but whether such associations were as self-evident as some authors suggest remains to be seen. Thus, my initial question remains: why does the weight fall on Peter and not on Paul? Are there perhaps earlier indications to justify such a preference? Religious traditions usually do not come suddenly out of the blue.

Historically speaking, or rather based on literary evidence from earlier times, the connection of Paul with Rome can more easily be established than that of Peter. Paul's *Letter to the Romans* shows the apostle's interest in writing to fellow-Christians in Rome and the desire to visit the imperial capital.²⁰ His *Letter to the Philippians* may have been written from Rome and, if that is the case, gives interesting additional information about contentious relationships.²¹ In the book of *Acts*, which is dedicated to the aftermath of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, both Peter and Paul play major roles, but there is a strange transition halfway through when the stories about Peter and other apostles fade out and the focus is redirected to the mission of Paul and his entourage. The last chapters elaborate on hostilities endured by Paul in Jerusalem, his trial in Caesarea, and his travel to and subsequent stay in Rome as a prisoner. We would have loved to hear more, particularly about where Paul ended up: did he go further to the West, or perhaps back to the East, or was he found guilty and executed in the eternal city itself? The story is open-ended and we can only speculate about the reasons.²²

In contrast, Peter does not seem to have had much connection with Rome in the earliest sources. He started out as a fisherman from the Galilee, and, generally speaking, fishermen were not particularly high on the social scale of Roman society. They were often made fun of in both text and image.²³ As already noted, Peter figures in the first part of canonical *Acts* in his key role as a witness to the resurrection after which he fades away. Geographically Peter's activity is limited to the traditional areas of the Jesus movement: Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and the Galilee. Peter does go beyond this area when he starts a mission among gentiles in Antioch, where he also encounters Paul. Further information about Peter comes from the letters of Paul and from the canonical *Gospels*. In *Galatians*, Peter had the famous altercation with Paul, an episode that continues to play an important role in the reception history

19 Dijkstra (2016) 403; see also Sessa (2012).

20 *Rom.* 1.8–15.

21 For the arguments for Rome (versus Ephesus or Caesarea) as the least problematic, see Bockmuehl (1998) 32.

22 On traditions of Paul's death, see Marguerat (2015) 305–32; Di Berardino (2015) 521–32.

23 See Laubscher (1982); Bekker-Nielsen (2002); Lytle (2012).

of that text and of the relationship between the two apostles.²⁴ In the four canonical *Gospels* Peter gained a venerable reputation, though with a variety of connotations.²⁵ In most accounts, he is the preeminent disciple of Jesus who functions as a spokesperson and represents the group of twelve.²⁶ He shows strengths and weaknesses: his confession about Jesus as the Messiah is powerful and influential, but it is countered by his failure and denial. This contrast between his outstanding role as a disciple and his abject failing will also remain an issue throughout later theological debates.

Whatever the theological differences may have been, toward the early second century Peter and Paul gradually appear as a team. This tendency of unification may have started already in the book of *Acts*. Although Luke portrays them in sequence rather than together, they are the two main players in his narrative. Other examples of this tendency are pseudo-epigraphic texts under the name of Peter, such as the letters of Peter. Helmut Koester viewed these letters as written in the Pauline tradition but under Peter's name to give them more authority and to unify the apostles and their presumed constituencies.²⁷ In *1 Clement* 5 both Peter and Paul are mentioned together as apostles and martyrs;²⁸ throughout this paragraph the language seems martyr-related with a connection to Rome by association.²⁹ The *Letter to the Romans* of Ignatius provides a similar testimony with an implied connection to Rome.³⁰ There is no need to repeat all the key passages and arguments here – they are well-known

24 *Gal.* 2, 11–14; also Van den Hoek and Herrmann (2013) 301–26.

25 See Bockmuehl (2012) 19–33. Gnllka (2002) 142–78.

26 See Lampe, Thümmel, and Hardt (2011).

27 Koester (1980) 294. For texts documenting opposition to Paul, see Luedemann (1989).

28 *1 Clement* 5. See also Still (2015) 163.

29 Pace Zwierlein (2010) 30; in my opinion, a cluster of typical “martyr” terms can be seen in this passage: ἀθλητής, ἀθλέω, διώκω, μαρτυρέω, δόξα, ὑπομονή, βραβείον, γενναίος, κλέος. See also Zwierlein (2011) 444–67, and Zwierlein (2013).

30 Ignatius, *Rom.* 4.3; cf. also *John* 21.18–19. Di Berardino (2015) 521, notes that no firm date has been established for Ignatius' lifetime, which ranges from 110 to ca. 170. In 171–172 Dionysius of Corinth (via Eusebius, *HE* 2.25.8) wrote: ὡς δὲ κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν ἄμφω καιρὸν ἐμαρτύρησαν, Κορινθίων ἐπίσκοπος Διονύσιος ἐγγράφως Ῥωμαίοις ὁμιλῶν, ὧδε παρίστησιν « ταῦτα καὶ ὑμεῖς διὰ τῆς τοσαύτης νοουθεσίας τὴν ἀπὸ Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου φυτεῖαν γενηθεῖσαν Ῥωμαίων τε καὶ Κορινθίων συνεκεράσατε. καὶ γὰρ ἄμφω καὶ εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν Κόρινθον φυτεύσαντες ἡμᾶς ὁμοίως ἐδίδαξαν, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ εἰς τὴν Ἰταλίαν ὁμοσε διδάξαντες ἐμαρτύρησαν κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν καιρὸν, 'And that they both suffered martyrdom at the same time, Dionysius, bishop of the Corinthians, conversing with the Romans, says in a written statement as follows: 'By such a great admonition you united the planting done by Peter and of Paul at Rome and Corinth. For both planted and likewise taught us in our Corinth, and they taught together in like manner in Italy, and suffered martyrdom at the same time'.

and well-studied.³¹ They make clear that very early a tradition about the *concordia apostolorum* exists with a special connection to Rome.³² The question then arises, why does the weight fall on Peter and not on Paul in Christian art of the fourth century (and onwards)?

Some evidence appears in the later second and the third centuries that can be read in the light of the later imbalance in their relationship at Rome. Archaeological information comes from the via Appia just outside Rome at the funerary complex under the church of S. Sebastiano, also known as *in memoria apostolorum*.³³ Already early in the fourth century Eusebius made mention of this location in his *Church History*:

Παῦλος δὴ οὖν ἐπ’ αὐτῆς Ῥώμης τὴν κεφαλὴν ἀποτμηθῆναι καὶ Πέτρος ὡσαύτως ἀνασκολοπισθῆναι κατ’ αὐτὸν ἱστοροῦνται, καὶ πιστοῦταί γε τὴν ἱστορίαν ἢ Πέτρον καὶ Παύλου εἰς δεῦρο κρατήσασα ἐπὶ τῶν αὐτόθι κοιμητηρίων πρόσρησις, ...³⁴

It is reported that Paul was beheaded in Rome itself and that likewise Peter was crucified during his (Nero's) reign, and the designation "of Peter and Paul," which is still current at the cemeteries there confirms the report ...

'Still' is referring to Eusebius' own day, and 'there' means Rome; the sentence then continues with the well-known reference to Gaius and the quotation about the *tropaeum* of each apostle – which do not concern us here. The area of commemoration at the cemeteries has long been located right under the center of the later church of San Sebastiano. Reconstruction shows that this structure, which is traditionally called the *triclia*, was an open courtyard with a kind of portico on one side. The walls of this *loggia* were covered with hundreds of graffiti, invoking the names of Peter and Paul, partly in Latin, partly in Greek, a few in Latin with Greek script; some are intact but most are very fragmentary.³⁵ They were evidently connected with funerary banquets in the honor of both the saints and the deceased. Richard Krautheimer remarks that: 'were its walls not covered with invocations to the apostles (one dated to 260)

31 See the recent studies of Zwierlein on Peter in Rome above and the scholarly responses they evoked.

32 It doesn't make much difference for my argument here whether one dates 1 *Clement* to c. 100 or 120.

33 See Friedrichs' contribution to this volume.

34 Eusebius, *HE* 2.25.5.

35 Snyder (1985) 141–45.



FIGURE 11.1 Graffito with possible consular date (260 CE) from the Triclia, ICVR, V 12935, EDB 26596

and with records of feasts in their honor, the *loggia* might be the *pergola* of an ordinary *osteria*.³⁶ One of the graffiti may give the consular date, to which Krautheimer refers: (fig. 11.1)

.... *Celeri* ...
v idus aug....
saccul
et Donat ...³⁷

which was read by Robert Marichal as: *Celeri[nus] / V Idus Aug[ustas] / Saccul[ari II] / et Donat[o II co(n)s(ulibus)]*, Celerinus on the 9th of August with Saecularis and Donatus as consuls (both for the 2nd time).³⁸

36 Krautheimer (1965/1975) 34–5.

37 Styger (1918) Tav. 11. Toynbee and Ward Perkins (1956) 268. *AE* 1954,54; *AE* 1956,236; *AE* 1957,45.

38 Marichal, *AE* 1954,54. The reading is still contested; for different readings by Guarducci and Ferrua, see Felle (2012) 478, and note 6.

We also know through other ancient sources that from 258 onwards a festival commemorating Peter and Paul was celebrated at this location.³⁹ The site began to be used in the 250s and came to an end after the construction of the church of S. Sebastiano, originally the *Basilica Apostolorum*, somewhere in the first half of the fourth century.⁴⁰ My interest in these intercessions, in which Peter and Paul are addressed so frequently, is primarily because of the sequence in which their names occur; who came first: was it Peter and Paul or Paul and Peter? For this I looked at the inscriptions as they are published in the fifth volume of the *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae* and as they appear on the Bari database.⁴¹ Of the more than three hundred graffiti that were discovered not all could be reconstructed; whenever a reconstruction was certain with either the name of Peter or Paul or both, even in fragmentary form (... *et Petre*, or *Paule et ...*), I would include it in my tabulation. In this way, I counted 85 Latin and 28 Greek inscriptions in which both apostles were addressed, so 113 graffiti in total. In Latin Peter appears first 50 times, while Paul appears first only 35 times; in Greek Paul appears first 16 times, and Peter appears first 12 times. (fig. 11.2) Thus, it appears that for the Latin speakers there is an inclination to name Peter first, but for the Greek speakers there is a slight preference for putting Paul in first position – and I want to stress again how amazing it is to have this prime documentary information from pre-Constantinian times still available. It is virtually a public opinion poll.⁴²

Several textual sources from pre-Constantinian times show the interplay between these preferences. Obviously, the apocryphal *Acts of Peter*, in which Peter plays a prominent role, come to mind;⁴³ they are joined by a wide range of texts with the name of Peter attached to them, among them the later *Pseudo-Clementines*.⁴⁴ These novelistic narratives as such do not form a valid argument for the precedence of one apostle over the other, since the *Acts of Peter* parallel the *Acts of Paul* and other such traditions; in fact, there are many interconnections between the Petrine and Pauline apocryphal *Acts* that are not easy to explain.

39 For the date and further bibliography, see Di Berardino (2015), 521–32, esp. 524.

40 See also Carandini (2013) 145–51.

41 Ferrua, *ICUR* V, 12907–13090. For the Epigraphic Database Bari, see <http://www.edb.uniba.it/>.

42 I am aware of the statistical problem based on small numbers.

43 Lipsius-Bonnet (1891–1903). Vouaux (1922) 398–466. For further bibliography, see Bremmer (1998) 200–2.

44 Rehm (1953); Irmscher (1967²); Paschke (1992³). Paschke (1965); Paschke (1994²). For further bibliography, see Bremmer (2010) 306–25.

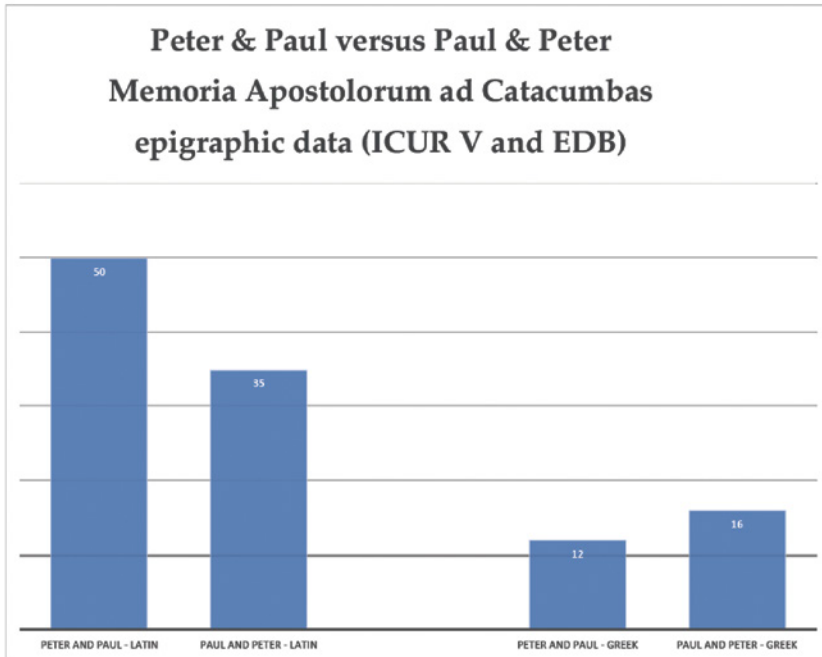


FIGURE 11.2 Tabulation of the sequence of the apostolic names on graffiti of the *Triclia*

There are some features in the *Acts of Peter*, however, that can shed light on the issue of apostolic preferences and balance.⁴⁵ The work has a complex history; it was originally composed in Greek, probably toward the end of the second century (180–190) but had a wide dissemination with many oriental versions as well. Its largest surviving fragment is in Latin, known from the *Codex Vercellensis* 158.⁴⁶ The place of origin is not known, perhaps Rome, perhaps not. Obviously, Peter is the principle character of the narrative, but strangely enough the first three paragraphs of the *Actus Vercellenses* begin with Paul and his departure from Rome, and in the last chapters Paul appears again. The main narrative of the *Acts* is about a contest in working miracles between Peter and Simon Magus, a proto-heretical figure. It is mostly set in Rome but starts in Jerusalem and concludes with the inglorious failure of Simon, followed by Peter's martyrdom. Scholars have noticed that the references to Paul in the beginning and at the end of the *Actus Vercellenses* are not well integrated into

45 For a general survey of Peter's role in non-canonical traditions, see Foster (2015) 222–62.

For the relationships between Peter, Paul, and Simon, see also Bockmuehl (2010) 94–113.

46 From where they are also called the *Actus Vercellenses*.

the text, causing discontinuities and even contradictions.⁴⁷ This suggests that they are interpolations – supposedly the work of a redactor who drew from the Pauline epistles and had an interest in expressing harmony between the two apostles in an otherwise Petrine context.⁴⁸

When we have a Greek and a Latin version available, as in the story of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, there are examples in which the Latin passage gives more prominence to Peter than the Greek version does, as we saw in the graffiti. In an article on Peter and Paul in Rome, Gahbauer included some of the instances,⁴⁹ and it may suffice here to quote one example: in the *Martyrium Petri and Pauli* 44 during the fictitious interrogation by the emperor Nero, the Greek text reads:

Σίμων εἶπεν· Οὐκ ἐγένετο τοῦ Παύλου διδάσκαλος ὁ Χριστός. Παῦλος εἶπεν· Ναί, δι' ἀποκαλύψεως καὶ ἐπαίδευσεν.⁵⁰

Simon (Magus) said: 'Christ was not the teacher of Paul.' Paul said: 'certainly, he instructed also me through his revelation.'

The Latin equivalent of the *Passio Sanctorum Apostolorum Petri et Pauli* 44 renders the situation as follows:

*Simon dixit: Pauli Christus magister non fuit. Paulus dixit: qui Petrum prae-sens docuit, ipse me per revelationem instruxit.*⁵¹

Simon (Magus) said: 'Christ was not the teacher of Paul.' Paul said: 'the one who taught Peter in person, instructed me too through his revelation.'

Peter's position is even more prominent in the *Pseudo-Clementine* literature; there great emphasis is placed on Peter as founder of the church⁵² – though these texts are hard to date (roughly from the third century onwards), but the tendency is interesting nevertheless. The *Ps. Clementine Homilies* are preceded by the so-called *Letter of Peter to James*. They may date to the fourth century but supposedly contain earlier materials. The work is written from a

47 Thomas (2003) 22–3.

48 This also happens in the martyrdom of Peter, in which Paul suddenly appears.

49 Gahbauer (2001) 155–67.

50 Lipsius-Bonnet (1891–1903) 156, ll. 19–21.

51 Lipsius-Bonnet (1891–1903) 157, ll. 18–20.

52 See, for example, Rufinus' version of the *Epistula ad Iacobum* 1.2.

Jewish-Christian perspective with a strong defense of the law of Moses. One of the most striking passages reads as follows:

τινές γὰρ τῶν ἀπὸ ἐθνῶν τὸ δι' ἐμοῦ νόμιμον ἀπεδοκίμασαν κήρυγμα, τοῦ ἐχθροῦ ἀνθρώπου ἄνομόν τινα καὶ φλυαρώδη προσηκάμενοι διδασκαλίαν. καὶ ταῦτα ἔτι μου περιόντος ἐπεχείρησάν τινες ποικίλαις τισὶν ἐρμηνείαις τοὺς ἐμούς λόγους μετασχηματίζειν εἰς τὴν τοῦ νόμου κατάλυσιν.⁵³

For some from the gentiles have rejected my preaching according to the law, admitting some lawless and nonsensical teaching of the man who is my enemy. And some tried these things while I am still around to transform my words by manifold interpretations, for the dissolution of the law.

It is not certain who the proclaimed enemy is, but if it is aimed at the apostle Paul, this text would be overtly anti-Pauline and go well beyond the hints seen in the sources above.⁵⁴

In contrast with the preferences displayed in these novelistic and popular texts, writings of theologians of the late second and early third centuries usually bring up Peter and Paul together, as strong and unifying emblems of faith against heresy, as guarantors of apostolic succession, and ultimately of the authority of the Roman church. However, these texts should not obscure the historical reality that there must have been many different Christian groups in second century Rome (as in other cities for that matter), each with their own alliances and often competing with one another for turf.⁵⁵ The problem is that history is mostly written by the parties that ultimately prevailed – and the few sources available may well reflect this phenomenon.

We will first hear from Irenaeus, a theologian and later bishop of Lyons in Gaul, who migrated from Asia Minor to the West shortly after the middle of the second century and who also spent time in Rome. Irenaeus makes his point loud and clear:⁵⁶

53 *Epistula Petri*, 2.3–4. Irmscher, Paschke, and Rehm (1969) 1–2.

54 Gerd Luedemann refers to other anti-Pauline tendencies in the *Pseudo-Clementines*; see Luedemann (1989) 169–196. In general, also Porter (2005); Gray (2016).

55 For Christian groups in the second century, see the work of Lampe (2003). For the dangers to Christians in opposing other philosophical schools to the point of death threats, see Baarda (2017). Tjitze Baarda refers to a certain Crescens, who had threatened Tatian's teacher Justin and may have been involved in Justin's demise, see Tatian, *Oration* 19; cf. Eusebius, *HE* 4.16; Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 23.

56 Christoph Marksches makes the point that Irenaeus' emphasis on the institutional traditions and the authority of the bishops came from threats to these communities from free teachers with a different set of views and scriptures; Marksches (2015) 234–5.

*Sed quoniam ualde longum est in hoc tali uolumine omnium Ecclesiarum enumerare successiones, maximae et antiquissimae et omnibus cognitae, a gloriosissimis duobus apostolis Petro et Paulo Romae fundatae et constitutae Ecclesiae, eam quam habet ab apostolis traditionem et adnuntiatam hominibus fidem per successiones episcoporum peruenientem usque ad nos indicantes, confundimus omnes eos qui quoquo modo, uel per sibi placentiam uel uanam gloriam uel per caecitatem et sententiam malam, praeterquam oportet colligunt: ad hanc enim Ecclesiam propter potentiorum principalitatem necesse est omnem conuenire Ecclesiam, hoc est eos qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper ab his qui sunt undique conseruata est ea quae est ab apostolis traditio.*⁵⁷

But since it would be too long in a volume like this to enumerate *the successions of all the churches*, we (will speak about) the church that is the greatest, most ancient and known to all, founded and established by the *two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul at Rome*; while showing that the *tradition that it has from the apostles* and the faith that was announced to the people coming down through the *successions of bishops* even to our time, we put to shame all those who in any way for their own pleasure or vain glory or blindness or bad judgment assemble illegitimately. For it is necessary that every church – that means the faithful everywhere – agrees with this church, because of its more powerful *primary place*, (this church) in which the *tradition that comes from the apostles* has always been preserved by those who are from everywhere.

A few generations later similar views on the founding fathers and their legacy can be heard from Tertullian. Like Irenaeus, Tertullian states that Christians in North Africa derive their authority from the church in Rome. He lays this out in *De Praescriptione Haereticorum*:

*... si autem Italiae adiaces, habes Romam unde nobis quoque auctoritas praesto est. Ista quam felix ecclesia cui totam doctrinam apostoli cum sanguine suo profunderunt, ubi Petrus passioni dominicae adaequatur, ubi Paulus Iohannis exitu coronatur ...*⁵⁸

57 Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3.3.2.

58 *Praescr.* 36. Tertullian was also the first to state that both Peter and Paul were victims under persecution of Nero, *Scorpiace* 15.

... if you are near Italy, you have Rome, from where we also derive our authority. How blessed is that church on which the apostles poured forth their whole doctrine along with their blood, where Peter endures the same passion as the Lord, where Paul is being crowned in death like John.

In this polemical discussion about apostolic authority, Tertullian puts more flesh on the bones, i.e. additional names on the apostolic succession:

*Hoc enim modo ecclesiae apostolicae census suos deferunt, sicut Smyrnaeorum ecclesia Polycarpum ab Iohanne collocatum refert, sicut Romanorum Clementem a Petro ordinatum est. Perinde utique et ceterae exhibent quos ab apostolis in episcopatum constitutos apostolici seminis traduces habeant.*⁵⁹

For in this way apostolic churches convey their origin, just as the church of Smyrna reports that Polycarp was placed there by John, and as the Roman church asserts that Clement *was ordained by Peter*. Anyway, in like manner also the other churches present those who were appointed by the apostles to the episcopacy and hold the shoots of the apostolic seed.

When it comes to episcopal ordination and succession, Tertullian singles out Peter as the one who ordained Clement and omits Paul.⁶⁰ Irenaeus, however, includes Paul in this process of ecclesiastical organization as well as in the foundation of the church:

θεμελιώσαντες οὖν καὶ οἰκοδομήσαντες οἱ μακάριοι ἀπόστολοι τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, Λίνῳ τὴν τῆς ἐπίσκοπῆς λειτουργίαν ἐνεχείρισαν· τούτου τοῦ Λίνου Παῦλος ἐν ταῖς πρὸς Τιμόθεον ἐπιστολαῖς μέμνηται. διαδέχεται δ' αὐτὸν Ἀνέγκλητος, μετὰ τοῦτον δὲ τρίτῳ τόπῳ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων τὴν ἐπίσκοπὴν κληροῦται Κλήμης, ὁ καὶ ἑορακῶς τοὺς μακαρίους ἀποστόλους καὶ συμβεβληκῶς αὐτοῖς καὶ ἔτι ἔναυλον τὸ κήρυγμα τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τὴν παράδοσιν πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν ἔχων, οὐ μόνος· ἔτι γὰρ πολλοὶ ὑπελείποντο τότε ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων δεδιδασκόμενοι.⁶¹

Therefore after *the blessed apostles* had founded and built the church, *they* handed the ministry of the office of bishop over to Linus. Paul made mention of this Linus in his *Letter to Timothy*. Anencletus succeeded him,

59 *Praescr.* 32.

60 See also Brent (2013) 171.

61 Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3.3.2, in Eusebius, *HE* 5.6.1–2.

and after him in third place Clement obtained the office of bishop from the apostles; he had seen the blessed apostles, had communicated with them, and with the preaching of the apostles still ringing in his ears he held their tradition before his eyes. He was not alone, for at that time there were still many left who had been taught by the apostles.

It appears that already in the second century in a polemical context bishops' lists existed or had been construed, to which both Irenaeus and Tertullian are able to refer. In *his* list, Irenaeus included both apostles,⁶² while Tertullian singled out Peter alone. As many third century sources show, the latter tradition continues in the West and subsequently elsewhere as well.⁶³

For Tertullian, this ecclesiastical tradition was key for truth and legitimacy. He maintains that those who do not follow the rule do not have any rights, not even to use the Christian writings on which they base themselves for their arguments.

*Si haec ita se habent, ut ueritas nobis adiudicetur, quicumque in ea regula incedimus quam ecclesiae ab apostolis, apostoli a christo, christus a deo tradidit, constat ratio propositi nostri definientis non esse admittendos haereticos ad ineundam de scripturis prouocationem quos sine scripturis probamus ad scripturas non pertinere.*⁶⁴

If this is so that truth is granted to us, every one of us who walks according to this rule, which the churches handed down from the apostles, the apostles from Christ, and Christ from God, then the rationale of our main point is established, defining that heretics should not be allowed to *provoke us from the scriptures*, since we prove without the scriptures that *they have nothing to do with the scriptures*.

*Ita non christiani nullum ius capiunt christianarum litterarum ad quos merito dicendum est: qui estis? quando et unde uenistis? quid in meo agitis, non mei? quo denique, Marcion, iure siluam meam caedis? qua licentia, Valentine, fontes meos transuertis? qua potestate, Apelles, limites meos commoues?*⁶⁵

62 For the role of Paul in the works of Irenaeus, see Blackwell (2011) 190–206.

63 Giles (1952). Butler (1996). See also Eusebius *HE* 5.28.3, in which Pope Victor is listed as the thirteenth bishop of Rome after Peter and Zephyrinus.

64 *Praescr.* 37.

65 *Praescr.* 37.

Thus, not being Christians, they have no right to Christian scriptures; one should justly say to them: ‘Who are you? When and from where did you come? What do you have to do with me, you who are not mine? Finally, by what right do you, *Marcion*, cut my wood? By what license, *Valentinus*, do you divert my streams? By what power, *Apelles*, do you move my boundaries?’

*Ego sum heres apostolorum. Sicut cauerunt testamento suo, sicut fidei commiserunt, sicut adiurauerunt, ita teneo.*⁶⁶

I am the heir of the apostles. Just as they bequeathed in their will, just as they committed to trust, just as they swore, so I hold possession.

Vos certe exheredauerunt semper et abdicauerunt ut extraneos, ut inimicos.

You they certainly have disinherited forever and renounced as outsiders, as enemies.⁶⁷

Tertullian has nothing but harsh words for his opponents, whom he mentions by name: Marcion, Valentinus, and Apelles; in this he targets followers of these teachers, those who enlisted in their schools and studied their writings. There is a strong sense of “us” against “them” in these texts, “us” standing for the rightful owners of the inheritance, and “them” for those who should not even be allowed to *read* the sacred writings or to enter a discussion based on the scriptures. The “us” is legitimate, the “them” a total fraud, who should be disinherited and rejected as strangers and enemies of the apostles. There is no ranking of apostles in Tertullian’s statements here, and the focus is not only on Peter and Paul, but on all apostles. Both Irenaeus and Tertullian have strong institutional views that stress the founding fathers of the Roman church and the legitimacy of the church’s existence. That Paul could not be the founder of the Roman church, as Irenaeus claimed (“the church.... founded and established by the two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul at Rome”), is a detail that is temporarily lost in Irenaeus’ polemical fervor – he undoubtedly knew better.

In the same work (*De Praescriptione*) Tertullian provides additional information with bearing on our subject. He evokes the text of *Galatians* and blames his opponents for interpreting the disagreement between Peter and Paul in

66 *Praescr.* 37.

67 *Praescr.* 37. For a general survey of the traditions of Peter and Paul in North Africa, see Dunn (2001) 405–15. More recently, see the magnificent opus of Burns and Jensen (2014).

an incorrect and unjustifiable way; they accuse Peter and the other apostles of being ignorant, claiming that their apostolic performance was imperfect.⁶⁸ The accusation is repeated several times in his books *Against Marcion* with basically the same arguments.⁶⁹

*Solent dicere non omnia apostolos scisse, eadem agitati dementia qua susum rursus conuertunt, omnia quidem apostolos scisse sed non omnia omnibus tradidisse, in utroque Christum reprehensionem inicietes qui aut minus instructos aut parum simplices apostolos miserit.*⁷⁰

They are accustomed to saying that the apostles did not know everything; driven by the same madness by which they turn (things) upside down again – (saying that) the apostles did indeed know everything but did not hand everything on to everybody, in either case casting the blame on Christ for sending out apostles who were either poorly educated or rather dishonest.

*Proponunt ergo ad suggillandam ignorantiam aliquam apostolorum quod Petrus et qui cum eo reprehensi sunt a Paulo. Adeo, inquit, aliquid eis defuit, ut ex hoc etiam illud struant potuisse postea plenioram scientiam superuenire, qualis obuenerit Paulo reprehendenti antecessores.*⁷¹

To scoff at some ignorance of the apostles they propose therefore that Peter and his companions were rebuked by Paul. Thus, they say, something was lacking in them, so as to fabricate from this the idea that afterwards they would be able to arrive at a fuller knowledge, such as came to Paul when he rebuked his predecessors.

*Nam et ipsum Petrum ceterosque, columnas apostolatus, a Paulo reprehensos opponunt, quod non recto pede incederent ad euangelii ueritatem, ab illo certe Paulo, qui adhuc in gratia rudis, trepidans denique, ne in uacuum currisset aut curreret, tunc primum cum antecessoribus apostolis conferebat.*⁷²

68 *Praescr.* 23.1; 23.5; 24.2. In general, see also Wechsler (1991).

69 *Adv. Marc.* 1.20; 4.2.5–3.5; 5.3.1–7.

70 *Praescr.* 22.

71 *Praescr.* 23.

72 *Adv. Marc.* 1.20; see also 4.2.4–3.5; 5.3.1–7. In 4.2.4 Tertullian writes: *Nam ex his commentatoribus, quos habemus, Lucam uidetur Marcion elegisse, quem caederet. Porro Lucas non apostolus, sed apostolicus, non magister, sed discipulus, utique magistro minor, certe tanto posterior, quanto posterioris apostoli sectator, Pauli sine dubio, ut et si sub ipsius Pauli*

For they respond that Peter himself and others, pillars of apostleship, were rebuked by Paul for not walking uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, by that *very* Paul, who still unformed in grace, in short, in fear of having run or running in vain, was then meeting for the first time with the apostles who preceded him.

For his part, Tertullian tries to show that there was no real conflict between the two apostles and gives a full exegetical survey of Paul's texts with additional references to the book of *Acts*, which – as he claims – his opponents view as a forgery. Tertullian also brings up the idea of antiquity and seniority, arguing that Peter and others were earlier than Paul and that Paul is a latecomer.⁷³ He used the same argument of antiquity in another debate about the authority of the gospels, arguing that Marcion selected and emended the *Gospel of Luke* as his preferred gospel.⁷⁴ In this discussion, Tertullian portrays Luke as a double latecomer, arguing that he was not even an apostle but an apostolic man (*non apostolus sed apostolicus*), not a master but a pupil (*non magister sed discipulus*), and inferior to and later than his master – the master being Paul, who in turn was himself later than others. Thus, this whole discussion centers around who was first as a way to express who was more authentic and/or closer to the truth. As the discussion plays out (and, of course, we only have Tertullian's side of it),⁷⁵ Tertullian vigorously denies that Paul is superior to Peter as his opponents had argued. It is interesting to see how Tertullian firmly defends the position of Peter but without degrading Paul, who is obviously the hero of the opposite party – elsewhere Tertullian had called Paul *haereticorum apostolus*.⁷⁶

As appears from the first volume of *Biblia Patristica*, Tertullian is the first Christian writer to seriously engage in this discussion and scrutinize the

nomine euangelium Marcion intulisset, non sufficeret ad fidem singularitas instrumenti destituta patrocinio antecessorum. For from these interpreters whom we have, Marcion seems to have chosen Luke as the one to chop up. Now Luke was not an apostle but an *apostolic man*, not a master but a *pupil*, in any case less than his master, certainly so much later, as he was a follower of a later apostle, without doubt Paul, so that even if he (Marcion) had presented his gospel under the name of Paul himself, the single document lacking the protection of predecessors would not have been sufficient for faith.

73 Centuries later we still can hear the reverberations of this in Augustine's sermons: *Beatus Petrus primus apostolorum, beatus Paulus nouissimus apostolorum*. See also Van den Hoek and Herrmann (2013) 319.

74 For the argument of *praescriptio novitatis*, see Lieu (2015) 62.

75 For the various presentations of Marcion in Early Christianity, see Lieu (2015).

76 *Adv. Marc.* 3.5; see also Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 4.41.4; and Cooper (2013) 224–46.

passage from *Galatians*, apparently driven by arguments of his opponents.⁷⁷ The passage does not seem to have been problematic for writers from the East. We also know that this text continues to be heavily debated in the West, well into post-Constantinian times, as the famous debate between Augustine and Jerome shows.⁷⁸

A similar debate goes with a gospel passage that Tertullian quotes in this context, *Mat.* 16.18–19:

and I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

As with the passage from *Galatians* this text does not have much resonance in the East at the time but has great significance in the West.

*Quis igitur integrae mentis credere potest aliquid eos ignorasse quos magistros dominus dedit, indiuiduos habens in comitatu in discipulatu in conuictu, quibus obscura quaeque seorsum disserebat, illis dicens datum esse cognoscere arcana quae populo intellegere non liceret? latuit aliquid Petrum, aedificandae ecclesiae petram dictum, claues regni caelorum consecutum et soluendi et alligandi in caelis et in terris potestatem?*⁷⁹

But who of a sound mind can believe that they whom the Lord gave as teachers were ignorant of anything, keeping them inseparably in his company, in his discipleship, in his community, to whom he used to explain privately whatever was unclear; telling them that it was given to them to get to know secrets that people were not allowed to understand. Was anything concealed from Peter, who was called the rock on which the church would be built, who obtained the keys of the kingdom of heaven and the power of loosing and binding in heaven and on earth?

Tertullian also quotes the Matthean passage in *De Pudicitia*, a treatise from his later period.⁸⁰ After he joined the movement of the New Prophecy and

77 In a different context, Christoph Marksches calls attention to the conflict of Peter and Paul as a 'central point of departure for all of Marcion's theological thinking'; Marksches (2015) 226.

78 See also Van den Hoek and Herrmann (2013) 317–21, and bibliography.

79 *Praescr.* 22.4; cf. *Monog.* 8.4.

80 *Pud.* 21.

openly cut ties with his former church, he changed his views considerably. In this treatise, he employs Matthew's words but this time not against heretical opponents but against the authority of the church and the bishop – it is not certain whether this was the bishop of Rome or more locally of Carthage. At stake are matters of penance and chastity. Tertullian questions the authority of the church to forgive people for sexual misconduct, maintaining that adultery and fornication have their place of “honor” between idolatry and homicide – “honor” is used sarcastically, and the whole treatise is filled with bitter sarcasm and harsh ridicule:

De tua nunc sententia quaero, unde hoc ius ecclesiae usurpes. Si quia dixerit Petro dominus: super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam, tibi dedi claves regni caelestis, uel: quaecumque alligaueris uel solueris in terra, erunt alligata uel soluta in caelis, idcirco praesumis et ad te deriuasse soluendi et alligandi potestatem, id est ad omnem ecclesiam Petri propinquam? Qualis es, euertens atque commutans manifestam domini intentionem personaliter hoc Petro conferentem? super te, inquit, aedificabo ecclesiam meam, et: dabo tibi claves, non ecclesiae, et: quaecumque solueris uel alligaueris, non quae soluerint uel alligauerint.⁸¹

From your point of view, I now ask, why do you usurp this “right” of the church? If it is because the Lord has said to Peter, ‘Upon this rock I will build my church, to you I have given the keys of the kingdom of heaven,’ or ‘whatever you shall bind or loose on earth, shall be bound and loosed in heaven,’ is it for that reason that you presume that the power to loose and tie has transferred to you, that is to every church akin to Peter. What kind of person are you that you subvert and totally change the clear intention of the Lord who bestowed this on Peter personally. ‘Upon you, he said, I will build my church,’ and ‘I will give the key to you,’ not to the church, and ‘whatever you shall loose or bind,’ not what they shall loose or bind.

Some generations later Tertullian's compatriot, Cyprian, will exploit the Matthean text heavily in favor of the position against which Tertullian so fiercely had fulminated. Cyprian asserted that by appointing Peter as the rock upon which the church would be built Christ established the office of the bishop. As successors of Peter, the bishops also became the guarantors of the

81 *Pud.* 21.9–10.

unity of the church.⁸² The authority that had been given to Peter first was then shared by all the apostles together, and for Cyprian this became a model for the episcopal college.⁸³ Space forbids to go further into the questions of ecclesiastical authority and the passage from Matthew. It is sufficient to note that Paul is nowhere to be seen in this discussion and that all the weight falls on Peter. Tertullian and Cyprian set great store by the Matthean text about Peter and the rock; they exploited it in divergent directions, but both link it to church and authority.⁸⁴

In Rome itself, however, there is only sketchy evidence of the text being employed at this time. The *Acts of Peter* had referred to it but not to the extent of the North Africans.⁸⁵ In his *Dialogue with Trypho* Justin Martyr quoted only the preceding doxological part:⁸⁶

καὶ γὰρ υἰὸν θεοῦ, Χριστόν, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ ἀποκάλυψιν ἐπιγνόντα αὐτὸν ἕνα τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ, Σίμωνα πρότερον καλούμενον, ἐπωνόμασε Πέτρον. καὶ υἰὸν θεοῦ γεγραμμένον αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἀπομνημονεύμασι τῶν ἀποστόλων αὐτοῦ ἔχοντες καὶ υἰὸν αὐτὸν λέγοντες νενοήκαμεν ὄντα καὶ πρὸ πάντων ποιημάτων ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς δυνάμει αὐτοῦ καὶ βουλή προελθόντα ...⁸⁷

For he (Christ) named one of his disciples – previously called Simon – Peter; since he recognized him to be Christ, son of God, according to the revelation of his father: and since we have him recorded in the *memoirs*

82 As Patout Burns explains: ‘the local church consisted of people who were united with their bishop, who symbolized Peter upon whom the church was built’; see Burns and Jensen (2014) 384.

83 Patout Burns indicates that Cyprian understood Peter ‘not only as a figure of the local bishop but as a member of the college of bishops, which Christ had established in choosing the twelve and endowing them with the gift of the holy spirit’. Burns and Jensen (2014) 388.

84 For the role of the Matthean text in Tertullian, see also Farmer and Kereszty (1990) 80–1.

85 See *Acta Petri* 7 (Vouaux 276, 2). *Si enim me, quem in honore maximo habuit dominus*. Also Ps-Clem. *Hom.* 17, 19: πρὸς γὰρ στερεάν πέτραν ὄντα με, θεμέλιον ἐκακλησίας, ἐναντίος ἀνθέστηκάς μοι (For you now stand against me, who is a firm rock, the foundation of the Church).

86 *Math.* 16, 16–17: ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ Σίμων Πέτρος εἶπεν, Σὺ εἶ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος. ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Μακάριος εἶ, Σίμων Βαριωνᾶ, ὅτι σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα οὐκ ἀπεκάλυψέν σοι ἀλλ’ ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς (Simon Peter replied: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus replied, blessed are you, Simon Bar Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my father who is in heaven). For an extensive reflection on the meaning of the Matthean text, see Cullmann (2011) 164–242.

87 Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 100.4; in *Dial.* 106.3, in which Justin refers to Peter’s name change; see also Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 4.13.

of his apostles as the Son of God and we call him his Son, we have understood that he is and proceeds before all creatures from the father by his power and will, ...

Interestingly Justin gives full credit to his source here, not as the *Gospel of Matthew* but as *apomnemoneumata*: memoirs of the apostles.⁸⁸ As is well known, Justin never mentioned the apostle Paul, and the scholarly debate still goes on about whether or not he knew the letters of Paul.⁸⁹ If he did, then his silence is noticeable, though it is difficult to draw conclusions or make an argument from silence. If Justin did not know about Paul, it is hard to explain that people in his ambience such as Tatian did.⁹⁰ At this point we just draw a blank and only can speculate about the reasons.⁹¹

Conclusion

Working my way through these materials, it dawned on me that the image of Peter and Paul as a unity cannot easily be deconstructed based on the sources at hand. By-and-large and very early in the reception history, the two apostles come as a pair. We also saw this phenomenon in real historical and documentary terms in the mid-third century in the intercession graffiti on Via Appia. The intercessions are to Peter and Paul together but with Latin speakers tending to give precedence to Peter and Greek speakers favoring Paul. Eastern sources appear to have named Peter and Paul together in early bishops' lists (see Irenaeus and Dionysius) while Western sources would single out Peter (see Tertullian).

Textual sources also show that in the mid-second century struggles between various groups competing for dominance, there was an attempt to eliminate, or, at least, tone down the importance of Peter in favor of Paul. We can also discern a counter movement in the West, perhaps already in Justin Martyr's position, but this remains highly uncertain. Much more evident is the polemical

88 See also Markschies (2015) 233.

89 For a recent discussion of Justin Martyr and the use of Paul in connection with Marcion, see Lieu (2015) 418–21.

90 Eusebius remarks that Tatian 'dared to paraphrase some words of the apostle as though correcting the arrangement of the text' – τοῦ δ' ἀποστόλου φασὶ τολμήσαι τινὰς αὐτὸν μεταφράσαι φωνάς, ὡς ἐπιδιορθούμενον αὐτῶν τὴν τῆς φράσεως σύνταξιν (*HE* 4.29.6). See also Jerome, *Com. ad Titum, praef.: sed Tatianus, Encratitarum patriarches, qui et ipse nonnullas Pauli epistulas repudiavit, hanc uel maxime, hoc est ad Titum, Apostoli pronuntiantam credidit*, 'But Tatian, patriarch of the Ebionites, who also himself repudiated some letters of Paul, believed that especially this one, the one to Titus, should be declared of the apostle.'

91 See also Paul Foster's conclusions; Foster (2011) 124–25.

reaction of Tertullian, who opposed the idea of Paul's superiority and made vigorous attempts to rescue Peter and Peter's reputation *but ...* without losing Paul. It is important to realize that these anti-heretical debates equally wanted to preserve the Pauline legacy but not what they perceived as ultra-Pauline tendencies.⁹² I am fully aware that Tertullian's treatises are polemical, acerbic and one-sided, but those are the materials that we mostly have at our disposition.

Tertullian's interpretations of key texts from *Galatians* and the *Gospel of Matthew* are reflections of spirited debates; they are glimpses – brief and partial as they may be – into the defense of Peter's position in the West, while these texts do not attract much attention in the East at the time.⁹³ We saw a hermeneutical trail of the Matthean *logia*, already with a faint start in Justin Martyr and the *Acts of Peter*, and with a strong resonance in the works of Tertullian and Cyprian. For Tertullian, the figure of Peter emerges in both anti-heretical polemics and (after breaking ties with the church) in polemics with the church about the exercise of apostolic authority. For Cyprian, these texts no longer form a polemical argument; he developed them fully to defend the institutional church and its hierarchy – with special focus on the position of the bishop and the episcopal college. In this we see a clear elevation of the role of the apostle Peter.

Whether the tendency in the West and, particularly, in Rome to elevate one apostle over the other already existed *before* the last decades of the second century remains an interesting but unanswered question. The interval between the early second century sources, such as 1 *Clement* and the later with Justin Martyr, the *Acts of Peter* and Tertullian remains pretty much open for discussion, and, for lack of evidence, open for speculation, which I happily leave to others.

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92 See also Ferguson (2013) 33.

93 Patout Burns suggests that a text, such as *John* 21:18–19, may have had a similar function as the passages from *Galatians* and *Matthew* (personal communication).

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The Architectural Appropriation of the Apostle Peter by the Early Christian Popes

Kristina Friedrichs

In terms of Christian values and ideals in the early centuries CE, Peter is generally regarded as one of the most important apostles, and in particular for the urban community of Rome itself. Peter was used as an icon to convey an ideology to support political goals directly or indirectly. One means for achieving this is through art and architecture. This essay explores this phenomenon by addressing two central enquiries:

(i) What does the concept of architectural appropriation imply and how is it integrated in the process of anchoring innovation? How did this relationship develop between the 2nd and 6th centuries? (ii) Who are the protagonists of this development and what was their motive to use Peter as an anchor? This paper describes an approximate model of architectural appropriation deduced from the results obtained in addressing these enquiries.

There are several places in the city of Rome associated with Peter: First, of course, the supposed grave site of Peter on the Vatican hill; secondly, the place where Peter and Paul lived and where their skulls, according to legend, were kept during the time of persecution, under the present Basilica of San Sebastiano. In addition to these places, no other physical sites to revere Peter were established in and around Rome, except for San Pietro in Vincoli. This article, however, focuses exclusively on the Vatican and San Sebastiano, as there are many architectural activities to retrace.

Architectural appropriation in this context means the intentional use of architecture or architectural decoration in order to achieve particular political or societal goals. This observation is closely linked to the concept of anchoring innovation. In fact, architectural appropriation can be a kind of anchorage. The conceptual basis of anchoring was laid down by Sluiter in 2017; she stated that anchoring innovation is the successful implementation of something new to a defined social group by conveying that this innovation is based on something old and long known.¹ The same can be said of architectural appropriation: it

¹ 'Anchoring is the dynamic through which innovations are embedded in and attached to what is (perceived as) older, traditional, or known. "Anchors" are the concrete phenomena

involves a process in which a well-established tradition is evoked, thereby enabling the target group to readily accept and support a political situation.² In both cases, however, there exists the risk that the innovation may not find approval by the target group if the historical construct is lacking in acceptance.

There are, however, differences between these two concepts. While anchoring can be controlled both consciously and unconsciously,³ architectural appropriation is always an active process, in which the protagonists are clearly identifiable. Installing a new anchor can even occur spontaneously, whereas in the case of appropriation, this anchor must be concretized subsequent to its introduction. This allows us to draw conclusions regarding the introduction and genesis of an anchor. In this case, the apostle Peter serves as an anchor.

This paper describes a three-phase model that retraces the development of architectural appropriation in chronological order. The development begins with the first appearance of what is going to become the anchor later on; an accumulation of content follows, until a point is reached where it is recognized that this anchor can be implemented to achieve contemporary political goals. This paper deals primarily with the social and political motives in the early centuries CE in Rome, which places this work in the category of metalevel discourse. Archaeological findings and written evidence would be required to substantiate or invalidate the premises described herein. This paper does not examine the dates and attributions, which have been discussed extensively and sometimes controversially elsewhere in published research. The reader, however, is referred to the corresponding literature where relevant.

1 Stage 1: Peter on the Rise

The first architectural monument dedicated to Peter dates back to the 2nd century, and thus to a time when the Christian Church, as an institution, had neither been consolidated nor established its organization internally. It is supposed that around the year 160 a community leader from the ranks of the local clergy was elected.⁴ Nevertheless, the process of differentiation of the church hierarchy was not yet complete. Until the time of the Constantinian shift, it

or concepts that are perceived or experienced as the stable basis for innovation': Sluiter (2017) 11.

2 Assmann (1999) 63–5.

3 Sluiter (2017) 1.

4 Ignatius of Antioch *Smyrn.* 8.1f. Some authors argue in favor of a later dating in the last decades of the second century: see Zwierlein (2009) 183–215 and Handl (2016).

can be assumed that construction activities remained limited and concentrated on sepulchral architecture.

In the second half of the 2nd century, probably after 160, the well-known *aedicula* was erected on the supposed tomb of Peter on the Vatican hill. It consisted of a niche that was embedded within existing structures and limited to two columns, one at each side.⁵ A written source bears testimony to the structure: Gaius, a member of the Roman community, wrote around the year 200: 'But I can show the trophies of the apostles. For if you will go to the Vatican or to the Ostian Way, you will find the trophies of those who laid the foundations of this church.'⁶ In this context, the trophies serve as proof of the purity of Roman doctrine. No mention is made regarding the appearance of the place, but the term *tropaion* denotes a factual place associated with martyrdom or the tomb itself.

Considering the process of architectural appropriation and the extent to which an innovation has been anchored, two things are notable: First, it is neither known from written sources, nor from archaeological evidence who exactly the architect of this site was. On the one hand, the Christian community as an institution could be considered as the initiator of the construction project. On the other hand, wealthy private individuals are conceivable.⁷ The question to which extent this work was linked to the bishop has not been finally answered.⁸

Without naming the protagonist exactly, two things can be stated: firstly, a place was required to commemorate the apostle and founder of Rome's community, and to accommodate a powerful saint. Secondly, the establishment of a memorial in honour of an (outstanding) deceased person corresponds to the general values of the Roman society of that time. The veneration for Peter probably played a major role in this case.

The same can be said for the memorial on the Via Appia Antica, which was excavated below San Sebastiano. According to common belief, Peter and Paul resided here. Since the 1st century a cemetery existed here and was still in use

5 Apollonj Ghetti et al. (1951) 107–44 and *CBCR V* (1967) 177, 182–3. See also Arbeiter (1988), 30–1 for the various reconstructions.

6 Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* II.25.5. Arbeiter (1988) 18–9.

7 For the juridical situation concerning church property see Bowes (2008) 64.

8 While Guarducci (1967) 56 wanted to see the pope as an individual as the guardian of the tomb of Peter and justified this with the oral or personal tradition and the temporal proximity, Dassmann (1994) 52 proved that the monepiscopate is indeed detectable by 150 and thus a single person possibly could have decided on construction projects. However, it was not yet a monarchical episcopate, which again limited this idea. Cf. Kritzinger (2016) 24–43 and Schölgen (1986). Thümmel (1999) 96–8 also noted that communities in particular played a major role in remembering the dead.



FIGURE 12.1 Inscription in the *triclia* below S. Sebastiano ad catacumbas

into the 3rd century. Around 250–260 a place of worship was created, the *memoria apostolorum*, for both apostles.⁹ A roofed area was created in proximity to the older tombs, which served to commemorate the dead, thereby offering protection from the weather. More than 600 inscriptions dedicated to Peter and Paul bear witness to the great veneration that was given to the two apostles in this place (fig. 12.1).¹⁰ In acts of personal piety, the saints were called upon and asked for intercession.

Neither archaeological nor written sources are available that reveal who was responsible for the construction of the pergola. However, the inscriptions are evidence that this place developed into a place of worship for the laity without major external control. Architecturally, the structure corresponds to the well-known *triclia*, a place for funeral banquets,¹¹ but without any specially developed typology. The place of worship thus corresponded to the typical Roman tradition of honouring outstanding personalities of the past and thus conformed to already familiar patterns.

Few monuments belong to this very early phase of architectural appropriation of Peter. Especially important was the exceptional role of the saint

9 Arbeiter (1988) 49–50, Jastrzebowska (2002) 1145–7, *CBCR IV* (1970) 112–8.

10 See also the contribution by Van den Hoek to this volume.

11 Diefenbach (2007) 41–55 and 155–64.

as apostle and founder of the Roman community, who as a major saint could have been a strong personal advocate. It is not known to what extent the church as an institution became active as a protagonist in this development. Scholarship has so far not been able to reveal, by name, a single protagonist which enacted this appropriation process. Peter, not yet being an anchor, was therefore not an actor to install an innovation. Rather, it seems that already known traditions were more likely to have been used to anchor Peter's special role. Well-known burial traditions were therefore used to support the evolving trend.

2 Stage 2: Petrus Becomes an Anchor

After the Constantinian shift, major changes took place. An architectural appropriation in the narrower sense occurred as a result of a Christian architecture becoming possible. Nevertheless, it was mostly Emperor Constantine, members of the imperial family or the aristocracy who founded many new churches.¹² These new buildings either enabled the continuation of a cult at their construction site or the establishment of new traditions. The construction of the episcopal church at the Lateran falls into this period.¹³ At the same time, the institutionalization of the church progressed, both in terms of the differentiation of the clergy and the construction activities. The secular founders involved the clergy. This is documented towards the end of the 4th century.¹⁴ It is also known that the construction process was supervised by the clergy. For example, when Bishop Damasus erected the baptistry of Old St Peter's, he instructed the presbyter Mercurius to supervise the installation of the water channels.¹⁵ At this point, the question regarding the architectural appropriation of Peter becomes important: how complete was the level of architectural appropriation? Who were the protagonists of this development and what were their aims? Which innovation required an anchor?

12 Leeb (1992) 71–85.

13 For the Christian topography of Rome see Krautheimer (1983) 7–40. This opinion was limited by Brands (2003) 10–6 and Diefenbach (2007) 83–130.

14 The case best known is the letter of the emperors Valentinian, Theodosius and Arcadius addressed to the *praefectus urbi*, giving the instruction to consult the bishop: *Collectio Avellana* 3. Gelasius later regulated new constructions so that the bishop's approval always had to be obtained (*ep.* 33).

15 Ferrua (1942) no. 3. Further examples: Friedrichs (2015) 110–112.

A first example is the Basilica of San Sebastiano, which was built at the beginning of the 4th century above the place of worship for Peter and Paul, as a three-nave building with a semi-circular apse.¹⁶ The consecration to Saint Sebastian took place only in the 9th century. The Basilica Apostolorum took over the function of the former *memoria*, where the dead could be commemorated and the worship of apostles could take place on a larger scale.¹⁷ The construction therefore remained functional within the usual traditions, but possessed the capacity for larger events. The building was financed by the imperial family. Besides this well-known site for the two apostles, many other Roman saints were also provided with their own churches, among them Agnes, Marcellinus and Petrus as well as Laurentius.¹⁸ There was therefore no exclusive focus on the two apostles or Peter in particular.

On the contrary, however, the emperor had Peter's alleged grave built around 320 to 327 with a monumental basilica 213 meters long and 63 meters wide (fig. 12.2),¹⁹ which emphasised the significance of the apostle's tomb. Only the episcopal church at the Lateran could boast with similar dimensions. Not only was the sheer size of the church extraordinary, but also its use as a place of pilgrimage clearly dictated its architectural layout with four aisles, transept and atrium with a colonnade. Particularly striking to observe is how the grave and altar are architecturally combined. In other memorial churches such as S. Agnese and others, the church was always erected near the catacomb, but not directly above the tomb, as this would have disturbed both the holy peace of the dead and also Roman law.²⁰ That this solution was chosen for Peter's sepulchre demonstrated the particular importance that was associated with him. The church above Paul's sepulchre was also designed with a similar arrangement, but the Constantinian construction remained in much smaller dimensions, thereby emphasizing the importance of Peter in particular.

For Constantine various motives for this focus seems to have been crucial. Peter was one of the most important apostles. According to the interpretations of the Roman Church, Peter was even considered as the head of this circle. For the emperor, Peter was already suitable as an anchor for an innovation: When Constantine opted for the Christian religion, he chose Christ as his personal

16 *CBCR IV* (1970) 118–46, Jastrzebowska (2002) 1148–55.

17 La Rocca (2002) 1117–8.

18 *LP* 34.23–26. See *LTUR Sub 1* (2001) 33–6 for S. Agnese fuori le mura, *LTUR Sub 4* (2007) 19–25 for SS. Marcellino e Pietro, and *LTUR Sub 3* (2005) 203–11 for S. Lorenzo fuori le mura.

19 Brandenburg (2017) 48–52. *CBCR V* (1967) 165–286.

20 Diefenbach (2007) 162–3 and De Blaauw (2001) 973–80.

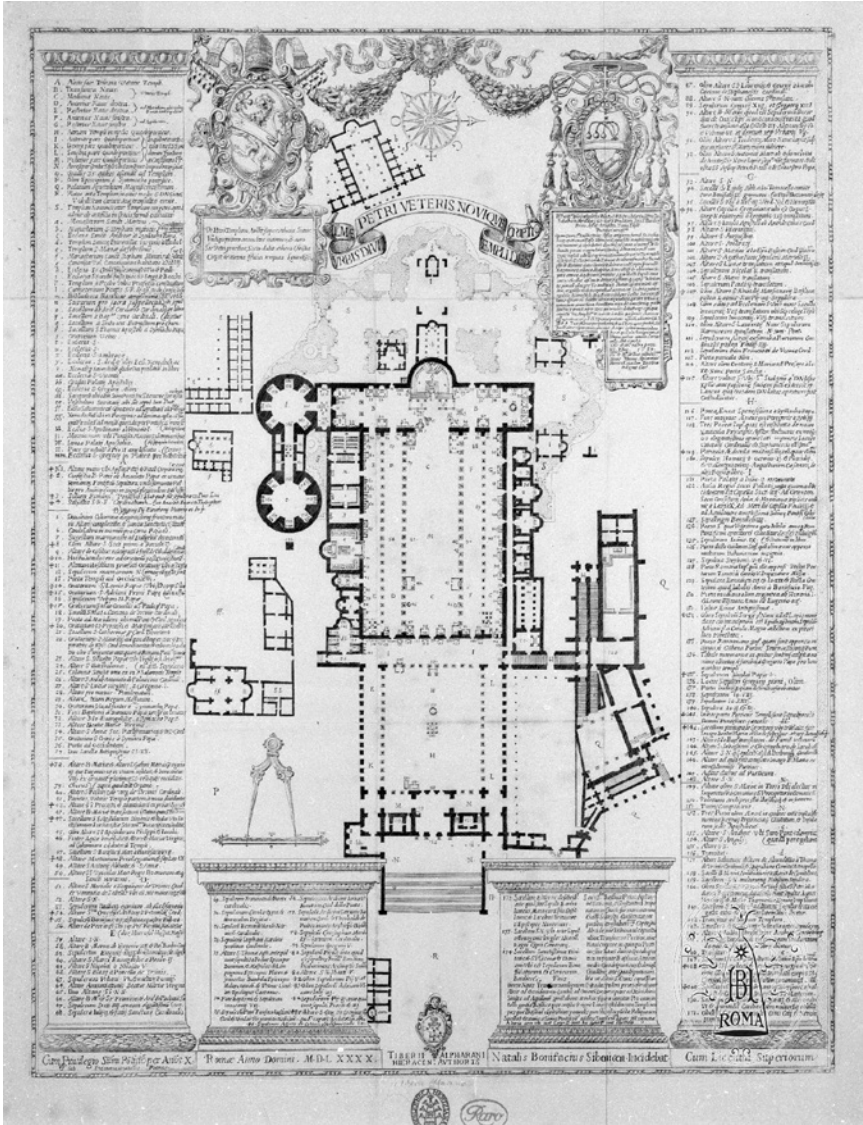


FIGURE 12.2 Ground plan of Old St Peter's. Tiberius Alphanus: *Almae urbis divi Petri veteris novique templi descriptio / Tiberii Alphanani Hieracen, auctoris. Natalis Bonifacius Sibenicen. Incedebat*, around 1590

comes and the highest saints as his personal advocates.²¹ He had to explain this shift to a particular God – the Christian one – to both Christians and non-Christians. He was able to demonstrate this to Christians through the construction of the churches and the consecration to certain saints, for example through St Peter's or the Lateran church dedicated to the Saviour. On the other hand, he took into account the traditions of the pagans (but not their values regarding Christianity) by following the typical patterns of personal piety, which could also be expressed through the activities of foundations. In his case, this took place at a high level in accordance with his rank. This was not devised with the objective of promoting the Roman bishop, who would later become important, but rather to accentuate the imperial founder himself. Thus, the church of Old St. Peter is an early example of architectural appropriation of Peter: The apostle was not only perceived as important as a possible anchor, but was also used for imperial self-expression and thus already succeeded as an anchor. Other places of representation and their saints, however, had the same function.

Half a century later, bishop Damasus (366–384) dictated a different direction. A schism overshadowed his inauguration and caused unrest in the community for years.²² He therefore had to resort to extraordinary measures to represent himself. His solution was to use the Roman saints as support. In the catacombs he carried out extensive constructions, all of which were adorned with praiseworthy inscriptions of the saints, including of himself.²³ One of the best known examples is that at the *memoria apostolorum*:

*Hic habitasse prius sanctos cognoscere debes,
nomina quisque Petri pariter Paulique requiris.
Discipulos oriens misit, quod sponte fatemur;
Sanguinis ob meritum Christumque per astra secuti
Aetherios petiere sinus regnaque piorum.
Roma suos potius meruit defendere cives.
Haec Damasus vestras referat nova sidera laudes.*²⁴

21 In Constantinople, a similar action was taken by the emperor when he developed the cult of Andrew, but of course with another background than in Rome, see Leeb (1992) 90–118.

22 Reutter (2009) 31–56.

23 Diefenbach (2007) 289–324 and Reutter (2009) 80–98.

24 Ferrua (1942) no. 20. 'Here the saints abided previously. You ought to know this, whoever you are, you who seek equally the names of Peter and Paul. The East sent the disciples, which we acknowledge freely. On account of the merit of their blood and having followed Christ through the stars, they have traveled to the bosom of heaven and the kingdom of

Besides the common *topoi* of Damasus, the above-mentioned inscription is particularly interesting, because it celebrates Peter and Paul as the new stars of Rome and thus as the successor of the Dioscuri. Nevertheless, it remained within the usual wording of the Damasian inscriptions.²⁵ Although Peter was worshiped as a special saint, the real anchor that would help support the bishop's acceptance was the entire group of Christian saints.

The construction of a baptistery at the Vatican was clearly more focused on Peter. When Damasus became active here, probably with the assistance of the noble lady Anastasia, not many possibilities for baptism existed in the city of Rome.²⁶ Even though the baptistery cannot clearly be located, the right arm of the transept, an annex to the transept or an independent building in the immediate vicinity come into question.²⁷ The *Gesta Liberii* report that Damasus set up the baptistery at the Vatican.²⁸ Furthermore, the *Peristephanon Liber* of Prudentius yields a vague description that gives the impression of splashing water, reflecting mosaics and a marble basin.²⁹ At this time, the Roman community was baptized at the Lateran, which implies that this baptistery at the Vatican should have been primarily intended for pilgrims, who wanted to be baptized at this particular site. Here too, Damasus had an inscription attached, praising Peter as a saint and presenting himself as the founder. The inscription remained within the usual parameters mentioned above.³⁰ The architecture was primarily of a practical nature, so that although an architectural appropriation took place, this only partially used Peter as an anchor in order to politically stabilize the pontificate of Damasus. On the one hand, this was probably due to the fact that other protagonists, such as the imperial family and the Roman aristocracy, were also very active in the Vatican during this time.³¹ On the other hand, Damasus did not especially need to emphasise Peter, because the sheer mass of saints used for this was a much more effective method to achieve episcopal representation.

In the 4th, but especially in the 5th century, the theological development of a doctrine of Peter accelerated. The emphasis on Paul, on the other hand,

the righteous. Rome capably deserved to watch over its own citizens. Damasus records these things for your praise.' Translation by Eastman (2011) 101.

25 Ferrua (1942) 144 and Reutter (2009) 150.

26 Bruderer Eichberg (2002).

27 See Schumacher/Barth (1986), Smith (1988), Alchermes (1995) as well as Brandenburg 2017, 24. Cf. also 6, Brandenburg (2003), Trinci Cecchelli (1983) 182–87.

28 The *Gesta* (PL 8.1388) only date into the 6th century and thus their reliability is limited.

29 *Perist.* 12.33–44. As Brandenburg (2003) suggested, those lines could also refer to a *cantharos* in the atrium of the basilica.

30 Ferrua (1942) no. 3 and 4.

31 Videbech (2017) 1–3.

increased in the last decades of the 4th century.³² The theological discourse emphasized the extraordinary fact that the Roman community had been established not by one, but by two apostles, thus exalting the bishop seat out of the others.³³ In architecture, this was expressed by constructing a monumental replacement of the church on Via Ostiense, which was built by the Roman emperors. In this context, Paul was actively developed as an anchor in a relatively short time. Even though the project was led by the emperors and only subordinately by the bishop, who was a kind of “first consultant”,³⁴ the coordinated construction project should be useful for the latter.

Peter, nevertheless, remained the mainstay of Roman discourse, especially in theological matters. During the pontificate of Leo I, the focus was redirected towards Peter, who was emphasized not only as the founder of the Roman community, but as the highest of the apostles, deputy of Christ on earth and the beginning of Roman episcopal succession.³⁵ Ideally, these conceptual constructs should have an impact on the prevailing political situation. Within this context, it becomes apparent that Peter is explicitly used as a stabilizing anchor to justify the growing demand of power by the Roman bishop. When one considers this development, the question arises whether the architectural appropriation by the bishop reached a new dimension.

It is possible to draw conclusions from the information in the *Liber Pontificalis* concerning the donations and foundations of the popes.³⁶ With regards to Leo I, four factors can be identified: First, he had to replace the liturgical objects that had been lost during the vandal invasion. Second, during his tenure, Leo had a church built on the Via Appia dedicated to *beato Cornelio episcopo et martyri*. Both were measures that belonged to the typical duties of a community leader. Third, he founded a new monastery near St Peter's and found his own final resting place near that of the apostle. The combination of a burial site and a monastery, in which intercession is provided for its founder, suggests

32 Grig (2004a) 203–30.

33 Friedrichs (2015) 68–73. Both apostles' death was even commemorated with a joint celebration on June 29th. Contemporary sources mention this event: Prudentius, *Perist.* 12; Ambrosiaster, *In Epistolam Beati Pauli ad Romanos* 2,7,8 in *PL* 17.45–184, *CSEL* 81.1.

34 A discussion about the authority and power of co-determination of the bishop can be found at Kritzinger (2016) 150–8. Lucherini (2016) 67 also estimated the financial resources of the Roman bishops in the 4th century as too low to become architecturally active on a large scale.

35 Leo, *ep.* 10 (*PL* 54.551–1218) used the Roman inheritance law, *Tituli ex corpore Ulpiani* 20.1. Maccarone (1991a) 261–74, Ullmann (1960). The political claim to power of the popes reached its peak at the end of the 5th century: Felix III., *ep.* 9 (*PL* 58.934–6), written by Gelasius. Gelasius, *ep.* 8 (*PL* 59.13–140). Ullmann (1981).

36 *LP* I.238–41.

a significant personal connection with this chosen saint. Fourth, both the large basilicas, St Peter's and St Paul's, were renovated.

St Paul's was probably damaged by lightning. It is not possible to exactly ascertain the extent of the restoration, but it seems to concern mainly the central area of the nave.³⁷ The clerestory walls were adorned with extensive fresco cycles, which are dated by most scholars to the pontificate of Leo I.³⁸ In the following centuries, of course, these were repeatedly restored and altered, and were almost completely destroyed by a severe fire in 1823. The basis of investigation, therefore, is quite fragmentary. One the most interesting parts of the decoration includes the series of papal portraits that adorned the walls of the clerestory. All Roman bishops, including Leo I, were depicted in a uniform manner in a homogeneous series of ecclesiastical dignitaries (fig. 12.3).³⁹ This coincides with the idea of apostolic succession introduced by Leo, in which the following bishop was identical with his predecessor. Such a "sense of continuity" is a particular characteristic of "anchors".⁴⁰ In the case of secular rulers, this could be done through inheritance. For the Roman bishops this was achieved through the idea of succession. Thus, the cycle begins with Peter, followed the tradition of the written lists of bishops – a practice that was already in use for about three centuries.⁴¹ Thus, the clerestory walls in St Paul's emphasize the papal office that arose from Peter as the theological basis. This clearly demonstrates that Leo used Peter as an anchor, especially associating him with the concept of an established tradition, already embedded in the minds of the people. In this way, Leo was able to justify the extensive demand for power by the papal office. This was a case of a deliberate, as well as an intellectually mature appropriation of Peter by means of images in an architectural context. At about the same time, a major restoration was undertaken to St Peter's by Leo I.⁴² Lay people Marinianus and his wife Anastasia were involved in decorating the façade. Here too, the walls of the clerestory were painted with a cycle of papal portraits, analogues to St Paul's, which depict the Roman bishop uniformly in a row with Peter as the starting point of the succession. Again,

37 *CBCR V* (1967) 93–164, also Kessler (2004) and Brandenburg (2005) 124f. Cf. *ICUR* 2.4783; 2.4958.

38 Friedrichs (2015) 215–24, Andaloro (2006) 366–95, Pöpper (2004), Ladner (1941) and De Bruyne (1934). Gianandrea (2016), who prefers a Constantinian dating, spoke recently against dating to the 5th century. For the further history of the paintings and their iconography cf. Proverbio (2016).

39 *Cod. Barb. Lat.* 4407.

40 Sluiter (2017) 4.

41 For further reading about the bishop lists see Caspar (1926), Klauser (1974) and Maccarone (1991a).

42 *CBCR V* (1967) 165–286, Friedrichs (2015) 226–31 and Andaloro (2006) 416–8.

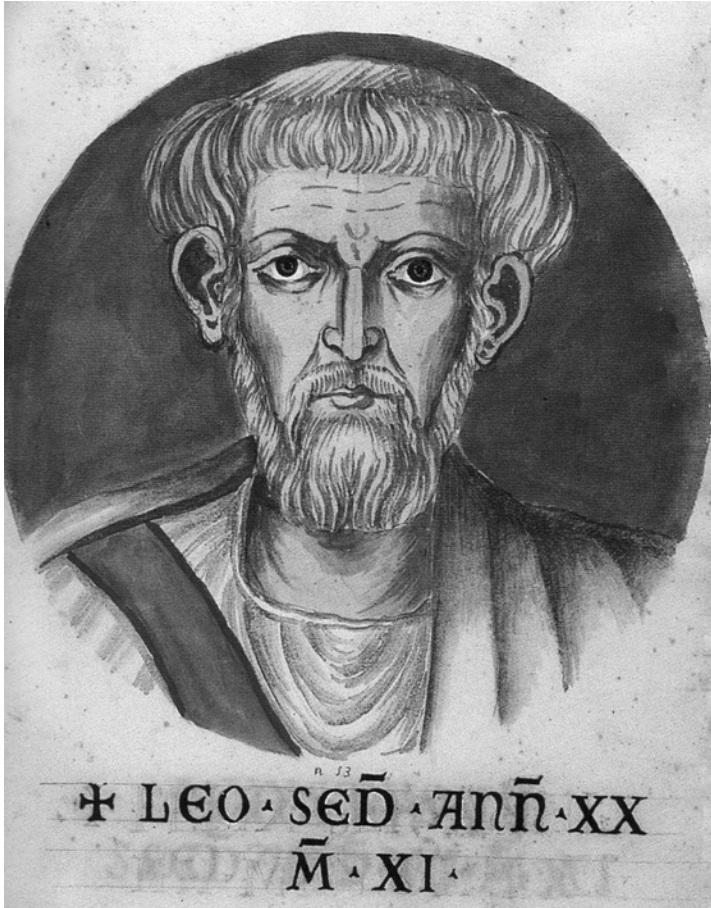


FIGURE 12.3 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. lat. 4407, Antonio Eclissi: *Effigie di settantotto Pontifici dipinti intorno alla basilica di San Paolo*, 1634, fol. 46

the focus was on the papal office, not on the individuals. Thus, in two of the most prominent places in Rome, Leo visualized his elaborate idea of so-called “Petrinology”, consciously acquiring Peter and using this as an anchor for his ideas as described above.

As indicated at the beginning, Peter was not only of theological and political importance as an anchor for Leo, but the pope also showed a great personal connection with the saint. For this reason, the bishop chose a place near the relics of the apostle, where he had his own burial site created. An additional monastery was founded in order to preserve the memory of its founder. Both

structural measures show, in contrast to the examples above, no architectural appropriation of Peter. Rather, these were privately motivated foundations that Leo used to ensure his own life after death. It was not a decision from the papal administration.⁴³

The two non-privately motivated foundations, on the other hand, are based on the significance of Peter within the theological ideas Leo had, whereby the written and pictorial-architectural concepts become congruent. The architectural appropriation by a holder of the papal office reached new heights under Leo: in this case, Peter was used as an indirect anchor to justify the superiority of the popes to other bishops. One could back up this special position via theology and via the (supposedly) grown tradition; architectural appropriation followed as a consequence of these lines of thought.

3 Stage 3: Representation through Peter

At the beginning of the 6th century, the idea of apostolic succession and the political consequences derived from it were already well developed. In the first decade of this century, one case reveals that the apostle Peter could be used as an anchor for political purposes, regardless of the theological basis. This case involves bishop Symmachus, who used Peter's grave to stage himself as a true leader of the Roman community.

The background to this case involved the schism with Laurentius, which persisted for several years. In order to bring about a solution, the Roman community had to resort to including the secular offices. For a long time, Symmachus lived in exile from the city and was only recognized as the rightful bishop in 506.⁴⁴ Under these circumstances, he and his followers had to come to terms with the existence outside the city walls. Whatever architectural measures were taken, they had to be chosen in such a way as to create a good reputation for Symmachus.⁴⁵

Symmachus chose St Peter's as the place of his residence.⁴⁶ From the *Liber Pontificalis* it is known that he took several measures to adapt the place to his needs for the residential and administrative functions. He donated a church

43 The statement in the *Liber Pontificalis* that the early Roman bishops were buried close to Peter's grave may not be taken as a hard fact, but is a later projection from the sixth century, see Borgolte (1989) 15–21.

44 *LP* I.260–68; Wirbelauer (1993).

45 Cecchelli (2000) 111–28.

46 *LP* 53.6–12. Alchermes (1995) 15 calls St Peter's a 'proper papal showcase'.

dedicated to the apostle Andrew, which was housed in an existing 4th-century building. Several altars were consecrated to saints whose relics were transferred from other places to Rome.⁴⁷ In the baptistery Symmachus integrated three altars, which were in obvious analogy to the Lateran baptistery consecrated to the Holy Cross, John the Baptist and John the Evangelist. Symmachus had no access to the main baptistery of the community at the Lateran during his exile years.⁴⁸ In addition, Symmachus donated a large number of liturgical objects for the Basilica of Peter. There he built a *quadriporticus* with mosaics and precious marble, stairways and a public bath. This was an additional monumentalization of the complex, which was also equipped with accommodation for the poor and – as a particularly outstanding project – the bishop's palace as well. All of these construction measures supported his self-portrayal as the legitimate bishop of the city. In addition, this observation is supported by two further construction projects for St Pancras⁴⁹ and St Martin of Tours,⁵⁰ who were known on the one hand as helpers and on the other hand as supporters of the poor. With all these actions, Symmachus presented himself as a philanthropist and a good community leader.

Most of his efforts, however, were put into St Peter's, which was thus transformed into a kind of second episcopal seat. Since the true seat was not accessible, Symmachus had to occupy the latter, emblematic place. On the basis of the station liturgy, as recorded in the *Capitulare Lectionum* of Würzburg, it is also possible to understand what significance the Vatican had achieved. Eight stations were celebrated in the Lateran, ten in Santa Maria Maggiore, but also eight stations in the Vatican.⁵¹ These observations emphasize that Symmachus purposely appropriated Peter to achieve a political goal. It is clear that not only was Peter fit as an anchor, but apparently he was considered to be so effective that most of Symmachus's personal representation was based on the apostle. Thus, this was a case of architectural appropriation, as was last encountered under Constantine. The architecture dedicated to the apostle was used to communicate a new, secondary situation and to enforce the bishop's innovation, namely to be recognized as legitimate, even if he did not reside at the Lateran.

47 Alchermes (1995) 9–10.

48 Brandenburg (2003) 67–8.

49 *LP* 53.8, *CBCR* III (1967) 153–74.

50 *LP* 53.9, *CBCR* III (1967) 87–124.

51 Dated around the middle of the 6th century. See Geertman (1987) and Friedrichs (2015) 135 as well as table 3,290–1. In Carolingian times, the Vatican was visited even 13 times.

4 Conclusion

It has been shown that the processes of anchoring innovation and architectural appropriation correlate in some way in the case of Peter. There appear to be several stages of appropriation linked to the acceptance and stability of the anchor.

In the first phase, the anchor is in development, which requires other anchors to enforce it as an acceptable innovation. Existing ideas and values support this process. In our example, Peter was already an outstanding figure as a saint, apostle and founder of the community of Rome, who was initially the object of personal devotion (“Volksfrömmigkeit”). No protagonist can yet be named who willingly used this anchor for his own innovations, but already prevailing trends developed within the context of their historical circumstances without an active agent.

In the second phase, the anchor, in this case Peter and his cult, experiences the formation of an intellectual foundation. The ideas behind the anchor stabilize – and the anchor itself as well. At the same time, an awareness develops that the anchor can be used to underpin other (own) ideas, which leads to the third phase.

At this stage, the anchor is fully established and is used to justify the introduction of an innovation in order to ensure its acceptance and thus to pursue own, more far-reaching goals. At the same time, architectural appropriation can be a means of communication. Accompanying iconographic programs or liturgical ceremonies serve an explanatory purpose and make this process acceptable to the target audience. The anchor itself becomes the medium of transfer.

It is evident that this process is not linear (fig. 12.4).⁵² Rather, it correlates with the historical circumstances, the protagonists involved and the innovations to be anchored. While architectural appropriation under the protagonist Constantine already experienced a first climax, it took much more time for the Roman bishops as protagonists to use this anchor. Examples of other anchors also emphasize the diversity of the development, be it Damasus with the martyrs of the city or Paul in the late 4th century as the second apostle of Rome. Numerous protagonists used Peter in various ways to achieve different goals. Conversely, the architectural appropriation is often evidence that an anchor was considered to work and was given a certain power of persuasion. Above all, the aforementioned Constantine and much later Symmachus are good

52 This is an observation also made by Gianandrea (2016) 103, who mainly looked at the founder's behavior in the Vatican in the fifth century.

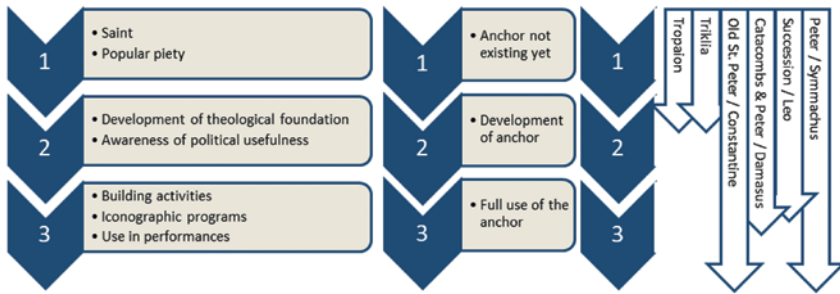


FIGURE 12.4 Idealized scheme of architectural appropriation

examples of the anchoring processes in which Peter has an important role and architecture functions as a medium through which these processes took place.

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The Cult of Peter and the Development of Martyr Cult in Rome. The Origins of the Presentation of Peter and Paul as Martyrs

Alan Thacker

This paper will examine the early development of the cult of St Peter as martyr in Rome and its relationship to martyr cult in general as it was elaborated in the city before the seventh century. In so doing it will review the ways in which the earliest texts relating to the cult illustrate how this evolving tradition was anchored in Rome through the attachment of various episodes in the life of Peter to specific sites within the city, sites often of long-standing and exceptional importance in Roman public life.

In its early phases, the Petrine cult is often intertwined with that of Paul, so where necessary they will be considered together. The biblical account of the two apostles focuses upon their pastoral and preaching activities, their missionary work and their teaching. Peter and Paul derive their status not from their deaths but from their commissioning as messengers, the one by Christ in his earthly life, the other after Christ's crucifixion on the road to Damascus. The earliest indications that both were thought to have died for their beliefs date from the late first century but give no details of the circumstances in which they met their end.¹ By the late second century, however, Tertullian could claim that both had been martyred in Rome, Peter crucified like Christ and Paul beheaded like John the Baptist. Early *acta* were presumably in existence by then and indeed seem to have been expressly mentioned by Tertullian.²

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- 1 For an affirmative review of the earliest (pre-200) evidence that Peter and Paul died in Rome see Bockmuehl (2010), esp. 114–132, where the author focuses upon the so-called *First Letter to Clement*, which he argues implies that by the end of the first century both apostles were believed to have been martyred in the city. See also Bockmuehl's contribution to this volume. For a more sceptical approach see Moreland (2016), esp. 349–50, 357.
 - 2 Eastman (2015), esp. 390–401, provides the relevant early references to the apostolic martyrdoms. For a succinct summary of the complex early Petrine dossier see Lanéry (2008) 125–31. See also Van den Hoek's contribution to this volume.

1 The Earliest Texts

1.1 *The Acts of Peter*

The earliest known explicit and circumstantial presentation of the Roman martyrdom of either saint appears to have been the Greek, so called ‘Gnostic’, apocryphal *Acts of Peter*, probably composed between c. 175 and c. 225.³ The original text is now lost but it evidently included accounts of the saint’s combat with Simon Magus and his solitary martyrdom (unaccompanied by Paul) in Rome. The final section of a shortened version of these acts survives in Greek, the *Martyrium Petri*,⁴ and the whole text in several renderings, including the Latin Vercelli Acts, offering accounts of the apostle’s earlier miracles and preaching.⁵ The *Martyrium Petri* circulated independently and may have been regarded as a freestanding text.⁶ It tells of Peter’s final contest with Simon Magus and the sorcerer’s attempt, viewed by crowds upon the Via Sacra, to demonstrate his powers by flying which ended with his crashing to the ground and subsequent death. Thereafter Peter causes outrage by preaching chastity to the wives of eminent men in Rome, including the prefect, Agrippa, who is urged to arrest him and kill him. Peter is warned by his followers to leave Rome but when fleeing the city he encounters the risen Lord and asks him where he is going. Christ replies that he is going to Rome to be crucified a second time and Peter interprets this as a prophecy of his own forthcoming fate. Peter returns to Rome, is arrested, and Agrippa orders his crucifixion. Peter is taken to the place of execution and preaches beside the cross before being crucified upside down at his own request. He preaches further on the cross and then dies. He is embalmed and buried in a stone sarcophagus by his follower Marcellus. Afterwards, he appears to Marcellus in a vision. This strengthens Marcellus until the arrival of Paul in Rome. The *Martyrium* ends with Nero, who had wished to punish Peter even more severely, being frightened by a threatening vision and thereafter leaving Peter’s followers alone.

Apart from the reference to the Via Sacra the text shows little knowledge of Rome, and does not mention the site of the martyrdom or of the tomb. It does however provide the framework for more elaborate and Rome-centred versions of the death of Peter and is an indication that by then to achieve the

3 Eastman (2015) 1–25; Lanéry (2008) 126.

4 *BHG* nos 1483–85.

5 *BHL* no. 6656; Erbetta (1975–81), II, 142–68.

6 Eastman (2015) 1–3.

highest status among the Christian dead it was already necessary to have died for the faith.⁷

1.2 *The Acts of Paul*

The Greek text of the martyrdom of Paul is almost certainly early, perhaps dating back to the second century. It shows no knowledge of Roman topography and is focused solely upon Paul and his solitary martyrdom.⁸ A Latin revision of this text, attributed to Linus, was in existence by the fifth or early sixth century. While it includes a resurrection miracle and an account of Paul's teaching after being sentenced, the telling of the actual martyrdom is brief. After his decapitation Paul presents himself to Nero in a threatening vision; in conclusion the resurrected Paul, like Christ, appears at dawn to his former guards at his unlocated tomb.⁹

1.3 *The 'Catholic' Tradition*

The texts discussed above are focused on one or other of the apostles, each depicted as martyred alone. But from an early date, at least the third century, there was also another, the so-called 'catholic', tradition, in which the apostles are united in a common martyrdom in Rome. That, as we shall see, in turn gave place to a different tradition within the corpus of Roman texts.¹⁰

2 **The Development of the Petrine and Pauline Cults in Rome: the Evidence of Later *Acta***

2.1 *Pseudo-Linus' Acts of Peter and the Passio SS Processi et Martiniani*

Another recension of the apocryphal Greek *Acts of Peter*, diverging in several respects from the version transmitted by the Vercelli Acts, was the parent of two texts. One, Pseudo-Hegesippus, dates from the late fourth-century and, although offering a couple of perfunctory references to Paul, focuses almost exclusively upon Peter. It records the combat with Simon Magus, in particular, the competition over the resurrection of an imperial relative, and the martyrdom of the apostle.¹¹ For our purposes the more significant text is the Latin adaptation of the Greek Acts ascribed to Pope Linus, which clearly represents

7 Cf. Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35–107?); Tertullian (c. 150–220); Origen (writing c. 235); Grigg (2004) 8–26.

8 *BHG* nos 1451–52; Eastman (2015) 121–37.

9 *BHL* no. 6570; Eastman (2015) 139–69.

10 Lanéry (2008) 126, 129–30; Lanéry (2010) 15–369, at 120–1.

11 *BHL*, nos 6646–6653; Ussurani (1932) III, 2 (pp. 183–7); Lanéry (2008) 127–30.

a later stage in the development of the Petrine legend.¹² Centred upon Peter and taking as its starting point the period after the combat with Simon Magus, Pseudo-Linus appears to have been written for a Roman audience; that is evident both from its strong emphasis on the pre-eminence of Rome and from certain topographical and personal details. It includes one of the earliest references – probably indeed as we shall see the earliest of all – to Peter's incarceration in the *custodia Mamertini*, the Mamertine prison on the Capitoline Hill known to the ancients as the Tullianum.¹³ It also mentions Peter's prison guards, naming them as Processus and Martinianus and gives the precise location of Peter's death. A particularly interesting episode is Peter's miraculous production of water for the baptism of the guards. Warning Peter that Agrippa is seeking to destroy him, Processus and Martinianus comment that 'after you baptized us as believers in this region of the Mamertine prison ... in a spring brought forth from the stone by prayers and the glorious sign of the cross, you went about as freely as you pleased.'¹⁴ They add he would be similarly free now were it not for Agrippa; so because he, Peter, liberated them from the chains of sin and of demons, he should now depart free from prison and being fettered with chains.¹⁵ As we shall see, the theme of Peter's baptismal miracle seems to make an early appearance in the iconography, and – rather later – the chains play a prominent part in the cult.

The date of this text has been much debated. References to certain doctrinal formulations make it unlikely that it was composed before the later fourth century, but the details about Peter's guards and his place of imprisonment suggest that it was later still. Pseudo-Linus's use of the term *custodia Mamertini*, hitherto unknown, coincides with, or slightly predates, its sudden appearance in a number of *passiones* none of which is earlier than the sixth century.¹⁶ Most notable among these is the *Passion of Processus and Martinianus*, which tells of their guardianship of both Peter and Paul and adds a further forty-seven prisoners to the number of those baptized in the Mamertinum.¹⁷ Again the date

12 *BHL* no. 6655; Eastman (2015) 27–65.

13 For the Tullianum-Mamertinum, see Steinby (1993–2000) I, 236–9; Fortini (2002).

14 *Nam postquam nos credentes in hac vicina Mamertini custodia, fonte precibus et ammirabili signo crucis de rupe producto, in sanctae trinitatis nomine baptizasti, licentiose quo liberat perrexisti et nemo tibi fuit molestus ...*: Eastman (2015) 40–1.

15 *nos [Processus et Martinianus] oramus te [Petrum] ... ut quia nos a peccatorum et daemonum vinculis absoluisti, a carcerali et compedum nexibus ... liber ... abscedas*: Eastman (2015) 40–3. A similar account appears in the Acts of Sts Processus and Martinianus (*BHL*, no. 6947); Franchi de' Cavalieri (1953) 48–9; below.

16 Verrando (1983) 419–21. For the early references to the Mamertinum see Franchi de' Cavalieri, (1953) esp. 15–21; Lanéry (2010) 221.

17 Franchi de' Cavalieri (1953) 47–9; Amore (1968) col 1139.

of the text is controversial, but – although this was once doubted – Verrando's careful analysis has shown conclusively that it post-dates Pseudo-Linus and it has been assigned to the period 514–50.¹⁸ Interestingly, while it presents both Peter and Paul as joint agents of the conversion of the guards and prisoners, it is Peter alone who elicits water from the rock, performs the baptisms and celebrates the initiates' first mass – evidence that the emphasis on Peter's primacy continued to be strong after Pseudo-Linus composed his *acta*.¹⁹

The names of the apostolic guards derive from the titulars of a church outside the walls on the Via Aurelia, known to have existed by the end of the fourth century.²⁰ There is, however, no evidence that they were then identified as having any such role. Given that their *passio* postdates the work of Pseudo-Linus, the duo's appropriation to the Petrine legend is first apparent in the latter. That text, it has been plausibly suggested, is best regarded as a product of the conflicts of the Laurentian schism (498–506).²¹ The anomalous emphasis on Peter alone, even though the association with Paul is an early and strongly Roman one, is perhaps explicable in terms of Pope Symmachus being based at the Vatican, while between 502 and 506 his rival Laurence controlled the Lateran and indeed most of the churches of Rome. Those churches presumably included St Paul's on the Via Ostiense, the likely centre of the production of a rival text similarly focused on a single apostle, the *Acts of Paul* again attributed to Pseudo-Linus.²² Moreover, the Laurentians probably also controlled the church of Sts Processus and Martinianus which lay on the Via Aurelia not far from the cult site of St Pancras, where Symmachus had built (or was to build) a basilica. Contemporary ecclesiastical politics could well have tempted Pseudo-Linus to interpret the earlier iconography of the apostle's imprisonment (discussed below) in such a way that the Laurentian saints were enrolled in a Petrine legend that buttressed Symmachus's party with its base at the Vatican.²³ That the story, as told by Pseudo-Linus and later elaborated by the *Passio* of the two saints, was indeed regarded as doubtful is perhaps suggested by the fact that even as late as the end of the sixth century Gregory the

18 Verrando (1983) 419–22, followed by Lanéry, who dismisses suggestions that the passage in Pseudo-Linus relating to the gaolers, Processus and Martinianus, was a later addition to an existing text, pointing out that there is no sign of any such interpolation in the manuscripts: Lanéry (2010) 216–23.

19 Franchi de' Cavalieri (1953) 48.

20 See the anonymous, fifth-century treatise *Praedestinatus*, PL 53, cols 529–672, at 616; Valentini and Zucchetti (1940–53) II, 151–2; Verrando (1983) 424.

21 Verrando (1983) 415–16, 422–26; Lanéry (2010) 218–19. For other hagiography produced at this time see Verrando (1982) esp. 106–9; idem (1981) esp. 108–12.

22 LP I, pp. xxviii, 43–46; Verrando (1983) 425.

23 Verrando (1983) 424–26; Leyser (2000) 304; Lanéry (2010) 218–19; LP no. 53.

Great could ignore it when preaching in their church on the vigil of their feast. While referring to the titulars as martyrs,²⁴ to the wonders performed by their relics, and to their miraculous appearance in the church *Gothorum tempore*, the pope makes no mention of their association with St Peter.²⁵ It seems likely that this was not because he was unaware of that aspect of the Petrine legend but rather because he regarded the story as a late fabrication.²⁶

In addition to the prison story Pseudo-Linus gives certain cultic details. In particular, he refers to the site of Peter's crucifixion as the place called the Naumachia *iuxta obeliscum Neronis in montem*. The term 'naumachia' which relates to a marine amphitheatre, designated two edifices across the Tiber; Pseudo-Linus appears to have been referring to the Naumachia Trajani which lay to the north of the Castel Sant'Angelo and which may have replaced a previous structure by Domitian on or near the same spot.²⁷ His use of the term in this context is an innovation, clearly anachronistic. Significantly the site of the martyrdom is not so named in the *Liber Pontificalis*, compiled perhaps some thirty years later.²⁸ The term 'naumachia', however, also appears in both the Latin and Greek accounts of the joint passion of the two apostles, discussed below.²⁹

Pseudo-Linus identifies the otherworldly figure who warned Nero to leave Christians alone as Peter himself and mentions other visionary appearances of the saint. But he follows the early *acta* in evincing no interest in a tomb cult and does not even mention the location of the tomb itself. It was, it seems, the martyrdom that was all important. In this respect, he provides a crucial

24 Though without actually naming them.

25 The sermon, given in the basilica of Sts Processus and Martinianus on 1 July, the vigil of the feast day of the two saints, gives no biographical details at all: Étaix *et al* (2005–8) no. XXXII, cap 6: *Ad sanctorum martyrum corpora consistimus, fratres mei. Numquid isti carnem suam in mortem darent, nisi eis certissime constitisset esse vitam pro qua mori debuissent? Et ecce qui ita crediderunt, miraculis coruscant. Ad extincta namque eorum corpora viventes aegri veniunt et sanantur, periuri veniunt et daemonio vexantur, daemoniaci veniunt et liberantur. Quomodo ergo vivunt illic ubi vivunt, si in tot miraculis vivunt hic ubi mortui sunt.* The miraculous appearance is cap. 7.

26 For Gregory's ambivalent attitude to Roman martyr cult and to the *gesta* see Leyser (2000) 289–307.

27 Valentini and Zucchetti (1940–53) I, 144, 182. They note that according to Suetonius the Vatican Naumachia was first constructed by Domitian next to the Tiber and then demolished to make way for the restoration of the Circus Maximus. Trajan reconstructed it on the same site or nearby and dedicated it in 109. Cf. Richardson (1992) 265–6; Steinby (1993–2000) III, 338–9 thinks it improbable that the Naumachia Domitiani corresponded to the Naumachia Trajani.

28 Verrando (1983) 421–22; LP nos 1, 22; below.

29 Eastman (2015) 262–305.

elucidation of the *Quo vadis* story. Presenting Christ's appearance to Peter as a vision, he notes that when Peter came to himself he understood the exchange as a reference to his own impending passion: 'The Lord was going to suffer in him – the Lord who suffers in the elect by the compassion of his mercy and the celebration of their glorification.'³⁰ In other words, the crucial condition for *glorificationis celebritas*, for the feast-day of a saint, was that it was preceded by martyrdom; the implication is that Peter by his passion had become not just a divinely commissioned leader and teacher of the faithful, he had been assimilated into, had become leader of, the glorious band of martyrs.

2.2 *The 'Catholic Tradition' and Pseudo-Marcellus*

Such sentiments may be compared with another development in which the passions of Peter and Paul are brought together. This, the so-called 'catholic' tradition, makes an early appearance in the texts in the *Passion of Nereus and Achilleus*, which may well date from the later fifth century.³¹ This 'epic *passio*', which strings together accounts of several saints, includes a letter purporting to have been sent to Nereus and Achilleus by Peter's disciple Marcellus in which he relates Peter's early conflict with Simon Magus and alludes to its resumption after a year in concert with Paul, by then in Rome. Marcellus is made to declare that 'I thought it superfluous to teach you what you (already) know, since St Linus wrote the full account of their martyrdom in Greek text for the eastern churches.'³² As Lanéry has pointed out, this cannot be a reference to a Greek antecedent of the Latin Pseudo-Linus, since that text is focused solely on Peter.³³ There are, however, closely related texts, in Latin (ascribed to the same Marcellus) and in Greek, in which Paul is associated with Peter in the final conflict with Simon Magus and in which the passions of the two apostles are brought together.³⁴ The texts are so similar that one must be a rendering of the other but there is uncertainty over which came first. Most recently it has been argued that, since the Greek version shows some evidence of transliteration from Latin, Pseudo-Marcellus probably represents the original.³⁵ Both were written for a Roman audience, at an uncertain date, Pseudo-Marcellus

30 *quod in eo Dominus esset passurus, qui patitur in electis misericordiae compassione et glorificationis celebritate*: Eastman (2015) 44–5.

31 Lanéry (2010) 113–38.

32 *Rescriptum Marcelli* (BHL, no. 6059), AA SS Maii III, 9–10, at 10: *superfluum habui vos docere quod nostis, cum Sanctus Linus Graeco sermone omnem textum passionis eorum ad Ecclesias orientales scripsit*. Translation: Lapidge (2017) 219.

33 Lanéry (2010) 120, n. 248.

34 BHL, nos 6657–9; BHG, nos 1490–1; Eastman (2015) 221–315; Lanéry (2008) 130–1.

35 Eastman (2015) 223.

certainly being in existence by the later sixth century, when it was used by the author traditionally identified as Pseudo-Abdias.³⁶ The Greek text interestingly offers a more elaborate account of the martyrdom of Paul and places it *ad aquas Salvias* rather than the traditional site on the Via Ostiensis.³⁷ Both texts exhibit a first-hand knowledge of the topography of Rome and conclude with an episode that stresses Rome's superior claim over the East to be the resting place and focus of cult of the two apostles. They present an image of apostolic 'harmony', while making it clear that the ultimate leadership of the Christians lay with Peter. That might suggest that they date from the later fifth century, though other later periods seem possible.

The Latin text begins with Paul being brought to Rome under guard and meeting Peter, while its Greek counterpart gives more preliminary details about Paul's adventures. Both present Peter and Paul as preaching harmoniously together and being jointly involved in the contest with Simon Magus, though Peter is given the leading role.³⁸ They relate that Simon conjures devils to assist him in flying until the demons' power is broken by Peter and the sorcerer crashes to the ground on the Via Sacra breaking into four pieces which turn into four stones and which 'remain to the present day to commemorate the apostolic victory'.³⁹

Outraged by the death of his friend, Nero orders that Peter and Paul be bound in chains and executed in the Naumachia, but Agrippa, the prefect entrusted with the task, intervenes to ensure that Paul suffers the more merciful fate of decapitation. That penalty is said to have taken place beside the Via Ostiense.⁴⁰ Peter, in accordance with Nero's original commands, is crucified in the Naumachia and his body buried 'under a terebinth tree next to the amphitheatre in the place that is called the Vatican'.⁴¹

The final episode in the text is an account of an attempt by some Greeks to steal the bodies of the two apostles. They are pursued and overcome by the people of Rome, who wrest the bodies from them and deposit the remains 'in the place which is called Catacumba, on the Appian road at the third

36 *BHL*, nos 6663–4; Eastman (2015) 67–101; Lanéry (2008) 131.

37 Eastman (2015) 306–7.

38 See the explicit affirmation that Peter was chosen first by the Lord in the Greek text: Eastman (2015) 300–1.

39 *qui sunt ad testimonium victoriae apostolicae usque in hodiernum diem*: Eastman (2015) 260–1. Cf. the Greek account, 304–5; see below pp. 269–70.

40 Eastman (2015) 264–5.

41 *sub terebinthum iuxta Naumachiam in locum qui appellatur Vaticanus*: Eastman (2015) 266–7. Cf. Greek text, 308–9.

milestone'.⁴² There they remain for a year and seven months until they are retrieved and taken ceremoniously to their respective final resting-places 'in the Vatican at (near) the Naumachia' and 'on the Ostian way at the second milestone',⁴³ where both authors conclude that many blessings were done through the prayers of the apostles.⁴⁴ While it has been argued that this episode could well reflect Roman defensiveness in relation to the prestige and power of the eastern patriarchates, Pseudo-Marcellus's intentions in general seem more local: to explain and weave stories around cult sites in Rome associated with the apostles. That extends not only to the three apostolic basilicas, but also to the relic stones on the Via Sacra. Their existence is confirmed by Gregory of Tours, who clearly knew the legend of the contest with Simon Magus but offered a rather different explanation for the stones' origin.⁴⁵ All this makes it the more interesting that neither Pseudo-Marcellus nor the Greek Acts make any reference to Peter's baptism of his guards. Pseudo-Marcellus presents Peter as referring to the *Quo vadis* story, but that is all. That perhaps suggests that these texts predate the ascription of apostolic associations to the Mamertinum or to the church of Processus and Martinianus.

One other near contemporary witness to these traditions is the earliest recension of the *Liber Pontificalis*, compiled c. 535,⁴⁶ the first entry of which is devoted to Peter, treated as bishop of Rome. The compiler relates that Peter held many debates with Simon Magus before the emperor Nero and that he was crowned with martyrdom along with Paul in the thirty-eighth year after Christ's passion. He adds that the apostle was buried on the Via Aurelia at the temple of Apollo, near where he had been crucified and Nero's palace on the Vatican.⁴⁷ That account sits rather uneasily with a story in the biography of Pope Cornelius (251–53) who is said to have been responsible for the removal of the bodies of Peter and Paul from the catacombs and to have transferred that of Peter to the Vatican; again, however, the site is identified as close to the place where the apostle had been crucified, at the temple of Apollo on the Mons Aureus at Nero's palace.⁴⁸ In a third reference, in the biography of Pope

42 *in loco qui dicitur Catacumba via Appia miliario tertio.*

43 *in Vaticano Naumachiae, in via Ostiense miliario secundo.*

44 Eastman (2015) 268–9. Cf. Greek text, 312–13.

45 Krusch (1885) 53–4 (*In Glor. Mart.*, cap. 27); below.

46 The earliest recension is lost, although its text can be reconstituted partially from epitomes; the existing (second) recension is no later than the 540s: Davies (1989), pp. ii–iii, vii–ix, xxxvii–xxxviii; Geertman (2009), 37–107.

47 LP no. 1 (I, pp. 51–3, 118). Nero's palace on the Vatican is imaginary, but the temple is now thought to be the Phrygianum, the sanctuary of Cybele at the Vatican: Duchesne, LP I, pp. 119–20, n. 13; Liverani (2006a, 2006b, 2008); Giordani (2001).

48 LP, no. 22 (I, pp. 66–7, 150).

Silvester (314–35), the compiler relates that the emperor Constantine built the basilica of St Peter over the tomb of the apostle, in this instance mentioning only the temple.⁴⁹ This manner of identifying the site of Peter's tomb appears to be unique to the *Liber Pontificalis*, and distinct from the near-contemporary accounts in Pseudo-Linus and Pseudo-Marcellus.⁵⁰ Like both these authors, however, the compiler of the *Liber Pontificalis* seems more interested in associating the apostolic body with the site of the martyrdom than in the tomb itself.

2.3 Conclusions

The *acta* traditions point to the apostles' martyrdoms as the foundation of their cult in Rome. The primary emphasis is on the sites where they suffered rather than the tombs in which they were buried. The city was sanctified as much by their activities within it, above all by the shedding of their blood there, as by possession of their bodies: the funerary *memoria* are expressly associated with the location of the martyrdoms. The continuing vitality of these traditions is shown by their various reworkings and elaborations in a succession of *acta*. The texts not only deploy the Petrine legend for specific politico-ecclesiastical purposes, they also illustrate its progressive embedding in Roman topography.

3 The Early Development of Martyr Cult in Rome

To provide a context for these writings it is necessary to turn back to the early development of martyr cult in Rome. The earliest surviving calendar of martyrial commemorations in and around Rome is the *Depositio martyrum*, which includes, beside Christmas and Peter's chair, twenty-four martyrial feast days, some with celebrations at more than one place. At the same time a similar calendar of episcopal depositions from Lucius (d. 254) down to Sylvester I (d. 335) was also compiled.⁵¹ While it seems more than probable that ecclesiastical authorities associated with Pope Mark (d. 336) were responsible for both these lists, they were clearly part of a wider and developing consciousness of Rome's status as a Christian city. In 354 both sets of *Depositiones*⁵² were included in the *Chronographia* which the celebrated calligrapher Filocalus compiled for a wealthy Roman patron called Valentinus, perhaps a member of the

49 LP, no. 33 (I, pp. 78–9, 176).

50 An interpolated version of Pseudo-Marcellus, dependent on the *Actus Silvestri* and LP, equates the temple of Apollo with the Vatican: Lipsius and Bonnet (1891), I, 176.

51 LP I, pp. 10–12.

52 The bishops updated to include Mark and Julius I (d. 352).

Symmachus family; they formed part of a wide range of comparable almanac-like information, which included the birthdays of the Caesars, the official civil calendar of Rome, lists of Roman consuls, prefects, popes, and the fourteen regions of the city, and a chronicle of Rome.⁵³ Valentinus was almost certainly a Christian and the *Chronographia* is evidence of the degree to which martyrial feast days were coming to be thought of as an element of Romanness, even if as yet Christianity was not fully integrated into the public life of Rome and its aristocracy.

In its most famous entry, on 29 June, the *Depositio martyrum* calendars the joint feast of Peter *in catacumbas* on the Via Appia and Paul on the Via Ostiensis. This was a specifically Roman commemoration; in the East the joint feast was celebrated from the fourth century on 28 December, as recorded by Gregory of Nyssa (d. c. 395) and in the Syriac calendar of 411.⁵⁴ The *Depositio* unequivocally places Peter and Paul among the martyrs, yoking them together as suffering death on the same day and thereby forming one among several martyrial doublets in the calendar. Although the significance of the cult site *ad catacumbas* is famously problematic, graffiti found there provide clear evidence that, as the *Depositio* asserts, it had been the scene of cultic activity since the later third century, including funerary feasts, *refrigeria*, at which the apostolic martyrs were evidently invoked. All this confirms the early and Roman origin of the ‘catholic’ tradition that the two apostles were martyred on the same day.⁵⁵

The *Depositio* places Peter and Paul jointly at the heart of emerging martyr cult in Rome. The crucial developments in this process, however, came later in the fourth century. Pope Damasus’ activities in promoting Rome’s martyrs both within the city and in the intramural cemeteries have been much discussed and can only be touched on briefly in this paper.⁵⁶ Here it is necessary simply to stress that the pope’s role needs to be considered in relation to the role of the Christian aristocracy in Rome. The presence of Christian grandees and high imperial officials – men such as Junius Bassus, Olybrius and Petronius Probus – was much felt at the great imperial basilicas, including St Peter’s, and they clearly set the tone for burial *ad sanctos* and the commemoration of the dead.⁵⁷ Damasus, operating with the co-operation of local patrons, focused attention on the martyrs themselves and their tombs. That seems to have involved

53 Salzman (1991).

54 Eastman, (2011) 23, n. 20.

55 For a recent discussion see Nieddu (2009). See also Van den Hoek’s contribution to this volume.

56 See most recently Trout (2015).

57 See McLynn (2012); Thacker (2013).

a good deal of imaginative recreation, since the famous epigraphic poems set up at the allegedly martyrial tombs reveal how little he had to go on. And, of course, it involved a very considerable expansion in the number of martyrs created. Some eleven of the surviving poems commemorate saints for the first time⁵⁸ and even extend to inscriptions celebrating large groups whose names and identities were unknown.⁵⁹ The fashion for martyrial doublets already apparent in the *Depositio*, was further developed in the feasts represented in the epigrams and it is perhaps worth pondering their significance, especially in relation to the presentation of Peter and Paul as founders of Christian Rome.⁶⁰

Damasus's contribution to the development of the cult of Peter and Paul has to be set in the context of this wider martyrial sponsorship. Although he published a poem celebrating Paul's biblical doings,⁶¹ Damasus does not appear to have set up any inscription at the tomb basilica on the Via Ostiensis. At St Peter's the texts by which the pope proclaimed his presence were not at the heart of the imperial basilica but related to a landscaping and canalization project on the Vatican and to a baptistery.⁶² Where Damasus did proclaim the martyrial cult was of course *ad catacumbas*, in the *basilica apostolorum*, on the Via Appia, where perhaps tellingly the two apostles were no longer believed to reside. In the famous epigraphic poem *Hic habitasse*, he asserted that it was on account of their blood (that is to say their martyrdom), that Peter and Paul reached the heavenly realms and it was that same blood (shed of course in Rome) that gave the city, though they were sent from the East, the right to claim them as citizens.⁶³ This is an explicit declaration that the apostles' martyrial status was absolutely essential to, indeed the foundation of, their Roman cult.⁶⁴ Clearly while this might be regarded as a way of pre-empting the primatial claims of the equally Petrine see of Antioch,⁶⁵ it was also part of current thought about martyrs in Rome. The same notion was expressed in other poems including the epigram relating to Saturninus, in the cemetery of Traso, which states that although he was an inhabitant of Carthage the

58 Trout (2015) *Elogia* 6, 7, 8, 15, 21, 28, 31, 42, 43, 44, 49.

59 Trout (2015) *Elogia* 42 (unknown martyrs), 43 (62 martyrs), both in the cemetery of Traso. For Damasus see also Noble's contribution to this volume.

60 Cf. Leo I's assertion of their superiority to Romulus and Remus, below.

61 Trout (2015) *Elogium* 1.

62 Trout (2015) *Elogia* 3–4; Thacker (2013) 145 and references therein.

63 Trout (2015) *Elogium* 20: *discipulos oriens misit, quod sponte fatemur;/ sanguinis ob meritum Christumque per astra secuti/ aetherios petiere sinus regnaque piorum:/ Roma suos potius meruit defendere cives./ haec Damasus referat vestras nova sidera laudes.*

64 For the importance of martyr cult to Damasus and his successors and especially of the twinning of Peter and Paul as martyred patrons of Rome see Sághy (2015).

65 As argued for example by Chadwick (1962).

shedding of his blood (in Rome) changed his homeland, his name and his race, and made him a Roman citizen.⁶⁶ That the emphasis on the martyrial status of Rome's apostles had imperial endorsement is evident in the remodelling of the Pauline basilica on the Via Ostiense begun by Theodosius I; the enormous new building was focused on the saint's tomb, enclosed in a *memoria* which proclaimed Paul's status as both martyr and apostle and probably functioned as a *mensa* for the pouring of libations as well as an altar.⁶⁷

Prudentius shows the impact of Damasus's enterprise especially clearly, envisaging Rome as the city of innumerable martyrs, who were its guardians and protectors. He was especially impressed by the sixty unknown martyrs buried under one massive stone on the Via Salaria, presumably those commemorated in Damasus's epigrams at the cemetery of Trason.⁶⁸ At the heart of this burgeoning cloud of witnesses sit Peter and Paul. In the *Peristephanon*, in his poem on St Lawrence, Prudentius calls on Christ to grant that Rome may become Christian and as sureties for this invokes the two princes of the apostles, who reign there. In the same poem he expressly presents Peter and Paul as the saviours of Rome; they have displaced Jupiter – Paul banishes him hence, the blood of Peter drives him out.⁶⁹ By implication they have become the presiding patrons of a refounded Rome.⁷⁰ In another poem celebrating the two apostles, which clearly reveals knowledge of their deaths as recorded in the early Greek *Acta*, Prudentius depicts their joint feast day as a major event in Rome, the festival of triumphal martyrdoms which he believed were separated by exactly one year. The refounding theme is further pursued in his rumination upon the Tiber, viewed as consecrated both by its washing of the marshlands soaked in martyrial blood and by the hallowing of both its banks through the sacred tombs on either side.⁷¹

Prudentius, then, confirms that Rome was regarded as having been refounded and protected through the blood of its unnumbered martyrs at the head of which stand Peter and Paul. Similar sentiments were expressed in the hymn attributed to Ambrose which refers to Rome as 'founded by such blood'⁷² and

66 Trout (2015) *Elogium* 46: *sanguine mutavit patriam nomenque genusque./ romanum civem sanctorum fecit origo.*

67 Fillipi (2009a) esp. 37–40); idem (2009b); Eastman (2011) 36–42. The two surviving inscribed lastra of the *memoria* read *Paolo apostolo mart(yri)*.

68 Prudentius, *Perist.* 2.530–2, 541–4; 11.13–6. Edition: Thompson (1949–1953); Trout (2015) *Elogium* 43 (see also *Elogium* 42); Thacker (2007) 37–8.

69 Prudentius, *Perist.* 2.457–72. Cf. Dijkstra's contribution to this volume, pp. 3–4.

70 Elsewhere Paul is termed *Salvator generis Romulei*: Prudentius, *c.Symm. praef.* 80.

71 Prudentius, *Perist.* 12.

72 Ambrose, hymn 12.23: *fundata tali sanguine*: Duval (1992) 525. The hymn seems to privilege Peter as founder.

by Paulinus of Nola, who asserted that the city had been saved, when Stilicho defeated invading Germans, by the presence of Paul and Peter, grandees – *proceres* – of Rome, along with all the city's other martyrs.⁷³ Although the divine commissioning of Peter and Paul as princes of the apostles is always recognized, it is the martyrial status that they share with Rome's other saints that underpins their guardianship.

In the mid fifth century this theme of Rome's unique claim to the apostles' especial patronage, by virtue of being the location of their martyrdom underpinned the wide-ranging primatial claims made by Leo I in his sermons. By then Peter was clearly coming to overshadow Paul in papal thought. Thus in a sermon preached on the anniversary of his consecration, Leo grounded his own authority on Peter's unceasing authority in his see which itself derived not only from Christ's commission but also from the powers of patronage which a martyr acquired through his suffering.⁷⁴ In another sermon preached on June 29 Leo urged the Romans that they had uniquely special reasons to make much of the apostles' feast:

Yet today's feast must be revered with a special celebration of its own for our city, beyond the respect it deserves from the rest of the world. Where the death of the leaders of the apostles has been covered with glory, there should be the chief place of joy on the day of their martyrdom.⁷⁵

73 Paul. Nol., *carmen* 21,27–34: *Pluribus haec etenim causa est curata patronis/ ut Romana salus et publica uita maneret;/ hic Petrus, hic Paulus proceres, hic martyres omnes/ quos simul innumeros magnae tenet ambitus Urbis/ quosque per innumeras diffuso limite gentes/ intra Romuleos ueneratur Ecclesia fines:/ sollicitas simul impenso duxere precatu/ excubias:* Dolvec (2015) 464; trans. Walsh (1975).

74 Sermon 5.4: *Nam si omnibus fere ubique martiribus pro susceptarum tollerantia passionum, hoc ad merita ipsorum manifestanda donatum est, ut opem periclitantibus ferre, morbos abigere, immundos spiritus pellere et innumeros possint curare langores; quis gloriae beati Petri tam imperitus erit aut tam inuidus aestimator, qui ullas Ecclesiae partes non ipsius sollicitudine regi, non ipsius ope credit augeri?* 'Nearly all the martyrs in every place have been granted – as a reward for enduring the sufferings they underwent and in order to make known their merits – the ability to help those in danger, to drive away sicknesses, to expel unclean spirits, and to cure infirmities without number. Who then will be so unacquainted with the glory of the blessed Peter or so begrudging in their estimation [of it] as to believe any segment of the Church not guided by his watchful concern or endowed with his help?': Chavasse (1973); trans. Freeland and Conway (1993) 32. Cf. Chadwick (1962).

75 Chavasse (1973), Sermon 82.1: *Verumtamen hodierna festiuitas, praeter illam reuerentiam quam toto terrarum orbe promeruit, speciali et propria nostrae urbis exsultatione ueneranda est, ut ubi praecipuorum apostolorum glorificatus est exitus, ibi in die martyrii eorum sit laetitiae principatus;* trans. Freeland and Conway (1993) 352.

He goes on, significantly, to invoke Peter as the founder (*inter alia*) of the church in Antioch, 'where the dignity of the name of Christian first arose' but then notes that it was Peter who thereafter 'bore the trophy of the cross of Christ in the Roman citadel', where by the divine plan he had been preceded by the honour of Christ's power and the glory of his suffering.⁷⁶ For Leo, as for Damasus, the location of that martyrdom was a decisive factor in Rome's primacy.

4 Early Iconographical Evidence Relating to the Apostolic Martyrdoms

How do the texts just considered relate to other forms of evidence for the cult of the apostle-martyrs in Rome? Early frescoes in the catacombs suggest that Peter and Paul begin to be distinguished from the rest of the twelve apostles in the mid-fourth century. Particularly interesting is a fresco in the vault of the *arcosolium* of Celerina in the cemetery of Praetextatus, which depicts a youthful Christ in a central medallion with on the right Paul and Peter and on the left Sixtus II (corresponding to Paul) and a now lost figure, probably Lawrence⁷⁷ or Timothy,⁷⁸ corresponding to Peter.⁷⁹ Outside the *arcosolium* is a figure labelled Liberius, presumably the mid fourth-century pope, who, it has been suggested, was paired on the other side of the entrance arch with another then popular Roman martyr, Hyppolytus.⁸⁰

76 Chavasse (1973) sermon 82.5 (version β): *Iam Antiochenam Ecclesiam ubi primum Christiani nominis dignitas est orta, fundaveras, ... tropaeum crucis Christi Romanis arcibus inferebas, quo te divinis praeordinationibus anteibant et honor potestatis, et gloria passionis*; trans. Freeland and Conway (1993) 355. Cf. sermon 83.1.

77 Peter and Paul appear with Lawrence and Sixtus in a gold glass from the catacombs: Morey (1959) no. 240 (Peter, Paul, Lawrence, Sixtus, Cyprian). Cf. no. 344 (Peter?, Paul, Lawrence, Timothy). The two apostles also feature in Prudentius' poem on Lawrence: *Perist.* 2.457–72.

78 Timothy is paired with Sixtus on three surviving gold glasses (Morey (1959) nos. 55, 74, 313) while Lawrence appears with Sixtus only twice, once in a glass on which Timothy also appears in a lower register (nos. 240 and 344). Timothy's connection with Sixtus is unknown.

79 The images are head first towards Christ with their feet pointing to the outer wall.

80 Dagens (1986) 327–81; for Hippolytus see Morey (1959) nos. 38 (fragment with Peter and Timothy), 240 (with Peter, Paul, Lawrence, Sixtus and Cyprian), 278 (with Sixtus), 344 (with Timothy). For another image with these saints see the fresco in catacomb of St Januarius at Naples. Cf. also a fresco dating from around 400 in the catacomb of Peter and Marcellinus. This depicts Christ enthroned, flanked by Peter on the right (from the standpoint of the viewer) and Paul on the left, with four smaller figures below, named as the martyrs with whom the catacomb was especially associated: (from viewer's left):

Such an iconographical programme presents Peter and Paul as essentially Roman figures keeping company with popular local martyrs – those whose images appear especially frequently on late fourth-century gold glass votives from the catacombs. A considerable number of these discs, which are presumed to have formed the bases of drinking vessels used in *refrigeria* in the catacombs, show one or more Roman martyrs.⁸¹

Peter and Paul are by far the most commonly represented, but if we look a little more closely quite a complex pattern emerges. The two apostles are most frequently shown facing each other, often accompanied by a wreath or crown to commemorate their joint victory over death through martyrdom.⁸² That image clearly points to their standing as the joint patrons of the city as a whole and even perhaps as the heirs or supplanters of earlier civic cult.⁸³ On a number of occasions they appear with other martyrs, sometimes together, sometimes separately. Paul several times occurs alone, but Peter never, except in a couple of scenes representing his striking of the rock.⁸⁴ Of the other Roman martyrs, the most often represented is Agnes, whose iconography may be compared with that of the apostles. Generally she appears alone, as an orant;⁸⁵ there are, however, two scenes of her flanked by Peter and Paul, one of them a striking image in which she towers over the two apostles.⁸⁶ Such evidence suggests that, while there was a commonly adopted official imagery

Gorgonius, Peter, Marcellinus, Tiburtius and Gordianus: Huskinson (1982) 10–11, citing Nestori (1975) no. 3 (p. 48).

81 See Morey (1959); Thomas (2015); Walker (2017).

82 E.g. Morey (1959) nos. 37, 50, 51, 53, 56, 60, 61, 63, 65, 66, 67, 286, 314. This imagery could affect other Roman saints, e.g. no. 74 (Sixtus and Timothy shown facing one another, *in concordia*, with a figure holding crowns over their heads).

83 The Romanness of the cult was emphasized by Leo I: *Isti sunt sancti patres tui verique pastores, qui te regnis caelestibus inserendam multo melius multoque felicius quam illi discordes usque ad parricidium gemini condiderunt, (version α), quam illi quorum qui tibi nomen dedit fraterna te caede foedavit (version β)*. ‘These selfsame men are your holy fathers and true shepherds, who built you up to be a part of the holy kingdom better by far and much more favourably than those twins quarrelling to the point of murder, than those of whom the one, who gave you your name, defiles you with the murder of his twin brother’: Chavasse (1973) sermon 82.1; trans. Freeland and Conway (1993) 353. A third version (Chavasse, γ) adds a further clause, *quam illi quorum prima studio moenium tuorum fundamenta locata sunt*: ‘than those by the zeal of whom the first foundations of your walls were established’.

84 Morey (1959) nos. 80–1; discussed below.

85 Morey (1959) nos. 82, 84, 85, 121, 124, 221, 226, 246, 248, 412, 425 (? fragment). In no. 265 she appears with Mary and in no 283 she is orant flanked by Christ and Lawrence.

86 Morey (1959) nos. 75, 83.

which depicted Peter and Paul as guarantors of Rome's privileged civic status, there might be more personal reactions to the dual cult, treating them primarily as local Roman martyrs and associating them with their peers. In the two Agnes discs, indeed, the imagery seems to reflect a votary wishing at the very least to underline Agnes' equality with the apostles as protector of the city.

The frescoed *arcosolia* and the gold glass votives represent the world of the affluent middle classes of late antique Rome. To an altogether grander world belong the Christian sarcophagi, on which Petrine imagery first emerges in the early fourth century.⁸⁷ The relevant iconography has been fully discussed elsewhere in this volume⁸⁸ and here I wish only briefly to comment on the scenes of Peter's arrest and of Peter striking the rock. Peter's arrest has generally been presumed to represent his committal to prison in Rome, before his martyrdom, a subject known from the earliest apocryphal literature. Those responsible for such imagery seem to have avoided depicting shameful death by crucifixion whereas they did not shy away from Paul's death by the sword, already known by the mid fourth century.⁸⁹ When it appears in 359, on the magnificent sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, together with the explicit depiction of the martyrdom of St Paul and counterbalancing the arrest and passion of Christ, the Petrine arrest is implicitly martyrial.⁹⁰ By the end of the century the inclusion in the scene of a soldier bearing a cross makes the meaning more explicit,⁹¹ and eventually this depiction of Peter on the *via crucis* developed into an image of Peter carrying the cross – as on the Pola casket, an ivory box probably used to contain relics and almost certainly made in Rome in the early fifth century.⁹² We can detect here, then, a development in the iconography. The earliest versions could just as well have been read as Peter's arrest in Jerusalem as related in *Acts*, where he is said to have been kept under military guard and on the occasion of his release to have been asleep between two soldiers.⁹³ The later representations, however, make it clear that Peter is on the road to martyrdom and hence have a specific Roman context.

87 Discussed by Huskinson (1982) 13–31. See also Van den Hoek's contribution to this volume and Dijkstra (2016).

88 See the contributions of Löx, for Peter's arrest, and Dresken-Weiland.

89 See, e.g., the sarcophagus found in the *confessio* of the Theodosian basilica, which also shows a balding Paul bound with his hands behind his back facing a Roman soldier. For the date see Rep. I no. 61: second third of the fourth century; Donati (2000) cat. no. 48 (pp. 126, 207–08): 340–60; Utro (2009a) 57–63; idem (2009c), 122–4: 340–50. Eastman assigns to it a later, Theodosian, date: Eastman (2011) 43–4.

90 Rep. I no. 680; Malbon (1990) esp. 47–9, 121–36.

91 Rep. I nos 189, 667; Huskinson (1982) 20, 25–6.

92 Huskinson (1982) 46. Cf. Cartlidge and Elliot (2001) 169.

93 Acts 12.1–8.

The scene of Peter striking the rock, which seems to have been in existence by the early fourth century, has been read as a reference to the imprisoned Peter's conversion of his gaolers, a story that appears in the texts only c. 500.⁹⁴ Again, the iconography is, to say the least, ambivalent.⁹⁵ It clearly evokes an episode in the life of Moses, recounted in both Exodus and Numbers, in which at the Lord's bidding Moses strikes a rock so that his rebellious people might drink.⁹⁶ The biblical story was represented in early frescoes in the catacombs – although there Moses generally appears without drinking companions – and it may also be depicted in a gold glass in the British Museum that shows the person striking the rock with a single kneeling figure, inscribed *Hilaris in Deo cum tuis pie zezes*: 'Joyfulness in God with you and yours; drink that you may live'.⁹⁷ On the other hand in another late fourth-century gold glass the solitary figure striking the rock is unambiguously identified as Peter, even though he is unaccompanied by drinkers.⁹⁸ One plausible way to view this scene in a Roman context is to read it as intended to evoke Peter as a new Moses, a leader who guides his people in Rome to a new life and refreshes them with the waters of life. Such an understanding of the scene would render it an appropriate companion to that of Peter embarking on his passion, leading to the death that rendered him definitively a citizen of Rome. It does not necessarily provide evidence that by the early fourth century the story of Peter converting his gaolers was already current.

The various media considered here suggest that the anchoring of Peter in a specifically Roman context was already very much under way in the fourth century but that we should be wary of reading the imagery too closely in the light of later texts. What however is clear is that both Peter and Paul were adopted as local saints and patrons by the well-to-do of Rome and that Peter had especial significance for Christian members of the senatorial aristocracy such as Junius Bassus, perhaps because he was viewed as leader of the apostles and of the church in Rome.⁹⁹ The emphasis in this early period is thus very much

94 See e.g. Huskinson (1982) 14–5, citing Lateran 212, Rep. I no. 41 (c. 325/350), from St Peter's; Lateran 161, Rep. I no. 6, Weizmann (1979) no. 374 (310–20), find-site unknown; Lateran 104, Rep. I no. 43 (c. 325/350), from S. Paolo fuori le mura. See also Dijkstra in this volume.

95 See for example the much-debated scenes on the Jonah sarcophagus, which probably predate the peace of the Church, where a figure striking a rock with three companions is associated with what appears to be an arrest: E. Dinkler, in Weizmann (1979), cat. no. 361; Lateran 119, Rep. I no. 35; Huskinson (1982) 13–4; Cascianelli (2017).

96 Exodus 17.1–7; Numbers 20.1–12.

97 Thomas (2015) no. 19.

98 As is another figure without any identification: Morey (1959) nos. 80–1.

99 Cf the imagery in another almost contemporaneous sarcophagus from St Peter's, Lateran 174, Rep. I no. 677. In this the centrepiece in the front is the *traditio legis*, with the arrest of

on martyrdom and leadership rather than on what was to become the pivotal scene of the delivery of the keys (Matt. 16.19), which occurs only rarely.¹⁰⁰

5 The Embedding of Peter and Paul in the Roman Landscape

5.1 *The Tomb Cult: the Imperial Basilicas*

One of the most striking architectural developments in the first half of the fourth century, after the peace of the Church is the group of imperial basilicas, forming large covered cemeteries, often circus-like in shape and associated with an imperial tomb.¹⁰¹ Cults promoted at those basilicas often achieved enduring leading status; such was the case with Agnes on the Via Nomentana, Lawrence on the Via Tiburtina, and, to a lesser degree, Marcellinus and Peter on the Via Labicana. In general, such martyrs came to eclipse figures like Sixtus II and Timothy, both of whom feature prominently on the gold glass and were clearly popular in the late fourth century but were not the primary saint of an imperial basilica. In some instances at least, we may ponder whether it was the cults that initiated the basilicas or whether imperial sponsorship through the basilicas effected a promotion of the cults.

Peter and Paul with their three locations at the Vatican, and on the Via Appia and the Via Ostiensis, formed part of this group, although the Pauline basilica was a distinctly lesser affair until the 390s, when its refoundation perhaps hastened the decline of the apostolic cult *ad catacumbas*.¹⁰² While Peter and Paul's importance in Biblical and patristic terms could not be questioned, it seems likely that imperial sponsorship mattered particularly in Rome. It is perhaps significant that imagery of Peter and Paul was clearly associated with martyr cults based in imperial basilicas, such as those of Agnes and Peter and Marcellinus.¹⁰³

5.2 *Later Cult Sites*

By the fifth century other intramural cult sites were clearly developing in the heart of the *abitato*. Of these the most important was the *basilica apostolorum* on the Oppidan hill, the refoundation of which in the 430s was again in part

Peter to the left and the sacrifice of Isaac left of that. The sides show the denial of Christ, with the cock on column and Peter striking the rock.

100 See LÖx and Weiland in this volume; Dijkstra (2018).

101 This paragraph is based on discussion in Thacker (2007) 23–30, and the references therein. See also Liverani (2012), 107–23 and Friedrich's contribution to this volume.

102 Thacker (2012) 383–7 and references therein.

103 See above.

at least an imperial enterprise. By the early sixth century and probably by the mid fifth, it had become a cult centre for Peter's chains, variously associated in the Petrine dossier with those which feature in the story of Peter's imprisonment in the *Acts* of the apostles and those which bound Peter during his imprisonment in Rome.¹⁰⁴ The latter receive careful reference in Pseudo-Linus,¹⁰⁵ and also feature prominently in the *passio* of Processus and Martinianus, which adds the additional detail that they fell off near a building known as the Septizodium on the Via Nova before Peter had reached the Appian gate and encountered the risen Christ.¹⁰⁶ It is also noteworthy that in Pseudo-Linus's *Acts of Paul*, the Pauline chains receive a pointed reference; perhaps by the time of the Laurentian schism they were housed in the basilica on the Via Ostiense.¹⁰⁷ The Petrine chains or at least a portion of them had already achieved a certain prominence in 419 in the famous inscription erected by Bishop Achilleus outside the walls of Spoleto, and it may be that they formed the earliest secondary relics sent to grand recipients such as the Prefect Rufinianus and, perhaps, Bishop Ambrose of Milan. Filings from the chains certainly had this function in the early sixth century. Damasus' inscription in the Vatican, ostentatiously proclaiming 'one see of Peter and one true baptism', and concluding that 'no chains hold (*nulla vincula tenent*) [one whom this water washes]' is perhaps alluding implicitly to Petrine legend and to the possession of these relics.¹⁰⁸

Another apostolic cult site emerges in the sixth century on the Via Sacra. Gregory of Tours, who clearly knew the legend of the final contest with Simon

104 Thacker (2012) 398–404; Thacker (2007a) 48–50. See also a letter anciently ascribed to Jerome, *De vinculis beati Petri*: PL 30, cols 226–31.

105 For a crucial allusion see above fn 15, but there are two other references: [*Nero*] *eum [Petrum] in custodia squalidissima compedibus uinciri iussit* ('Nero ordered Peter to be bound and fettered with shackles in the foulest prison'); *et dum pergeret, ceciderunt illi fasciamenta ex crure demolita a compede* ('and while he was going [away from prison] the bandages fell from his leg which had been damaged by the shackle'); Eastman (2015) 32–3, 42–3. Cf. the reference in Pseudo-Marcellus and its Greek counterpart to Nero's order that Peter and Paul be bound in chains: Eastman (2015) 262–3, 304–5. The Greek text also tells of Paul being bound in irons as he was taken to the place of his beheading: Eastman (2015) 306–7.

106 *Tunc beatissimus Petrus dum tibiam demolitam haberet de compede ferrei, cecidit ei fasciola ante Septemsonium in via nova* ('Then because Peter had a damaged shin-bone as a result of the iron shackles, his leg-bandage fell off near the Septizodium on the Via Nova'): Franchi de' Cavalieri (1953) 49; trans. Lapidge (2017) 386. For the Septizodium and the Via Nova, see Lapidge (2017) 386 fn. 17–18; Richardson (1992) 350, 417.

107 *inter quos et Paulus, consuetudinarias sibi pro Christo nomine gestans cathenas, ductus est vincitus* ('among these, Paul was brought and bound, bearing his usual chains for the sake of Christ'): Eastman (2015) 150–1.

108 Trout (2015) *Elogium* 4.

Magus, refers to relics relating to this episode: ‘still today at Rome there are two small indentations in the stone upon which the blessed apostles knelt and delivered their oration to the Lord against Simon Magus.’ They were clearly valued relics, for Gregory adds that rain water collected in the indentations effected cures,¹⁰⁹ and are presumably to be identified with the two flagstones allegedly from the Via Sacra and bearing the imprint of the apostles’ knees which are today in the church of Santa Maria Nova.¹¹⁰ Originally, they were probably housed in the new church dedicated by Paul I (757–67) to Peter and Paul on the Via Sacra where, according to his biographer in the *Liber Pontificalis*, ‘these blessed princes of the apostles knelt down when they poured out their prayers to our Redeemer; and on this spot even now their knee-prints can be distinguished on a very tough willow tree as a testimony to every subsequent generation to come.’¹¹¹ Paul I’s church, which was known until at least the end of eighth century, has disappeared, perhaps being replaced by S. Maria Nova founded by Leo IV (847–55) just under a century later. It is odd, however, that the relics as described in the *Liber Pontificalis* seem rather different from those mentioned by Gregory and still surviving today. At all events, the stories relating to them presumably reflect the circulation of material similar to that recorded by Pseudo-Marcellus and the Greek Acts in the sixth century if not earlier, though again there are discrepancies – the Roman texts state that the stones derived from the transformation of Simon Magus’s broken body and expressly mention only Paul as praying on his knees.¹¹²

It is also possible that the Mamertinum was emerging as a place of veneration at this time. Recent archaeological investigation suggests that by the seventh century it may well have been the site of cultic activity associated with St Peter.¹¹³ As we have seen, it was presented as the location of Peter’s baptism of his gaolers, first by Pseudo-Linus and then by the author of the *passio* of Processus and Martinianus, whose own cult site was clearly active in the sixth century.¹¹⁴ That *passio* elaborates the role of the *custodia Mamertini*, which it expressly associates with the Tarpeian Hill. Not only was it the prison of both Peter and Paul who together performed many miracles there, but it saw the

109 Krusch (1885) 53–4 (*In Glor. Mart.* cap. 27). For knowledge of the Petrine apocryphal acts in Gaul see the dog depicted on a fourth-century Gallic sarcophagus, illustrating an episode from the early conflicts with Simon Magus: Cartlidge and Elliot (2001) 167 and Dijkstra (2016) 368–9.

110 Webb (2001) 132.

111 LP no 95 (pp. 465, 466n.); trans. Davis (1992) 83.

112 Eastman (2015) 258–61; 300–5.

113 See Fortini (2002) 522–3.

114 Étaix *et al* (2005–8) no. XXXII, caps 6–7; above.

baptism of others besides the guards themselves.¹¹⁵ The continuing impact of the story is evident from the fact that by c. 800 there was another cult site associated with Peter's water miracle, the *Fons Petri*, identified as outside the walls. Its origin is unknown but it presumably represents a rival location.¹¹⁶

The elaboration of Petrine cult sites in Rome is reflected in the contents of some of the great relic collections assembled in the Latin West by the ninth century.¹¹⁷ An eighth-century label from Sens records a relic *de illo loco ubi s(anctu)s Petrus et s(anctu)s Paulus contra Simon mago orabant*, evidently a reference to the imprinted stones in the Forum.¹¹⁸ Another such label from Sens, dating from the eighth or ninth century and recording material *de petra ubi oravit s(anctu)s Petrus*, relates to the cult site at the Mamertinum or at least the stories connected with it.¹¹⁹ More mysterious is an early eighth-century label from S. Maurice d'Agaune, identifying a relic *de terra aecclisiae in qua sepultus (est) Petrus primo*. This clearly alludes to a site other than the Vatican *memoria* and perhaps reflects ambiguities evidenced in the not entirely consistent descriptions of the saint's first resting place in the sixth-century sources. It could relate to the graves (*sepulchra*) in the church *ad catacumbas* which were shown to seventh-century visitors as the temporary resting-place of the apostles; alternatively it may derive from a site inspired by Pseudo-Marcellus's account of Peter's initial burial place under a terebinth tree next to the Naumachia on the Vatican hill.¹²⁰ Clearly, however, whatever the provenance or authenticity of these relics, they surely reflect knowledge of diverse Petrine cult sites in Rome and the legends associated with them.

6 Final Conclusions

This paper has focused upon the Petrine cult in Rome, and in particular its embedding along with that of Paul, in the centuries after the peace of the Church as both the pre-eminent civic cult and as one of the city's local martyrial cults. The stress on Peter and Paul's joint role as chief protectors of their adopted

115 For text and discussion, see Franchi de' Cavalieri (1953), 47–9.

116 Valentini and Zucchetti (1940–53) II, 190; Steinby (1993–2000) II, 261.

117 I am most grateful to Julia Smith for drawing my attention to these relic labels and for supplying the references in the following paragraph, in advance of publication: Smith (forthcoming).

118 Bruckner and Marichal, XIX (1985), no. 682.lxxii, p. 55.

119 Bruckner and Marichal, XIX (1985), no. 682.lxxi, p. 55.

120 Bruckner and Marichal, I (1954), no. 36, pp. 38–9; Valentini and Zucchetti (1940–53), II, 85; Eastman (2015), 266–7.

city, already evident in the feast day of 29 June, reached its high point in the late fourth and early fifth century, and left an especial mark on the iconography of the sarcophagi and the gold glass. The imperial family in particular promoted the *concordia* of the apostles and showed a zealous devotion especially to Paul.¹²¹ The commemoration of the joint martyrdom was never entirely eclipsed but by the mid-fifth century it was accompanied in papal rhetoric by a growing emphasis on the primacy of Peter;¹²² that, of course is reflected in the later passion literature relating to the two apostles, except for the anomalous accounts of the separate martyrdoms, probably attributable to the Laurentian schism.

While it hardly needs saying that the official ecclesiastical hierarchy played a leading role in these developments, the cult's embedding among the senatorial aristocracy and the well-to-do also had other – imperial and local communal – roots. Most importantly, the basis of all this resided not so much in official teaching about divine apostolic commission or the powers to bind and loose but on the apocryphal martyrdoms. Although not recorded in any specifically Roman version until the fifth century, they are traceable in the fourth. Clearly variable and perhaps adapted to the site upon which they focused, the early stories which inspired the fourth-century imagery may well not have been exactly those recorded in the later Roman *Acta* and *Passiones*; like the imagery itself those stories clearly developed and were invested with new meanings as martyr cult itself developed in Rome. Nevertheless, it was those texts and traditions that underpinned the cult promoted in the city and by its citizens.

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121 Not only in the rebuilding of S. Paolo fuori le mura but in their sponsorship of the intramural *basilica apostolorum* on the Oppidan (later S. Pietro in Vincoli): Huskinson (1982) 82–3.

122 See e.g. Huskinson (1982) esp. 85–6, 92–5, 114–23.

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Anchoring the Rock: the Latin Liturgical Cult of Peter in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages

Els Rose

1 The Rock – the Tears: Monothematic Preferences in the Earliest Liturgical Prayers of the Apostle Peter

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’ And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus answered him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.’¹

The Gospel according to Matthew is the first written account that framed Peter as the foundation of the Church. The central role Peter played both in the circle of the disciples that accompanied Jesus as described in the Gospels, and in the mission of the apostles that started with Pentecost as depicted in the canonical *Acts of the Apostles*, is reflected by the representation and veneration of this figure, which crystallised already in the earliest centuries of Christianity and kept developing in later centuries.²

An overview of the development of the *liturgical* cult of the apostle, in the more confined sense of the feasts celebrated through the liturgical year with their prayers and chants, is less easily found. More than fifty years ago now, Joseph Szövérfy expressed his amazement about the lack of a comprehensive study of the liturgical cult of this core apostle and one of the most prominent

¹ Matth. 16.13–20 (NRSV).

² For early Christianity: Apollonj Ghetti (1969); Sotomayor (1962); *partim* Dijkstra (2016); Burnet (2014). For the medieval period: Lazzari & Valente Bacci (2001).

saints of the Latin Church.³ In the preceding decades, some studies appeared that eliminated this deficiency albeit only in part. Of these, Szövérfy himself provides a remarkably rich insight into the way the liturgy celebrated Peter, due to his selection of hymn material from a broad geographical and chronological scope. Moreover, even if Szövérfy's study is limited to the single liturgical "genre" of hymns, it has the benefit of dealing with all feasts that developed over the centuries, most importantly the *natale* of Peter's martyrdom on 29 June, originally shared with Paul,⁴ Peter's Chair on 22 February,⁵ and Peter's Chains on 1 August.⁶

A second liturgical study was published by Victor Saxer a few years after Szövérfy's monograph.⁷ In contrast to the latter, Saxer's study was limited not only to one feast day: 29 June, but also to one liturgical region, namely Rome and the liturgical evidence traditionally linked to that city. The *natale* of Peter (and Paul) on 29 June is the oldest liturgical feast and has its origin in Rome. It occurs on the *Depositio martyrum*, incorporated in the Roman Calendar of 354 and known as the oldest liturgical source of urban Rome.⁸

Saxer's study concerns the prayers for Mass used on 29 June and found in the so-called *Sacramentarium Veronense*, a collection of separate *libelli* containing one or more Masses for singular feast days, following the calendar from January to December. The single manuscript in which it is transmitted (Verona, Biblioteca capitulare LXXXV [80]) is dated to the sixth century while the material is generally seen as composed by Roman bishops from the fifth and sixth centuries.⁹ The book contains 28 entries for the *natale Petri et Pauli*.¹⁰ Saxer examined the prayers of all these masses and concluded that they concentrate mainly on the apostles' martyrdom and their role as leaders (*rectores*) and teachers (*doctores*) of the Church. Although the apostles' martyrdom is at the centre of attention, in line with the theme of the feast day, there is little room for narrative details on this motif, as we will see further below. The prayers are mainly based on scriptural sources. With regard to Peter specifically, the prayers draw from a selection of biblical accounts, mainly Matth. 16.16–9 (Peter

3 Szövérfy (1965) 117.

4 Auf der Maur (1994) 117.

5 Rose (2005) 236–44.

6 Auf der Maur (1994) 117.

7 Saxer (1969).

8 *Depositio martyrum*; ed. Lietzmann (1911) 3; see Salzmann (1990) 46–47; Auf der Maur (1994) 94 and 116; Rose, Introduction. In *Missale Gothicum*, ed. Rose (2005) 244–251, with references to earlier literature.

9 *Sacramentarium Veronense*, ed. Mohlberg (1994) lxxix–lxxxii. See also Vogel (1983) 38–46; Bernard (2008) 16.

10 *Sacramentarium Veronense*, ed. Mohlberg (1994) 37–51.

the rock receives the keys of heaven), Lk. 22.31–2 (Christ's promise to ask the Father for a firm faith), and John 21.15–7 (Christ commands his flocks to Peter).

Despite the problematic character of this collection when it comes to pinpointing its specific use,¹¹ we must observe the relevance of the *Veronense* for the study of the earliest liturgical celebration of Peter in the West, given the spread of the material in the book over all regions of Latin Christianity in the early Middle Ages. A close reading of the prayers for 29 June demonstrates that Saxer's conclusions are right. The prayer material for the summer feast of the apostles in this collection is based on canonical Scripture. Moreover, the choice of relevant biblical passages is such that Peter occurs in these prayers as powerful and heroic. Moments of triumph, like Matth. 16 (*Tu es Petrus*) and John 21 (*Pasce oves meas*) prevail over moments of crisis, like doubt on the waters (Matth. 14.30–1) and denial and tears (Matth. 26.75) – themes that do not occur at all in this collection. Peter is presented here as a hero of perseverance, granted the privilege to express his faith in Christ through a *gloriosa confessio* and entrusted with the keys of heaven and, thus, with the authority to forgive and reckon sins. Only two exceptions are found where the apostles, in particular Peter, are not presented as heroes only. In the fifth Mass, the *praefatio* (294) – the first part of the Eucharistic prayer, changing each Sunday and feast day and culminating in the chant *Sanctus* – comments on Peter's simple background as a fisher: "... and this Peter, once a humble fisherman, unexpectedly became an apostle".¹² The *piscator exiguus* needed to go through a transformation in order to become the founder of the Church. The other exception is found in the 24th Mass, where the *praefatio* (366) describes the process from martyrdom to heavenly bliss the apostles went through with reference to Ps. 125.5:

It is truly worthy [and just that we praise you], for the blessed Peter and Paul your apostles now show to gather with gladness what they sowed under tears. And while they went out weeping, they were not frightened by death, but to receive the fullness of their blessed passion and through sowing the precious seed of their glorious blood, they arrived and behold, they have now come in exultation of the entire church, carrying the fruit of their eternal victory through present and future rewards.¹³

11 Bernard (2008) 16.

12 *Sacramentarium Veronense* 294: ... *et ille quondam Petrus piscator exiguus, repente factus apostolus*. Ed. Mohlberg (1994) 39.

13 *Sacramentarium Veronense* 366: *Vere dignum: quoniam beatus Petrus et Paulus apostoli tui, quod in lacrimis seminarunt, in gaudio metere nunc probantur. Et qui euntes ibant et flebant, non morte perterriti, sed ut beatæ perciperent plenitudinem passionis, gloriosi sanguinis semina prætiosa mittendo, uenientes ecce nunc ueniunt in exultatione totius aeclesiae*

The tears mentioned here in quotation of Ps. 125.5 (126.6): *qui seminant in lacrimis in exultatione metent* clearly do not refer to the tears of repentance found in Matth. 26.75, but to the sorrows of martyrdom foretelling triumph – in later, medieval sources Ps. 125.5 occurs as a tract for martyrs' feasts.¹⁴

Peter's martyrdom is the only theme found in the *Veronense* Masses that as such cannot be traced back to biblical sources. The account of Peter's crucifixion is found, in its most extensive form, in the distinctive versions of the apocryphal *Acts of Peter*,¹⁵ while it is referred to as a matter of fact in the work of various historians.¹⁶ However, despite the central role of the theme of martyrdom in the 29 June celebration (*natale*), the liturgical material of the *Veronense* does not reflect long on the narrative traditions around Peter's death. The only aspect highlighted in this collection is the connection of the event with Rome, stripped from its narrative (apocryphal Acts) or historical (Eusebius) details. The prayers connect Peter's martyrdom directly with the apostle as patron saint – together with Paul – of the city of Rome, a notion that occurs explicitly in a number of prayers in the *Veronense*. The theme works out in two ways. In the *praefatio* of the 22nd Mass, the focus is on Rome itself (*nostra ciuitas*)¹⁷ and the benefit of the apostles' protection granted to this city as long as its inhabitants faithfully observe the celebration of its patrons and follow their doctrine. In the second example, the Roman *patrocinium* of Peter (and Paul) is interpreted more extensively as the beginning of the Christianisation of the whole world (*per tota mundi regna*). This prayer is also found in the fifth Mass (292) and, in a more extended version, as the *praefatio* (306) of the tenth Mass:

It is worthy [and just that we praise you], who through an ineffable mystery has placed the power of apostolic authority in the city named Rome, so that from there the truth of the Gospel would spread throughout all kingdoms of the world and the universal body of Christian devotion would follow what emanated from their preaching to the entire orb of the earth. And so that through their wholesome help those who deviate

fructum uictoriae sempiternae et praesentibus referentes praemiis et futuris. Ed. Mohlberg (1994) 49–50.

14 Cantus Manuscript Database: <http://cantus.uwaterloo.ca/>, last consulted 20 November 2017.

15 The earliest explicit evidence is the first letter of Clement, Peter's successor as bishop of Rome: 1 Clement 5; ed. Bihlmeyer (1970) 38; see Burnet (2014) 191–99. For the *Acta Petri* see also Thacker's contribution to this volume.

16 E.g. Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* II.25.1, see Burnet (2014) 196.

17 *Sacramentarium Veronense* 361: *Vere dignum: qui praeuidens, quantis nostra ciuitas laboratura esset incommodis, apostolici roboris in eadem praecipua membra posuisti*. Ed. Mohlberg (1994) 49.

from their track are considered outsiders and only those who do not in any way depart from the principle tradition appear as sons of truth.¹⁸

The transition from fisherman to apostle entails more than a change of profession or calling. The long way Peter went from the Judean province, central in the Biblical accounts of Peter, to Rome as the heart of the Empire, as depicted by his martyrdom accounts, is presented in this prayer as an essential trajectory in the universal spread of the Christian religion throughout the *orbem terrarum*. To become a universal religion, Christianity's principle founder needed to be "urbanised"; the successful spread of the novel religion depended on its anchoring in the city that counted as the heart of the realm: Rome itself.¹⁹

2 Bible and Christian Apocrypha: the Plurality of Themes and Sources in Transalpine Traditions

If we now turn to the early medieval Latin liturgy outside Rome, in particular North of Alps and Pyrenees, we can see that for sure, not the spread of Christianity as a whole, but the spread of Peter's liturgical cult did emanate from Rome – in that sense the *Veronense* prayer was answered. The feast of the *natale* on 29 June as well as the second major Petrine celebration in the liturgical calendar, entitled *Cathedra Petri* and commemorating Peter's episcopate, travelled from Rome to the regions of Gaul and Spain.²⁰ However, these Western provinces of the Roman Empire developed their own liturgical traditions and did not slavishly imitate the model set in Rome. Local traditions played a crucial role in the conservation and development of the feasts, in particular of Peter's Chair, of which no traces are found in the liturgy of Rome between the first attestation in the fourth-century *Depositio martyrum* on the one hand, and, on the other, the ninth century, when Frankish liturgical material

18 *Sacramentarium Veronense* 307: *Vere dignum: qui ineffabili sacramento ius apostolici principatus in Romani nominis arce posuisti, unde se euangelica ueritas per tota mundi regna diffunderet, et quod in orbem terrarum eorum praedicatione manasset, christianae deuotionis sequeretur uniuersitas; salubrique compendio et hi, qui ab illorum tramite deuiassent, haberentur externi, et tantummodo filii ueritatis exsisterent, qui a principali nullatenus traditione discederent.* Ed. Mohlberg (1994) 41. The first half (until *uniuersitas*) is also found in *Sacramentarium Veronense* 294; ed. Mohlberg (1994) 292.

19 A socio-historical explanation of the central role of the city in the Christian mission is given by Meeks (2003) 14–6.

20 Rose (2005) 236–51.

was adopted by Rome.²¹ Moreover, in terms of content, the liturgical traditions of Gaul and Spain are conspicuous for the innovation they brought to the figure of the apostle Peter by extending, in comparison with the *Veronense*, the choice of sources and themes when composing the liturgical prayers with which they commemorated him. As we will see below, the composers of liturgical texts in these regions made ample use of apocryphal traditions, which played a much more central role in the liturgical veneration of saints than in the city of Rome.²²

2.1 *Choice of Themes*

To illustrate the innovative character of Peter's liturgical celebration in Spain and Gaul I will concentrate again on the prayers for Mass used on 29 June in both regions. The liturgy of late antique and early medieval Gaul is represented here by the *Missale Gothicum*, a year-round collection of prayers for Mass transmitted in a single manuscript now in the Vatican Library (Vat. reg. lat. 317), dated around 700, which was probably composed for and used in the urban cathedral of Autun (Burgundy). For Visigothic Spain the transmission of liturgical material is a bit more complicated. The main collection of prayers for Mass more or less contemporary with the Gothic Missal is transmitted in a manuscript of much later date, the so-called *Liber mozarabicus sacramentorum*, dated to the eleventh century and representing the liturgy of early medieval Toledo.²³

The Mass for Peter and Paul on 29 June in the Gothic Missal contains prayer material in which, in comparison with the *Veronense* Masses, a more complete picture of Peter is sketched. The themes present in the *Veronense* prayers are also central in the Gothic Missal, but the Mass for 29 June in this book also gives room to the fear and doubt that the biblical accounts attribute to Peter. The first and most extensive prayer is the *immolatio* (378),²⁴ a term indicating, in the liturgical tradition of early medieval Gaul, the same first part of the Eucharistic prayer that is called *praefatio* in the Roman tradition as we have seen above:

21 The lacuna of three quires at the beginning of MS Verona, BC LXXXV [80] (months January to mid-April) makes it impossible to say whether early Masses for *Cathedra Petri* were originally part of the *Veronense* collection: Rose, Introduction, in Rose (2005) 236–37.

22 See Rose (2005) 327.

23 *Liber mozarabicus sacramentorum*, ed. Janini (1982). On the Old Spanish liturgical tradition and the relevant terminology, see the introduction by Ward & Johnson in their 1995 reprint of Férotin's edition 10–11, and Boynton (2015).

24 Rose (2017) 58–9.

378 PRAYER OF SACRIFICE. It is truly worthy and just that we always and everywhere bring thanks to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, especially today in honour of your most blessed apostles and martyrs Peter and Paul, whom your election has deigned to consecrate to you, such that blessed Peter's worldly art of fishing was converted into a divine doctrine, in order that you would free the human race from the depths of this world with the nets of your teaching. For you changed the heart and the name of his fellow apostle Paul (*Acts* 13.9), and the Church rejoices that he who first was feared as a persecutor (I Tim. 1.13) is now for her a teacher of heavenly commands. Paul was made blind that he might see (*Acts* 9.17–18), Peter denied that he might believe (Matth. 26.69–75; John 21.15–19), you handed over to the one the keys of the heavenly kingdom (Matth. 16.18) and you gave to the other the knowledge of divine law in order to call the gentiles. For the latter [Paul] teaches, the former [Peter] opens, both have therefore received the reward of eternal strength. Your right hand raised up the one when he walked on the water, lest he would drown (Matth. 14.28–33), while you helped the other, who was shipwrecked three times (II Cor. 11.25), to withstand the dangers of the deep sea. The one vanquished the gates of hell (Matth. 16.18), the other the sting of death (I Cor. 15.56). Paul was beheaded because he was established by the gentiles as head of the faith, and Peter followed Christ as head of us all while the steps to the cross were laid out beforehand. To whom all [angels] rightly [sing: Holy, holy, holy].²⁵

25 *Missale Gothicum* 378: *Immolatio missae. Vere dignum et iustum est nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere, domine, sancte pater, omnipotens aeterne deus, praecipue hodie in honorem beatissimorum apostolorum et martyrum tuorum Petri et Pauli, quos ita electio tua sibi consecrare dignata est, ut beati Petri saecularem piscandi artem in diuinum dogma conuerteret, quatinus humanum genus hac de profundo istius mundi praeceptorum tuorum retibus liberares. Nam cum apostolum eius Paulum mentem cum nomine commutasti et quem prius persecutorem metuebat ecclesia nunc caelestium mandatorum laetatur se habere doctorem. Paulus caecatus est ut uideret, Petrus negauit ut crederet; huic clauis caelestis imperii tradidisti, illum ad euocandas gentes diuinae legis scientiam contulisti. Nam ille introducit, hic aperit, ambo igitur uirtutes aeternae praemia sunt adepti. Hunc dextera tua gradientem in elemento liquido, ne mergetur, erexit, illum autem tertio naufragantem profunda pelagi fecit uitare discrimina. Hic portas inferni, ille mortis uicit aculeum. Paulus capite plectitur, quia gentibus caput fidei conprobatur, Petrus autem praemissis in cruce uestigiis caput omnium nostrum secutus est Christum. Cui merito omnes.* Ed. Rose (2005) 495; transl. Rose (2017) 262–63.

As said, the *immolatio* does refer to Peter's transition from a simple fisherman to a preacher of the Gospel and to the biblical account in which Peter is told to receive the keys of the heavenly kingdom. Yet the biblical passages that represent Peter's doubt and fear are, different from the *Veronense* Masses, not left out in this prayer in the Gothic Missal. Peter is presented in this prayer also as the doubting disciple who had to deny first before he was able to believe, who had to catch the hand of his Master lest he drowned because of little faith.

The second relevant prayer in the Gothic Missal is the prayer of benediction, expressing the words that accompanied the solemn blessing of the people before Communion:²⁶

379 Blessing of the people on the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul. God, who made the tears of Peter and the letters of Paul shine as a twin-born light for the members of the Church, by which they are protected against darkness. AMEN.

Look mercifully on this people, you who made that Peter with his key and Paul with his doctrine open the heavens. AMEN.

So that while the leaders show the way, the flock can approach where both equally, the shepherd through the crucifixion and the teacher through the sword, have reached the gathering [of the saints]. Through our Lord.²⁷

The prayer highlights, after the reference to Peter's denial in the *immolatio*, now with more detail Peter's tears shed bitterly when the cock wakened him to his denial (Matth. 26.75). In medieval spirituality, tears – shed by Peter, Mary Magdalene (Lk 7.38), and other saintly figures – symbolise the salutary repentance of the sinner leading to life,²⁸ as opposed to Judas' obduracy leading to death. Gregory the Great has already worked out the tears of Peter (and others, like David, Mary Magdalene, and the Thief crucified with Christ) as a wholesome bath that washes away his denial.²⁹ Beverly Kienzle has made clear how

26 Rose (2017) 62–3.

27 *Missale Gothicum* 379: *Benedictio populi in natale apostolorum Petri et Pauli. Deus, qui membris ecclesiae uelut gemellum lumen, quo caueantur tenebrae, fecisti Petri lacrimas, Pauli litteras coruscare. Amen. Hanc plebem placitus inspice, qui caelos facis aperire Petro in claue, Paulo in dogmate. Amen. Vt praeuiantur ducibus illic grex possit accedere, quo perueniunt pariter tam ille pastor suspendio, quam iste doctor per gladium in congresso. Per dominum nostrum.* Ed. Rose (2005) 496; transl. Rose (2017) 263.

28 Kienzle (2001). On the identification of the anonymous woman washing Christ's feet with tears in Luke 7 with Mary Magdalene, see *ibid.* 250.

29 Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Ezechielem* II.8, lines 579–99; consulted through Brepolis Cross Database Searchtool at www.brepolis.net, last accessed 23 November 2017. See Kienzle (2001) 258–59.

in the later, medieval sermon tradition tears of repentance are considered as a second baptism after repentance. Thus Peter, in this context often referred to together with Mary Magdalene, functions as a role model and as an example of the repentant sinner.³⁰

Let us now turn to the liturgical cult of Peter in early medieval Spain. The Old Spanish Mass *ordo*³¹ has much in common with the structure of Mass in early medieval Gaul.³² Again, two prayers in the Mass for Peter and Paul in the *Liber mozarabicus sacramentorum* (henceforth LMS)³³ in particular catch our attention for Peter's tears of repentance, while underlining their salutary effect on the faithful who celebrate his feast. The first is the prayer *ad pacem* (815), accompanying the exchange of the kiss of peace:³⁴

Prayer at the kiss of peace. Almighty Creator and almighty Redeemer, you have placed the letters of Paul and the tears of Peter as two great lights to establish the conversion of the gentiles and the reconciliation of the penitents, so that through your grace neither Paul's persecution, which the love for your Law had imposed on him, nor Peter's denial, which fear of death had required from him, alienated them. Grant us, so we beseech you, to repent after ignorance, to cry after guilt, to recover grace after tears. May Paul, who was not hindered by the fact that he did not know, and Peter, to whom his denial was no lasting obstacle, stand by to further forgiveness in the cases of those who err.³⁵

The second relevant prayer is, as in the Gothic Missal, the prayer accompanying the blessing of the people before Communion:

Blessing. Almighty God, who has granted all redemption of faith to the miserable, may grant you to be cleansed by Peter's tears from all contagion of sin. Amen.

30 Kienzle (2001) 258–62.

31 *Liber mozarabicus sacramentorum*, repr. Ward & Johnson (1995) 12–5.

32 Rose (2017) 44–65.

33 *Liber mozarabicus sacramentorum*, ed. Janini (1982) 282–87.

34 Rose (2017) 56–7.

35 *Liber mozarabicus sacramentorum* 815. *Ad pacem. Omnipotens conditor, omnipotens et redemptor, qui ad conuersionem gentium et penitentium reconciliationem duo magna luminaria Pauli litteras et Petri lacrymas posuisti, ut a gratia tua nec illum persecutio, quam amor legis intulerat, nec istum negatio, quam timor mortis exegerat, faceret alienos. Da, quesumus, resipiscere post ignorantiam, flere post culpas, gratiam recuperare post lacrimas; adserant apud indulgentiam tuam errantium causas, et Paulus cui non obfuit quod nesciuit, et Petrus cui non inpediit quod negauit.* Ed. Janini (1982) 284.

May he grant that through Paul's teaching you may receive the wisdom of his Word. Amen.

So that the one through penitence, the other through teaching may make you obtain eternal life. Amen.³⁶

In these two prayers Peter's remorseful tears are accentuated more than the biblical passages in which he is presented as the solid rock, the fundament and leader of the church. What is more, Peter is clearly positioned here as a model for the faithful. His penitence and contrition are held up as a mirror to the face of the Toledan community celebrating the *natale* of the saint with these prayers. Their imitation of the repentant model Peter is crucial in their way to eternal salvation. In the Old Spanish Mass for Peter and Paul, the scenes of denial and repentance are presented as more central to the spiritual life of the faithful than the passage on the apostle holding the keys of heaven and able to bind and loose sins.

2.2 *Choice of Sources*

Just as the range of thematic variance in the liturgical compositions of Gaul and Spain for 29 June is much larger than in the traditions linked to urban Rome, the same is valid with regard to the sources that inspired the composers of the prayer texts. As we have seen above, the martyrdom of Peter is presented in the *Veronense* Masses without much historical or narrative detail. This is different in the Gothic Missal and the LMS, where the details of Peter's acts and martyrdom as found in the apocryphal *Acts of Peter* are highlighted by the prayers.

One of the central episodes in the apocryphal *Acts of Peter* is his fight with Simon Magus,³⁷ a scene that forms the greater part of the prayer after the chant *Sanctus* in the Spanish LMS, sung after the first part of the Eucharistic prayer (*Post Sanctus*).³⁸ This prayer presents in all detail the struggle of Peter and Paul together against Simon Magus. The story line in itself has its roots in

36 *Liber mozarabicus sacramentorum* 815: *Benedictio. Omnipotens deus, qui omne remedium pietatis tribuit miseris, det uobis Petri lacrimis emundari ab omnibus culpe contagiis. Amen. Concedat doctrina Pauli, percipere uos sapientiam uerbi. Amen. Vt ille per penitentiam, iste per doctrinam, faciant uos peruenire ad uitam aeternam. Amen.* Ed. Janini (1982) 287.

37 Schneemelcher (1997) 253: "... die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Zauberer Simon ist gewissermaßen das Leitmotiv, an das sich die anderen Erzählungen und auch das Martyrium anschließen und das sie ergänzen". See for Simon also Thacker's contribution to this volume. On the complex history of the apocryphal *Acts of Peter*, see Baldwin (2005).

38 Rose (2017) 60.

the canonical *Acts* (*Acts* 8.9–24), and is elaborated in the apocryphal *Acts of Peter* where the scene of their controversy is first Samaria, but is then moved to Rome where the culmination of their contest takes place on the Campus Martius. It is to this final stage that the prayer in LMS refers:

After the Sanctus. Osanna in the highest! You, at the same time most high in the highest and humble on earth, Christ son of God. Who has destroyed the dark tricks of the magical art [produced] by Simon's presumptuousness, by revealing the truth in the contest with the apostles. And his boasting (*iactantia*), deceived by an illusion of demons, elevated him on high, while he vainly tried hard to ascend towards heaven by the motions of the air, only to be severely dashed to pieces, so that, to the extent that his audacity permitted him to fly a little longer, all the more strongly his dismissed insanity while flying broke him. For he did not know that, unless he held the praised confession of Peter or the confidence with which Paul believed, he could not enter the door of heaven of which Peter had the keys, and through whose most secret part Paul had gone in. And he did not remember the sternness and strict judgement of him who had condemned to the punishment of death Ananias and Saffira, who had lied to the Holy Spirit, guilty of delusion and treachery.³⁹

The fight with Simon is told in various versions of the Latin Acts of Peter as they circulated in the West.⁴⁰

The second central element of the Acts of Peter is Peter's martyrdom, located in Rome. The final passage of the *immolatio* (378) in the Gothic Missal, quoted in the previous section, hints at Peter's crucifixion head-down:

39 *Liber mozarabicus sacramentorum* 817: *Post sanctus. Osanna in excelsis! Idem excelsis in excelsis, idem humilis in terrenis, Christe filius dei. Qui nebulosa magice artis in Simonis presumptione prestigia, apostolice concertationis ueritate prodita destruxisti. Quem frustra caelorum ascensum aeris mollitionibus adpetentem, decepta demonum inlusione iactantia altius extulit, grauius elidendum, ut quo eum paulo longius sursum uolandi audacia permisa sustolleret, multo ualidius in deorsum uolantis insania dimissa disrumperet: nescientem utique quod, nisi laudatam Petri confessionem, nisi creditam Pauli fidem teneret, caeli cuius clauces Petrus habebat, et cuius Paulus intima penetrauerat, ianuam non intraret. Inmemor etiam illius seueritatis atque censure, qui Ananiam et Saffiram sancto spiritui mentientes, preuaricationis et perfidie reos, presentis mortis animaduersione damnauit.* Ed. Janini (1982) 286.

40 Baldwin (2005) 26–62 gives an overview of Latin sources and (early) modern editions and studies. The most elaborate account of the fight with Simon Magus is in the *Actus Vercellenses*, ed. Lipsius (1898). See, for a collection of articles on the figure of Simon Magus, Ferreiro (2005).

Peter followed Christ as head of us all while the steps to the cross were laid out beforehand.

The passage leaves room for diverse interpretations, as I explained elsewhere.⁴¹ The words *praemissis [...] uestigiis [...] secutus est Christum* can be understood as a response to the Gospel passage John 21.18–22, where Peter's martyrdom is considered to be predicted by Christ, followed by the call *tu me sequere* (John 21.22). However, it is also possible that the phrase is taken from the famous *Quo vadis* legend included in the *Acts of Peter*. This passage narrates how Peter met Christ when he was urged by the Christian community of Rome to run away from the city where martyrdom threatened him, and how Christ called him back to undertake this martyrdom.⁴² The emphasis on the *uestigia* (footsteps) with which Christ preceded Peter gives cause to consider the apocryphal narrative a more plausible background to this quotation than the biblical passage. Peter uses the same word in his speech to the Roman prefect Agrippa (whose aim to kill the apostle drove Peter away from Rome in the first place), claiming that his martyrdom is necessitated by his wish to imitate Christ: *et desidero eius sequi uestigia passionis*.⁴³

The reference to Peter's speech to Agrippa in the Gothic Missal positions his martyrdom in the concrete setting of Rome where his martyrdom eventually took place. Likewise, the narrative on Simon Magus gives the prayer in the LMS a distinct Roman aura. The city of Rome may have left its mark on the *Veronense* Masses, particularly the prayers that were clearly written for the local Roman community (*nostra ciuitas*)⁴⁴ as the symbolic centre of the Christianising Empire. Yet the composers of liturgical prayers in early medieval Gaul and Spain no less emphasised the Roman roots and urban character of Peter's cult when they tried to innovate the liturgical celebration of this saint for their own communities. The local popularity of the Rock in the more northern regions of Latin Christianity, which becomes evident from the numerous churches and monasteries dedicated to Peter,⁴⁵ never lost track of the Roman origins of this cult.

41 Rose (2017) 263; see also Burnet (2014) 190–91, 193.

42 *Martyrium Petri* (Ps-Linus) c. 6, ed. Lipsius (1891/1990) 7–8.

43 *Martyrium Petri* (Ps-Linus) c. 8, ed. Lipsius (1891/1990) 10.

44 See footnote 17.

45 Ewig (1976–79).

3 Anchoring the Rock: Conclusions

The sources from which authors of liturgical texts took their inspiration to create the liturgical cult of Peter the saint are manifold. Likewise, the themes that dominate the liturgical celebration of his feast day are multifaceted and do justice to the multifarious character of this core apostle. The Rock of Matth. 16 is celebrated in many ways, but just as central to the liturgical cult are the images of the repentant sinner and the doubtful believer, providing a more imitable mimetic model for others to follow. The choice of sources that underlie the liturgical portrait of Peter shows that every effort was made to add to the innovative quality of Peter's cult, even more so outside Rome than in Rome itself.

The transition from the simple fisherman to the urban patron saint Peter became in and through Rome could not be established on the ground of biblical sources alone. Although the urban dimension is present in the canonical book of *Acts*, where Peter operates in Jerusalem, the biblical narrative does not position this apostle in Rome.⁴⁶ Establishing a liturgy that celebrated Peter as Roman martyr and, thereby, celebrating also in a liturgical setting *Roma nova*, now protected by the Christian patron saint as new "founder", was only possible with the help of other than biblical sources, among which the apocryphal *Acts of Peter* take central stage. This intervention was particularly successful in regions where the composers of liturgical prayers and chants for saints traditionally made ample use of narrative material taken from hagiography and, in the case of biblical saints, the apocrypha.⁴⁷ The fact that the liturgical traditions in which Rome is presented in most detail as the setting of Peter's mission and martyrdom developed primarily *outside* Rome and in the former provinces is one of the most striking paradoxes of the history of Latin liturgy. This conclusion is probably biased by the result of the remarkable lack of relevant sources of the liturgy of late antique Rome.⁴⁸ More directly it shows the remarkable richness of the other Latin traditions and the way liturgy was celebrated outside Rome as the presupposed centre of the Latin Church. This richness of non-Roman sources provides us with a dynamic and multi-coloured picture of the liturgical veneration of Peter in the earliest period of his cult.

46 Unless 1 *Peter* 5.13 is a hidden reference to Rome: see Burnet (2014) 192–93 with further bibliographical references.

47 Such as Gaul and Spain, see above footnote 22.

48 Bernard (2008) 15–19.

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I followed the orthography found in the editions used without additional explanation of (sometimes notable) deviations from the classical norm. This article was published with financial support from NWO VICI 277-30-002 *Citizenship Discourses in the Early Middle Ages, 400–1100* (2017–2022).

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