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The Roman past in the consciousness of the Roman elites in the ninth and tenth centuries

Pope Leo placed a crown on his head, and he was hailed by the whole Roman people: To the august Charles, crowned by God, the great and peaceful emperor of the Romans, life and victory! After the acclamations the pope addressed him in the manner of the old emperors. The name of Patricius was now abandoned and he was called Emperor and Augustus.¹

In the citation, we see probably the most famous of many famous passages used to illustrate the idea of the preservation and/or revival of the notion of *Romanitas*, revival of the Roman Empire, *Renovatio imperii romanorum*: a large number of well-known clichés – none of which I shall be directly discussing in this paper. The words cited above apply to a pope and an emperor – neither of these is the hero or even the anti-hero of my argument. There is no doubt that the whole process of ideological revival and referencing of Rome to the imperial past was one initiated by the papacy and in its wake by the emperors from North of the Alps who took it up, as well as by their chroniclers and poets. The revival of the ‘Roman past’ was favoured by the popes themselves in the first place, in the ninth century, as part of an antiquarian attitude of revival of the empire of Constantine. Charlemagne, Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald were in ideological accord with this view, as we can see from Charlemagne’s *intitulatio* as *Karolus serenissimus augustus a Deo coronatus, magnus pacificus imperator*, Charles the Bald’s imperial seal inscribed *Renovatio imperii Romani et Francorum*, and many other such official documents or images. Later on, Otto III in particular was keen to go further by dreaming of a revival of imperial Rome, complete with titles, and hopes of returning the centre of government of a revived Roman Empire to Rome, and even to the Palatine, though his views were equally strongly influenced by the contemporary Byzantine political sphere. For the Carolingian and Ottonian emperors, control of Rome was a necessity for the very existence of an emperor, and especially for Otto II and Otto III, Rome was the imperial capital of both Ancient Rome and the New Rome of both Byzantium and Charlemagne.²

The popes were no less keen on this ideological revival. Of the massive amount of material concerning the relationship between them and the emperors in the ninth and tenth centuries, I would only like to refer to three elements. The first is the text now referred to as the *Itinerary of Einsiedeln*, a ‘guidebook’ for pilgrims, produced at the papal court for Charles’s court if one follows the claim of its latest editor Del Lungo, and aimed at highlighting the parallels between ancient Roman glory and

¹ *Annales regni Francorum*, a. 801, trans. Scholz/Rogers, 81.

² P. Schramm 1984, 68–187; Görich 1993, 39–45, 58–59, 72–77, 89–90, 97–110, 187–274; Althoff 1996, 100–125, 169–181.

papal restorations.³ The second point is the appropriation of Roman artifacts by the papacy, for example in its bringing together of the statue supposed to be of Constantine and of the she-wolf onto the Lateran piazza, the heart of the expression of papal political and judicial power in the city.⁴ The third is the deliberate exaltation of the tradition of classical Rome in John VIII's letters.⁵

Last, but by no means least, perhaps the most important influence on this revival and/or preservation of the imperial past were the writers and poets from northern Europe, men who, since Bede's commentary on the legend that as long as the Colosseum stands, so will Rome, continued to influence the way of thinking of Frankish writers. Hence Regino's claim that, when 'Arnulf took the city by force [in 896], this had been unheard of in previous centuries, because it had never happened except a single time when, a long time before the birth of Christ, the *Galli Senones* had done it under their leader Brennus', and referring to the senate.⁶ It is generally assumed that these were literary antiquarian expressions from writers North of the Alps, who used their classical knowledge to define thus the leading aristocratic figures in the city. For these men, such ideas were exotic and perceived as part of the continuation of their classical readings, which they continued to associate with the city to the same extent as they did its link with the papacy, Constantine, and above all, of course, St Peter, Prince of the Apostles and Keeper of the Keys. This double association of Rome, with both classical scholarship and the Petrine presence, was one increasingly imposed on the city by its vast numbers of northern pilgrims, and was taken up with eagerness and effectiveness by the papacy after its alliance with the family of Pepin. It played a crucial role in the transformation of Rome, through the projection put onto it by its visitors, into a city with a dual nature: that of the past, exemplified by its visible monuments, to which the papacy contributed preserving and restoring for the purposes of tourism, as a kind of heritage park; and that of the present, the city of the saints and martyrs, above all the city of St Peter. In fact, the idea of Rome was increasingly associated by northern pilgrims with St Peter and the pope, not perhaps launched but very much developed through the Anglo-Saxon devotion to St Peter, and partly via Boniface and Alcuin, becoming a standard element of Carolingian piety.⁷ This is well illustrated through the very association of 'Rome' with the Vatican by most pilgrims: they did not focus as much on the city itself, even if they visited its churches and relics, as on the area of St Peter's. Even Charlemagne, during his first visit in Rome, came to St Peter's, where he stayed

³ Del Lungo 2004, 82.

⁴ Krautheimer 1980; Goodson 2010, esp. 66–106; Esch 2001, 3–7, 16; Herklotz 1985, 13–25; Wickham 2015, 336–337.

⁵ John VIII, *Epistolae*, ed. Caspar; Arnaldi 1990, c. 1.

⁶ Regino of Prüm, *Chronicon*, a. 871, a. 881, trans. MacLean.

⁷ Miller 1974 and 1975; Zwölfer 1929; Schieffer 2000, 283–90, and Schieffer 2002; Ortenberg 1995. In a more general way on the Patrimonium of St Peter, there is a large amount of literature available, most of which is discussed in Noble 1984, 138–324 esp. 212–55 and 291–323.

throughout the week, and though he went with the pope to the Lateran, and was received there with pomp and ceremony, was then taken across the Via Maior back to the Vatican, where he spent most of his time, and where he, or more likely his successors, had their headquarters in a palace within the complex of St Peter's.⁸ The Romans, from what we can read between the lines, were well aware of this, and possibly quite happy with it. Their contact with emperors or would-be emperors was only too often one with their troops when they laid siege to the city or repressed rebellions, as in 864 with Louis II, in 878 with Adalbert, and in 896 with Arnulf, resisted by Angeltrude, not to mention Otto III's siege.⁹ One gains the impression that the Romans rather hoped that the Frankish, and later the Ottonian, emperors would think that Rome was St Peter's, and stay there: if foreign emperors and rulers thought St Peter's was Rome, let them, and they will leave us in peace, the Romans may have thought. This is of course why, when he so abysmally failed in his *Renovatio imperii Romanorum* in Rome, partly because he was determined to rule from Rome itself, Otto III was so hated by the Romans that they effectively expelled him from the city.

The papacy took up and developed both these strands, the heritage and the pilgrimage ones, brilliantly in the ninth and tenth centuries. At the same time, this augmented papal prestige and authority among the visitors to the city, from simple pilgrims to emperors, and allowed the popes to fashion the very nature of the papacy as a European force. But the Romans themselves had different perspectives, and throughout our period, we see this increasing tension between this pilgrim, petrine-led perception of Rome, which the papacy was happy to adopt as its powerbase, and therefore embed its increasing European-wide authority in it, and the Roman inhabitants' perception of their city and their church.¹⁰ An excellent anecdote illustrates this: when Notker tells the story of how, when Pope Leo III's accusers tried to swear to their innocence, many among them 'begged that they might be allowed to swear on the tomb of Peter that they were guiltless of the crime imputed to them'; however, Leo, 'aware of their dishonesty', begged Charlemagne not to be deceived by their cunning. Leo claims that they would do so because they knew that Peter will forgive them, but this may well also mean that he was aware that they may have been prepared to perjure themselves without too much concern if asked to swear an oath on the relics of St Peter, which they would not do if asked to swear an oath on those of a Roman saint; therefore he, Charlemagne, should look for the stone of the martyr Pancras, and they should be made to swear by that.¹¹ Despite the justification given for by Leo of his accusers' choice of Peter, this vignette

⁸ Einhard, *Vita Karoli* 27, ed. Pertz, 457; LP I, Hadrian I, cc. 37–40, pp. 497–498; *Annales regni Francorum* a. 800, trans. Scholz/Rogers, 78–81.

⁹ *Annales Bertiniani*, a. 864, ed. Waitz, 66–74; *Annales Fuldenses*, a. 878, a. 896, ed. Kurze, 91–92, 127–130; Regino of Prüm, *Chronicon*, a. 896, ed. Kurze, 144; Liutprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis* 1, 25–27 and 32–37, ed. Becker, 21–22, 24–28.

¹⁰ Di Carpegna Falconieri 2002, 39–49, 82–83, 92–93.

¹¹ Notker the Stammerer, *Gesta Karoli Magni Imperatoris* 1, 26, trans. Ganz.

seems to me to show, on the one hand, that the local martyr Pancras, a purely Roman saint, was more feared by the Romans than was St Peter, and also, on the other hand, that those same Romans were aware of the Franks' reverence for St Peter and thought they could be deceived in this way.

While the papacy and pilgrimages are well-known territory, my own interest is in the pendant of this development: how did the Romans perceive the past of their city? I believe that the answer to this lies less in matters of imperial and papal ideology, than in two practical aspects of life in the city: topography, and the self-perception of the people (which, of course, as so often for our period, means of the elite) through their self-chosen titles. These are the two kinds of material discussed here. I propose to do so by setting up a deliberately artificial distinction between the aristocracy and the elites of the city on the one hand, and the popes on the other, excluding the popes themselves from the analysis. This may seem somewhat problematic methodologically since, from the second half of the eighth century, most popes were members of the main aristocratic families in the city, and most top level papal functionaries of the Lateran bureaucracy, especially the seven palatine judges, likewise.¹² Similarly, looking at it from the other end, most important aristocratic families were important partly because they held offices or titles associated with the papal entourage, notably the *primicerius* and the *superista*. Examples of *primicerii* include Ambrose, *primicerius* between 742/3 and his death in 752, and his successor Christopher, effectively the Foreign Affairs ministers, who wielded huge power under popes Zacharias, Stephen III and Hadrian I, and Theodotus, uncle of Hadrian I, former duke of Rome then *primicerius*, founder and patron of the *diaconia* of S. Angelo in Pescheria.¹³ In the ninth century, Pope Paschal I had sent the *primicerius* Theodore, together with the head of the Lateran militia, the *superista* Florus to represent the pope at the Emperor Lothar's wedding to Ermengard in 822.¹⁴ After Pope Zacharias' return of the patriarchate from the Palatine to the Lateran, the papal court was no longer administered by a vicedominus but by a *superista*, who often became the other power behind the pope. Such was especially Paul Afiarta, who attempted to bring the papacy and the king of the Lombards into a closer alliance under Hadrian I¹⁵, and later on Gratian, *superista* involved in an alleged plot under Leo IV and Benedict III and accused of being a spy for the Emperor Lothar in Rome.¹⁶ Nevertheless, I will justify making the distinction here between the aristocracy and the popes, in so far as, once popes, many of these men either had to, or chose to, or needed to, think

12 Toubert 1973, 2, 1202–1229 and 2001; Wickham 2015, 187–188.

13 LP I, Zacharias, cc. 12, 14, 18, pp. 429–432, and Stephen II, c. 5, 24 (Ambrose), pp. 441, 447; Stephen II, c. 49, p. 455, Stephen III, cc. 5, 7–8, 11, 15, 28–32, pp. 469–473, 478–480, and Hadrian I, cc. 5, 14, pp. 487, 490 (Christopher); Hadrian I, c. 2, p. 486 (Theodotus).

14 *Annales regni Francorum* a. 821, trans. Scholz/Rogers, 108–9.

15 LP I, Hadrian I, cc. 6–15, pp. 487–491.

16 LP II, Leo IV, cc. 110–112, p. 134, and Benedict III, c. 11, p. 142.

of themselves and their actions in relation to their role as popes on the international scene, and not just as members of the Roman elite families.

It is precisely through the families of the popes in the ninth century, at a time when we have less information about the aristocracy of Rome from other sources, that we can work out where these families chose to live, which was at the foot of, or on the perimeter of, the central zone of the old imperial city: the area of S. Silvestro in Capite on the Via Lata (family home of Popes Stephen II and Paul), the Via Lata near S. Marco (Hadrian I, Valentine), the Regio III around S. Martino ai Monti and Trajan's Baths on the Esquiline (Hadrian II), and the Regio IV (Sergius II).¹⁷ We might conclude that at the end of the eighth and beginning of the ninth centuries, the public and ceremonial spaces of the ancient city were still respected: they had been part of the imperial fisc, and the popes only carried out repairs and restorations there. There had already been some reusing of a few of these monuments, converted into churches or *diaconiae*, most famously the Curia as the church of St Hadrian, the Pantheon as Sta Maria ad Martyres and the vestibule of the Domus Tiberina as the church and *diaconia* of Sta Maria Antiqua.¹⁸ But the popes had never demolished classical monuments, unless they were a risk, like the Temple of Concord, which was in such a bad state that it threatened to collapse on top of the *diaconia* of SS Sergius and Bacchus, which had been built leaning into half of the arch of Septimius Severus, and was then demolished and rebuilt by Pope Hadrian I.¹⁹ Most importantly, even when such churches and *diaconiae* were in the Roman Forum in the middle of classical complexes, it was nevertheless still clear to all exactly what these monuments had been: when Stephen III was elected, his electors met at the 'Three Fates' i.e. the three statues of the Sybils near the Rostra in front of the Curia – perhaps not by chance the meeting place of Roman republican assemblies.²⁰

As Riccardo Santangeli Valenzani has shown, the half century which saw the end of eastern imperial rule in the city enabled the popes for the first time to have access to, and then to take control of, this huge area of property and real estate capital, no longer belonging to the emperors.²¹ The ninth century is a crucial period for change in the city, notably with the beginnings of the encroachment of private space onto the public space of the Fora, even if still only around the edges, with the Fora of

¹⁷ LP I, Paul I, c. 5, p. 464–465, Hadrian I, c. 1, p. 486, LP II, Valentine, c. 1, p. 71, Hadrian II, c. 1, p. 173, Sergius II, c. 1, p. 86. In the tenth century again the references are to the *Regio VIII* at the foot of the Capitol LP II, Benedict VI, p. 255 and in the *Gallina Albas* region on the Quirinal near the Baths of Diocletian, LP II, John XV, p. 260. On the area around S. Marco and its aristocratic links see Manacorda 1993, 42–48.

¹⁸ LP I, Honorius, 323–327; Boniface IV, 317–318; John VII, 385–387.

¹⁹ LP I, Hadrian I, c. 90, p. 510.

²⁰ LP I, Stephen III, c.10, pp. 470–471.

²¹ The works by Santangeli Valenzani are of crucial importance and I am drawing heavily on their conclusions in this paper. Especially important are: Meneghini/Santangeli Valenzani 2004, 31–101, 157–188; Santangeli Valenzani 2008; Santangeli Valenzani 2011; Santangeli Valenzani 1996; Santangeli Valenzani 2000.

Nerva and Caesar. Some of the main roads, especially the Argiletum, were not only preserved, but recovered and reused, and the aristocratic houses excavated there, which Santangeli Valenzani defines as Carolingian in the sense that they date from the height of the period of Carolingian control over the city, and dates to the ninth century, were clearly meant to open onto a main road.²² These Carolingian houses, of the *domus solarata* type, with two floors, of which relatively little is known since the top floor, the ‘piano nobile’ where the family lived, is no longer there, shows the reuse of marble columns and capitals.²³ The attempt made by the Roman aristocracy to associate itself topographically with the centre of the Roman past nevertheless still respected the central part, especially the Roman Forum, perceived as the core of old Rome, and of course the Capitol and the Palatine, until the tenth century. This is clear from that fact that the ground level in the Roman Forum, for example in front of the Basilica Emilia, remained the same, and only started to rise between the late eighth and the mid-ninth century, though very slowly, and would not rise by the 3–4 m which would later turn it into the ‘Campo Vaccino’ until the late eleventh-twelfth centuries. In 982 for example, we find a significant example of this phenomenon with a house of a similar type to those in the Forum of Nerva, effectively inside the temple of Romulus, in *templum quod vocatur Romuleum*²⁴ – erroneously called so since it was the temple of Venus and Rome, but it had been known by the name of Romuleum for a long time, so that we cannot assume this to have been an example of gradual forgetting of ancient Roman monuments.

The other major public space with which the aristocracy associated itself was the area of the old *Campus Martius*; this effectively meant the Terme Alessandrine,²⁵ the area around and between the Pantheon and Piazza Navona, but also the area of the now Largo Argentina, which had been part of the aristocratic zone of some of the old senatorial aristocracy, most notably of the Anicii. There we find a ninth-tenth century *domus* six to seven times the size of the ones in the Forum of Nerva. Like most aristocratic houses of a high level, this *domus* probably had the standard two floors, with some reuse of marble from Roman monuments on the top floor, its own private baths, a *curtis* around it incorporating a church, possibly with a significant relic,²⁶ and almost certainly with prestigious decorative schemes such as that still extant in the church of Sta Maria in Via Lata, a possession of the family of Alberic in the

22 Santangeli Valenzani 1999; Meneghini/Santangeli Valenzani 2004, 34–46; Pani Ermini 2001, 296–304.

23 Santangeli Valenzani/Meneghini 2007, 47–50; Santangeli 2000.

24 *Tabularium S. Maria Novae*, a. 982, no. 1, ed. Fedele, 183.

25 Fiore Cavaliere 1978, 121–126, 145; Pani Ermini 2001, 315–317; Santangeli Valenzani 1994; Wickham 2015, 120, 130–134.

26 Meneghini/Santangeli Valenzani 2004, 41–44, 50.

tenth century.²⁷ Less characteristically, the house opened not onto a road, but onto the interior, a plan akin to the traditional Roman *domus* which we still find in Ravenna.²⁸

Papal control over the city space also meant in effect that the new owner had the right to demolish or otherwise dispose of its built environment. To that extent, the ninth century was crucial in the transition of the old centre: until the Carolingian period, the monumental landscape of classical Rome was in a good state of preservation, but on account of the need to reinforce the city's fortifications and rebuild the walls, as well as to set up those of the Leonine city, the popes ripped out the marble floors of the imperial fora to reuse the marble.²⁹ This was the first example of actual spoliation and reuse of the monuments of the city centre, and it started the decline of the monumental fabric of the imperial fora. The popes sometimes kept such monuments as part of the memory of the city that they constructed, which we see so clearly in the *Itinerary of Einsiedeln*. This text, produced in the second half of the eighth century, only makes one error of identification when describing ancient monuments, that of calling the Stadium of Domitian the Circus Flaminius.³⁰ Otherwise, every name and identification is completely accurate – making it clear that they were all remembered and known, and that the papacy was keen to preserve them. But the spoliation of the marble floor in the Fora led to the building of large *domus* along the Via Sacra and the Vicus Jugarius, and of small wooden houses like that in the northern corner of the Atrium of Vesta, which remained functional until the tenth century. The concomittant result was the rise of floor level in that area in the ninth and tenth centuries, as well as the presence of artisans' workshops in the area of Cannapara (cordwainers) and of modest houses in the Forum of Cesar, whose purpose was to service the nobler *domus* of the Forum of Nerva.³¹ This infill with private housing in the Fora, as well as newly established churches including Sta Maria Nova, and the use made by them of still usable ruins, crypts, columns and arches, gradually led to an increasing ruralisation in the Forum of Cesar, and also an increasingly marshy landscape by the eleventh century, when even the *domus* of the Forum of Nerva were abandoned by the elite to lower social levels inhabitants.³² Part of the problem with the destruction of the buildings was the loss of in-

27 On the link between Alberic's family and the monastery of S. Ciriaco in Via Lata, see Cavazzi 1908 and *Ecclesiae S. Maria in Via Lata Tabularium*, Introduction, ed. Hartmann, vol. 1; Martinelli 1655, 7–129; Meneghini/Santangeli Valenzani 2004, 42–44; another example of such a house, a *domus solarata* with a marble staircase is mentioned, for example, as the house belonging to land given by John Crescentius to Farfa in 1013, see Gregorio of Catino, *Il Regesto di Farfa*, no. 699 (doc. 667), ed. Giorgi/Balzani, vol. 4, 68–71.

28 The description of a characteristic house (*domucella cenaculata*) in Ravenna in 975–976 is for example that of the *negociator* Unalso, see Benericetti 2002, 297 (no. 253).

29 Meneghini/Santangeli Valenzani 2004, 54–55, 71–72; Coates-Stephens, 1998.

30 Del Lungo 2004; see also the essential papers by Delogu 2000a and 1988.

31 Meneghini/Santangeli Valenzani 2004, 157–174.

32 Meneghini/Santangeli Valenzani 2004, 44–47, 175–179.

scriptions which anchored the names of these buildings in the popular memory: gradually until the twelfth century, the knowledge of the ancient city, or at any rather the correlation of monuments with their names, became lost. Thus not only in the hagiography do we have dragons living in the *disabitato* as mentioned by John the Deacon, but also fancy invented names for temples, such as *Templum Fatalis*, *Templum Dianae*, *Templum Minervae*, which bear no relation to the reality on the ground – a mythical city superimposing itself on the real city.³³ Some major names remain well-known, the Colosseum, Trajan and Antoninus's columns, the she-wolf, but increasingly the names of the regions no longer suffice to identify a place in a recognisable manner.

It remains significant that, when it comes to the elites' land transactions, their way of defining a particular piece of land is precisely through its localisation, for example in the form of 'one end is the wall which is adjacent to X's house, and the other wall is the one adjacent to Y's house, and the third one is the wall next to the temple of A'. Such examples include properties near the *columpna maiure* called Antoniniana, the area of the *Campus Martius*, the *campo de Agonis*, the *Horrea sub Aventino*, the *Therme Alexandrinus* and the *Thermis Diocletianis*, the areas called *Arenula* and *Piscinula*, the Via Sacra, the *templum* called *Romuleum*, the church of St Apollinaris a *templum Alexandrini*, the *arch qui dicitur militiorum*, and the *Colossus*, used also to identify a person like 'Bonizo de Colossus'.³⁴ Here is an example of such a transaction, in 982, at the time of Otto II:

John archdeacon of the diaconia of 'S Maria which they call Nova', leases to Leo, priest of the diaconia of SS Cosma e Damiano in the Via Sacra:...a tiled and shingled 1-storeyed house with solarium, with both the lower and the upper floor from the ground to the roof, with its courtyard and pergola, with the marble staircase in front, and the garden at the rear with 13 olive trees and other fruit trees. The house is sited in the Fourth Region in Rome, not far from the Colossus in the temple called the Romuleum, with the following boundaries on each side: on one side, the house of Romanus the smith, and the house of the brothers Francus and Sergius, the garden being of the heirs of a certain Kalopetrus, on the second side the garden of Constantius the priest

³³ *Mirabilia urbis Romae*, ed. and trans. Nichols/Gardiner; Meneghini/Santangeli Valenzani 2004, 225–227; Santangeli Valenzani 2015, 314.

³⁴ *Regesto del monastero di S. Silvestro de Capite*, ed. Federici, 265–292 for the grant by Pope Agapitus II of 955, and its confirmation in 962; for several examples of such toponyms, see also *Le carte antiche dell'Archivio Capitolare di S. Pietro in Vaticano*, a. 955, ed. Schiaparelli 1901 (*columpna maiure*); *Liber Largitorius*, no. 279, ed. Zucchetti, vol. 1 for 958 charter, and Gregorio of Catino, *Il Regesto di Farfa*, no. 707 (doc. 675), ed. Giorgi/Balzani, vol. 4, 77–79, for 1027 privilege (*campo de Agonis*); *Il Regesto del monastero dei SS Andrea e Gregorio Ad Clivum Scauri*, no. 125, ed. Bartola, 495 (henceforth *S. Gregorio*), for 961 charter (*sub Aventino in loco qui vocatur Orrea*); Gregorio of Catino, *Il Regesto di Farfa*, no. 461 (doc. 428), ed. Giorgi/Balzani, vol. 3, 141–143, for 998 charter (*iuxta thermas Alexandrinus*); *Tabularium S. Praxedis* 2, ed. Fedele, 40–43, for 998–999 charter (*Thermis Diocletianis*); Lori Sanfilippo 1957, 2, no. 1 for 1000 charter (*Arenulam*); *S. Gregorio*, no. 68, ed. Bartola, 299, for 945 charter (*Piscinula*); *Tabularium S. Maria Novae*, a. 982, no. 1, ed. Fedele, 182, for 982 lease (*Via Sacra; non longe a Colossus*); *Il Regesto Sublacense del secolo XI*, ed. Allodi/Levi (henceforth *RS*), no. 118 for 966 charter (*Bonizo a Colossus*).

and his family, on the third side the garden of Anna, a noble young lady, and the house of Stephen the coppersmith (*herarius*), and on the fourth side the public road.³⁵

An example of even more detailed knowledge can be found in Stefano de Imiza's grant to SS Andrea e Gregorio in Clivo Scauro in 975: he owned a large part of the eastern Palatine, including 'his' *templum* called *Septem Solis*, as well as the *criptas in portico* [...] above it, the *moenia palatii* called *Balneum Imperatoris* between the Circus (Maximus) and the *arcum triumphale* (of Constantine), all of which he gave to SS Andrea e Gregorio, in the case of the temple for the monastery to destroy it whenever it decided to do so.³⁶ The absence of the full names of the circus and the arch could be interpreted as proof of an end to the classical memory, but it can equally be interpreted as an omission of something, which is too obvious to all for it to be stated. Similar usage is found in narrative sources, and Benedict of Soracte for example uses references such as the *arcus qui dicitur militiorum* or the church of St Apollinaris *a templum Alexandrini*.³⁷

The area of the Fora was clearly important for the strategies of settlement of the Roman aristocracy, especially for the family of Alberic and his friends. All their houses are around SS Apostoli (himself) and the Via Lata (his three cousins Marozia, Stefania and Teodora), and Alberic made gifts to churches in the reused monumental complexes, such as S. Basilio in scala Mortuorum, built on podium of the temple of Mars Ultor in the Forum of Augustus.³⁸ When it first came to prominence, the family of Theophylact, like that of another major aristocratic functionary in the tenth century, Gregorius de Aventino, settled on the Aventine, as had the old imperial aristocracy.³⁹ The family still lived there, Theophylact and his wife Theodora, then their daughter Marozia and her son Alberic, born in the family home which he would later turn into the monastic foundation of S. Maria de Aventino (now S. Maria del Priorato), to initiate the reform of Odo of Cluny in the city.⁴⁰ Alberic then moved to the

35 *Tabularium S. Maria Novae*, a. 982, no. 1, ed. Fedele, 183: John archdeacon of diaconia of 'S Maria quae appellatur Noba', [LEASES to] *Leo presbiter diaconiae SS Cosme et Damiani in Via Sacra: ... domum solarata tegulicia et scandolicia, una in integrum cum inferiora et superiora sua a solo et usque a summo tecto, cum corticella sua et pergola atque scala marmorea ante se, hortuo post se in qua sunt 13 arbores olivarum seu ceteras arbores pomarum. Posito a Roma regio IV, non longe a Colossus in templum quod vocatur Romuleum, inter affines ab uno latere domum de Romano ferrario, atque domum de Franco et Sergio germanis, sive hortuo de heredes quondam Kalopetro, et a secundo latere hortuo de Constantio presbitro et de suis consortibus, et a tertio latere hortuo de Anna nobilissima puella ad domum de Stephano herario, et a quarto latere via publica.*

36 S. Gregorio, no. 151 (a. 975), ed. Bartola, 581–584.

37 Benedict of Soracte, *Chronicon*, ed. Zucchetti, 151, 170.

38 Meneghini/Santangeli Valenzani 2004, 47–59, Santangeli Valenzani 2011 and 2015; Wickham 2015, 22–28.

39 RS no. 55.

40 Rota 1956; Sickel 1902 – more recently, Hamilton's papers, especially Hamilton 1962/1979 and Hamilton 1970; Santangeli Valenzani 2011, and Wickham 2015, 24–28.

area closest to the imperial end of the Fora, and his palace was back at the core of power on the Via Lata, at SS Apostoli.⁴¹ I would like to remark in passing on the fact that this may be also an interesting choice of location in relation to its name: the cult was of course strongly associated with the imperial family in Constantinople, notably with the Apostoleion.

Another element of interest in relation to the topography of the city and its elites is the case of the Palatine.⁴² In the late-seventh century it was still in use, as witnessed by the existence of the *curator palatii* Platon, father of Pope John VII, who then moved the *episcopium* there, where it remained until Pope Zacharias moved it back to the Lateran half a century later, either because it was no longer felt to be in need of imperial protection or because it was no longer in need of closeness to the by then no longer Byzantine centre of power.⁴³ When Charlemagne and his successors were in Rome, they never considered reviving of use of Palatine by living there, either because of its Byzantine association, but more likely because they did not see their empire in that way; they saw it as Constantinian, and therefore its link was with St Peter and hence the Vatican, where the Carolingian palace was.⁴⁴ The Palatine was abandoned as a palace and saw the transformation of some of the old buildings into churches and monasteries, most famously S. Maria in Pallara, founded in the tenth century by Peter Medicus, possibly from an existing church in a *curtis*.⁴⁵ In the tenth century the Palatine had large areas of private aristocratic property, often granted to monasteries. Thus, while no longer an area of imperial power, there was an increasing interest in the Palatine from some aristocratic families in the tenth century, especially the de Imiza – Stephen's grant of 975 to SS Andrea e Gregorio has been mentioned, and the family already had a foothold in the area in 963.⁴⁶ The de Papa family of John de Papa *de septem viis* around the Septizodium was another such aristocratic family.⁴⁷

A quick word on the debate of Otto III's palace on the Palatine (or not) – though this is not immediately related to my discussion here.⁴⁸ Currently, we still have two views on the matter, the first developed by Schramm and Brühl and apparently accepted by Toubert and Augenti for example, suggesting that Otto III, true to his ideas of imperial *renovatio*, actually took up residence on the Palatine. This is contested by Santangeli Valenzani, followed by Le Pogam, who remain convinced that Otto stayed

41 RS, no. 155 (Alberic's 942 *placitum*); Santangeli Valenzani 2015.

42 Meneghini/Santangeli Valenzani 2004, 209–215; Augenti 1996, 45–74; Augenti 1999 and 2000.

43 LP I, John VII, 385–387, and Zacharias, c. 18, p. 432; Augenti 1996, 60.

44 See eg. Monciatti 2005, 8–15.

45 Fedele 1903.

46 Wickham 2015; Meneghini/Santangeli Valenzani 2004, 211; S. Gregorio no. 151 (a. 975), ed. Bartola, 581–584, for the de Imiza bequest, also mentioning the de Papa.

47 Augenti 1996, 62–63.

48 P. Schramm 1984, 87–187; Brühl 1954; Toubert 1973, 2, 1012; Augenti 1996, 74–77; Görich 1994; Santangeli Valenzani 2001; Le Pogam 2004.

on the Aventine, like all Roman aristocrats, probably at SS Alessio e Bonifazio. Görich further related Otto III's move to the Palatine to the fact that much of it was in the hands of the Imiza family, who were 'pro-imperial', as opposed to the Crescentii on Quirinale.⁴⁹ Did Otto stay on the Aventine? – very likely; did he want to revive Palatine? – very likely too, and he may have begun to do so later had he lived.

By the tenth century we no longer have only a few major aristocrats who take over the monuments, everybody appropriates the old public space. At first it had been the papacy which, through papal foundations like *xenodochiae* and *diaconiae*, had implanted a network of assistance and helped expand papal power and control over the city, largely in relation to pilgrims from northern Europe.⁵⁰ In the tenth century it was the aristocracy, and especially Alberic and his entourage, who were responsible for the foundation and reform of monasteries, which were also part of their strategy of territorial control of the city.⁵¹ Such tenth-century foundations, whether chapels in their palaces or new houses, were aristocratic and not papal, founded or promoted by Alberic and his family or friends. From the foundation of SS. Ciriaco e Nicola in Via Lata by the women of Theophylact's family, S. Maria de Aventino by Alberic or SS Cosma e Damiano in Mica Aurea by Benedict Campaninus, and SS Bonifacio e Alessio, to the gifts to SS Andrea e Gregorio, S. Erasmo on the Celio, S. Pietro in Horrea and S. Maria in Monasterio by the likes of the de Imiza, to the great reforms of Subiaco, it was the aristocracy who was involved with monasticism, not the papacy.⁵²

Monastic reform was not the only aspect of Alberic's policy in relation to the reuse of the ancient topography of power. Another aspect was his support to what one might see as an attempt at urbanism through government intervention, associated with Kaleolus, one of Alberic's friends at the 942 *placitum*.⁵³ This was an attempt at 'rezoning' or urban regeneration in the Forum of Trajan, in the area known as the *Campus Caleoli*.⁵⁴ Here too there were several aristocratic *domus*. Like his control of monasteries and of the church in order to make sure of that they functioned well and carried out their duties, a prerogative but also a duty perceived as part of the ruler's (usually the emperor's) function, so the intervention of the *princeps* for the purposes of euergetism seems to have been felt by Alberic to be part of a Roman ruler's job description.⁵⁵ To that extent, Alberic's influence in terms of consciousness of the

⁴⁹ Görich 1994.

⁵⁰ To the classics on the history of the assistential system, esp. Lestocquoy 1930 and Bertolini 1968, need to be added the more recent Saxer 2001, 584–590; Stasolla 1998; and Giuntella 2001. A key paper on the subject is now Santangeli Valenzani 1996 as well as his discussion in Meneghini/Santangeli Valenzani 2004, 73–91.

⁵¹ Meneghini/Santangeli Valenzani 2004, 47–53, 95–101.

⁵² Santangeli Valenzani 1996 and 2008; Barone 2014, 200–205.

⁵³ For the 942 *placitum* see RS no. 155.

⁵⁴ Meneghini/Santangeli Valenzani 2004, 186

⁵⁵ Rota 1956, 16–20; Kölmel 1935b.

Roman past can be also seen in the other aspect with which this paper is concerned: the self-consciousness of the Roman elites as expressed through their titles.

The secular administration of Rome still used some of the old titles and functions, but these had gradually lapsed, so that, for example, the last mention of a Prefect of the City, with the title of *vir gloriosus*, had been that of Gregory the Great.⁵⁶ Apart from a brief reappearance at the time of Hadrian II (772–795), when a Dominicus is said to have been Urban Prefect – Cecchelli, Arnaldi and Burgarella have all shown how the same name is used but without there being any demonstrable continuity – the next proper reference to a Prefect of the City was in 955 in the Bull of Agapitus II, which mentioned the Praefectus Stephen de Teodoro, precisely at the time of Alberic.⁵⁷ The next prefect would be Peter, active during the rebellion of 965–966 against Otto I and later hung by the hair from the statue of Constantine.⁵⁸ Words such as senate and senator were used, often by northern writers, for example by Regino and the author of the Annals of Fulda, the first mentioning that in 872 ‘the Roman senate declared [...] Adalgis to be a tyrant’ or that in 881 ‘Charles [the Fat] coming to Rome, was [...] received [...] by the Roman senate’, and the second stating that in 896 ‘the whole of the senate of the Romans [...] came [...] to receive the king [...]’ and that ‘Constantine and Stephen [...] were great among the senators’. Senators and the senate were also still mentioned by the *Liber Pontificalis*, most conspicuously under Hadrian II,⁵⁹ but no scholar, except Solmi who wrote in 1944 with nationalistic fervour that the senate had continued to exist without interruption throughout the early Middle Ages, actually believes that there was such continuity.⁶⁰

In the remaining charters and judicial documents dated to between 750 and 1000 the most common title found is that of *consul et dux*, which appears in over thirty documents, with several people being so described – the title thus expanded from being a qualifier of moderate to high status when it defined many people in one document, to one increasingly more limited to those of the highest status, when referring to *primates* like John de Primicerio, Ildebrandus and Stephen de Imiza, especially when associated to the qualifying *eminentissimus vir*. The title was used for Theophylact and Crescentius II, for example in 927 and 987, though they had more elevated ones too.⁶¹ The use of the separate titles of either consul or *dux* without the combination of the two, interestingly, seems to have been used, though also rather indiscriminately, only at the highest level, with *dux* alone used in twelve docu-

⁵⁶ LP I, Gregory I, 312–314.

⁵⁷ For the Bull of Agapitus II see above n. 30; Cecchelli 1935; Burgarella 2001; see also Arnaldi 1982; P. Schramm 1984, 57–63; Görich 1993, 250–256.

⁵⁸ LP II, John XIII, p. 252.

⁵⁹ Regino of Prüm, *Chronicon*, a. 872, a. 881, trans. MacLean; *Annales Fuldenses*, a. 896, trans. Reuter, 133–134; LP II, Valentine, c. 7, p. 72, and Hadrian II, c. 3, p. 173.

⁶⁰ Solmi 1944.

⁶¹ 927 (Theophylact): RS no. 62; 987 (Crescentius) see *Regesto dell'abbazia di Sant'Alessio all'Aventino*, no. 3, ed. Monaci, 368–369.

ments when referring to men such as Theodorus *dux* in 939 or Demetrius de Melioso in 961, but also sometimes more specifically for the most powerful men around Rome, such as Ingebaldus *dux et rector* of Sabina in 939.⁶² Likewise, while the title of consul was fairly generously given in 837, it became more restricted in the tenth century, when it too was associated only with Theophylact in 963, John and Crescentius II sons of Crescentius in 988, and Demetrius de Melioso in 946⁶³ – fewer than ten documents in the tenth century. It could be sometimes associated with another title, for example that of *magister censi Urbis Romae* in 850 and *tabellio Urbis Romae* in 927,⁶⁴ at which point it was still at a lower level of importance, compared to those of Theophylact consul, and Crescentius *consul et senator*. Clearly, there was a conflation of titles meant to be reminiscent of the Roman tradition in the later ninth and early tenth centuries, but there appears to have been a change across the tenth century, with a more hierarchical and restrictive application as time went on. This ‘specialization’ first of all separated the *dux*, and at a lower level, the *comes*, used sometimes for city aristocrats but increasingly for the dominant figures of the papal territories, such as Ingebald of Sabina – men who were not in fact part of the papal government of the city – and the consuls, the aristocracy whose power was city-based, associated with papal posts, such as Theophylact as *vestararius*, John de Primicerio and, in the ultimate case, Alberic and Crescentius, with the ultimately elevated titles of *senator* and *illustrissimus*.⁶⁵ The title of *senator*, and of *illustrissimus*, which had gradually disappeared after the eighth century, was resurrected as the highest one by Alberic as part of his revival of classical Rome, and was presumably meant to apply to the men governing Rome, to himself in 937, 938 and 945 as *omnium Romanorum senator*. It was later assumed by others who saw themselves in this light, Gregorius *Romanorum senator* in 986, and Crescentius in 989 as *omnium Romanorum senator*.⁶⁶ The use of all such titles was not simply self-assumed, and examples show people being addressed as such, for example in a letter from Eugenius Vulgarius to

⁶² Gregorio of Catino, *Il Regesto di Farfa*, n. 400 (doc. 372), ed. Giorgi/Balzano, vol. 3, 79–80.

⁶³ RS no. 123: *Theophilactus eminentissimus consul* in 963; *Regesta Honorii Papae* 3, ed. Pressutti, 1, cxx–cxi for *Iohannes et Crescentius illustrissimi viri filii domini Crescentii consulis et ducis qui dicitur de Theodora* in 988; *Regesta Honorii Papae* 3, ed. Pressutti, no. 1 for *Demetrius eminentissimus consul et dux filiusque Meliosi* in 946.

⁶⁴ RS no. 31: *Anastasius consul et magistro censi urbis Romae* in 850; RS no. 62: *Leo in Dei nomine consul et tabellio urbis Romae* in 927.

⁶⁵ *Theophilactus vestararius*: Sergia and Bonifacius children of *Theophilactus vesterarius* and *Theodora vesterarissa* in 900 circa, see Mai 1831, 215; in 927, *Liber Largitorius*, no. 82, ed. Zucchetti, vol. 1; S. Gregorio no. 4, ed. Bartola, 22: *Ioannes consul et dux qui vocatur de Primicerio* in 983; BAV Codices Vaticani Latini, Fondo Galletti 12632, pp. 313–317 [formerly ASV Indice 224]: *Dominus Crescentius excellentissimus vir et omnium Romanorum senator atq[ue] glorioso comes* in 989; Zimmermann 1984, no. 72 (a. 936), pp. 120–124 or no. 85 (a. 938), pp. 146–148: *magnificus vir Albericus, gloriosissimus princeps atque omnium Romanorum senator*; S. Gregorio no. 68, ed. Bartola, 297: *Albericus Domini gratia humilis [later gloriosus] princeps atque omnium Romanorum senator* in 945.

⁶⁶ *Cartario di S. Maria in Campo Marzio*, ed. Carusi, no. 1: *Gregorii Romanorum senatoris* (a. 986).

someone of importance in the Roman Church calling him *episcoporum venerantissimo* [...] *ac senatori primo*, and to one Geminus as consul, admittedly by a writer who defined the success of Pope Sergius as the man who had restored the Rome of the Fabii and the Scipioni.⁶⁷ The title was not limited to men, but used extensively by the women of the Theophylact/Alberic family: Marozia II, Theophylact's granddaughter, wife of the *vestararius* Theophylact, *senatrix omnium Romanorum*, and her sister Stefania *senatrix*, mostly also qualified as *illustrissima*, as was their sister Teodora III, and then Gregory de Tusculum son of Marozia II, and Crescentius II.⁶⁸ At the summit of the pyramid was, of course, the *princeps* title revived by Alberic for himself with a very different meaning from such Carolingian titles as used by, for example, Louis III in 901: not as the leading members of the court, and not only imitating the titles of southern Italian princes,⁶⁹ but also modelled on the title and role of Augustus, the *primus inter pares* among senators, the *cuncto senatus* as defined in a 958 *placitum*.⁷⁰

The family of the *vestararius* Theophylact *gloriosissimus* and his wife Theodora *vesterarissa* or *vesteratrix* were in control of the city at the turn of the tenth century, and he was succeeded by their daughter Marozia *senatrix Romanorum*, who ruled the city after her father's death until 932. In 932 Marozia's son Alberic famously rejected her third marriage to king Hugh of Provence or of Arles, rebelling against his perceived humiliation by Hugh when, as his stepson, Alberic brought him a basin of water for Hugh to wash his hands before the nuptial banquet, and Hugh shouted at him for not being polite enough; Alberic used the opportunity to rally the Roman aristocracy around him against the foreigners, he disposed of his mother by imprisoning her, and ruled as *princeps atque omnium Romanorum senator* from 932, though he himself married Hugh's daughter Alda.⁷¹ He was succeeded in 954 by his son Octavian, who later became Pope John XII (956–964).

Alberic's court is best seen in his chief remaining act of government, the 942 *placitum*. The main figures at this point, and into the second half of the tenth century, were Benedict Campaninus, Stephen de Imiza son of Ildebrand, Demetrius de Melioso, and John de Primicerio.⁷² Benedict Campaninus was described as *eminentissimus vir et gloriosus dux*.⁷³ Demetrius di Melioso too was *eminentissimus consul et dux* by

⁶⁷ Eugenius Vulgarius, *Sylloga* ed. in P. Schramm 1984, no. 33, 52–53.

⁶⁸ RS no. 64: *Marozza senatrix omnium Romanorum* (a. 959); RS no. 124: *Marozza excellentissima femina atque senatrix* (a. 961); Zimmermann 1984, no. 205 (a. 970), pp. 404–406: *Stefania clarissima senatrix*; *Regesto dell'abbazia di Sant'Alessio all'Aventino*, no. 3 (a. 987), ed. Monaci, 368: *Stefania illustrissima femina comitissa senatrix*.

⁶⁹ On Alberic's titles see above note 61 and also, for *princeps* on its own, for example Zimmermann 1984, no. 85 (a. 938), pp. 146–148, *Albericus gloriosus princeps Romanorum*; Labruzzi 1912; Wickham 2015, 24, 190; Wickham 2000.

⁷⁰ RS no. 20.

⁷¹ Benedict of Soracte, *Chronicon*, ed. Zucchetti, 165–167; Liutprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis* 3, 45–46, ed. Becker, 97–98.

⁷² RS no. 155.

⁷³ RS no. 35: *Benedicti eminentissimi viri et gloriosi duci* (a. 943).

946;⁷⁴ he was one of John XII's envoys to Otto I and for Liutprand, he was the *illustrior* of the Roman *optimates*.⁷⁵ His son was John *excellentissimus vir*, and in 987 he, like his father, was *eminentissimus consul* [sic] *et dux*, with two *nobilissime* sisters (married to a *nobilis vir* and a *consul et dux*).⁷⁶ John de Primicerio, as his name suggests, was presumably the son of a papal office-holder. Like Benedict Campaninus, he was one of the great aristocrats present at the court cases in 966 and 983, and also the executor of the will of Stephen de Imiza, as *consul et dux*. His son Leo was called *illustris*,⁷⁷ perhaps the title which was historically most directly associated with the foremost Roman families, and a title often applied to women as well, as had been the case in the Late Roman Empire for the highest-ranking members of the Senate. Before 1000, we find it recorded nearly forty times, over half of which apply to the people just mentioned above and/or their close relatives: the families of Theophylact and Alberic, the de Imiza, the de Primicerio, the Crescentii, and their wives.⁷⁸

But neither Theophylact nor Alberic were consistent about their titles; they were taking up a range of past images without settling for any one on a permanent basis, which indicates that they themselves were perhaps creating their legitimacy on the basis of classicizing formulae, in other words picking and choosing what they thought most fit out of a body of symbols, titles and ideas of power. I should like to show how this affected their perception of their own role within the body politic of the city.

Traditional historiography has made much of the 'Italian' or 'national' versus 'foreign' or 'German' attitudes in Rome and in Italy in the tenth century.⁷⁹ While current perceptions have shifted away from this perceived nineteenth century 'nationalist' attitude, there is some indirect continuation of it among some historians who see the success of Alberic and the Crescentii as a form of the tenth century dislocation of the Carolingian world, and thus as an attempt by individual local powers, be they regions or ethnic groups, to move away from the centralising power of the empire and to gain independence.⁸⁰ It seems to me plausible to see the political development of tenth-century Rome in the terms suggested by Delogu, Wickham and Di Carpegna Falconieri,⁸¹ as an attempt to reverse the ninth-century expansion of papal power in European terms, and to treat Rome as only a part of the wider political man-

74 *Documenti dell'archivio della cattedrale di Velletri*, no. 1 (a. 946), ed. Stevenson, 73: *Demetrius eminentissimus consul et dux filiusque Meliosi*.

75 Liutprand, *Historia Ottonis* 6, ed. Becker, 162–163.

76 *Regesto dell'abbazia di Sant'Alessio all'Aventino*, no. 2 (a. 987), ed. Monaci, 365–368: *Iohannes eminentissimus consul et dux filiusque Demetrii*, with his sisters Boniza and Theodora *nobilissime femine*, wives of *Franco nobilis vir* and *Gregorius consul et dux*.

77 *Ecclesiae S. Maria in Via Lata Tabularium* no. 10 A, ed. Hartmann: *Leo [tt illustris] filius Iohannis de primicerio* (a. 981); *S. Gregorio* no. 4 (a. 983), ed. Bartola, 23: *Leo illustris filius Ioannis de Primicerio*.

78 Wickham 2015, 195.

79 Most obvious representative of this debate is Kölmel 1935a.

80 Keller 2015, 280–281.

81 Delogu 2000b; Wickham 2015, 24–25; Di Carpegna Falconieri 2002.

date of the western empire, to return the government of the city and the remit of its bishop to a more specifically Roman one, rather than the European political power towards which it had been gradually moving under the Carolingians, and which the Ottonians revived with even more enthusiasm through their appointment of 'German' popes. If we accept this, then the choices made by the Roman aristocracy to try and control papal appointments, and to control the running of the city, seem to me to be manifestations of this 'anti-internationalism', and of a return to the structures of government of a more 'secular' Rome, for which the best model would have therefore been a pre-Constantinian, or even pre-imperial, Rome. One could then interpret Alberic's opposition to the rule of Hugh of Provence over the city, and by Crescentius II to that of the Ottonians in this light. The issue was not simply one of control over the papacy, but also, in the case of Alberic specifically, an attempt to reduce the influence of the popes to what he probably saw as its rightful remit, that of ministering to the church of Rome, rather than, on the Carolingian model that it had increasingly adopted, being a political power controlling areas of the remit of the prince.

To that extent, one could suggest that Alberic's was a truly determined attempt at revival of the real power of Rome in the sense of the old republic, rather than that of spiritual tourism of the papacy, which was mostly centred on pilgrimage. Alberic and his 'court' clearly tried to put in place policies based on two goals: that of reviving Roman classical structures, such as the titles of Urban Prefect and the Senate, and that of attempting to create a more secular, Roman focus to their rule, opposed to the papacy's perception, which had become too focused on its European level. Such aims can be guessed at from Alberic's acts as a ruler. We have very few surviving coins of Alberic: on them he uses the title of *patricius* in the first instance, which, it has been argued, was meant to show that his position was granted by the Byzantine emperor.⁸² This may have been so, but in that case it would have been because he sought help against Hugh from the Byzantines – such a title might show that they may have considered giving it, and that they granted Alberic a title just below that of the emperor, and one previously used for the exarchs.⁸³ However, once he got rid of Hugh and did not need such help any more, Alberic only used the *princeps* title. But Alberic's view of his power was that it was given to him by the *populus Romanus* as full sovereignty – which explains his minting of coins.

Another way in which Alberic acted as a ruler was that, while fighting against a possible imperial rule by Hugh, he himself acted as an emperor. We can see this firstly through his founding and reforming of monasteries, and secondly through his supporting a 'rezoning' of the heart of imperial Rome through patronage and euergetism, as in the *Campo Kaleolonis*.⁸⁴ Alberic saw monastic reform as part of the role of the emperor to look after the good of the church. At a time when there was

⁸² Labruzzo 1912, 147–149; Fusconi 2012. I am grateful to A. Rovelli for the latter reference.

⁸³ Labruzzo 1912, 147.

⁸⁴ Meneghini/Santangeli Valenzani 2004, 180–186.

no emperor, this would have to be part of his responsibility as a ruler: he could argue that he had to do it since the function of emperor was suspended. He was a major monastic reformer and his family granted lands to major monasteries in and outside Rome, and he attempted to control both land and government rights in Lazio, notably through having his own men in control, such as Benedict Campaninus *gloriosus dux*.⁸⁵ He tried to re-establish territorial control over the *Patrimonium S. Petri*, through officials answering to him. At the same time, even as he took control of monasteries like Subiaco, he did not turn his lands and that of his family, held as emphyteutic land from the church, into patrimonial land, nor did he in fact attempt to build a dynasty.⁸⁶ There was on his part a distinct lack of interest in expansion outside Rome or Lazio; no attempt at direct kingship or empire, no patrimonialization of family wealth.

And this, to my mind, implies that, at the same time as he carried out a revival of an ancient Rome, with republican memories, and some of the duties and roles of an emperor, Alberic also showed either an uncertain understanding of what ancient Roman rule meant, or, far more likely, he was constructing his own idea of ancient Roman rule in an antiquarian style. Alberic's cultivation of the Roman past, especially in its republican tradition: the revival of the Senate and the office of Prefect of the City, head of the judicial system, as well as of his own title of *princeps* of the Senate, the naming of his son Octavian, his use of his name on the coinage, his idea of the prince's euergetism, was a deliberate classicizing act.⁸⁷ At the same time, interestingly, he did not attempt to create a government in the Roman style, notably in terms of legislation or justice. There are, extraordinarily for one so attached to the Roman tradition, fewer documents from Alberic's rule than from almost any other of that period in the city, and only one which could be definitely seen as a 'public' act, referring to a meeting of his 'court': the record of the *placitum* held in his palace at SS Apostoli in 942.⁸⁸ Alberic did not date his documents by his own rule but by that of the popes. He not only rejected his mother's marriage to King Hugh but also, after having thrown Hugh out of Rome, he deliberately moved out of Castel S. Angelo, where Hugh and his mother had been ensconced, back to SS Apostoli, a symbolic move away from a fortified residence, as used by tyrants alone,⁸⁹ to a palace admittedly, but only the foremost one among his peers. He made a point of living in his own house as a *princeps* – even the doges in Venice, while living in their own houses before and after their period of office, did make the ducal palace their official residence

⁸⁵ Wickham 2015, 192.

⁸⁶ Wickham 2015, 24–25.

⁸⁷ P. Schramm 1984, 87–187; Görich 1993, 187–267.

⁸⁸ RS no. 55.

⁸⁹ Santangeli Valenzani 2015.

while in office.⁹⁰ The lack of attempt at patrimonializing the family lands at a time when the popes were particularly weak and would have been unable to resist pressure from the *princeps*, and the little preoccupation with the creation of dynastic rule in the mould of most post-Carolingian rulers, seems to suggest that Alberic did not see himself as a ruler of this kind, for example as a potential king of Italy, let alone an emperor. He may have done so early on, which may explain his (failed) attempt to gain a Byzantine bride; perhaps this failure brought him back to focusing on Roman interests alone later. Alberic seems to have not quite been able to decide whether he wished his rule to be one in the post-Carolingian model, or one fully in the Roman model. He may not have wanted to, or been able to, think entirely in terms of a tradition of 'secular' Roman government for himself and the city. This would not have been an impossible point of view at the time, with the doges of Venice thinking exactly like that. Moreover, it may not have been a totally alien view in Rome itself, if one believes, as I do, that there had been an earlier Roman attempt to revive a secular tradition of government. The idea of a return to the perceived greatness of ancient Rome by restoring the traditional separation between secular and ecclesiastical government in a pre-Constantinian mould, could have been exactly what Pope Sergius II's (844–847) brother Benedict was attempting to do. The *Liber Pontificalis*' hostility to Benedict seems to indicate that he attempted to build a more secular power in city, notably through the construction and restoration of the walls and other fortifications, 'despoiling' monasteries – as well as being guilty of simony, since he was indifferent to the spiritual qualities of future bishops and only wanted to raise money through the sale of episcopal charges in order to achieve his aim.⁹¹ Moreover, he claimed to have been given the 'primacy' or 'lordship at Rome'; some have explained this as some kind of imperial deputy title. The accusation of simony against Benedict clearly reflects the chronicler's shock at this abuse of the tools of power of the Church; but such an use of the Church patrimony to construct defenses at the expense of monasteries and churches could also be interpreted as an attempt to establish a distinct non-ecclesiastical and military rule over the city (in his case a more definitely imperial one), even though not to the extent that Alberic was to do subsequently.

Chris Wickham saw Alberic's request on his death-bed for his son to be made pope as an acknowledgement of the failure of his plans for a Roman republican revival.⁹² I would also see it as an acknowledgement of the fact that, by that stage, the association of Rome with the papacy, especially as a result of the northern European veneration for St Peter, had already made the city too much of a player on the European scale for a purely Roman regime for Rome to be still feasible. It was not really

⁹⁰ John the Deacon, *Chronicon Venetum* 3, 32, ed. and trans. Berto, 147, where John the Deacon highlights how one doge, after becoming ill and withdrawing from the ducal charge, leaves the palace to go back to this house.

⁹¹ LP II, Sergius II, cc. 40–42, pp. 97–98.

⁹² Wickham 2015, 24.

possible for Alberic 'to turn the pope into a mere bishop on a permanent basis'.⁹³ More importantly perhaps was the fact that, during his rule as a *princeps*, Alberic had succeeded in keeping away the various powers fighting for control of Italy, from Hugh of Italy to Berengar II and Adalbert, from gaining a foothold in the city. He had been successful in this on account of his own strong power and prestige, and of the fact that he was able to rule with the consensus of the main aristocratic factions in the city. It seems more than probable that, by the time of his death, he would have been able to see that the chances of his son doing the same as *princeps* would have been lesser, and that the consensus was unlikely to last, unless his son also came to be in charge of the pontificate.

The attempt to revert to a secular government was made again by the Crescentii who did, however, have to deal with an emperor too. Crescentius I de Theodora, *illustrissimus vir* and *consul et dux*, was already a political actor in the 970s, but it would be his wife's Sergia *illustrissima femina* and their sons, John and Crescentius II *illustrissimi viri*, who would be the major political figures in Rome in the 990, John with the title of *patricius*, Crescentius II as *excelentissimus vir et omnium Romanorum senator*.⁹⁴ The latter took control of Rome in the early 990s, and was still in charge when Otto III invaded the city, besieged and took Castel S. Angelo and beheaded him in 998, after having ritually mutilated and humiliated the pope set up by him, John XVI, Otto's very own old tutor John Philagathos.⁹⁵ We know both how keen Otto III was on 'his' Romans and on his plan for the *Renovatio imperii Romani*; for this, he put together a package comprising Roman titles for his court, such as the *prefectus navalis*, *imperialis palatii magistri*, *imperialis militiae magister*, mixed with Byzantine ones such as *logotheta* and *protospatharius*, partly known through his mother's roots and partly probably copying the administration of the papal court, itself modeled on that of the imperial palace of Constantinople in the first instance.⁹⁶ Moreover, he behaved in a manner which he thought suited to his imperial position, most famously through his splendid isolation when dining alone at a semi-circular table on a little stage.⁹⁷ Had this remained his only stance of imitation and restoration, as others had done before him, for example Berengar I when he was said in the *Gesta Berengarii* to have been received in the city with a proper Adventus ceremony, complete with proskynesis, salutation, coronation and acclamation,⁹⁸ Otto III might have been regarded by the Romans as yet another northern fan of Antiquity. The real problem arose when he made it clear that he intended actually to reside in Rome, probably on the Palatine in the old imperial seat of power, and to govern

⁹³ Wickham 2015, 24.

⁹⁴ *Regesta Honorii Papae* 3, ed. Pressutti, 1, cxxi; BAV Codices Vaticani Latini, Fondo Galletti 12632 [ex ASV Indice 224], 313–317.

⁹⁵ Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon* 4, 30–31, ed. Holtzmann, 167–169.

⁹⁶ Halphen 1905; Houben 2001, 27–34; Labande 1963; P. Schramm 1969.

⁹⁷ Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon* 4, 47, ed. Holtzmann, 185–186.

⁹⁸ *Gesta Berengarii imperatoris*, ed. and trans. Stella, 120–129; Hofmann 2002, 547–556.

from there. As previously suggested, most ‘foreigners’ thought that Rome meant the Vatican and St Peter’s, and most Romans were quite happy to allow them to live with this delusion. Having Otto III actually wanting to take over the city of Rome itself was, however, definitely not an acceptable situation, for either the Crescentii or any other important Roman family, possibly not even for the allegedly pro-imperial de Imiza.

The Crescentii had some of same problems as rulers of Rome that Alberic had had, but for them too the focus of their interest and political power was the city – Chris Wickham had shown how Rome was sufficiently important and rich for one to be satisfied with controlling it rather than bothering with external struggles in Italy.⁹⁹ Had the emperor been like the Carolingians, or even like Otto I, who focused on St Peter’s, one could live with that. The problem with Otto III was first of all that he wanted to rule from Rome and in Rome, which would have been unacceptable to the Romans, and secondly that the pope at this time, Gregory V, was his appointee as well as his German relative Bruno; neither could possibly have endeared him to the Romans. Crescentius II responded by pushing out Gregory V and putting in place his own pope, John XVI. But even after having Crescentius II executed and John XVI punished in 998, this did not allowed him to regain control of the city: Otto was effectively thrown out of Rome, never to return – though he is unlikely of course to have accepted this dismissal had he lived longer. Gregory V was accepted back briefly before his end death in 999, and Otto again chose the next pope, Silvester II, but he was an outsider, a Frenchman and a well-known scholar under his name of Gerbert, and therefore probably a more acceptable compromise. Mainly, though, in Rome itself, Crescentius II’s son John gained an even stronger position than his father’s as Rome’s effective ruler with the titles of *patricius urbis* or *patricius senatus* or *patricius Romanorum* up to his death in 1012.¹⁰⁰

The various perceptions of Rome in the ninth and tenth centuries referred to the present as well as the past: *aurea Roma*, *Roma caput mundi*, *rerum suprema potestas*, *terrarium terror*, *fulmen quod fulminat orbem*,¹⁰¹ the city of St Peter and the capital of the *patrimonium* of St Peter, the city of Augustus and Trajan, the city of Constantine, and the capital of the Christian Roman Empire, even Republican Rome, ‘mistress of the nations’, *res publica Romanorum*. Most of them were proposed by the creators of ideology, papal or imperial, and by outsiders looking at the city and its associations with the Roman Empire, the martyrs, and especially St Peter. For the Roman aristocracy, as far as we can tell in the tenth century, when we begin to have enough evidence, one can speculate that they too ‘bought’ into this scenario, and associated their own power with that of the rising importance of the papacy. This is, for example, Delogu’s view about the use of the past in Rome, and once which can be justified

⁹⁹ Wickham 2015, 192.

¹⁰⁰ Wickham 2015, 199–200. See also Scholz 2006.

¹⁰¹ Eugenius Vulgarius, *Sylloga* ed. in P. Schramm 1984, no. 33, 52–53; *Libellus de imperatoria potestate in urbe Roma*, ed. Zucchetti, 191–210.

from the overall narrative.¹⁰² I would propose, however, that the importance of the actual, real presence of the traces of imperial Rome visible to the naked eye in the city, and their impact in everyday life for reference purposes, as well as being part of the folklore of the city, and the sheer long-term memory of the association of power with words like senate, consul, *princeps*, were still part of the ideological mental landscape of the city. Di Carpegna Falconieri has pointed out the importance of the concept of *romanitas* to Romans in legal terms, not because of some major legal distinctions at this point between Roman and Lombard law, but because it was a way of expressing belonging.¹⁰³ There was a clear understanding that Rome had been great and no longer was, as the beginning of the *Libellus de imperatoria potestate in urbe Roma* says:

*Priscis temporibus imperial decus effloruit Romae, sub cuius dominatione diversa consistebant regna, et cui cunctae gentes propria submittebant colla. Constituit ergo consules, qui cotidiano usu regni gubernacula consilio disponebant. Erant namque distributa officia per senatores et magistratus, prout unicuique ministerium opere competeat.*¹⁰⁴

In earlier times the imperial ornament flourished in Rome, under the power of which were various kingdoms and to which all these peoples bowed their heads. It appointed consuls, who on a daily basis dispensed the government of the kingdom through their counsel. Many offices were distributed, senators and magistrates, to each in accordance with their competence for that particular task. (My translation)

Completing it with a nostalgic yearning for it, when mentioning how, when Lothar I was emperor in Rome:

*ubi et ampliori quadam usum est potestate, habens strenuos viros eius urbis, scientes antiquam imperatorum consuetudinem, et intimantes Caesari, qui suggerebant illi, repetere antiquam imperatorum dominationem.*¹⁰⁵

while according to custom power was greater, having strong men from the city itself, with knowledge of ancient imperial law, suggesting to Cesar and intimating to him that he should restore the ancient rule of the emperors. (My translation)

Even Liutprand, in his fictionalized account of Alberic's speech to the Romans after his quarrel with Hugh, made this point – no friend of Alberic, we must assume that he would have thought it plausible for the *princeps* to have said these things, and be taken seriously:

“The dignity of the Roman city is led to such depth of stupidity that it now obeys the command of a prostitute. For what is more lurid and more debased than that the city of Rome should per-

¹⁰² Delogu 2015, esp. p. 318; see also Di Carpegna Falconieri 2002, 92–93.

¹⁰³ Di Carpegna Falconieri 2012a, 85–87.

¹⁰⁴ *Libellus de imperatoria potestate in urbe Roma*, ed. Zucchetti, 191.

¹⁰⁵ *Libellus de imperatoria potestate in urbe Roma*, ed. Zucchetti, 200.

ish by the impurity of one woman, and the one time slaves of the Romans, the Burgundians, I mean, should rule the Romans?”¹⁰⁶

As for Benedict of Soracte, his final lamentation about the fate of Rome, *at tantis genta oppressa et conculcata*, now under the Saxon yoke, daughter after having been mother, holding the scepter and supreme power over kings, has become a well-known topos.¹⁰⁷

Despite this awareness and the lamentations on it, it remains clear that there was enough of the glory of Rome left on the ground to make it highly visible and desirable to be associated with it, and proud of it if one was a Roman born and bred – maybe even to use it as part of one’s day to day life. This, obviously, is precisely what led to Liutprand’s alleged scandalized attitude to John XII, who, according to him, was known to *in ludo alea Iovis, Veneris, ceterarum demonum adiutorium poposcisse* – ‘invoke the names of Jupiter, Venus and other demons when playing dice’ – as the pope was accused of doing at the synod which deposed him in 963.¹⁰⁸

106 Liutprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis* 3, 45, trans. Squatriti, 134.

107 Benedict of Soracte, *Chronicon*, ed. Zucchetti, 186.

108 Liutprand, *Historia Ottonis* 6, ed. Becker, 162–163. Grabowski 2015 has shown convincingly how deliberate as well as successful Liutprand’s hatchet job on John XII has been; the interesting fact remains that making such an accusation of worship of the pagan gods would have seemed a plausible sin for a Roman to engage in, in the eyes of Liutprand’s Ottonian audiences.