The invention of the papacy

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For Sue and Lydia Barritt (again)

Contents

Short abstract

This thesis has two main aims. The first is to examine the intellectual development of the later ninth-century papacy in its Roman context, including its engagement with the outside world and the remarkable levels of 'papal myth-making' prevalent in later ninth-century Rome. It examines the careers of some of the key figures in this 'myth-making', namely Anastasius Bibliothecarius, John the Deacon, Gauderic of Velletri and Formosus, and investigates the linkages between this 'myth-making' process and the papacy's involvement with the outside world. It also briefly charts the decline of this remarkably lively and energetic intellectual culture, and looks at Rome's descent into aristocratic in-fighting at the end of the end of the ninth and beginning of the tenth centuries, symbolised most obviously by the disputes over the papacy of Formosus and the legitimacy or otherwise of episcopal transfer.

The second main aim of the thesis is to examine how the 'myth-making' in Rome affected the papacy's international engagement during the later ninth century. It does this by investigating the papacy's involvement with the conversions of Bulgaria and Moravia during the later ninth century, which were both notable for developed, detailed and sustained involvement from the papacy and from Roman clerics more generally, and for centring around a glorious figure from the papal past - Gregory I in the case of Bulgaria, and Clement I for Moravia. The thesis argues that these conversions were an obvious consequence of the 'myth-making' in Rome at the end of the ninth century. It also contrasts this extensive papal involvement with the relatively low-level papal involvement in the conversions of Bohemia and Poland in the tenth century, and suggests some reasons for this connected to the decline of intellectual culture in ninth-century Rome.

Long abstract

This thesis is an examination of the development of the papacy during the late ninth century. It does this through two specific themes: an investigation into two of the clerical intellectuals active in Rome during the late ninth century, namely Anastasius Bibliothecarius and Formosus, and a parallel investigation into papal/Roman involvement with the conversion of central and eastern Europe during this period, done through two specific case studies, namely the conversion of Bulgaria and of Moravia.

The confident and energetic papacy of Nicholas I (858-867) nurtured a new generation of Roman clerics, who came to run the Roman church in the 870s, and who engaged in an ambitious programme of 'papal myth-making', centred on rewriting the papal past in a form that was useful to them in the 870s. These figures included most notably Anastasius Bibliothecarius, the future Pope John VIII, John the Deacon, Gauderic of Velletri, and the future Popes Marinus I and Formosus. This circle effectively 'invented' a new papal past, drawing on both the great figures of the late antique papacy (Gregory I above all), and the papacy's (limited) history of Christianisation in 'outer' Europe in the seventh and eighth centuries. The papacy was then able to use this invented past to provide itself with a model and literary template for its engagement with the outside world, including, but not limited to, its conversion activities in eastern Europe in the late ninth century, most notably the Christianisation of Bulgaria and Moravia, in which Romans, Byzantines and Franks were all serious players. These conversion activities both had at their core constructive engagement with a 'model case', invariably one of the great figures of papal history - Gregory I for the Bulgarians, and Clement I for the Moravians; papal history was rewritten for these conversions to meet the current needs of the papacy. The remarkable energy unleashed by these intellectual luminaries in their attempts to create a new papal past initially met with considerable success, but was inevitably soon misdirected to interpersonal rivalries, most notably between John VIII and

Formosus, which led to a falling away of the dense engagement with the past in the Rome of the 870s, and a petering away of the ‘Roman renaissance’ which these figures represent.

Rome then entered the tenth century consuming itself with internal debates between partisans of one or another of these figures, rather than continuing the energy and drive of the papal myth-making of the 860s and 870s. The papacy descended into what has not unreasonably been termed its ‘dark century’, where the confident and energetic activity of the late Carolingian papacy effectively ran out of steam. This is not to resurrect old narratives of a ‘pornocracy’, a totally dysfunctional papacy, or rule by lay aristocrats (though there is some truth in the last of these, which is in itself not necessarily a bad thing). The tenth-century papacy certainly still functioned, but does not seem to have had the same drive and ambition as we can see in the late ninth century. One example of this, which the thesis investigates in some detail, is the conversions of Bohemia and Poland to Christianity in the tenth century. These were two significant conversion activities, which took place fairly soon after those of Bulgaria and Moravia, and are both notable for a lack of consistent papal involvement, or even interest, in marked contrast to Bulgaria and Moravia. There was some, to be sure, but nowhere near the sustained engagement the papacy was able to maintain in the late ninth century, when the papal myth-making and ‘invention of the papacy’ was in full swing. The driving force in these conversions was the Ottonians, not the popes.

However, amongst the ‘papal reform movement’ of the eleventh century, we can see a certain revival of interest in the creative exploits of the late ninth-century popes, most notably in the works of Humbert of Silva Candida, Desiderius of Montecassino and Pseudo-Liudprand. The echoes these people picked up on during the eleventh century were minor, but nonetheless present, elements in their attempts to reassert papal authority over all of Christendom, leading ultimately to the emergence of the ‘papal monarchy’ in the ‘high’ middle ages. Thus, the ‘invention of the papacy’ in the ninth century was itself an element of the social memory of Rome and the papacy in the eleventh century, and onwards.

To move onto the individual chapters, the thesis starts with the introduction, which sets out the basic facts of the source base and the historiographical context for the rest of the thesis, and includes a basic sketch of the structure of the Roman curia, and the people who supported/engaged with papal activities, during the period in which the thesis is set. It first sets out where the thesis stands historiographically, and looks at some of the most significant scholars to have studied late ninth-century Rome and the papacy. It makes the point that, despite the pioneering efforts of these scholars, there is still quite a lot of work to be done in terms of investigating late ninth-century Rome, as the existing historiography is usually either out of date or too focussed on the Carolingian dynasty. It then moves onto an examination of the Roman curia and the power groups within the city of Rome itself, and briefly sets out the main features of the papal *scrinium*. It also engages with the work of Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri on the medieval Roman clergy, noting his emphasis on the development of new clerical offices in late ninth-century Rome, and on the increasing importance of a 'clerical' rather than a 'lay' office-holding class. Finally, the introduction examines the source base for the thesis, with a particular focus on the two main classes of sources that I have used, namely papal letters and the *Liber Pontificalis* (LP). It sets out the main points of how papal documents were preserved, including the vital fact that our knowledge of Roman politics tends to come from outside Rome itself, and makes some speculations about the nature of early medieval papal registers in general. It then examines the *LP*, including an investigation into the purpose of that collection's later papal lives, engaging with the recent theories of François Bougard as to why these later lives continued to be written.

Chapter 1 is a study of politics within the city of Rome itself. It takes the form of a fairly narrative summary of the careers of two key players in late ninth-century Roman politics, namely Anastasius Bibliothecarius, the failed papal candidate in 855 who went on to become papal librarian under Nicholas I, Hadrian II and John VIII, and Formosus, an influential if controversial cleric on both the 'domestic' and 'international' stages in the 860s and 870s, who went on to become pope

himself from 891 to 896. The chapter argues that the careers of both Anastasius and Formosus show the fundamentally 'international' nature of Roman politics during the late ninth century - both of them were sent on various diplomatic missions by the pope, and both of them forged connections for themselves well beyond the boundaries of the city of Rome. The chapter also investigates the roles of Anastasius and (less so) Formosus in the so-called 'papal myth-making' of the later ninth century, i.e. the rediscovery of glorious figures from the papal past, most obviously Popes Gregory I and Clement I in order to legitimise the papacy's policies during the later ninth century. It notes especially the activities of the group surrounding Anastasius, consisting of John the Deacon and Gauderic of Velletri, and their interest in Gregory and Clement. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the issue of episcopal transfer, i.e. the moving of a bishop from one see to another, and how this also involved engagement with the distant past to support and oppose contemporary political developments.

Chapter 2 is an examination of the papacy's role in the conversion of Bulgaria to Christianity in the late ninth century. Although ultimately Bulgaria became and remained part of Constantinople's 'sphere of influence' in the church, nonetheless the lengths the papacy went to try to exert its influence over it means it provides an interesting case study of how popes attempted to exert their authority over the Christian world outside Rome. The two dominant themes of this chapter are competition between Rome and Constantinople, exemplified most obviously in the Photian schism, which is discussed in the chapter, and the use made by Rome/the papacy of the figure of Gregory the Great in the conversion of Bulgaria. It notes that in many ways the conversion of Bulgaria in the ninth century can be seen as a rewriting of the conversion of England in the late sixth and early seventh centuries, and that the figure of Gregory looms large in this development. Most notably, many of the letters sent to Bulgaria by the papacy during this time were consciously informed by Gregory's writings - so the 'papal myth-making' taking place in ninth-century Rome had one specific outplaying in the papacy's attempts to convert Bulgaria.

Chapter 3 then examines the papacy's role in the conversion of Moravia. It tracks the careers of Cyril and Methodios, the 'apostles to the Slavs', who started out as Byzantine missionaries but were eventually taken over by the bishops of Rome to convert the Moravian Slavs to western Christianity. It examines the conflicts this conversion brought with it between Rome and Constantinople, most notably on the subject of the liturgy Cyril and Methodios introduced into Moravia. It also also looks at the use of the figure of St Clement in this conversion, who played a very similar role to Gregory the Great in the conversion of Bulgaria, i.e. an impressive figure from the distant papal past being used as the symbolic centre of the conversion mission. Although Clement was arguably not as central to the conversion of Moravia as Gregory was to that of Bulgaria, he was still important, and, the chapter argues, can still profitably be seen as an example of the 'papal myth-making' taking place in Rome having real-world consequences in terms of the conversion of 'outer Europe' to Christianity.

Chapter 4 consists of narratives of the conversions of Bohemia and Poland to Christianity in the tenth century, investigating the growth of church structures as part of the ongoing 'state formation' processes in these areas. It argues that the key absence in these conversion narratives is the papacy, and that this is because the project of 'papal myth-making' that had been taking place in ninth-century Rome had run out of steam by the tenth century. Some of the reasons for this are explored in chapter 1, but they basically centre around the new interest in episcopal transfer we can see in tenth-century Rome, and the factionalism and infighting which this brought about among Roman clerics. One consequence of this is that Rome/the papacy seems to have lost interest in the international involvement which characterised it in the ninth century, with the result that fairly significant conversion processes, with close parallels in the not particularly distant past, were more or less overlooked by the papacy, and were instead dominated by the Ottonian dynasty. The chapter therefore makes the point that the active engagement with the outside world that was one of the

hallmarks of the ninth-century papacy was itself dependent on the intellectual dynamism prevalent in Rome during that time.

The epilogue is an investigation of some of the echoes of the ninth century in some eleventh-century writers. It fundamentally exists to give an outline of the circumstances surrounding the copying and preservation of John VIII's Register, which took place at Montecassino in the later eleventh century, and makes some suggestions as to why the Register was copied in the first place, and what it can tell us about attitudes to the the ninth-century papacy in Rome and in Montecassino. It also notes some of the interest in later ninth-century popes displayed by other eleventh-century writers such as Pseudo-Liudprand, Humbert of Silva Candida and Peter Damian, and suggests some of the reasons for this interest.

Corrections acknowledgements

The first version of this thesis was submitted more than a year ago, and was then obliterated in the viva and examiners' report. Carrying out the corrections has, to put it mildly, not been an easy process; this has been compounded by illness and significant personal difficulties. I hope, therefore, that it is not remiss of me to register my appreciation to those who have supported me specifically over the 426 days since the first submission: Peter Hanaway, Pauline Williams, Logan Hamilton, Chris de L'isle, Pan and Pippa Christoforou, Dylan James, Debbie Potter, Iris Tomé Valencia, Chris Wickham, Conrad Leyser, Trevor Barritt, Sue Barritt and Lydia Barritt. The original dedication still stands.

List of abbreviations

DBI - Dizionario biografico degli italiani

LP - Le Liber Pontificalis, ed. L. Duchesne, 2 vols (Paris, 1955)

MGH - Monumenta Germaniae Historica

NCMH - New Cambridge Medieval History

PG - Patrologiae Graecae, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1857-1866)

PL - Patrologia Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1844-1855)

Introduction

This introduction sets out to do two things. Firstly, it will investigate the sources on which this thesis is based, i.e. mostly papal letters, but also saints' lives, historical works like the *Liber Pontificalis*, and contemporary chronicles, and discuss how these came to be written, how they survived (or were lost), and the advantages and problems of using them for historical research. It will also investigate the workings of the papal bureaucracy in the early middle ages, to see how individual papal letters and letter collections came to be written, and to assess how much we can say about the composition of the papal bureaucracy and papal government in the early middle ages. Secondly, it will set out some of the main themes in the historiography of the early medieval papacy which affect this thesis, namely the dispute between Thomas Noble and Marios Costambeys over the existence or otherwise of an independent 'papal state' already by the eighth century, and give an overview of the key figures in historiography of the late ninth-century papacy.

It may be helpful to put the argument of the thesis in a nutshell here, at the outset, in an inevitably broad-brush and simplistic form, which will be nuanced considerably in what follows. The confident and energetic papacy of Nicholas I (858-867) nurtured a new generation of Roman clerics, who came to run the Roman church in the 870s, and who engaged in an ambitious programme of 'papal myth-making', centred on rewriting the papal past in a form that was useful to them in the 870s. These figures included most notably Anastasius Bibliothecarius, the future Pope John VIII, John the Deacon, Gauderic of Velletri, and the future Popes Marinus I and Formosus. This circle effectively 'invented' a new papal past, drawing on both the great figures of the late antique papacy (Gregory I above all), and the papacy's (limited) history of Christianisation in 'outer' Europe in the seventh and eighth centuries. The papacy was then able to use this invented past to provide itself with a model and literary template for its engagement with the outside world, including, but not limited to, its conversion activities in eastern Europe in the late ninth century,

most notably the Christianisation of Bulgaria and Moravia, in which Romans, Byzantines and Franks were all serious players. These conversion activities both had at their core constructive engagement with a ‘model case’, invariably one of the great figures of papal history - Gregory I for the Bulgarians, and Clement I for the Moravians; papal history was rewritten for these conversions to meet the current needs of the papacy. The remarkable energy unleashed by these intellectual luminaries in their attempts to create a new papal past initially met with considerable success, but was inevitably soon misdirected to interpersonal rivalries, most notably between John VIII and Formosus, which led to a falling away of the dense engagement with the past in the Rome of the 870s, and a petering away of the ‘Roman renaissance’ which these figures represent.

Rome then entered the tenth century consuming itself with internal debates between partisans of one or another of these figures, rather than continuing the energy and drive of the papal myth-making of the 860s and 870s. The papacy descended into what has not unreasonably been termed its ‘dark century’, where the confident and energetic activity of the late Carolingian papacy effectively ran out of steam. This is not to resurrect old narratives of a ‘pornocracy’, a totally dysfunctional papacy, or rule by lay aristocrats (though there is some truth in the last of these, which is in itself not necessarily a bad thing). The tenth-century papacy certainly still functioned, but does not seem to have had the same drive and ambition as we can see in the late ninth century. One example of this, which the thesis investigates in some detail, is the conversions of Bohemia and Poland to Christianity in the tenth century. These were two significant conversion activities, which took place fairly soon after those of Bulgaria and Moravia, and are both notable for a lack of consistent papal involvement, or even interest, in marked contrast to Bulgaria and Moravia. There was some, to be sure, but nowhere near the sustained engagement the papacy was able to maintain in the late ninth century, when the papal myth-making and ‘invention of the papacy’ was in full swing. The driving force in these conversions was the Ottonians, not the popes.

However, amongst the ‘papal reform movement’ of the eleventh century, we can see a certain revival of interest in the creative exploits of the late ninth-century popes, most notably in the works of Humbert of Silva Candida, Desiderius of Montecassino and Pseudo-Liudprand. The echoes these people picked up on during the eleventh century were minor, but nonetheless present, elements in their attempts to reassert papal authority over all of Christendom, leading ultimately to the emergence of the ‘papal monarchy’ in the ‘high’ middle ages. Thus, the ‘invention of the papacy’ in the ninth century was itself an element of the social memory of Rome and the papacy in the eleventh century, and onwards.

Historiography

Before coming onto an investigation of the sources upon which this thesis rests, it will be useful to go through some of the historiographical issues currently prevalent in the study of the late ninth-century papacy. I will then come onto a summary of the main themes and trends concerning the papal chancery in the late ninth century; the sources are somewhat bewildering without some grounding in this, before coming onto the sources themselves at the end of this introduction. Each introductory section assumes knowledge of the section before it; to see the sources in their proper context involves an understanding both of the late ninth-century papal chancery, and of the historiography of the early medieval papacy more broadly.

The late ninth-century papacy stands at the intersection of two lines of development in the early middle ages. These are the rise and fall of Carolingian power in the eighth and ninth centuries, and, obviously, the history of the late antique and early medieval papacy up until, say, Gregory VII

(1073-1085).[1] To take the Carolingians first: the use the Carolingian family made of the papacy, and of the religious legitimacy it gave them, is so well-known to anyone with even a cursory interest in the middle ages that it does not need more than passing acknowledgement here. Charlemagne would almost certainly not have been able to present himself as the new Roman emperor without the legitimacy bestowed on him by the pope. It is also debatable whether he would have invaded northern Italy if the pope had not asked him to; though admittedly it is not difficult to imagine him coming up with another excuse, and some historians have. But the important point is fairly straightforward: no-one doubts that Rome and the papacy had a fundamental role to play in the origins, legitimation and elaboration of Carolingian kingship/emperorship, or that the popes were serious political and intellectual players in the Carolingian world right up until the mid-ninth century at the earliest (though the Carolingians were less interested in the city of Rome itself, as shall be seen in chapter 1, and, conversely, the popes were less interested in the detailed working-out of the Frankish self-defined political-religious mission).[2]

This thesis, though, begins with Nicholas I, who came to the papal throne in 858. If we go for a timescale of 'Carolingian history' from 751 to 888 (ignoring the historiographical debate about both ends of this)[3], it is therefore firmly situated in the late Carolingian world. Thus, a lot of the papal legitimation of Carolingian rule was already history by the point the thesis starts. Rather, the shift I start off with could be formulated as the papacy attempting to move the centre of gravity of

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[1] Throughout this thesis, titles are referred to in short form, to save space. Full references to all works cited can be found in the bibliography. The best survey of the Carolingians is now Costambeys et al, *The Carolingian World*; *NCMH* volume 2 is beginning to show its age, but is still the go-to reference work. Although there are untold numbers of studies of specific aspects of the early medieval papacy, there are surprisingly few overviews. Larson and Sissons, *Companion to the Medieval Papacy*, only really starts in 1046; Collins, *Keepers of the Keys*, is not great overall but (unsurprisingly) fine for the early middle ages. Actually, the best existing overview, at least from an English historiographical perspective, is probably the relevant parts of MacCulloch, *History of Christianity*. Arnaldi, 'L'età medievale', is excellent, though (obviously) very Italian in its historiographical foci.

[2] For Rome/the papacy as a legitimating tool for the Carolingians, see most obviously McKitterick, *Uses of the Past*, chapter 2; and now Nelson, *King and Emperor*.

[3] Costambeys et al, *Carolingian World*, p. 13, with refs.

the mythologisation of papal history back from Carolingian Francia to Rome. Nicholas I[4] is impossible to see as anything other than an extremely energetic and enterprising man, whose entire pontificate can profitably be understood as an attempt to bring back papal authority to Rome, where (he thought) it belonged. The most celebrated example of this is Nicholas' intervention in the marriage case of Lothar and Theutberga,[5] which shows a very forceful papal intervention in Frankish affairs; actually, though, this is not an especially good example of a new papal attitude, as popes were no strangers to pronouncing on matters such as Adoptionism or iconoclasm, the centres of which were quite a long way from Rome.[6] What was new in Nicholas' interventions, though, was the use he made of the papal past to justify what he was doing. The most obvious example of this is in his *Responsa* to the questions the Bulgarians, newly-converted to Christianity, had asked him concerning how to establish Christianity in a newly-cohering kingdom.[7] This document was itself consciously modelled on Gregory I's letters to the newly-converting Anglo-Saxons in the late seventh/early eighth century. Then, in the decade after Nicholas' death, the papal curia developed something of an obsession with Gregory I; indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that he only became Gregory 'the Great' as a result of this new interest in late ninth-century Rome.[8] This interest in Gregory cannot have come from nowhere; given that the majority of the Roman aristocrats mentioned above who were influential in the 870s were all significant members of the papal entourage under Nicholas, it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that Nicholas' marshalling of Gregorian memory caused a surge of interest in him in Rome, which played itself out with this

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[4] For whom see for overview Bougard, 'Niccolò I'.

[5] For which see Stone and West, *The Divorce*; Heidecker, *Divorce of Lothar II*; d'Avray, *Dissolving Royal Marriages*; idem, *Papacy, Monarchy and Marriage*.

[6] For a list of 'external' papal interventions in the eighth and ninth centuries, see Noble, 'The papacy in the eighth and ninth centuries', pp. 577ff. Most up to date works - adoptionism: Cavadini, *Last Christology of the West*; iconoclasm: Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era*.

[7] The *Responsa* is discussed in chapter 2; cf. Mayr-Harting, 'Two conversions'.

[8] John the Deacon, *VG*. 4.76 on greatness. See further Lehmann, 'Mittelalterliche Beinahmen'.

'myth-making' in the 870s. The upshot of this, at least as far as it relates to the Carolingians, is that we can see an attempt by Roman aristocrats to relocate Roman social memory, which they had implicitly ceded to Francia, back to Rome.[9]

The previous paragraph has begun to see references to the papal curia, and of 'papal myth-making' creeping in, which takes us firmly to the second, and more significant, historiographical context for this thesis, that of the general development of papal history in the early middle ages. It is often said that there is already a superabundance of academic work on the early medieval papacy (taking 'early medieval' as running roughly from 300 to 1000). This is emphatically true for late antiquity,[10] true for Gregory the Great,[11] more or less true for the eighth century,[12] just about true for the early Carolingians,[13] and not true for the late ninth and tenth centuries. There is, indeed, a sense in which modern papal historiography loses interest with the election of Nicholas I, who himself is often seen in a Frankish, rather than a Roman, context.[14] So for example, Thomas Noble's book on papal history stops in 825, and he has himself explicitly said that he has a very limited interest in papal history beyond the death of John VIII in 882.[15] Noble has probably done more than anyone else to shape the field of early medieval papal historiography in the last 40 years or so, at least in the English-speaking world (which does not necessarily mean that all his arguments have been

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[9] This is really a variation on the argument made by Leyser, 'Memory of Gregory', whose section 'Charlemagne's Gregory' is immediately followed by 'Rome's Gregory'.

[10] See Moorhead, *Popes and the Church of Rome*, with bibliography up to 2014.

[11] Most recently Demacopoulos, *Gregory the Great*, with refs to previous studies.

[12] Noble, *Republic of St Peter* is still the best existing overview of the papal long eighth century in terms of raw facts, even though Marios Costambeys has comprehensively disproved the core argument (see below).

[13] Goodson, *Rome of Pope Paschal*; Maskarinec, *City of Saints*, for two high-quality recent studies. Cf. Marios Costambeys' forthcoming book on Rome c. 535-962, which is likely to become the standard account for that period.

[14] This is true of all the works cited in n. 5. Stone, West and Heidecker are definitely writing about Frankish history; d'Avray is doing a *longue durée* study of the medieval papacy, which starts with Nicholas; none of them are looking at Nicholas I in the context of the early medieval papacy.

[15] Noble, *Republic*; idem, 'Morbidity and vitality', pp. 511, 521ff.

correct), so it is significant in and of itself that he sees such a clear cut-off date for the early medieval papacy.[16] But this sense does not end with him: Fred Engreen's article about John VIII's problems with Arab raiders in southern Italy,[17] for example, is very much a contribution to the history of (southern) Italy, rather than of the papacy; and Dorothee Arnold's examination of John VIII's pontificate very much sees him in the context of Frankish history, rather than exploring John in the context of early medieval papal history.[18] Even Girolamo Arnaldi's *Natale 875* is at least as much about Charles the Bald and Louis the German as it is about Rome or Italy.[19] There is nothing wrong with looking at John VIII, or Nicholas I, or Hadrian II, in the context of late Carolingian/ Frankish history (it is, indeed, important in its own right); but it does have a somewhat limited use in terms of what it tells us about their place within the history of the papacy.

In a sense, therefore, one of the aims of this thesis is to bring late ninth-century papal historiography back to a papal context, rather than a Carolingian one. Indeed, going with the broad distinction I have been making between 'papal' and 'Carolingian' studies, the late ninth-century papacy has been more or less adequately covered by historians interested primarily in seeing the papacy in a Carolingian context.[20] There is still some way to go, though, in looking at it from a papal perspective. Among the questions that remain unanswered are: to what extent did the papal bureaucracy and the *scrinium* change, or indeed stay the same, during the late ninth century? How extensive was papal interest in the Franks, as opposed to other regions of Europe (southern Italy, Spain, eastern Europe etc)? How did the claims made in late ninth-century papal letters to non-

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[16] Cf. Noble's bold assertion that 'Frankish protection curbed the worst social and political abuses in Rome…but as soon as the Carolingian protectorate disappeared, the papacy sank into a morass of social upheaval and political corruption', made in 'The papacy in the eighth and ninth centuries', p. 586.

[17] Engreen, 'Pope John VIII and the Arabs'.

[18] Arnold, *Johannes VIII.*

[19] Arnaldi, *Natale 875*, whose Frankish focus clearly influenced Sennis, 'Giovanni VIII'.

[20] See e.g. Arnold, *Johannes VIII*; Sennis, 'Giovanni VIII'; and (from an earlier generation) Ullmann, *Growth of Papal Government*.

Roman interlocutors match up against what their predecessors had been claiming in their letters? And perhaps most interesting of all: accepting that the papacy's socioeconomic power within the city of Rome was fundamentally built on local landholding and economic resources,[21] how did they justify and broadcast their power over the church to the wider world? What were the papacy's legitimation strategies? How did the bishop of what was by the late ninth century a city of relatively little political or strategic significance continue to be able to present himself as head of the (in theory) worldwide church, rather than the bishop of a city of more immediate political significance like Constantinople, Rheims, Pavia or Cologne?

A DPhil thesis trying to answer all these questions would be rather a bold enterprise. Those I focus on here are fundamentally centred around ideology and legitimation;[22] these themes run through every chapter that follows. A desire to get away from the 'Carolingian' view of the late ninth-century papacy has also led me to focus my attention on 'outer Europe', i.e., in this context, the newly-converting polities of Bulgaria and Moravia, as test cases to see how papal rhetoric worked in two specific contexts which can be meaningfully said to be outside Carolingian Europe.[23] It has also meant that I have largely side-stepped debates which seem to have been occurring in Rome about, say, whether Charles the Bald or Louis the German should have been crowned emperor in 875, or whether Rome in the 890s should owe allegiance to Arnulf of Carinthia or to Guy of Spoleto; though it would not be possible to ignore these altogether. The focus of this thesis is not Francia, or, more broadly, on the Carolingian *Teilreiche*; it is firmly on Rome, and on what can be broadly if slightly unfairly be described as 'outer' Europe.[24]

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[21] Wickham, *Medieval Rome*, chapter 2.

[22] For similar questions on the late antique papacy, Barritt, 'Roman revolution'.

[23] Though obviously the boundaries of Carolingian Europe, both geographical and chronological, were very fluid, as discussed by Costambeys et al, *Carolingian World*, pp. 9-15.

[24] The title of Wickham, *Inheritance*, chapter 20.

I said above that the idea that there is a 'superabundance' of existing work on the late ninth- and tenth-century papacy, from the perspective of the *longue durée* historiography of the papacy, is not true; fortunately, however, this does not mean that no work has been done whatsoever. In fact, a significant proportion of the best work that has been done on this subject shares this thesis' focus on Rome and eastern Europe. The *doyen* of studies of the late ninth-century papacy is the late nineteenth-century French Jesuit priest Arthur Lapôtre, who produced several examinations of Rome, the papacy and Roman society in the late ninth century.[25] After completing his doctoral thesis on Anastasius Bibliothecarius in 1883, Lapôtre moved onto his seminal work, *L'Europe et le Saint-Siège a l'époque carolingienne*, in 1895.[26] Aside from a digression at the end into Carolingian politics, where one senses his energy flagging,[27] Lapôtre's focus in this book was squarely on the significance of the conversions of Bulgaria and Moravia in the second half of the ninth century for the long-term history of the papacy. Lapôtre did not have much of an overriding argument, as the book was really a fairly positivist unearthing of facts done at a time when such things were still acceptable; all the same, it is significant that a study which clearly focuses on the papacy's role in central and eastern Europe has remained so influential for over one hundred years. Lapôtre's specific interest in Bulgaria was certainly a product of its time - it cannot be a coincidence that he discovered papal interest in the Balkans at precisely the time that the Balkans was the most crucial geopolitical flashpoint in Europe, and arguably the world;[28] it is also interesting that Lapôtre's emphasis on the failure of papal evangelisation of Moravia coincided with the beginnings of the

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[25] For an overview of Lapôtre's work, see Girolamo Arnaldi's comments in Lapôtre, *Etudes sur la papauté*.

[26] Lapôtre, *L'Europe et le Saint-Siège* (papal-focussed despite the title); Lapôtre never published the thesis in his lifetime, but André Vauchez edited it in 1978 - Lapôtre, *Etudes sur la papauté*.

[27] Chapter 4, 'L'empire carolingienne'.

[28] This is well outside the remit of this thesis, but interesting nonetheless; the most recent survey of late nineteenth-century European geopolitics is Evans, *Pursuit of Power*, chapter 8.

failure of the Austro-Hungarian state.[29] Be that as it may, Lapôtre's areas of focus do somewhat anticipate those of this thesis.

Another scholar who showed a great interest in the late ninth-century papacy was another Jesuit priest, Francis Dvornik, who published various books in the early to mid-twentieth century focussed mainly on relations between eastern and western Christendom (i.e., essentially, Rome and Constantinople).[30] Dvornik's work can be firmly situated within the 'papal' historiographical tradition - he nowhere shows any serious interest in papal relations with the Carolingians; indeed, he was significantly more interested in what the papacy was doing *vis-à-vis* the Byzantines than in its relations with anyone else, including the Bulgarians and Moravians. Bulgaria and Moravia, indeed, were seen by Dvornik as part of a 'battle-ground' between Rome and Constantinople in the late ninth century. Dvornik was also more interested in Moravia than in Bulgaria (because he was Czech); all the same, his work, at least in relation to this thesis, stands in the same general tradition as that of Lapôtre - i.e. seeing the late ninth-century papacy from the long-term perspective of papal history, together with the concomitant interest this brings in papal relations with Byzantium, rather than getting distracted by the various deeds of Frankish warlords.

A further twentieth-century scholar who displayed a great level of interest in the activities of the late ninth-century popes is the great Italian historian Girolamo Arnaldi. *Natale 875* has already been discussed; it is essentially a microhistory of the events that led to the coronation of Charles the Bald at Christmas 875, which does by definition mean it belongs more to the 'Carolingian' historiographical tradition than to the 'papal' one. Before publishing *Natale 875*, however, Arnaldi had already devoted a significant amount of attention to the history of the city of Rome in the mid- to late ninth century, and to what he memorably called the 'tarda e stanca rinascita carolina in

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[29] Disputed by Judson, *Habsburg Empire*.

[30] E.g., from many, Dvornik, *The Photian Schism*; idem, *Les Slaves, Byzance et Rome*; idem, *Les Légendes*.

territorio romano' during the 860s and 870s.[31] Essentially, the argument of his two major articles on this theme was that Rome during this period witnessed a remarkable level of intellectual energy and creativity; Arnaldi himself was most interested in the triumvirate of Anastasius, Gauderic and John the Deacon, but this can be extended to the other figures whom I listed earlier.[32] Arnaldi's work was not really part of 'papal' history, or at least cannot be placed in that historiographical stream quite as squarely as Lapôtre and Dvornik; nonetheless, his examinations of the late ninth century in the context of the city of Rome, rather than that of Carolingian Europe, are extremely useful for this thesis, and I have drawn on them extensively in chapter 1.

Lapôtre, Dvornik and Arnaldi have a place in the historiography of the late ninth-century papacy not dissimilar to the one held by Steven Runciman in the historiography of the Crusades; that is to say that, although they were all unquestionably great historians, and anyone working on their topics still has to cite them, scholarship has somewhat moved on since they were producing their best output. We can now turn back to the work of Thomas Noble. Noble's most significant contribution to the historiography of the early medieval papacy was his book *The Republic of St Peter*, published in 1984.[33] Although this book does not directly deal with the period covered by this thesis, the debate surrounding it does have some important implications, so it is worth discussing here. It is easiest to summarise Noble's argument by using his own words:

> Beginning in the last years of the seventh century a series of resolute and like-minded popes acting in concert with the local Roman nobility deliberately emancipated central Italy from the Byzantine Empire and transformed the region into a genuine state, the Republic of St Peter. After the middle of the eighth century,

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[31] Arnaldi, 'Giovanni Immonide', p. 46.

[32] Arnaldi, 'Giovanni Immonide'; idem, 'Anastasio Bibliotecario'.

[33] As well as *Republic of St Peter*, Noble has produced a huge amount of what are essentially think-pieces on the early medieval papacy as a whole; the most stimulating are 'The papacy in the eighth and ninth centuries', 'Morbidity and vitality', 'Intellectual culture' and 'Literacy in the papal government', all of which I have drawn on below.

> the popes sought from the new Carolingian monarchy defense [sic] and protection for their fledgling state. These requests were granted by the Carolingians and the continued existence of the Republic was assured.[34]

Noble here was arguing against the then-dominant view that 'papal independence' was in fact a development to be placed sometime in the eighth century, with the papacy's break from Byzantium and alliance with the Carolingians; broadly speaking, most historians before Noble would have placed the 'origins of the papal state' some time following the papacy of John VII.[35]

Many of Noble's conclusions, however, are open to debate. This was shown by Marios Costambeys, firstly in a review article in 2000 which was not in the first place about Noble, but nonetheless hinted at a certain dissatisfaction with his account; and then, in more detail and persuasively, in his 2007 book about Farfa.[36] Costambeys really has two problems with Noble's argument. Firstly, and less significantly for this thesis, it is open to doubt whether the eighth-century papal polity can really be said to have constituted a 'state', or whether this 'state' can really be said to have 'emancipated itself' from Byzantium.[37] Leaving aside the debate over whether or not 'states' actually existed in the early middle ages, Costambeys rightly notes that Noble's 'highlighting the continued preoccupations in the Roman church with Constantinople and its agenda rather undermines Noble's general argument that the popes of this period sought genuine independence. On the contrary, the election of eastern popes [in the eighth century] shows the durability in the Roman mind of the notion that the city remained an integral part of the [Byzantine] empire'.[38]

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[34] Noble, *Republic*, p. xxi; the arguments here also, unsurprisingly, inform idem, 'The papacy in the eighth and ninth centuries'.

[35] This debate is summarised by Costambeys, *Power and Patronage*, p. 56, with refs.

[36] Costambeys, 'Property, ideology'; idem, *Power and Patronage*.

[37] idem, *Power and Patronage*, pp. 57-59.

[38] idem, 'Property, ideology', p. 390 n. 93.

The 'independence' or otherwise of papal Rome is really an argument about the eighth century, which is why it does not require any detailed analysis here; though it should be noted that Rome was never formally part of the Carolingian Empire in the ninth century. The more pertinent criticism Costambeys made of Noble is that his vision of some kind of unified papal conglomerate marching through history towards its platonic form of thirteenth-century statehood, present already in the eighth century, is not very persuasive. This is *prima facie* the case - anyone arguing that, say, the German government of 2019 shared its long-term strategic objectives with the German government of 1914 would, rightly, find their arguments summarily dismissed; therefore, an argument that the papacy had the same long-term objectives in (say) 795 as it did in 690, as Noble is effectively doing, is not viable. To quote Jinty Nelson, 'the strength and consistency of papal policy has been overestimated' here.[39] Rather, Costambeys argues that a proper understanding of the eighth-, and by extension ninth-, century papacy must be informed by an analysis of the power groups prevalent within both Rome and central Italy more broadly. As he puts it:

> A way through the muddle of institutional rhetoric and *événements* has been signposted by recent Italian historiography that draws attention to the aristocracy of Rome, lay and ecclesiastical, as the source of much of the initiative driving change in this period. Important work has revealed the extent to which the popes identified themselves with the aristocratic elite of Rome. Assessing where the balance of power lay between individual popes, the papacy as an institution, and elite families is a task for future research. But emphasis on aristocratic consent for papal action indicates the possibility that a distinction needs to be drawn between the kind of power that the popes actually exercised in this period, whether in Rome or beyond, and the modern notion of sovereign power.[40]

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[39] Nelson, 'Making a difference in eighth-century politics' p. 179, quoted by Costambeys, *Power and Patronage*, p. 59.

[40] Costambeys, *Power and Patronage*, p. 59f.

Costambeys summed this up by saying that 'the papacy was not one person but many'.[41] Although Costambeys was primarily writing about the eighth century, his conclusions about how power actually works still *a priori* hold for the ninth century. So Noble's notion of some kind of unified long-term papal policy in the eighth and ninth centuries is wide of the mark. New approaches to papal power are therefore needed.

One such new approach has been provided in the last twenty years or so by Conrad Leyser. In three important articles, published between 2003 and 2016, Leyser makes the case that the papal entourage of ninth-century Rome carried out a project of what he calls 'papal myth-making', i.e. the marshalling of the heroic papal past to better support their own objectives in the late ninth century.[42] In doing this, Leyser studiously ignores the late ninth-century papacy itself, in favour of analysing the power groups which supported papal activity. Leyser's principal focus is the figure of John the Deacon and the various hagiographical and literary activities he was carrying out in the late ninth century, but he is fully aware of the important roles played by other figures such as Anastasius Bibliothecarius and Gauderic of Velletri.[43] Drawing on the work of Lucia Castaldi above all, Leyser gives a very clear picture both of how this 'myth-making' was used to support and develop papal policy, most obviously with John the Deacon's marshalling of Gregorian charisma to glorify the papacy as an institution, and also of the divisions and factional squabbles prevalent in Rome at this time, most obviously with the very public falling-out between John VIII and Formosus in 876.[44] There will be detailed engagement with Leyser's work in chapter 1; for now, it is only really

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[41] idem, 'Property, ideology', p. 388.

[42] Leyser, 'Charisma in the archive', 'Memory of Gregory'. 'Episcopal office' is really about the tenth century, but still worth mentioning here. Cf. idem and Costambeys, 'To be the neighbour of St Stephen', primarily focussed on Roman monasteries, but with a certain amount of read-through here. For a similar approach for the eighth century, Costambeys, 'Transmission of tradition'.

[43] Both of whom only get fairly sporadic mentions in the articles, but considerably more so in pers. comm.

[44] Leyser, 'Charisma in the archive', p. 216f; discussed further in chapter 1.

necessary to note the upshot in terms of this thesis, which is that we can now see that the ninth-century papacy had a very efficient and intelligent propaganda machine, driven primarily by Roman clerics/aristocrats. Thus, we have here an example of the sort of aristocratic prosopography (for want of a better phrase) that Costambeys is calling for.

Although, for obvious reasons, this thesis is most influenced by Leyser's work, there has also been a certain amount of other people taking up Costambeys' call for a more aristocracy-aware approach to Roman/papal history in the eighth and ninth centuries. I have already mentioned Lucia Castaldi, who has produced several basically palaeographical studies of the Roman aristocracy at this time.[45] Réka Forrai has also produced an excellent examination of Anastasius Bibliothecarius' literary dedications, which I have drawn on extensively on chapter 1.[46] But the most significant recent work on medieval Rome is Chris Wickham's recent book of that title.[47] This book claims to start in 900, although in reality 900-c. 950 gets a fairly cursory treatment; nevertheless, its significance here is that its analyses of Roman aristocracies, and indeed later 'medium elites and church clienteles'[48], is exactly the sort of history Costambeys was calling for, albeit for a later period. The evidence does not fully allow us to extend Wickham's approach back into the ninth century (which is precisely why he starts with the tenth); nonetheless, the general thrust of his research does provide a useful framework for how to look at the various power groups which existed in Rome, and which supported, or indeed undermined, papal initiatives. Although we cannot reproduce the exact style and precise interests of *Medieval Rome* for earlier periods, it can still be

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[45] Castaldi, 'Le dediche di Giovanni Immonide' above all, though she has too many relevant publications to list here: https://air.uniud.it/browse?type=author&order=ASC&rpp=50&authority=rp03301#.XV0oJ3vTXGJ (accessed 21st August 2019).

[46] Forrai, 'The interpreter of the popes'.

[47] Wickham, *Medieval Rome*.

[48] The title of chapter 5.

used as a rough guide for how Roman society worked in a period close enough to the late ninth century to be useful.

Discussion of the various power groups and aristocratic cliques which affected papal activity does require a discussion of the papal bureaucracy and papal *curia*. This is therefore what I shall now move onto, before coming onto a discussion of the sources themselves. But, to summarise the foregoing: the historiography of the late ninth-century papacy, seen in the context of papal and/or Roman history rather than the Carolingians, has started to pick up in the last twenty years or so, and probably the most significant element of this uplift has been the new interest scholars have started to find in power groups supporting and/or undermining papal activities in Rome itself.

The Roman curia

We know very little about the distant origins of papal record-keeping and the administration of the Roman church.[49] According to the life in *LP*, Pope Fabian (236-250) installed notaries in each of the region of ancient Rome, and put them in charge of recording the deeds of the martyrs.[50] It seems that these were not the Augustan regions of Rome; rather, Fabian appears to have divided the city into seven new regions, and placed a deacon and a subdeacon at the head of each one.[51] These regional deacons were initially ministers for charitable services, before gradually taking on more roles, such as responsibility for the administration of church properties in their regions. They therefore inevitably began to become increasingly important players within the Roman church. Their headquarters were in the Lateran, and they functioned as 'the pope's chief personal

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[49] This discussion is based on Noble, 'Literacy and the papal government'.

[50] *LP* I, p. 64.

[51] For this and what follows, Noble, 'Literacy and the papal government', here p. 84; cf. idem, *Republic*, p. 217f (Noble always gets his facts right, whatever one thinks of his overall arguments).

representatives in each region of the city'.[52] Although they appear to have been instituted in the third century, unsurprisingly they grow in visibility, and presumably in influence, after Constantine, and thereafter continue to acquire more influence and authority throughout the next few centuries; nuances aside, this is essentially part of the story of the Christianisation of the city of Rome. The problem with this story, however, is that it is really a back-projection by the LP.[53] It is, therefore, hardly surprising that our contemporary evidence for the deacons does not appear until the seventh century, by which time they had come to be called 'cardinal' deacons; the 'college of cardinals' did not yet exist, but a decree of 769 gave these 'cardinal' deacons active rights in papal elections, and pronounced them eligible for election as pope.[54] The most senior of these deacons was the archdeacon, who was the pope's personal representative in each region of the city, and was probably also the clerical head of the pope's administrative personnel.[55]

The deacons were independent of the priests of the *tituli*, i.e. the individual churches of Rome; both, however were *clerici episcopi*, and therefore members of the Roman *presbyterium*, which had its headquarters at the Lateran.[56] There was, therefore, 'a junction between the pastoral and administrative staffs of the Roman Church'.[57] The Roman *tituli* also had deacons, but these were more like deacons in the modern sense, i.e. clerics on their way to being ordained priests, and were functionally different from the cardinal deacons.[58] Cardinal priests rarely went onto higher

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[52] ibid p. 84.

[53] For this see Bertolini, 'Il "Liber Pontificalis"'.

[54] Fourth-century Rome: Curran, *Pagan City*; cardinals: Kuttner, 'Cardinalis'; Fürst, *Cardinalis*. For a recent account of the late antique Roman clergy, though focussed on different issues, Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, chapters 15-18.

[55] Noble, *Republic*, p. 218; Andrieu, *Ordines Romani* 2.68 - 'archidiaconus, id est vicarius pontificis'.

[56] Noble, Republic, p. 218.

[57] ibid.

[58] Henceforth, therefore, a cardinal deacon means one of the seven deacons; a deacon without qualification is a deacon in the modern sense.

offices, at least before the ninth century,[59] but they were still highly important elements of the Roman church. Broadly speaking, therefore, we can trace out an ecclesiastical hierarchy in early medieval Rome of deacon - cardinal priest - cardinal deacon - bishop of Rome.

A complicating factor here is the appearance, from the mid-eighth century onwards, of the 'cardinal bishops', i.e. the bishops of the suburbicarian dioceses, that is the dioceses nearest to Rome, namely Albano, Frascati, Palestrina, Sabina, Ostia-Velletri, Porto and Santa Rufina.[60] The political function of the cardinal bishops was intricately linked with the Roman liturgy - they participated in papal consecrations (as they still do, indeed), and from the early ninth century they can be seen supporting the lay judges in the papal bureaucracy.[61] So, in terms of the clergy, it seems that, in the ninth century, we have the beginnings of the outlines of the modern system of cardinal bishops, cardinal priests and cardinal deacons; these all had radically different functions from their modern namesakes, to be sure, but the basic idea clearly already existed. Broadly speaking, the Roman clergy seem to have greatly gained in power and influence during the ninth century. The reasons for this are unclear, but seem to have been related to their taking over of the papal chancery, to which I shall now turn, before returning to the clergy at the end of this section.

Before getting onto the ninth century, it is worth giving a brief sketch of the development of the papal bureaucracy from late antiquity onwards; the history of the *scrinium* is sufficiently complex that it is more helpful to look at its development chronologically, from the beginning, than to try to dive *in medias res* in the late ninth century. What follows is based closely on Thomas Noble's article in Rosamond McKitterick's edited book about early medieval literacy.[62] In the fourth and fifth centuries, the next most important people in each region after the deacon and subdeacon

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[59] Di Carpegna Falconieri, *Il clero*, pp. 109ff, discussed below.

[60] Extremely interesting in their own right: Benigni, 'Suburbicarian dioceses'; Galland, 'Suburbicarian bishopric'.

[61] Di Carpegna Falconieri, *Il clero*, p. 105f.

[62] Noble, 'Literacy and the papal government'.

were the notaries and *defensores*. From the fifth century onwards, the notaries seem to have taken on the responsibility for writing papal documents, keeping the papal archives, and overall essentially serving as the papal civil service.[63] By the time of Gregory I, the notaries had become organised into a *schola*, i.e. a corporation, within which the seven regional notaries held the most important rank. Two of these, the *primicerius* and the *secundicerius*, had a particular importance.

Up until the eighth century, the *primicerius* supervised the notaries producing documents, and also directed the papal archives and the library. As the *secundicerius* was essentially his deputy, he does not require any discussion in his own right here. The *primicerius* seems to have remained chief archivist throughout the early middle ages, but, in the early eighth century, our sources attest for the first time the existence of a *bibliothecarius*,[64] and then under Hadrian I (772-795) we hear of three more *bibliothecarii*, all of whom are mentioned by name.[65] By 829 this office was sufficiently prestigious that it was usually filled by one of the cardinal bishops (though not always, as Anastasius is testimony to).[66] It is possible that this separation between the *primicerius*, responsible for the notaries and papal archives, and the *bibliothecarius*, responsible for the papal library, is due to the increased volume of business needing to be dealt with in Rome in the eighth century, though this is speculation.[67] Such was the prestige of the *primicerius* that he was one of the three people, together with the archpriest and archdeacon, who ruled Rome during periods of *sede vacante*.[68]

Discussion of the *primicerius* (and, after the eighth century, of the *bibliothecarius*) brings us onto the papal library and archives themselves. The holdings of the papal library can be fairly

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[63] Ibid p. 84f; von Heckel, 'Das päpstliche und sicilische [sic] Registerwesen'.

[64] LP I, p. 396; Noble, *Republic*, p. 221f.

[65] Jaffé nos. 2401, 2431, 2457; Noble, 'Literacy and the papal government', p. 85.

[66] Schramm, 'Studien zu frühmittelalterlichen Aufzeichnungen', p. 205; Noble, 'Literacy and the papal government', p. 86.

[67] Noble, *Republic*, p. 221f.

[68] idem, 'A court without courtiers', p. 245; cf. Toubert, '*Scrinium* et *palatium*', p. 102f.

summarily dismissed by saying that we cannot really know anything about them - we have no sources which would enable us to build up a picture of the holdings or physical space of the library.[69] Indeed, the oldest surviving catalogue of the papal library dates from the time of Boniface VIII (1294-1303), which is well after our period stops.[70] We can say more about the papal archives, though; the following discussion will base itself on what we can say about papal letters, and about how they were conserved (or not) in the archives. Our evidence is sufficiently fragmented that it is necessarily synchronic; still, though, that is better than nothing. Debate about when papal letters began to be enregistered and kept in the archives has seen several suggestions made, usually focussed on the fourth and fifth centuries.[71] The details of that debate need not detain us here; the important point is that some time in the fourth or fifth century seems right, and that would certainly fit with the broad narrative of the Christianisation of Rome and setting-up of papal government in late antiquity.

Whenever registers started to be kept, the problem for examining them is that there are very few surviving papal register from before Innocent III (1198-1216): we only have the Register of Gregory VII and the incomplete Registers of Gregory I and John VIII.[72] The oldest surviving original papal document is a fragment of a letter from Hadrian I from 788; the oldest complete original document is a letter from Paschal I in 819.[73] We have roughly 2,500 letters from the entire period before this; every single one of these has been transmitted to us either through copies or through Carolingian collections, such as the hundred or so papal letters in the *Codex Carolinus*, which, for obvious reasons, is focussed on the Carolingian kingdoms; it is very valuable to a

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[69] idem, ‘Literacy and the papal government’, p. 86; though cf. Bilotti, *I libri dei papi*, pp. 4-24.

[70] idem, *Republic*, p. 220.

[71] Ullmann, *Gelasius I*, pp. 35-44 (early fifth century); Steinacker, ‘Über das älteste päpstliche Registerwesen’, p. 7 (Liberius I); Hageneder, ‘Papstregister und Dekretalenrecht’, p. 320f (Leo I).

[72] Noble, 'Literacy and the papal government’, p. 86.

[73] Noble, ‘Literacy and the papal government', p. 86f. The letters are Jaffé nos. 2462, 2551.

historian of the (early) Carolingians, but it tells us very little about how important the Carolingians were for the papacy *vis-à-vis* other subjects (most obviously the Lombards), and precisely nothing about papal letter-keeping and document preservation.[74]

A bold historian might use the fact that, apart from Gregory I and John VIII, we have no papal registers from the early middle ages, and the fact that all the papal documents we do have come from non-Roman sources, to argue that papal registers were not kept *at all* during the early middle ages. That would be an interesting and stimulating argument, but it is another project entirely. For now, I will follow the general historiographical consensus, which is that papal letters were indeed kept by the papal archive, but we do not have them simply for reasons of contingency of survival. The general line is that, essentially, papal letter-keeping followed the principles of Roman imperial government. Imperial rescripts certainly provided the general model for papal letters;[75] the assumption is that imperial *commentarii* provided the model for papal registers.[76] There is a long and not particularly illuminating debate about whether or not incoming letters were ever enregistered, together with outgoing ones; but, whatever the case with that, by the late ninth century we certainly do not have any evidence for incoming letters being kept, at least not systematically.[77] It is worth noting that these registers were almost certainly papyrus documents, which may go some way to explaining why they have not survived. We do not know how the papal scribes produced their letter copies, but *a priori* it seems fairly likely that they simply took dictation from the pope or a senior Lateran official, and then went to the *scrinium* to produce two copies - one of these was sent out, and one was sent to the archives to be enregistered.[78]

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[74] ibid p. 87; the *Codex Carolinus* is edited in *MGH Epp.* 3 pp. 469ff, and has now been extensively discussed in Nelson, *King and Emperor, passim*.

[75] Classen, *Kaiserreskript und Königsurkunde*, pp. 99-101; Millar, *Emperor in the Roman World*.

[76] Bresslau, 'Die Comentarii', pp. 255-260

[77] Steinacker, 'Registerwesen', p. 8f.

[78] Noble, 'Literacy and the papal government', p. 88.

The papal archives were always available for public consultation; indeed, in imperial Rome only the public, archived version of a document had probative value.[79] There seems to have been a shift during the early middle ages 'in probative value from the public document in the archives to the private copy in the hands of a recipient'.[80] Nevertheless, there is still a significant amount of evidence for 'public interest' in the papal archives. Jerome, for example, was once accused of misrepresenting the contents of a papal letter, and wrote that anyone who wanted to check the relevant letter could go and look for it 'in Romana Ecclesiae chartario'.[81] The seventh-century bishop Braulio of Saragossa also asked a priest, Taio, who had 'by his zeal and sweat' brought codices of Gregory I's writings to Spain, which Braulio describes as 'not yet known' in Spain, to transcribe copies and send them to him;[82] it therefore seems highly likely that Taio had got these codices from the papal archives in Rome. Similar examples could be multiplied;[83] but the upshot is clear: not only in Rome, where one would expect interest in the papal archives, but also from various far-flung places of Latin Europe, people were actively interested in, and personally acquainted with, the papal archives.

The foregoing has been a fairly *longue durée* history of the papal archive from roughly the fifth to ninth centuries. It is useful for this thesis to have a basic overview of the origins and development of the papal bureaucracy, to understand how letter collections and archival practices worked, and to better appreciate the fundamental shift that seems to have been happening in the Roman bureaucracy during the ninth and tenth centuries. This has been very well-studied recently

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[79] ibid p. 89.

[80] Noble, 'Literacy and the papal government', p. 89; this is the basic argument of Classen, *Kaiserreskript und Königsurkunde*; cf. von Heckel, 'Registerwesen', pp. 395-399; Hirschfeld, *Die Gesta Municipalia*, pp. 23-49. For an up-to-date discussion of this, see Brown, 'The *gesta municipalia*'.

[81] Jerome, *Epistola adversus Rufinum*, c.20, ed. P. Lardet, CCSL 79, p. 91; Noble, 'Literacy and the papal government', p. 90.

[82] *PL* 80.690B.

[83] And have been by Noble, 'Literacy and the papal government', p. 90.

by Pierre Toubert and Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri; their analyses therefore form the basis for what follows.[84] Broadly speaking, it seems that clerics started to take on far more significant roles during these centuries; essentially, and putting all nuances aside (though the nuances are big ones), control of Rome passed from the old 'secular' aristocracy to a new 'clerical' aristocracy. I have already mentioned the rise to power, during the eighth and ninth centuries, of the *bibliothecarius*, who seems to have more or less replaced the *protoscriniarius* in managing the papal library. To be sure, a lot of this increasing power may well have been down to particularly energetic individuals becoming *bibliothecarii*, Anastasius above all;[85] all the same, it seems significant that the papal archives and library, which, so far as we can tell, were kept together from the fifth to eighth centuries, suddenly split off from each other in the eighth and ninth centuries. Here it is significant that the *bibliothecarius* seems always to have been a cleric, i.e. not part of the lay aristocracy which seems always to have had the senior roles in the papal bureaucracy up until the eighth and ninth centuries.[86] Given his clerical status, it is also significant that the *bibliothecarius* seems to have remained apart from the integration of the *scrinium* - during the late eighth and early ninth centuries, the regional *scriniarii* seem to have essentially coalesced into one unified *scrinium* for all of Rome (see below for this).[87] Here it is worth quoting Toubert in full:

> Il me semble que l'explication est culturelle et met en avant la conscience identitaire de ce collège de fonctionnaires et d'administrateurs qu'étaient les *judices palatini*. En somme, le bibliothécaire, si décisif et bien connu…qu'ait été son rôle au IXe siècle dans l'élaboration et la formalisation la plus achevée comme un

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[84] Toubert, '*Scrinium* et *palatium*'; di Carpegna Falconieri, *Il clero* (the later focussed above all on the eleventh and twelfth centuries, though with useful nuggets for the eighth and ninth).

[85] For him see chapter 1.

[86] Toubert, '*Scrinium* et *palatium*', p. 101f.

[87] ibid, *passim*.

> ‘bureaucrate’ à une époque où, ne l’oublions pas, quelle que soit d’autre part leur titulature, personnelle, tous les scribes ou scripteurs des bureaux avaient aussi qualité pour instrumenter en faveur des personnes privées. Secondairement, cette situation me paraît révélatrice de la distinction pratique et fonctionnelle qui s’est faite au cours du IXe siècle entre le *scrinium* en tant que service d’archives et la bibliothèque pontificale.[88]

The rise of the *bibliothecarius* goes hand-in-hand with what Toubert called ‘la courbe d’évolution du *scrinium*’ in the eighth and ninth centuries.[89] As was noted above, in the early days of papal administration, the Roman bureaucracy had a *primicerius* and a *secundicerius*, who more or less oversaw the activities of the papal bureaucracy. However, as Toubert notes, the eighth and ninth centuries saw a ‘diffusion de l’écrit’, which led to an opening-up of the papal civil service to a wider public: ‘on voit clairement le corps professionnel des *notarii* s’étoffer grâce à leur overture au corps des *scriniarii* publics’.[90] This then led to a ‘process of fusion’, in Toubert’s words, between the *scrinium*, which had historically been focussed on acting as papal document-keepers, and the *tabelliones*, who were essentially the branch of the papal bureaucracy responsible for preserving local Roman administrative documents, i.e. records of land transactions and so on.[91] This goes hand-in-hand with the emergence in the later ninth century of a new officer, the *protoscriniarius*, who is first attested in our sources in 861.[92] The appearance of this office was described by Toubert as ‘la conquête du *scrinium* par les *scriniarii*’.[93] Toubert’s detailed arguments are outside the remit of a thesis focussed primarily on papal letters, rather than what the various palatine judges may

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[88] ibid p. 102.

[89] ibid.

[90] ibid.

[91] For the *tabelliones*, see Noble, ‘Literacy and the papal government’, p. 92f.

[92] Toubert, ‘*Scrinium* et *palatium*’, p. 102.

[93] ibid p. 105.

have been doing, but the upshot is that, by the late ninth/early tenth century, there had been a ‘conquête’ of the papal bureaucracy by a new group of professionalised clerks.

The significance of this can be better seen by looking at the *palatium*. A broad distinction can be drawn, in a Weberian sense, between the ‘patrimonial’ role of the *palatium* and the ‘rational-bureaucratic’ role of the *scrinium*. The *palatium* was essentially the ‘domestic' setting of papal government - as the name implies, it was the personal residence of the pope, and the functionaries operating from the *palatium* oversaw things like the church fabric of Roman churches, papal finances, and the training of clerics in Rome.[94] The specific roles and responsibilities of various members of the *palatium* need not detain us here. The important thing, rather, is that Toubert is arguing that the eighth and ninth centuries saw a draining away of authority from the *palatium* to the *scrinium*, or, perhaps more accurately, at least a rise in power/authority of the *scrinium* to a point where it could begin to rival that of the *palatium*, historically the ‘nerve centre’ of early medieval papal Rome, in Thomas Noble's phrase.[95]

The upshot of all this, then, is that the eighth and ninth centuries seem to have seen the beginnings of a challenge to clerical control of Rome. The *primicerius* and *secundicerius* were usually lay appointments, and indeed the entire Roman bureaucracy was an essentially ‘secular’ sphere, though there was certainly no impediment to members of it being clerics, and Roman hierarchies were anyway extremely interlaced.[96] If Toubert is correct that these centuries saw a rise in power and influence of the ‘secular’ *scrinium*, as against the ‘clerical’ *palatium*, it may be that we are witnessing some kind of draining away of papal activity from the clergy to the ‘lay' aristocracy. Without wanting to be too teleological, this may go some way to explaining some factors of the history of the early tenth century in Rome. It is often noted that, despite the frequent

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[94] The most accessible guide to the *palatium* is Noble, *Republic*, pp. 223ff; also Toubert, ‘*Scrinium* et *palatium*’, pp. 91ff.

[95] Noble, *Republic*, p. 230.

[96] Wickham, *Medieval Rome*, p. 188.

changes of popes, the actual government of the city of Rome seems to have carried on virtually unimpeded in the early tenth century.[97] Rosamond McKitterick, indeed, sees the main element of this continuity as being precisely the continuation of the *scrinium*, and of the activities of the papal scribes, whom she describes as 'patiently coming in to work in the papal writing office regardless of the upheavals connected with the papal throne itself'.[98] Our sources do not allow us to track the *scrinium* in any detail; nevertheless, it is at least conceivable, if totally unprovable, that we can see here the outlines of some kind of conflict between the 'secular' and 'ecclesiastical' hierarchy in Rome. Really, this would be more relevant for a thesis about the city of Rome itself rather than the papacy; all the same, it is interesting, and further research is needed.[99]

The foregoing has essentially been discussing the 'secular' aristocracy of Rome in the *scrinium*; it remains to look at what the clergy were doing in Rome in the late ninth century. Here the basic text with which all work must now engage is Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri's *Il clero di Roma nell medioevo*.[100] This is an extremely engaging and stimulating book. It does suffer, though, at least in terms of its usefulness for this thesis, from its author's focus on the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It is of course absolutely fine for people to research the later 'middle ages', but one does sometimes feel when reading di Carpegna Falconieri's[101] book that the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries are little more than a prologue to his real interest in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[102]

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[97] See, from many, Wickham, *Medieval Rome*, p. 22; McKitterick, 'The church', p. 137.

[98] McKitterick, 'The church', p. 138.

[99] Wickham, *Medieval Rome* chapter 4, is not primarily interested in the *scrinium*.

[100] Di Carpegna Falconieri, *Il clero*.

[101] Without wanting to violate aristocratic onomastic rules, he will henceforth just be di Carpegna, to save space.

[102] 'Il filo conduttore consiste nel ricercare il periodo, il modo e le ragioni che portarono alla nascita del clero urbano, inteso come un gruppo sociale e istituzionale distinto dal clero papale' - *Il Clero*, p. 9.

Nevertheless, the relevant sections of the book are still useful on their own terms for an analysis of eighth- and ninth-century clerical groups in Rome.

Di Carpegna's central argument throughout the book as a whole is that, in his words, 'la storia del clero romano nei secoli centrali del medioevo si può compendiare…in una separazione lenta, fattuale e concettuale, tra il clero diocesano e il clero di curia'.[103] He does this through what amounts to a long teleological study of the various clerical groups present in Rome during these centuries. It will be convenient to look at di Carpegna's arguments about cardinal deacons, priests and bishops in turn, starting where he finishes, with the cardinal deacons. It is fairly clear that the ninth century marked an ebbing away of power away from the cardinal deacons. As mentioned above; di Carpegna himself suggests, persuasively, that the causes of this could have included the rise of the *scrinium* and consequent declining importance of the regions of Rome, the rise of lay judges,[104] and the fact that cardinal priests and cardinal bishops were gradually coming to dominate the city's political scene.[105] From the ninth century onwards, cardinal deacons were, by and large, not elected pope, a fairly radical change from what had been the case since late antiquity. Indeed, di Carpegna makes the point that 'nella seconda metà del X secolo la gerarchia ecclesiastica cominciò a rassomigliare a quella che conosciamo per i secoli seguenti: per divenire vescovo era necessario essere stato prete, a per divenire prete era sempre essenziale una precedente permanenza nel ministero diaconale'.[106] The decline of the cardinal deacons, therefore, was a fundamental part of the evolution of Roman clerical society in the ninth and tenth centuries.

Di Carpegna has significantly more of relevance to say about the cardinal priests, i.e., at the start of our period, the priests of the 25 *tituli*. We can see the cardinal priests acquiring considerably

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[103] ibid.

[104] Described by Toubert, '*Scrinium* et *palatium*', but not particularly relevant to this thesis.

[105] Di Carpegna Falconieri, *Il clero*, p. 129.

[106] ibid.

more power during the ninth century. For the first time, a series of popes were elected from among the cardinal priests, and indeed ninth-century popes were more often elected from among the cardinal priests than among the cardinal deacons. Di Carpegna correctly calls this 'una radicale inversione di tendenza'.[107] Di Carpegna puts this down to the decline in importance of the city's regions, and the consequent decline of the cardinal deacons:

> Il venir meno delle strutture costituite dalle regioni ecclesiastiche comportò, da un lato, un ridimensionamento dei poteri dei diaconi, che non avevano più una vera e propria base istituzionale, dall'altro una crescita del valore assoluto e del ruolo di alcuni enti ecclesiastici e dei loro capi. Si insinuava, per i preti prima per che per i vescovi, il concetto di legittimità della mobilità da una sede all'altra, se quest'ultima era di importanze maggiore. A ciò non corrispondeva più, evidentemente, la nozione di cardinale come 'incardinato', cioè assegnato a una chiesa in modo permanente. Così, i molti presbiteri cardinali che nel IX secolo divennero papi ci informano, con la loro stessa presenza, del fatto che il termine cardinale stava mutando di significato. I cardinali non erano ancora i cardinali della Chiesa universale, ma erano considerati legati al patriarchio, in una forma chiaramente espressa e più evidente rispetto al secolo precedente.[108]

In terms of the worldview of an average ninth-century cardinal priest in Rome, then, new opportunities previously denied to them were opening up. The cardinal deacons no longer had the monopoly on routes to the papacy; a new spirit of ambition could well have entered certain members of the group of cardinal priests. One person for whom this was certainly the case was Anastasius Bibliothecarius, who will be discussed in chapter 1; but, more broadly than that, the regular interfactional violence prevalent within the city of Rome during the late ninth century, most obviously seen at papal elections and in *LP*'s increasingly convoluted attempts to project a vision of

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[107] ibid p. 116.

[108] ibid p. 117f.

Roman unity (see below), may well be due in part to this broadening out of opportunity, from seven cardinal deacons to 25 cardinal priests.

Discussing ambitious people in the Roman clergy brings us naturally to the third ecclesiastical group, the cardinal bishops. Before the mid-eighth century, cardinal bishops are never mentioned in our sources, at least not in connection with the Roman clergy.[109] Sources from the late eighth century tell us their liturgical function, which was essentially to preside over the celebration of the daily Mass in San Giovanni in Laterano, and/or of the Sunday Mass at St Peter's .[110] Di Carpegna argues that, given this weekly division of roles, the number of cardinal bishops by the late eighth century was probably seven, and I can see no reason to disagree with him; indeed, it remains at seven today, and there is no evidence that it has ever fluctuated (though which bishops made it up has changed).[111] The cardinal bishops also participated in the pope's coronation ritual, and in the ninth century they seem to have started supporting the *bibliothecarius* in overseeing the papal library.[112] It is worth quoting di Carpegna for a summary of the growth in power of the cardinal bishops over the ninth century:

> Nel corso del secolo IX, i sette vescovi acquistarono sempre maggiore importanza, tanto da essere considerati un'élite in confronto non solo al rimanente clero romano, ma anche agli altri vescovi della provincia romana. Dalla fine di quel secolo, superando, con notevoli ostacoli, le barriere canonistiche (poiché il trasferimento da una sede all'altra era considerato inammissibile), i vescovi cominciarono a essere eletti pontefici, affiancando in questo processo i cardinali preti e sostituendo, anche se non totalmente, i cardinali diaconi.[113]

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[109] ibid p. 104.

[110] ibid, with refs.

[111] ibid.

[112] ibid p. 105f.

[113] ibid p. 106.

In a way, di Carpegna is here describing the most fundamental development in the whole Roman church over the course of the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries. The topic of episcopal transfer from one see to another was a topic of paramount interest to tenth-century churchmen;[114] it is certainly relevant that ninth-century bishops, most notably Actard, were being transferred when their original sees were (allegedly) destroyed by pirates, but it cannot, surely, be a coincidence that this discussion of episcopal transfer began to pick up speed at precisely the time when Marinus and Formosus were transferring from suburbicarian sees to the bishopric of Rome (the influence could certainly have gone both ways, but that does not undermine the point). It is also relevant to this thesis that, according to di Carpegna,[115] the cardinal bishops were beginning to support the activities of the *bibliothecarius*. Chapter 1 will look at the career of Anastasius *bibliothecarius* in some depth; two of his closest colleagues, namely Formosus and Gauderic, were both cardinal bishops. It therefore does not seem too outlandish to claim that the 'papal myth-making' which is the basic cornerstone of this thesis' argument was in some way an outplaying of the growth in power and status of the cardinal bishops, and to a lesser extent of the cardinal priests.

Overall, this discussion of the Roman curia has brought out three key themes for this thesis. Firstly, and quite prosaically, the Roman hierarchy, and the network of clerical posts, as indeed of posts in the papal bureaucracy, were startlingly complex. Leaving aside the fundamental split between the *scrinium* and the *palatium*, both the 'clerical' and the 'secular' career hierarchies would have been very difficult to navigate successfully.[116] This, indeed, may well have been part of the attraction of doing so; it certainly meant that control of Rome, or at least holding a position which could influence the city of Rome, would have certainly been something for ambitious aristocrats, or indeed clerics or notaries, to aim for during our period. The reward for mastering Rome would have

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[114] Leyser, 'Episcopal office'; cf. chapter 1 of this thesis; Scholz, *Transmigration und Translation.*

[115] *Il clero*, p. 106 with refs.

[116] The point has been made before - Wickham, *Medieval Rome*, p. 22.

been significantly higher than for preeminence in our period in, say, Pavia or Milan, and consequently the factional infighting which people in Rome engaged in seems to have been more prevalent. Indeed, our sources, most notably the *LP*, certainly indicate a very high level of fighting and factionalism within Rome, which does not seem to have been as prevalent in other cities in northern Italy, or indeed in Francia.[117] The upshot is that mastering the complex hierarchies of the city of Rome in the early middle ages would certainly have been difficult, but the reward for doing so, i.e. control of or influence over the papacy, would have been worth this effort.

The flipside of this complexity, for this thesis at least, is that it does make it rather difficult to determine who is 'speaking' in the papal letters upon which this thesis is primarily based. The simplest answer would probably be that it was the *scrinium*; but this itself causes problems, given the clear indications we have of fundamental change and upheaval taking place within the papal bureaucracy in the eighth and ninth centuries. I am primarily here talking about the changes taking place in the *scrinium* set out by Toubert; although we cannot really see the changes this might have caused within the *scrinium*, it would seem perverse to argue that the papal scribes would have been able simply to carry on operating in the same way as they had always done throughout the centuries before. To be sure, the basic function of the *scrinium* seems to have been broadly the same as the modern British civil service, i.e. to (as far as possible) 'speak with the voice' of the incumbent pope, without letting their personal views get in the way of this. But given the complexity of the Roman hierarchies I described above, together with the considerable rewards for mastering Roman politics in this period, caution must always be exercised about which people may or may not have had a hand in composing a particular letter. Even if papal letters do in fact represent the unfiltered views of whichever pope was in power at the time, it must be born in mind that the popes would always have needed themselves to master the various juridical, ecclesiastical and secular hierarchies of the city of Rome. To borrow a concept from Quentin Skinner, popes would only have been able to get

[117] For more on this, see Wickham, 'The Romans'.

away with saying not only things that would have made sense in the 'public sphere' of early medieval Europe more broadly, but also with what the Roman curia, and the people who influenced it, would have let them say in their letters.[118]

The most significant upshot of this discussion of the papal curia, though, is the significant process of change we seem to be able to see both in the Roman bureaucracy, and in the clerical hierarchy of Rome, during the ninth century. Most fundamental here is the rise of the cardinal bishops; but the growth in power of the cardinal priests at the expense of the cardinal deacons should not be neglected. Many of the main debates taking place at the end of the ninth century in Rome can profitably be seen as consequences of this new role for the cardinal bishops in Roman ecclesiastical society. The most obvious example of this is, of course, the transfers of Marinus and Formosus from their suburbicarian bishoprics to the bishopric of Rome itself; but, actually, the entire process of papal myth-making taking place in late ninth-century Rome makes sense within this context. If di Carpegna is right about the new role of the cardinal bishops in supporting the activities of the *bibliothecarius* (and proving him right or wrong is not within this thesis' remit), it is plausible that figures like Gauderic were involved in a two-way process of myth-making. Gauderic was in many ways the driving force behind the cult of St Clement in ninth-century Rome (his cathedral at Velletri was dedicated to Clement), and it is plausible to see the cardinal bishops as supporting the activities of the *bibliothecarius* at the expense, so to speak, of also glorifying their own suburbicarian sees. This in fact cuts both ways: glorifying the see of Rome, and by extension the pope, may well have had the side-effect of making it a more glittering prize for the suburbicarian bishops to aim for. So in a way, figures like Formosus may have started to believe the myth that they themselves had created - the newly-glorified bishopric of Rome, thanks to the

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[118] Skinner, 'Some problems in the analysis of political thought and action'; idem, 'The principles and practice of opposition'. For a recent application of the 'Skinner theorem' to the (later) medieval papacy, d'Avray, *Papacy, Monarchy and Marriage*. For the 'public sphere', Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, though really I have only borrowed the words rather than the concept from him.

glorification of the papal archive which both the clerics and the *scrinium* had been carrying out during the 860s and 870s, may well have seemed even more significant a prize at the end of the ninth century than it would have done at the beginning.

Sources

The two main types of sources I have used in this thesis are papal letters and the *Liber Pontificalis* (henceforth the *LP*). This section will explore the nature of both of these, and the advantages and drawbacks of their uses as evidence.

To take papal letters first: all papal letters from the mid- to late-ninth century are edited in *MGH*.[119] The surviving papal documents from between 896 and 1046 have been edited by Harald Zimmermann in his edition of *Papsturkunden*.[120] My discussion of papal letters here falls into two parts. Firstly, a straightforward investigation of how we have what we have, and how late ninth-century papal letters have been preserved through the intervening centuries. To do this, I will go through the surviving papal letters of each pope in turn, from Nicholas I down to Formosus. After thus examining these patterns of documentary conservation and destruction, I will move onto an examination of the intellectual *milieu* of late ninth-century Rome, essentially to investigate, to the extent that we can, how, why and by whom these letters were written. This will include a discussion of the Roman curia and of power groups more broadly in Rome, and will form an analysis of the groups (intellectual, political, economic, religious) which supported/led papal activities at this time. This will lead into looking at the circumstances surrounding the later composition of the *LP*, before

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[119] *MGH Epp.* 6 (Nicholas I and Hadrian II) and 7 (John VIII up to Formosus).

[120] Zimmermann, *Papsturkunden*.

I move onto the other types of evidence that I have used; this final section will be significantly less detailed, as, in comparison to papal letters and the *LP*, I have made less use of other sources.[121]

To start with the letters of Nicholas I: these, by and large, are not preserved in Rome, but rather, generally speaking, in various French libraries (this has a significance in and of itself, which I will discuss when I come onto intellectual groups in Rome).[122] Before coming onto these, though, it should be noted that a high proportion of Nicholas' surviving writings come to us from eleventh- and twelfth-century canonical collections.[123] Gratian included 116 excerpts from 47 of his letters in his *Decretum*; more than from any pope other than Gregory I.[124] These canonical collections, therefore, are a useful source for our knowledge of Nicholas' writings, although they do have their limitations, as by their nature they generally take quotations out of the contexts they were written in to make points more relevant to the eleventh and twelfth centuries than to the ninth.

Judging by the evidence we have from his lifetime, the contemporaries of Nicholas I realised that he was an extremely important pope. 'The wide distribution of letters began during his pontificate, or shortly after his death, and continued unabated in later centuries'.[125] Copying of these letters was undertaken not from any original registers which may or may not have existed in Rome (see below for this), but rather from the registers of the recipients of these letters. For example, Ado of Vienne listed the letters he received from Nicholas in his own Register, which comes down to us

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[121] The exception to this is the *Lives* of Cyril and Methodios in chapter 3, which get their own discussion in that chapter.

[122] This section on the transmission of papal letters is more or less taken wholescale from Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, pp. 110ff, to whose investigations I do not have much to add. For Nicholas specifically, see Perels, 'Die Briefe Papst Nikolaus' I.' (1912 and 1914) (in what follows, Perels, 'Die Handschriften', refers to his 1912 article; his 1914 one will be cited as 'Die kanonistiche Überlieferung'.)

[123] See e.g. Fournier, 'Collections canoniques'; idem, 'Les collections canoniques romaines'; idem and Le Bras, *Histoire des collections canoniques* vol. 2.

[124] Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, p. 111.

[125] ibid.

in Vat. Reg. lat. 566, which is probably a tenth-century copy of the original.[126] Another example is that of Hincmar of Rheims, a regular interlocutor of Nicholas. Hincmar's collection of Nicholas' letters has survived as in Laon, Bibl. municipale 407.[127] This manuscript mostly contains letters relevant to the case of the priests consecrated by Ebo of Rheims in 840-841, then deposed by Hincmar in 853, and then reinstated by Nicholas after the Synod of Soissons in 866.[128]

Another collection of Nicholas' letters, probably made in his lifetime, contains writings related to the case of Rothad of Soissons against his metropolitan, Hincmar of Rheims. This contains fifteen of Nicholas' letters from 863-865, as well as the conciliar address which Nicholas gave at Rothad's trial at Christmas 864. 'This group of letters is always combined with the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals in the manuscripts'.[129] The oldest manuscript of this collection (Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana D. 38) was produced in Rheims in the second half of the ninth century.[130] Two other manuscripts containing these letters are Vat. lat. 1343 (Italian, tenth or eleventh century) and Vat. lat. 1344 (French, twelfth century).[131] There is also a copy of these letters in Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana C. 15, fol. 137-167v, which was compiled in the sixteenth century. The compilers based their knowledge of Nicholas' letters on a 'codex antiquus' in the possession of Achilles Statius (died 1581), who founded the Biblioteca Vallicelliana; Ernst Perels argued, not unreasonably, that this 'codex antiquus' was in fact Vallicelliana D. 38, the oldest extant manuscript of this particular letter collection.[132]

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[126] ibid; cf. Perels, 'Die Handschriften', p. 564f.

[127] For this see, in great detail, Perels, 'Die Handschriften', pp. 557ff.

[128] Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, p. 112.

[129] ibid; for the disagreement between Rothad and Hincmar, see Hartmann, *Synoden der Karolingerzeit*, pp. 313ff, inter alia.

[130] ibid; cf. Williams, *Codices Pseudo-Isidoriani* p. 53f; Fuhrmann, *Einfluss und Verbreitung*, 2.269ff.

[131] ibid; Perels, 'Die Handschriften', pp. 547ff.

[132] Perels, 'Die Handschriften', pp. 550ff.; idem, 'Zur Wiederauffindung verschollener Handschriften', pp. 607ff.

'The most important and compendious collection' of Nicholas' letters is in a manuscript in Paris, namely B.N. lat. 1557.[133] The contents of this manuscript were not compiled by focussing on a particular problem; rather, the 45 letters in this collection all had the same geographical focus, namely letters Nicholas sent to recipients in the West Frankish kingdom; they are followed by 27 letters from Hadrian II (it should be noted in passing here that this manuscript is also the most important source for Hadrian's letters).[134] John Contreni has demonstrated that this manuscript can be dated to between 872 and 882, only between five and fifteen years after Nicholas' death (and even sooner after Hadrian's), and almost certainly belonged to Laon Cathedral.[135]

The same sequence of Nicholas' letters can be found in the aforementioned Vallicelliana C. 15, from the sixteenth century, in folios 168-256v, which proclaims that its source is the now-lost 'codex antiquus S. Maria supra Minervam qui fuerat Cardinalis de Turrecremata'.[136] It is unclear how old this manuscript is, but it is safe to assume that it was not copied from B.N. lat. 1557, because it contains parts of Boniface's correspondence, as well as some letters of Gregory IV and Benedict III, which the Paris manuscript does not; furthermore, this Roman manuscript omits some letters from Nicholas and Hadrian which the Paris manuscript contains.[137]

There is a third textual tradition of Nicholas' letters, as well as these recipients' collections and geographical foci; this is the thematic collections relating to his disputes with the eastern church, most notably with Photios.[138] The oldest member of this group is a manuscript from the

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[133] Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, p. 113; Perels, 'Die Handschriften', pp. 607ff.

[134] Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, p. 113; Lauer, *Catalogue général* 3.175.

[135] Contreni, 'Codices Pseudo-Isidoriani'; idem, *The Cathedral School of Laon*, p. 62 n. 81.

[136] Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters,* p. 114, citing fols. 112 and 168 of the manuscript for the quote. Cf. Perels, 'Die Handschriften', pp. 565ff.

[137] ibid; Perels, 'Die Handschriften', pp. 550ff,

[138] For Photios, see below in this introduction, as well as in more detail in chapter 2. Throughout this thesis, Greek names have been spelt with -os, rather than the Latin -us, apart from where they appear in direct quotations.

third quarter of the ninth century, even earlier than the Laon collection, which comes from Beauvais and is now Vat. lat. 3827.[139] This manuscript includes sixteen of Nicholas' letters of 860-866 concerning Photios, and adds them to a collection of Gallican and Frankish councils, some letters of Hadrian I and Leo IV, and the First Capitulary of Theodulf of Orléans.[140] In this collection, Nicholas' letter to Emperor Michael III[141] is copied twice into the manuscript from different sources. It is, indeed, from this collection that Nicholas' most important letters, for the purposes of this thesis, come, namely the letters he sent during the dispute over the conversion of Bulgaria in the 860s, which are on folios 127ff of this collection. Vat. lat. 3789, which is both later than and independent of the Beauvais manuscript, also contains the same letters of Nicholas I on the Bulgarians, minus his *Responsa ad Consulta Bulgarorum*.[142]

The single most important one of Nicholas' letters, for the purposes of this thesis, is his *Responsa* to Boris of Bulgaria.[143] The letter itself will be discussed in chapter 2, but for now, it is important to note that it has two completely separate manuscript traditions. The first, as just noted, is in the Beauvais manuscript, where it can be found together with Nicholas' other letters to or about the Bulgarians. The other tradition is a modern copy of the *Responsa* which is preserved in Vat. lat. 3554, previously in the possession of Cardinal Oliviero Carafa in the fifteenth century.[144] Very few people seem to have taken much interest in this double transmission of the *Responsa*, so it is difficult to make any firm statements about its significance; still, it is interesting that a letter of such importance does indeed have two separate transmissions.

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[139] For this manuscript see Mordek, *Bibliotheca capitularium regum Francorum*, pp. 858ff.

[140] Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, p. 115.

[141] *MGH Epp*. 6 no. 88.

[142] Jasper, *Papal Letters* p. 115.

[143] *MGH Epp*. 6, no. 99.

[144] For this see Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, p. 115 n. 116; Perels, 'Die Handschriften', pp. 541f, 545.

Various of Nicholas' letters also survive in manuscripts that preserve only one or two letters each, all of which were listed and analysed by Perels.[145] The upshot of this discussion, though, is fairly clear: our knowledge of Nicholas' letters is reliant on various more or less chance manuscript collections in France. This says something interesting about documentary practices in Francia, but that is beyond the remit of this thesis. Anyway, our knowledge of Nicholas' letters does not come from Rome. We know that Nicholas kept a Register, which is explicitly referred to in LP,[146] but no trace of it has survived to now. This is quite surprising, given the long-term significance of Nicholas' pontificate (arguably more significant than John VIII, whose Register has, of course, survived), and is not easily to explain; it is, nonetheless, the case.

Turning to Nicholas' immediate successor Hadrian II, again really the survival of the letters we have does not owe much to the papal archive. Paris, B.N. lat. 1557 is the fullest source of Hadrian's letters - it contains 27 letters to recipients in West Francia, which are contained on folios 79-93v, in the hand of the copyist of Nicholas' letters.[147] As an interesting aside, a leaf has been cut out between folios 83 and 84, so that we only have the opening sentences and closing formula of Hadrian's letter to the participants at the Synod of Douzy, at which he overruled the sentence passed on Hincmar of Laon,[148] but this too is more relevant to a historian of Carolingian Francia than of the papacy.[149]

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[145] Perels, 'Die Handschriften', pp. 584ff.

[146] '…but on the warrant of the supreme prelate's order, they excommunicated and anathematised the deaf listeners, until they should beg the medicines of repentance and flee the evil of incestuous liaisons, as is contained in the letters which these envoys took to Sardinia, and which are inserted in the register of this prelate.' - Davis, *Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes,* p. 234; Duchesne 2.162.

[147] These letters are edited by Perels, in *MGH Epp*. 6, pp. 691ff; for dating the manuscript, see McKeon, 'Toward a reestablishment of the correspondence of Pope Hadrian II'.

[148] Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, p. 125.

[149] See also the speculation of ibid p. 126, that this excision was deliberate.

In the eleventh century, a canonist copied Hadrian's letters into what is now Rheims, Bibl. municipale 672.[150] Eight of Hadrian's letters in the Paris manuscript are missing here, but the canonist did include the acts of the Synod of Ponthion (876, when John VIII was pope),[151] as well as three letters from John VIII from 876. Hadrian's letters are more or less nonexistent in later canonical collections.[152] Again, the upshot with regard to Roman documentary practices is fairly clear - there is no evidence for any systematic preservation of Hadrian's letters in the papal archive.

One other source for our knowledge of ninth-century papal letters is later medieval canon law collections. These contain letters from Nicholas I, Hadrian II and John VIII, and are most conveniently discussed as a whole. Here the most important source is the *Collectio Britannica*, a canon law collection completed around 1090, and now in the British Library, and generally believed to have been written towards the end of Gregory VII's papacy.[153] There are thirteen letters from Nicholas I contained in the *Collectio Britannica*, and four excerpts from Hadrian II's letters.[154] It is most useful, though, as a source for the letters of John VIII - it contains 55 of John's letters, on fol. 120r-136v.[155] 'The compilers omitted all the formalities of the letters, such as protocols and eschatocols, and, apart from the names of the recipients, which they abbreviated radically, mostly excerpted the parts of the letters that were of legal importance.'[156] Thus, the *Collectio* cannot necessarily be seen as an 'objective' guide to John's letters - the selections made by the compilers

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[150] ibid.

[151] This is the synod which excommunicated Formosus - see chapter 1 for this; also Sennis, 'Giovanni VIII', p. 563.

[152] Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, p. 126.

[153] The *Collectio Britannica* can be viewed online: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_8873 (accessed 21st September 2019). The standard study is Ewald, 'Der Papstbriefe der Britischen Sammlung'; see also Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, p. 122, with further refs.

[154] Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, pp. 122, 126.

[155] ibid p. 128.

[156] ibid.

are likely to have reflected what people were interested in in the eleventh century, rather than what they were interested in in the ninth.[157] This, indeed, is an important caveat to bear in mind with the other canonical collections containing ninth-century papal letters, all of which reflect eleventh-century preoccupations rather than ninth-century ones.[158]

The story changes dramatically when we come to the letters of Pope John VIII. Here, instead of the scattered assortment of French manuscripts which characterise the letters of Nicholas I and Hadrian II, we can clearly see a systematic attempt, in Rome, at collection and preservation of papal letters. Conrad Leyser has argued that 'John VIII instructed his chancery to keep his correspondence on the model of Gregory [I's] *Register*', i.e. that keeping a register was in its own right an attempt to marshal the papal past.[159] He is certainly correct about this, and the issue will be discussed further below. In terms of transmission and preservation, though, the salient point is that, in the second half of the eleventh century, the abbey of Monte Cassino requested a copy of John's Register for the period between September 876 and August 882 (Indictions X-XV); the resulting collection, composed of 314 of his letters, was copied in the 1070s by the scribes of Santa Maria in Pallaria, a dependent Roman house of Monte Cassino.[160] It is worth noting here that, according to Dietrich Lohrmann, this copy of the Register was never in Monte Cassino itself; rather, it arrived in the Papal Archives in 1267 via Berardus, canon of St Peter and chaplain of Pope Clement IV (1265-1268), who had been commissioned by the pope to collect some relics in Rome and, in Lohrmann's telling, supposedly happened upon the manuscript of John's Register in the by-now-

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[157] See the epilogue for more thoughts on this point.

[158] There is no need here to dive into the detail of which letters survive in which collections: see Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, pp. 116ff for this.

[159] Leyser, 'Memory of Gregory', p. 192.

[160] For John's Register, Lohrmann, *Das Register*, is basic; see also Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, pp. 127ff; Caspar, 'Studien zum Register Johanns VIII.'; idem, 'Studien zum Register Gregors VII'.

abandoned monastery of Santa Maria in Pallaria.[161] That story is really the preserve of a history of later medieval Italy, but it is worth noting that, assuming Lohrmann is right, the survival of John's Register actually seems to have been even more precarious than of the surviving letters of Nicholas I and Hadrian II.

Anyway, Lohrmann showed that John VIII's original register consisted of two volumes, which were copied by two scribes at Monte Cassino, who were supervised by a corrector (Lohrmann paints a rather forbidding picture of him in his chapter 'Der Korrektor'), who Lohrmann thinks was John of Gaeta, later Pope Gelasius II (1118-1119).[162] This does not in and of itself tell us that much about how the original Register was composed in the ninth century (which was not Lohrmann's principal interest in the book); all the same, it seems from the chronology of the Register as we have it that the papal scribes worked fairly continuously, but there seem to have been some breaks in activity, coinciding with times when John VIII was not in Rome, most notably during his trip to West Francia in 878-879.[163]

John's Register is extremely interesting in its own right, as the only surviving papal register from between Gregory I and Gregory VII. However, I do not intend to analyse the Register in any depth here. This is for two reasons. Firstly, Dietrich Lohrmann has already done it, and the reader who seeks further enlightenment on the copying and preservation of the Register, from the eleventh century onwards, is directed there. Secondly, and perhaps more pertinently, I have not actually used letters from the Register that much in this thesis. The Register only covers roughly the second half of John's pontificate, and, by coincidence, it is the first half which is more relevant to this thesis.

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[161] Lohrmann, *Das Register*, p. 130f; cf. Bloch, *Monte Cassino in the Middle Ages*, 1.319-323, for a potted history of Santa Maria in Pallaria.

[162] Lohrmann, *Das Register*, chs. 1 ('Die Schreiber'), 2 ('Der Korrektor'), 3 ('Der Auftraggeber'), 4 ('Die Benutzer').

[163] Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, p. 127; Caspar, 'Studien zum Register Johanns VIII.', pp. 102ff; Lohrmann, *Das Register*, pp. 179ff; for the (not entirely optional) trip, Sennis, 'Giovanni VIII', p. 563f.

Therefore, the majority of John's letters that I have used here come from his 62 letters sent between December 872 and August 875 (Indictions V-VIII). The major source for these letters is the *Collectio Britannica*, where 55 of John's letters are preserved in folios 120r-136v. The compilers of the *Collectio Britannica* generally excerpted the parts of the letters which they judged to be of most legal importance, but that is fair enough, and what they have preserved still provides a lot of useful material for modern historians.[164] As well as the *Collectio Britannica*, there are also seven more of John's letters which are known only through Deusdedit's collection of canons.[165]

One question that does need to be asked here is precisely why John's letters from 872 to 876 are not included in his Register. Here it is only really possible to speculate. Arthur Lapôtre, writing in the late nineteenth century (see below for more on him), came up with an interesting but not very persuasive thesis that the ninth indiction of John's letters, i.e. the letters from 875 to 876, had been destroyed by followers of Formosus after John's death in 882. Lapôtre's theorising was essentially that, as the ninth indiction contained material condemning Formosus, the 'Formosan party' in Rome destroyed the evidence; therefore, the eleventh-century copyists at Monte Cassino only had the second half of John's Register to use.[166] It would be quite nice if this thesis were true, but unfortunately it was comprehensively demolished by Dietrich Lohrmann, who pointed out that, if the 'Formosan party' were trying to destroy the evidence, they did a very bad job of it - Formosus' condemnation was not only known from the letters in John's Register, but also from the acts of the synods of Ponthion and Troyes in 876 and 878 respectively; it was also noted and quite extensively commented on in the *Annales Bertiniani* and *Annales Fuldenses*.[167] It is therefore difficult to see what the 'Formosan party' thought they would have achieved by destroying the ninth induction of

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[164] Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, p. 128.

[165] ibid.

[166] For this, see Lapôtre, *L'Europe et le Saint-Siège*, pp. 22ff.

[167] Lohrmann, *Das Register*, p. 135.

the Register; it would seem that it would have been a fairly pointless thing to do. It should still be noted, though, that no one has actually come up with a better theory for why we only have the second half of the Register.

One possibility that I would like to at least raise here, even if it would require a thesis in and of itself to investigate properly, is that the reason we only have the second half of John's Register (or, more accurately, the Register for the second half of his pontificate) is because intellectual developments within the curia meant that the second half of the Register began to be seen as more significant than the first half, and possibly as more significant than any papal register since that of Gregory I. Here the year 876 is of crucial importance. The disgracing of Formosus was not the only significant event in Rome that took place in that year; it was also the year that John the Deacon finished writing his *Life of Gregory the Great*, which was dedicated to John VIII.[168] The textual history of the Register of Gregory the Great need not detain us for too long here, but it is necessary to note the fact that, in order to write his *Life of Gregory*, John the Deacon was highly dependent on 'R', which is 'the biggest and most important selection from [Gregory's] *Register*', and was compiled in Rome during the pontificate of Hadrian I (772-795).[169] This was all part of what Conrad Leyser has called 'John VIII's exaltation of the papal archive'.[170] It is possible that part of this exaltation of the archive was a shift in the institutional memory of the papacy, from the *Liber Pontificalis* (see below), and to systematic collection and preservation of papal letters in Rome, rather than leaving preservation efforts to chance. Given that Gregory the Great is the only other early medieval pope whose Register we have any evidence for outside LP, this may be the case; although it would be difficult to argue that early medieval popes did not keep registers *at all*, preservation may have been somewhat haphazard, hence why we are so reliant on collections from

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[168] John's *Life of Gregory* is edited in *PL* 75.62-242; see for commentary e.g. Leyser, 'Charisma in the archive'; idem, 'Memory of Gregory'.

[169] Leyser, 'Memory of Gregory', p. 189f.

[170] idem, 'Charisma in the archive', p. 217.

outside Rome for our knowledge of the letters of Nicholas I and Hadrian II, and indeed for those of most other early medieval popes. This will be discussed further below; for now, I simply want to make the suggestion that John VIII, having discovered how useful Gregory's letters were for monumentalising papal history in the manner of John the Deacon's *Life of Gregory*, decided, in 876 but not earlier, to instruct the papal *scrinium* to start systematically recording and preserving his own letters in a similar way. Thus, the systematic preservation of papal letters that we see in John's Register may simply have been part of the 'papal myth-making' taking place during his pontificate - the intellectual activities surrounding Gregory caused a shift to an institutionalisation of papal memory, from the *LP* (which is essentially a notice on the main outlines of each pontificate) to the more systematic details available in preserved papal letters, which would have allowed a future papal bureaucracy to engage in the same kind of historical commemoration work as John VIII's advisers and subordinates were themselves carrying out in the 870s.

Another, simpler, explanation for the disappearance of John's Register for the years 872-876 is just that, to quote Thomas Noble, 'papal Rome was often a turbulent, violent place'.[171] As a suggestion, this is fine but not particularly stimulating. It is not implausible that the various Saracen attacks on Rome during the late ninth century would have caused some turbulence in documentary preservation.[172] It is equally not implausible that, when Adalbert and Lambert invaded Rome in 878, papal record-keeping may have suffered somewhat; indeed, Lohrmann showed that the papal scribes had significant difficulty in keeping up their registration activities while John VIII was out of Rome after this invasion.[173] It is not hard to imagine how papal documents could have been lost, or, indeed, deliberately destroyed by partisans of Adalbert and Lambert, during this time. All of this,

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[171] Noble, 'Literacy and the papal government', p. 89, discussed further below.

[172] For Saracen attacks on Rome, see Engreen, 'Pope John VIII and the Arabs'.

[173] For the invasion, *AF* s.a. 878. Lohrmann, *Das Register*, pp. 179ff; Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, p. 127.

though, ultimately, is speculation; it is often quite interesting speculation, but the fact remains that we do not know why the Register of John's pontificate does not survive for between 872 and 876.

Whatever the reasons for the incomplete preservation of John VIII's Register, what is clear is that papal record-/register-keeping died off at the end of the ninth century. There are very few surviving letters from Marinus I and Hadrian III, and Stephen V's letters are entirely preserved in canonical collections.[174] There are some letters from Pope Formosus, which were edited by Laehr,[175] but no one has ever carried out a systematic study of these letters, probably because there are only four and it would not really be worth the effort. For the record, though, they are all related to the diocese of Hamburg-Bremen, and all come from an eleventh-/twelfth-century manuscript, Treverensi 1081.[176] They are interesting in their own right, but I have not used them in this thesis, which does not investigate Hamburg-Bremen.

After Formosus' death in 896, and indeed, as just noted, before, papal documents largely dry up, and henceforth are no longer edited in *MGH*. There are still some, though, and they are edited in Harald Zimmermann's collection of *Papsturkunden* from 896 to 1046.[177] This collection is really only peripherally relevant to this thesis, because the tenth century is only discussed in one chapter (chapter 4), and that chapter only uses one of Zimmermann's letters; it is based far more on other sources, discussed below.[178] All the same, the fact that this collection exists in the first place does need some comment. Broadly speaking, what Zimmermann's collection shows us is that the work of the papal chancery did not die out in the tenth century, but it certainly died down. Bafflingly,

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[174] Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, p. 130f; the fact that Stephen's letters are all in canonical collections does rather make one question Jasper's assertion here that 'the transmission and limited reception of the letters of Stephen V…present a picture very similar to that of John VIII.'

[175] *MGH Epp*. 7, pp. 366ff.

[176] See the commentary of Laehr, at *MGH Epp.* 7 p. 354.

[177] Zimmermann, *Papsturkunden*.

[178] Namely *Papsturkunden* nos. 154.

Zimmermann did not himself produce an analysis of his own collection,[179] but this challenge was taken up by Jochen Johrendt, who has produced an excellent study of Zimmermann's collection using a Fergus Millar-esque petition-and-response model.[180] Johrendt shows that, by and large, the papacy during the tenth and early eleventh centuries was reacting to outside initiatives; most *Papsturkunden* from 896 to 956 were granting monastic privileges or conferring the *pallium* on archbishops; the papal chancery became more active with the advent of the Ottonians in the 950s/60s, but even then, the Ottonians were in the driving seat; there is no real sense of papal activity outside Rome itself being a specifically Roman initiative under the Ottonians.[181] So it is important to note that the energy and dynamism of the late ninth-century papal chancery does drop off somewhat as we enter the tenth century. Calling the tenth century the 'dark century' of papal history is a little overblown; nonetheless, there is a fair amount of truth in it.

Here we come onto the *Liber Pontificalis*, which is my second-most used source after papal letters. What *LP* basically is is very well-known, and need not detain us here: it is essentially a collection of the biographies of late antique and early medieval popes, written probably by various people in the papal chancery (more likely, throughout the years of *LP*'s production, to be in the *vestiarium* than the *scrinium*).[182] It was edited by Louis Duchesne in the late nineteenth century.[183] It is available most accessibly in Raymond Davis' English translation and commentary in the *TTH* series; its

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[179] Though cf. Zimmermann, *Papstabsetzungen*; idem, *Das dunkle Jahrhundert*.

[180] Johrendt, *Papsttum und Landeskirchen*.

[181] This picture is also very much borne out by other (relatively) recent German studies, e.g. Scholz, *Politik-Selbstverständnis-Selbstdarstellung*; Herbers, *Geschichte des Papsttums*.

[182] For the debate about whether the compilers worked in the *vesterarium* or *scrinium*, see e.g. Noble, 'Another look at the *Liber Pontificalis*'; Bertolini, 'Il *Liber Pontificalis*'.

[183] Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*.

commentary, given that it is about 100 years more up-to-date than Duchesne, will form the basis of my discussion here.[184]

Among the most interesting questions about the *LP* is why it exists in the first place. For a thesis focussed on the late ninth century, the distant origins of the *LP* are of secondary importance; still, it is worth a quick glance here. Essentially, the origins of the *LP* lie in the sixth century, and the aftermath of the Laurentian Schism.[185] The propaganda effort required to justify the legitimacy of the incumbent bishop of Rome led to the creation of a tradition of writing about that incumbent. This lay dormant for the rest of the sixth century, but, for unclear reasons, it was picked up again in the early seventh century, when the lives started to be written by contemporary writers. There is no reason to think that this ever stopped being the case until the end of the *LP* in the ninth century.

One question that is more relevant to this thesis is why the *LP* continued to be written, right up until the late ninth century, by which point the position of the bishop of Rome at the head of (Latin) Christianity was not seriously challenged (this point is not the same as saying that the identity of the legitimate bishop of Rome was unchallenged, which is of course demonstrably untrue). The field was until recently dominated by two rather pedestrian, and not wholly convincing, answers to this question. Raymond Davis argued that the continuation of *LP* into the ninth century was down mostly to 'lethargy-factor', i.e. the lives kept being written because they always had been written (or so the scribes believed).[186] This is fine as far as it goes, but really it is speculation, and does beg the question of why this 'lethargy-factor' would have suddenly vanished

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[184] Henceforth, 'Davis' simply refers to Davis, *Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes*, but he also, of course, produced *Book of the Popes* and *Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes*. Whenever Davis' translation is cited, Duchesne's edition is also cited as Duchesne x.y. The best articles on *LP*, at least in my view, from a huge bibliography, are Daileader, 'One will, one voice', and, for the late ninth century specifically, Bougard, 'Composition, diffusion et réception'. Noble, 'A new look at the *Liber Pontificalis*', stops in 816. Rosamond McKitterick has done a lot of work focussed mainly on the earlier parts of *LP*, but she is still worth reading (as always): see most recently 'Perceptions of Rome and the papacy', and for a full list of her *LP* articles see the bibliography.

[185] For this and what follows, see Davis pp. x-xi.

[186] Davis p. xi.

halfway through the life of Hadrian II. Davis' speculation is certainly more plausible than that of Thomas Noble, though. Noble made three suggestions, all of which can be fairly easily dismissed.[187] His first suggestion was that the *LP* was an official version of papal history from which young clerics could learn about papal history; this is not very persuasive, because, if the *LP* is a textbook, it is a very badly-written one; it is difficult to disagree with Davis' protestation, made with the unmistakable exasperation of someone who has translated every word of the LP, that 'I cannot help feeling that if the *LP* was used as a textbook someone would at some point have done something about the Latin style and syntax'.[188] Noble's second suggestion was that the *LP* was supposed to be a reference work for clerical scholars; again, this is a strange argument, as it is difficult to see what purpose this would have served. *LP* is fairly useless as a history of the Lombards or the Carolingians - for example, it is not interested in Charlemagne's dealings with the papacy between 774 and 799, a crucial period for the history of Frankish-papal relations, and the life of Gregory IV somehow manages never to mention Gregory's trip across the Alps to the Field of Lies in 833.[189] It is also not entirely clear why clerics would have needed to use the *LP*, as presumably they would also have had access to the papal archives themselves.[190] This leads onto Noble's third suggestion, that the *LP* was produced to act as an inventory for the papal archives. The problem with this, though, is that Noble seems to think that an early medieval archive/library would have been basically similar to a modern one, with material arranged in a more or less rational order, and easy to find with a good inventory (which in any case *LP* is not). This is an unwarranted assumption. To quote Davis again, papal 'archives were kept as often as not, I suspect, because it seemed wrong to throw documents away, rather than in any expectation that the preserved material

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[187] Noble made these suggestions in 'A new look at the *Liber Pontificalis*', summarised at p. 356.

[188] Davis p. xi; Davis does somewhat nuance this though by saying that, although some clerics may indeed have read it, it is unlikely to have been part of any standardised curriculum.

[189] ibid.

[190] A point Noble himself makes, 'A new look', p. 355.

would be consulted, or with any plan to make life easy for researchers'.[191] None of this disproves any of Noble's suggestions (and it should also be noted that the article is highly interesting and stimulating in its own right; rather, the upshot here is that, between them, Davis and Noble were not really able to come up with any fully convincing explanations for why the LP continued to be produced into late ninth century.

Fortunately, however, in 2009 a book was published, entitled *Liber, gesta, histoire*, which contained, among other things, two refreshing articles on the *LP* by François Bougard and Klaus Herbers.[192] Bougard's contribution is especially useful. Davis and Noble had rather run the question of why the *LP* continued to be written into the ground, focussing as they did on its immediate Roman context; Bougard very helpfully reformulates the question by examining the LP's 'diffusion et réception' in Latin Europe outside of Rome. Bougard notes, for example, that in 866 Hincmar of Rheims asked his colleague in Sens to go to Rome and bring him an updated copy of the Roman *gesta pontificum*, which he also elsewhere calls the *liber episcopalis*, and which we can fairly confidently assume refers to the LP, from the pontificate of Sergius II onwards.[193] Bougard himself notes that this is an 'indice du fait que, même dans un centre aussi important que Reims, on était en retard de vingt ans et près de quatre pontificats sur l'historiographie romaine'.[194] This is a very good point, but for our purposes it is also important to note the flip side of Bougard's observation: despite being out of date in his knowledge of what the papacy was doing, Hincmar was still interested enough to send his colleague on a relatively long journey from Sens to Rome specifically to acquire a copy of this *liber episcopalis*. There is therefore a clear sense that the papacy mattered to bishops,

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[191] Davis p. xi f.

[192] Bougard, 'Composition, diffusion'; Herbers, 'Agir et écrire'; the book also contains stimulating articles by McKitterick, 'La place du *Liber pontificalis*', and by Geertman, 'La genesi del *Liber pontificalis*', both of which are only tangentially relevant to this thesis.

[193] Bougard, 'Composition, diffusion', p. 134, citing *MGH Epp*. 8.1, pp. 194 ('demande de copie'), 212 (*codes episcopalis*); *MGH Concilia* 4, *Supplementum* 2, p. 217 (*liber episcopalis*).

[194] ibid.

or at least to this bishop; it is also relevant to note here that Hincmar was not hugely enamoured with the then-current pope Nicholas I, but still thought it important for him to be able to read the 'official line' of papal history, as produced by the *scrinium* in the *LP*. A similar point can be made from the fact that Flodoard, while staying in Rome in 936/7, asked whether he could acquire a copy of the *LP*, but could only find information going up to Nicholas I- again, there is still an interest in papal history, and in what the papal chancery was saying about papal history, in the early tenth century.[195]

As well as this more 'passive' dissemination of the *LP*, Bougard also has several very sensible points to make about its more 'active' diffusion from Rome. He notes, for example, that a selection of books sent to Charlemagne by Leo III probably contained a copy of the *LP* going up to Hadrian I, Leo's predecessor, of which the scriptorium at Laon made at least one copy, on the initiative of Bishop Wenilo (799-814), for Archbishop Hildebald of Cologne.[196] Bougard does note that it is not completely certain that this came from Leo's initiative, rather than Charlemagne asking for it; still it is plausible enough to suggest that there was some level of papal/Roman initiative in the dissemination of the *LP* to western Europe. Extending this further into the ninth century, it is not implausible that popes continued to send gifts, including manuscripts of the *LP*, to Carolingian rulers. It is especially easy to imagine Nicholas I, Hadrian II and John VIII, all of whom were broadly positive about Louis II, if not particularly close to him, continuing this tradition of using the *LP* as a diplomatic gift; though, again, this is speculation, and we do not have any direct evidence for it. All the same, it would seem that Bougard here has gone some way towards explaining why *LP* continued to be written up to the late ninth century - the *LP* was used as a propaganda tool for telling people outside Rome what the papacy wanted them to know about papal history. It was

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[195] ibid.

[196] ibid p. 134f; the manuscript is Cologne, Erzbishöfl., Diözesan- und Dombibliothek, ms. 164.

therefore not Davis' 'lethargy-factor' driving the continued production of *LP*, but its continual holding of an important place in the papacy's public relations strategy.

If Bougard has gone some way to explaining why *LP* continued to be produced up to the late ninth century, he has also given a satisfactory explanation of why its production ceased after the life of Hadrian II. Essentially, Bougard argued that, in the 870s, the *LP*'s place in the papacy's PR strategy was taken by John VIII's papal myth-making activities. To quote Bougard, the *LP* 'a été pris dans les années 870 dans un projet qui en changeait la nature, lui donnant un souffle hagiographique dont il était jusque-là dépourvu. Non que les notices soient devenues à une logique nouvelle, étrangère aux ressorts narratifs habituels du LP. Cependant Jean Hymmonide est mort en 876, en pleine rédaction de la notice d'Adrien II; après lui il n'y avait personne en mesure de reprendre le travail de cette manière-là'.[197] There is not much to add to this: Bougard had already proved beyond reasonable doubt that John the Deacon did indeed write the life of Nicholas I and Hadrian II in *LP*,[198] and it is not difficult to agree with his view that John's death in 876 meant that the papal chancery, as it were, 'forgot' how to write the *LP* (John had after all been writing it for at least the last twenty years); by 876, John VIII had reorientated the papal chancery around his own myth-making activities, and this now became seen as the central locus of papal literary activity. After John VIII died in 882, no one particularly saw the need to resurrect the *LP*; Roman aristocrats seem to have been more interested in fighting each other than in continuing literary production; and anyway papal PR had moved onto a new means of expression under John VIII which left the *LP* somewhat sidelined. To quote Bougard again, 'le commanditaire, Jean VIII, dispirut à son tour en 882, assassiné [Bougard is assuming this], dans un climat de luttes de factions peu propice à la continuité littéraire, et le LP en est resté là'.[199]

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[197] ibid p. 133f.

[198] Bougard, 'Anastase le Bibliothécaire ou Jean Diacre?'

[199] idem, 'Composition, diffusion', p. 134.

Bougard's article is also useful for the attention it pays to the reception of *LP*. It is certainly easy to agree with Bougard that studying the manuscripts and reception history of the lives of the ninth century popes is 'sans appel', not least because there are so few surviving manuscripts for these lives.[200] As will be discussed further below, 'la haute réputation de Nicolas Ier, la comparaison explicite entre son pontificat et celui de Grégoire le Grand sont le fruit d'autres voies' than *LP*.[201] Nevertheless, it is still worth looking, however briefly, at the overall reception history of the *LP* as a whole, to see what it can tell us about interest in papal history outside of Rome in the early middle ages. Essentially, it is striking how unevenly distributed manuscripts of *LP* were in late ninth-century Europe. There is no evidence for any interest in *LP* in Spain, which is not wholly surprising, as only the relatively inaccessible non-Arab northern coast is likely to have any interest in *LP*; it is more surprising that there is relatively little interest in *LP* in England (notwithstanding Bede's use of it), but that is a topic for another thesis. There is also no evidence for any manuscripts of *LP* in central Europe, not wholly surprising as the 'states' of Bulgaria and Moravia would presumably not have had particularly developed archival cultures in the late ninth century. Rather, *LP* essentially circulated around what is now France, northern Italy, Germany and Benelux, i.e. Carolingian Europe. The most-copied *LP* manuscript stops at the death of Stephen II in 757; thus, it is reasonable to argue, with Bougard, that the early reception of the *LP* is entirely dependent on Frankish interest in the papacy in the mid-eighth century.[202] Indeed, an entirely plausible argument could be made that papal history in the eighth and ninth centuries, up to the pontificate of Nicholas I, was largely constructed outside of Rome, though that would require considerably more space than is available here. Whatever the case with that, the fact remains that, in terms of widespread reception, the *LP* seems to have somewhat run out of steam after 757; it continued to be written,

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[200] ibid p. 143, for this and what follows.

[201] ibid.

[202] ibid; McKitterick, *History and Memory*, pp. 33, 144f; eadem, *Perceptions of the Past*, p. 47.

but, for whatever reason, interest in it across Europe seems to have dropped off somewhat, quite possibly due to the distracting presence of the 'Carolingian Renaissance' emanating from the regions which were most interested in *LP*.[203] This is not to say that there was *no* interest in the *LP* after 757 - we have already seen Hincmar and Flodoard being interested in it, and it is also important to note that the earlier pre-757 manuscripts of *LP* would have had more *time* to be copied by *scriptoria* around Europe - but this does seem overall to have been a 'réception partielle…qui n'a suscité d'attente pour une suite sous cette forme-là que dans quelques cercles restraints'.[204]

If Bougard's study was based principally on studying the manuscripts of *LP*, an earlier article by Daileader provides some further suggestions as to what the point of *LP* is by studying the text itself.[205] Daileader notes that, from the mid-eighth century onwards, every papal life in the *LP* contains an at least brief account of the relevant papal election. Daileader acknowledges that, technically, the act that made the pope the pope was consecration, not election, but nonetheless rightly makes the point that the *LP* generally presents the election as the main legitimating act of a given pope's pontificate. Daileader notes the surge of interest throughout Carolingian Europe in the *LP*, and in papal history more broadly, during the eighth and ninth centuries, and uses this to make the argument that 'the emphasis upon proper election bears witness to a new institutional self-awareness that goes far beyond the cataloguing of each pope's admirable personal traits, which, although also prominent during this period, reflect upon the individual more than the institution and its procedures…election accounts too were pressed into the service of influencing Frankish and Anglo-Saxon readers…[and] an ideology of papal independence from outside control could be

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[203] Bougard, 'Composition, diffusion', p. 144 - 'sauf la tentative avortée de reprise pour Étienne V, il [LP] reste figé aux années 870 pour sa composition, aux années 750 pour le gros de sa réception'.

[204] ibid.

[205] Daileader, 'One will, one voice'.

expressed'.[206] Essentially, Daileader argues that, by the end of the eighth century, papal election accounts were a sufficiently normalised part of the *LP* that the authors of the ninth-century lives could take them and run with them, to the point that they could start making some very bold claims about contested papal elections. Daileader presents a cumulative picture of the papal scribes working out how to deal with the papal elections, eventually reaching the life of Hadrian II, which he describes as the '*tour de force* of papal election accounts'.[207] It is abundantly clear from non-Roman sources[208] that the election of Hadrian II in 867 was quite fiercely contested. The *LP* makes the questionable assertion that Roman society was indeed divided, but only in that different Roman factions were trying to outdo each other in the fervency of their support for Hadrian II; it is very hard to understand what this means, other than that John the Deacon was a very good spin doctor, and was presenting each faction as being desperate to be the one to actually elect Hadrian, rather than either faction supporting a different candidate. In Daileader's words, 'everyone had always wanted Hadrian II to be pope, and unity in love for Hadrian was expressed by disunity over his election. An author of the *Liber*[209] had thus made a troubled election the result of unanimous approval for the future pope.'[210]

Daileader has therefore provided a second powerful motive for the continuation of the production of *LP* into the late ninth century, which, together with Bougard, overpowers Davis' 'lethargy factor' explanation. Essentially, the *LP* invents an imaginary unity of the Roman clergy and people in papal elections to legitimate both the position and actions of successive popes, in a

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[206] ibid p. 21. One could say that eighth-century papal-Carolingian interaction was part of an ongoing Weberian institutionalisation of charisma. For more on the papacy, the Carolingians and 'papal independence', see the historiography section above.

[207] ibid p. 27.

[208] Principally *AB* s.a. 867, 868; see further chapter 1; cf. Daileader's strange assertion that 'Frankish sources say almost nothing about this election' - 'One will, one voice', p. 27.

[209] Daileader was writing before Bougard made it more or less certain that this mysterious author was John the Deacon.

[210] Daileader, 'One will, one voice', p. 27.

way not wholly dissimilar to how the mythical 'will of the people' is used to justify highly misguided policies in the modern UK. In Daileader's words, 'the attempt to throw off outside sources of legitimacy necessitated an emphasis upon an internal source of legitimacy. Election by the Romans was the one aspect of the creating of a new pope that…remained (theoretically) beyond the control of any ruler, and it was for this reason that elections found their way into the *Liber Pontificalis* in the eighth and ninth centuries'.[211] Putting Bougard and Daileader together, therefore, it becomes quite clear why *LP* continued to be produced well into the ninth century: it functioned essentially as papal PR, broadcasting papal claims and assertions to the wider world. When it ceased to be needed, with the advent of the papal myth-making of the 870s, it stopped.

[211] ibid p. 31.

Chapter 1: The city of Rome in the late ninth and early tenth centuries: Anastasius Bibliothecarius and Formosus

The first chapter of this thesis examines the politics of the city of Rome in the late ninth century and (more briefly) the early tenth, through two case studies: the failed papal candidate and later papal librarian Anastasius Bibliothecarius, and Formosus, a highly influential figure in Rome already in the 860s, before his exile, rehabilitation, papal election and posthumous condemnation. It sets the careers of these two men within the wider context of Roman politics, and of contemporary events in Italy more broadly, to make some suggestions about how events in Rome impacted on the papacy, in both its 'domestic' and international settings. This will then form the groundwork for my investigations of the papacy's role in the conversion of central and eastern Europe in the ninth and tenth centuries later on in the thesis.

It may be wondered, in a thesis centred as it is on what can loosely be described as the papacy's international role, what the point of examining politics in the city of Rome is. It seems to me that this investigation is necessary, for two main reasons. Firstly, the bishops of Rome were and are always, first and foremost, precisely bishops of an individual city.[1] Whatever the international role of the papacy was, therefore, any account of papal history which ignored their position within the city of Rome would be missing a fundamentally important dimension of papal power and authority. In the case of Rome, indeed, the papacy's local role was more important than that of most bishops. Whatever the nuances which have been rightly added to Tom Noble's thesis of a more or less independent 'republic of St Peter', discussed in the introduction, the fact remains that the city of Rome was not formally part of any overarching polity in the late ninth and early tenth centuries. Rome was never part of the Carolingian Empire, and indeed the Carolingians never really

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[1] Wickham, *Medieval Rome*, p. 15.

understood, or arguably even cared about, internal Roman politics.[2] Thus, the bishop of Rome was essentially the head of a city-state and its associated territory, making him a temporal ruler in a way that, say, the bishop of Milan, operating within the framework of the Kingdom of Italy, would not have been.[3] Due to this, it would seem perverse to write a thesis on the medieval papacy and not have at least some investigation into politics in the city of Rome.

The second reason why this chapter is a necessary part of the thesis is the connections between internal Roman politics and the wider world. This was by no means a new feature of the late ninth century - see, for example, the influx of Greek monks into Rome in the eighth century.[4] Anastasius and Formosus have not been chosen at random as the focuses for this chapter. Formosus was, already in the 860s, a key figure in the papacy's attempts to win over the Bulgarians to Roman Christianity, and indeed Boris of Bulgaria tried to make him the archbishop of a new independent ecclesiastical province of Bulgaria; consequently, he is also discussed in some detail in chapter 2 of this thesis. In the 870s, Formosus also was effectively the ringleader of what has been called the 'pro-German' faction in the city of Rome. This almost certainly played a part in his expulsion from the city in 876,[5] and on his becoming pope, he showed a remarkable pro-German tendency, as evidenced, for example, by his repeated calls for Arnulf, king of the East Franks, to rescue Rome from Spoletan domination.[6] Anastasius was also a major international player. This was mostly a function of his various translation projects - Anastasius' role as translator of Greek texts for the papal court almost by definition involved extensive contacts with Constantinople; an example of this is his translation of the Acts of the Eighth Ecumenical Council from Greek into Latin in 870.

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[2] idem, *Inheritance*, p. 419.

[3] Though there were certainly southern Italian bishops in similar positions, discussed below.

[4] Costambeys, 'Property, ideology'; Sansterre, *Les moines grecs*.

[5] 'Pro-German' is a short-hand: Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy*, p. 170

[6] See Formosus' entries in *DBI* and *EP*.

He was also heavily involved in the Cyrillomethodian mission, and seems to have become great friends with both Cyril and Methodios when they were in Rome in 867/8, as will be discussed in chapter 3. His contributions to the 'papal myth-making' taking place in Rome during the late ninth century are also of crucial importance to this thesis, and will be discussed in detail during this chapter.[7]

Thus, this investigation of politics in the city of Rome is fundamental to the rest of the thesis. Several characters in this chapter cross chapter boundaries, as it were - most obviously Anastasius and Formosus, but also Popes Nicholas I, Hadrian II and John VIII, as well as senior Roman clerics like John the Deacon; figures who are treated in more depth in other chapters, such as Boris of Bulgaria and Cyril and Methodios, also feature here. Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of the thesis should therefore be seen as three interconnected parts of a whole - although each chapter treats a distinct geographical area, most characters in the narrative are quite heavily involved in all three chapters, in different ways.

A word needs to be said about both the sources for and the historiography of late ninth- and early tenth-century Rome. To take the sources first: to put it very simply, there are not many. The *Liber Pontificalis* basically ends with Hadrian II, despite later continuations; the possible reasons for this are discussed in the introduction, but it does need to be borne in mind that what is probably our best source for early medieval Rome exists for only about half of the period with which this chapter is concerned (though it is very useful for Anastasius' failed papal candidacy in 855). There are some papal letters which cast some light on events in Rome, most notably John VIII's letter

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[7] References will be more forthcoming in the relevant section, but basic are: on Anastasius, his entries in *DBI* and *EP* (both by Arnaldi), plus now Forrai, 'The interpreter of the popes'. On papal myth-making, Leyser, 'Charisma in the archive', 'Episcopal office', and 'Memory of Gregory'; and on the general intellectual culture of ninth-century Rome, Arnaldi, 'Giovanni Immonide'. Giulia Cò is also currently doing some very exciting work on Anastasius and episcopal transfer at the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici, but this work is still unpublished. See here also Sommar, 'Hincmar of Rheims'.

concerning the flight of Formosus et al from Rome in 876, and the subsequent show trial,[8] but by and large papal letters are not hugely illuminating about what was happening within the city of Rome (with some crucial exceptions - see below). This is actually not very surprising. By definition, papal letters were sent from Rome to other places, and so are more likely to tell us about, say, popes' relationships with Frankish princes or Neapolitan bishops than about factional infighting within the city of Rome. Indeed, given that papal letters are, among other things, exercises in rhetoric, it is likely that popes would have wanted actively to play down any threat to their own position within Rome, lest they appear to be in a weaker position to their interlocutors. Charters are also not very helpful. As Chris Wickham notes, 'Roman documents hardly exist for the eighth and ninth centuries', further elaborating that 'there are two full texts for the eighth century and fifteen for the ninth'.[9] Charters may or may not be a little more significant than this proposes, but there is still not much to go on here.

This is all to say that the sort of evidence I am using elsewhere in the thesis, i.e. papal letters and historical narratives,[10] does not really work for this chapter. Fortunately, there is still some evidence for Rome during this period. There are three main groups here. Firstly, the extensive writings of Anastasius Bibliothecarius, mostly, but not only, his translations of Greek texts for the use of the papal court. Réka Forrai has carried out an excellent investigation into these writings, including mapping out Anastasius' literary networks using their dedications, and I will draw on her work extensively in the pages below.[11] Anastasius' hagiographies and translations have also been

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[8] The letter is *MGH Epp*. 7 pp. 326ff.

[9] Wickham, *Medieval Rome*, p. 8 with n. 15.

[10] The *Liber Pontificalis* and the saints' lives of central and eastern Europe are not the same genre, but can both meaningfully be called 'historical narratives'; dwelling on this would miss the point here.

[11] The contribution that is relevant to this chapter is her thesis, 'The interpreter of the popes' (henceforth simply 'Forrai'), but her other work is extremely interesting in its own right, and is listed in the bibliography.

worked on by Bronwen Neil.[12] In the same category of writings from late ninth-century Rome is the *Life of Gregory the Great* by John the Deacon.[13] I only really discuss John in this chapter when he comes into contact with Anastasius or Formosus (which is actually quite often); all the same, it is worth noting that the *Vita Gregorii*, the longest saints' life from early medieval Europe,[14] can be seen as powerful evidence for a lively intellectual culture in late ninth-century Rome. [15]

The second main type of evidence used in this chapter is the *Streitschriften* over Formosus composed after the so-called 'Synod of the Corpse'. For more than one hundred years, these were only available in a rather terse edition by Ernst Dümmler,[16] but fortunately they have now been edited far more accessibly by Annette Grabowsky, whose 2012 thesis was a commentary on some of these texts.[17] These texts are, broadly speaking, parts of a war of words been defenders and opponents of Formosus. The issue was whether or not it was legitimate of him to transfer his episcopal see from Porto to Rome when he was elected pope in 891, and consequently whether the ordinations he carried out as Bishop of Rome were valid or not. This is a very interesting topic on its own terms; for our purposes, though, the significance of these texts is that they are evidence for a remarkably concentrated level of vitriol between factions in the Rome of the early tenth century. I will not go into the *Streitschriften* in any great detail, as they would take us too far from the main topics of this thesis, but all the same it is worth at least noting their existence, and making some

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[12] Neil, 'Cult of St Clement'; *Seventh Century Popes and Martyrs*. Jesse Torgerson has also given several talks on Anastasius at various conferences (see his CV: http://jtorgerson.faculty.wesleyan.edu/files/2017/07/JWT-Short-CV-2017.05.15.pdf, accessed 16th July 2019), but he too has not published anything on him, so I cannot use him here.

[13] Conrad Leyser has written no less than five articles in which this text gets a starring role - 'Charisma in the archive'; 'Redating of the interpolator'; 'Late antiquity in the medieval west'; 'Episcopal office'; 'Memory of Gregory'. The text itself is in *PL* 75, 62-242; hereafter I shall simply cite it as *VG*. See also Castaldi, *Iohannes Hymmonides*.

[14] Leyser, 'Memory of Gregory', p. 189.

[15] Arnaldi, 'Giovanni Immonide', with his later '*Retractatio*'.

[16] Dümmler, *Auxilius und Vulgarius*.

[17] Grabowsky, 'Streit um Formosus'. I am very grateful to Dr Grabowsky for sending this to me.

suggestions about what they can tell us about the collapse of institutional memory and 'intellectual culture' in early tenth-century Rome.

I said earlier that papal letters were not very useful for investigating the politics of the city of Rome; this is mostly true, but there is an exception here. The reason this chapter focuses on Anastasius and Formosus is precisely because they are the two figures we can find out most about from papal letters, and this in turn is because they are the two most visible papal legates from the 860s and 870s (though by no means the only ones). The intellectual backgrounds and pre-election careers of the major popes discussed later, Nicholas I, Hadrian II and John VIII, are close to invisible to us, and to discuss the little we know about them would not help the aims of this thesis. But all three wrote letters mentioning Formosus, and we can actually get a fairly good sense of his career from these letters. Anastasius himself also wrote several letters, and these can be used to try to reconstruct his network of literary contacts, in a similar way to the dedications of his translations.[18] There is a sense, that is to say, in which we know *more* about these two than about the popes they served. As discussed in the introduction, papal letters are a genre, and have quite specific formulae, literary tropes and rhetorical underpinnings. Thus, it is legitimate to wonder how much we really know about, say, John VIII from reading his surviving letters, as opposed to what we know about the rhetorical and literary techniques employed by the papal *scrinium*. That is to say, papal letters have a tendency to speak with the voice of 'the papacy', rather than of individual popes; whereas their references to specific people, such as Formosus, are not idealising people into offices, or at least not in the same way. And Anastasius' letters certainly reflect his own mind, not that of some wider body. For these reasons, I argue that to concentrate on Anastasius and Formosus is the best way into understanding what Roman politics were like in the period.

Having looked at the sources, a word on historiography is also needed. Here it is necessary to repeat that late ninth-century Rome is an understudied topic. Oddly enough, the best existing

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[18] Anastasius' letters are collected in *MGH Epp*. 7, pp. 395-442.

study of it is to be found in the relevant entries of the *Enciclopedia dei papi* and/or *DBI*; it is not entirely satisfactory that a more accessible alternative, or a good recent monograph, is not available.[19] (Girolamo Arnaldi has published a lot outside the *Enciclopedia*, but he cannot really be classed as 'recent').[20] Having said this, the last twenty years or so have seen the beginnings (and they are only the beginnings) of a more serious engagement with late ninth-century Rome among scholars. One example of this is Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri's study of the Roman clergy between the eighth and thirteenth centuries. , which was discussed in the introduction. Given that di Carpegna is not particularly interested in the main characters of this chapter, I have not particularly drawn on his insights here; nonetheless, this book should be kept in mind by anyone working on Rome during these centuries.

A second author who has carried out some excellent studies into late ninth-century Rome over the last roughly fifteen years is Conrad Leyser, whose contribution is really set out in four articles, one co-written with Marios Costambeys, appearing between 2003 and 2016.[21] The dominant theme in all these articles is what Leyser describes as the 'papal myth-making' going on in late ninth-century Rome, as evidenced by John the Deacon and his *Life of Gregory*. Essentially, Leyser is arguing that the 'intellectual renaissance' taking place in Rome during the 860s and 870s represented an attempt to take control of papal memory back to the city of Rome. For example, he points to John the Deacon's decision to write the *Life of Gregory*, following the realisation in Rome that 'there was scarcely a people of Europe who had not offered an account of Gregory…: the Franks (through a brief notice in Gregory of Tours), the Anglo-Saxons, through the Whitby *Life* and Bede, and the Lombards, through Paul the Deacon…But there was no Roman account of Rome's

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[19] This should not be taken as a criticism of *EP* or *DBI*; it is just frustrating that these general reference works are not supplemented by some more focussed monographs on ninth-century Rome.

[20] Arnaldi, *Natale 875,* 'Giovanni Immonide', 'Papa Formoso'

[21] Leyser, 'Charisma in the archive'; 'Episcopal office'; 'Memory of Gregory'; Leyser and Costambeys, 'To be the neighbour of St Stephen'.

most famous son'.[22] John's response was to write the longest saint's life in early medieval Europe, to regain the memory of Gregory for the Romans. What Leyser has done here is to lay the beginnings of a full study of how papal memory was used to bolster the international claims of the late ninth-century papacy. So for example, chapter 2 of this thesis will discuss how Nicholas I used the *Responsa* of Gregory to the Anglo-Saxons as a model for his own *Responsa* to the Bulgarians about various issues in the Christian faith; in a sense, Leyser has filled in the gap of why Nicholas used Gregory rather than any other early medieval pope. This is all very stimulating; but, whether by accident or (more likely) design, Leyser has made no sustained attempt to investigate Anastasius Bibliothecarius' role in this papal myth-making. Thus, this chapter, among other things, constitutes an attempt to develop Leyser's approach in relation to Anastasius.

The final person who must now be confronted by anyone studying late ninth- and early tenth-century Rome is Chris Wickham, who in 2000 published his thoughts on 'Rome in Italy in the late ninth and tenth centuries', which attempted to explain the frankly quite alarming levels of factionalism, in-fighting and violence prevalent in Rome during this time period.[23] Wickham argued that 'Rome was following not just one Italian developmental model but two, a northern and a southern one; and…it did not fully succeed in resolving…a contradiction between them'.[24] Essentially, the northern Italian cities, being part of the Carolingian empire, were ruled by non-dynastic episcopal succession, and could always fall back on outside Carolingian intervention; whereas southern cities were generally ruled by dynastic laymen (with the occasional exception of Naples, as Wickham acknowledges).[25] Rome's problem was that it tried to combine both of these

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[22] idem, 'Memory', p. 188f, echoing John's preface to the *Vita Gregorii* (Whether Gregory counts as 'Rome's most famous son' is debatable.)

[23] Wickham, 'The Romans according to their malign custom'.

[24] ibid p. 155f.

[25] ibid p. 156f. For a case study of this, see Skinner, *Family Power*. Naples: Cassandro, 'Il ducato bizantino', pp. 41-120.

models, i.e. non-dynastic episcopal rule in a more or less independent city-state, which did not really work very well. 'The problem was that non-dynastic episcopal government worked well enough on the local level, inside the overarching military and political framework of the *regnum Italicum*; it worked rather less well for sovereign states, where the greater degree of power at stake meant that rivals had much more to fight for'.[26] So basically, the chronic instability we see in late ninth-century Rome fundamentally came down to its unsuccessful attempt to combine these two Italian developmental models. This will become highly relevant in this chapter's examination of Formosus.

Wickham returned to Rome with the 2015 publication of *Medieval Rome*. This book explores, in considerable detail, the politics of the city of Rome between 900 and 1150.[27] Its existence means that taking this chapter beyond 900 is pointless, apart from a quick look at the Formosan *Streitschriften*, which are somewhat neglected by Wickham.[28] But the book starts in 900, and therefore does not look at Rome in the late ninth century, or at least not systematically.[29] Thus, there is scope to 'work back' Wickham's methodology into the late ninth century. This can only be done up to a point - the main reason why Wickham starts in 900 is precisely because evidence begins to pick up then, with Roman archives beginning to contain more documents relevant to Roman affairs;[30] that is to say that the detailed prosopographical analyses that form the basis of chapters 4 and 5 of *Medieval Rome* cannot really be recreated for the late (or indeed early) ninth century; we do not have the documentary evidence which Wickham can use in this book. All the same, it is worth trying to follow the general principle of his prosopographical analyses, and, as the

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[26] ibid p. 159.

[27] Although 'I claimed to start my book in 900, but it really starts closer to 950' (Wickham, pers. comm.), which rather begs the question of why not just claim it starts in 950.

[28] They get two mentions in *Medieval Rome* p. 22 n. 57, 376-7.

[29] Though John VIII and Formosus are discussed at pp. 22, 58, 67, 155, 189, 376.

[30] *Medieval Rome* p. 8.

preceding pages have demonstrated, we have enough evidence on Anastasius and Formosus to sustain this. Indeed, both of their careers contain connections with figures we would not be able to carry out a biographical study on themselves (John the Deacon and Paul of Populonia, to take two random examples), so it seems sensible to proceed with caution.

Anastasius Bibliothecarius[31]

Anastasius' only known family relation is Arsenius of Orte, who was probably his uncle.[32] He almost certainly originally came from Rome, and was born some time between 800 and 817, most likely between 810 and 812.[33] His first language was certainly Latin, but he seems to have started learning Greek at a very early age, which can probably be explained by his being educated at a monastery, presumably a Greek one - Sansterre's educated guess is that this was the monastery of St Sabas, but we cannot be sure.[34] This is certainly a better guess than that of Arnaldi, who seems to think that Anastasius learned his Greek by wandering around various Greek monasteries in Rome - this begs the obvious question of why Anastasius would have been the only person to do this.[35] But however he learned Greek, it is certainly clear that, from quite early on in his life, he had an unusual ability - in Arnaldi's words, Anastasius' 'padronanza' of Greek was 'eccezionale allora per Roma e,

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[31] Arnaldi's entries for Anastasius in *DBI* and *EP* are identical. I have used the *DBI* pagination here.

[32] There is some debate about whether Arsenius was in fact Anastasius' father, but the fact of a family connection is more important than the precise nature of that connection: Arnaldi, 'Anastasio' p. 25; Forrai, p. xiv. The debate is centred on *Annales Bertiniani* s.a. 868, but it is a side issue.

[33] Arnaldi, 'Anastasio', p. 25.

[34] Forrai p. xv; Sansterre, *Les moines grecs*, p. 69.

[35] Arnaldi, 'Anastasio', p. 26 - 'L'esistenza in Roma di chiese e monasteri greci, che ospitavano i numerosi profughi [da Costantinopoli]…è più che sufficiente a spiegare come Anastasio abbia avuto occasione di acquistare familiarità con la lingua e la cultura bizantine.'

in genere, per l'Occidente', and 'restò sempre il suo principale titolo d'onore…e fu ragione essenziale dei suoi successi'.[36]

We know nothing about Anastasius until the pontificate of Leo IV (847-855). During Leo's pontificate, Anastasius was appointed cardinal priest of San Marcello, most likely in 847.[37] Almost immediately, his life starts becoming very interesting. A few months after his appointment at San Marcello, Anastasius promptly fled Rome without papal permission and retreated to Aquileia and Chiusi.[38] Anastasius' motives for doing this are unclear.[39] Unsurprisingly, however, this insubordination had consequences for Anastasius - he was excommunicated at a Roman synod on 16th December 850, and then anathematised in Ravenna on 29th May 853, and then in Rome on 19th June of the same year.[40] Having ignored all these condemnations, preferring to stay 'running about…in alien dioceses, like a lost sheep', Anastasius was then deprived of his *sacerdotium* at another synod in Rome in December 854.[41]

Leo IV died on 17th July 855, at which point the Roman clergy and people, the *LP* informs us, unanimously elected Benedict, the cardinal priest of San Callisto, as Pope Benedict III.[42]

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[36] ibid p. 25. Recent work has cast some doubt about whether Anastasius' command of Greek was indeed that 'eccezionale'- see e.g. McCormick, 'Byzantium and the west'; Neil, *Seventh-Century Popes*, pp. 36-42. The key point, though, is not so much how unusual Anastasius' knowledge of Greek was, but the fact that it existed, and the uses to which he put it.

[37] ibid p. 26.

[38] ibid; Forrai p. xv.

[39] Arnaldi, 'Anastasio', p. 26, speculates that Anastasius and Leo IV had some kind of high-profile falling out, which led to Anastasius' flight from Rome. This is highly plausible, but it is precisely speculation, and Arnaldi is open about his lack of evidence for it. It is worth noting, with Arnaldi, that Anastasius is unlikely to have been consorting with 'pro-imperial' forces outside Rome - in Arnaldi's words, this possibility 'non impedisce che Lotario e Ludovico abbiano accolto la richiesta del papa di assisterlo nei suoi affannosi tentativi di mettere le mani sul fuggiasco, che abbiano anche manifestato il loro assenso alle varie sentenze di condanna.'

[40] For all these condemnations, see *Annales Bertiniani* s.a. 868 (sic).

[41] ibid; 'like a lost sheep' - Nelson's trans. p. 146; *LP* II, p. 129.

[42] For this and what follows see *LP* II pp. 141-144, available more accessibly in Davis, *Ninth-Century Popes*, pp. 168-177; Duchesne 2.140ff. On 'unanimous' elections, Daileader, 'One will, one voice', although this does not discuss 855.

However, Benedict's consecration was delayed, and only took place on 29th September 855. The cause of this delay was the machinations of Anastasius, and his contestation of Benedict's election. For three days, between 21st and 24th September 855, Anastasius was pope.[43] He managed to do this through the support of Arsenius, who convinced the papal legates Nicholas, bishop of Anagni, and Mercurius, *magister militum,* that, rather than reporting Benedict's election to Louis II, as they were required to do according to the *Constitutio* of 824,[44] they should support Anastasius instead.[45] Thus, Anastasius and Arsenius basically seem to have been attempting a coup. The *LP* is hardly a paragon of objectivity,[46] and the author of the life of Benedict III is clearly (and unsurprisingly) favourable to Benedict; it is therefore not difficult to imagine that he was trying to blacken Anastasius' name by presenting him as a 'foreign' papal candidate. Given this, we are entitled to doubt whether we are being told the undiluted truth here; all the same, the basic facts here seem to be fairly clear: whether or not Anastasius was an 'imperially-backed' candidate, his bid for the papacy was ultimately unsuccessful, due to not having sufficient support within Rome.

This throws up for discussion the relative success, or lack thereof, of 'Carolingian intervention' in Rome. Here the evidence can be read in two ways. On the face of it, it is interesting that Anastasius, backed as he was by forces external to the city of Rome, was able to at least make a serious claim to control of Rome, unsuccessful though he may ultimately have been.[47] Furthermore, Louis II's preference for Anastasius seems fairly clear (which does not necessarily mean that he

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[43] Forrai p. xv.

[44] For which see Noble, *Republic,* pp. 308ff.

[45] Forrai p. xvi. Davis p. 170 tells us that Arsenius 'buttered them [Nicholas and Mercurius] up with cunning words, their hearts began to soften and they veered from their loyalty to the elected blessed Benedict' (Duchesne 2.141).

[46] It is difficult to disagree with the judgement of Arnaldi, 'Anastasio', p. 26, that it 'dà un resoconto degli avvenimenti che, se non si segnala per obiettività e serenità di giudizio, ha però il merito di essere esteso e denso di particolari'.

[47] One hesitates to disagree with Jinty Nelson, but she is representative of the view that Anastasius was an 'imperially-backed' candidate - see Nelson, *Annals*, p. 80 n. 4.

actively supported him), and 855 was the only election between Pascal I and John VIII (i.e. between 817 and 872) where the Carolingian's preferred candidate did not ultimately win the election.[48] It would not be too difficult, therefore, to see Anastasius as the 'Carolingian candidate', enjoying Louis' support, in 855.

There is, though, another way of looking at Anastasius' candidacy in 855, which is to say that, for whatever reason, the Carolingians did not really mind who was pope at that moment. This is borne out by the lack of obvious interest in any Carolingian/Frankish source in events in Rome in 855. The *Annales Bertiniani* say simply this:

> In August Pope Leo died and Benedict succeeded him. That same month, two shooting stars, one larger, one smaller, were seen travelling from the western part of the sky to the eastern. This happened ten times with them appearing alternately; while the larger star stayed, the smaller was sometimes quite invisible.[49]

The notable lack of reference to any events involving Anastasius in Rome would here seem to suggest that the author saw nothing particularly worthy of note about this election. Here, though, one has to remember that at this point, the annals were still being written by Prudentius, who had, to quote Jinty Nelson, only 'partial and spasmodic' information available to him, and whose work had, by this point, 'acquired a more personal and "private" tone'.[50] What Nelson is saying here, in essence, is that Prudentius was quite distant, physically and metaphorically, from the power/ knowledge centres of the Frankish world. It would therefore perhaps be reading too much into this source to take it as evidence that Anastasius had no backing from Louis in 855 - if he did have imperial backing, Prudentius would probably not be the most likely person to tell us.

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[48] For Louis' preference for Anastasius, see *MGH DD LD* 29; and of course every *LP* life for the ninth century has a fairly extensive narrative of the election process, as do the *Annales Bertiniani* in most cases.

[49] *Annales Bertiniani* s.a. 855; trans. Nelson, p. 80f.

[50] Both quotes from Nelson, *Annals*, p. 9.

Fortunately, however, not long after 855 the *Annales Bertiniani* started being written by someone slightly more forthcoming than Prudentius, namely Hincmar of Rheims. In his account of the Eleutherius affair of 868 (for more on which see below), Hincmar tells us that:

> After the death of Pope Leo of worthy memory, Anastasius, anathematised and deposed, returned with the backing of worldly power from the secret places in which like a thief he had been skulking. Seduced by diabolical trickery and caught in a fog, in the manner of a brigand he invaded this church which he ought not to have entered at all, and like a savage and a barbarian, to the perdition of his own soul...along with his most villainous accomplices and followers he destroyed and threw down that picture [i.e. an icon in San Marcello] in the dust.[51]

Hincmar, to put it mildly, did not share Prudentius' lack of involvement in contemporary affairs: to quote Nelson again, 'what distinguishes Hincmar's work from his predecessor's is a much more significant involvement in high politics and much closer (if intermittent) contacts with the king and the court'.[52] That is to say, Hincmar is more likely than Prudentius to have known whether Anastasius had imperial backing in 855. All the same, Hincmar's statement here does not really prove anything: given that Hincmar was not known for passing up the opportunity to criticise anyone, it is hardly surprising that he might have wanted to criticise Anastasius, who after all had a not insignificant role as Nicholas I's chief adviser during the Lothar and Theutberga affair (Hincmar's specific dislike of Anastasius is discussed more below). It has to be said that the general flavour of Carolingian attitudes towards Rome probably make it more likely than not that they gave some active support to Anastasius, but the evidence is quite circumstantial, and it is impossible to be sure either way.

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[51] ibid p. 148.

[52] ibid p. 11.

The key significance of Anastasius' failed papal candidacy in 855, for our purposes, is that it seems to have brought about a fundamental change in Anastasius' outlook. Broadly speaking, most of Anastasius' actions before 855 can be basically explained by overweening ambition. If Arnaldi is right in his speculation that Anastasius fled Rome in 847 due to some kind of disagreement with Leo IV, it is not difficult to imagine a scenario wherein Anastasius and Leo fell out due to Anastasius openly disagreeing with key lines of papal policy (precisely what these would have been must remain a mystery). Anastasius was therefore framed for treason or something like it, and this then led to him fleeing Rome. Whilst outside Rome, Anastasius was able to scheme with Arsenius about how to return, and then put this plan into action when the papal throne became vacant in 855. There is no evidence whatsoever for this story; it is pure speculation. However, it is worth noting that the first half of this story seems to be precisely what happened to Formosus in the 870s - i.e. unfulfilled ambition leading to a high-profile falling out with the incumbent pontiff, and then enforced exile from Rome. It does not therefore seem to me to be totally implausible to project it back 30 years to try to explain the murky business of Anastasius and Leo.

Be that as it may, what is clear is that, after 855, Anastasius transforms from an excommunicated subversive and antipope into the right hand man of three popes (Nicholas I, Hadrian II and John VIII), a passionate advocate of papal policy against Photios, and arguably the single most influential non-pope in all of Rome between the fourth and tenth centuries. Such is the disconnect between these two figures, indeed, that until Arthur Lapôtre's investigations in the late nineteenth century, they were generally assumed to be two different people.[53] Indeed, the *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, published in 1896, contained two separate entries for 'Anastasius, Gegenpapst' and for 'Anastasius Bibliothecarius'.[54] Such a

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[53] For this see Lapôtre, *Études sur le papauté*, pp. 8-32.

[54] Arnaldi, 'Anastasio', p. 27, citing *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche* (Leipzig, 1896), I, pp. 489f and 492f.

remarkable transformation does cry out for an explanation. Frustratingly, however, our sources are not very forthcoming here. All the same, though, it is worth looking at what Anastasius' contemporaries thought of him to see if this sheds any light on the problem. Fundamentally, Anastasius' contemporaries never quite seem to know what to make of him. The exception to this is Leo IV, for obvious reasons. Leo basically saw Anastasius as a dangerous man whose only real principle was doing whatever was most likely to make himself pope.[55] Hadrian II was less sure - he vacillated between referring to Anastasius as 'dilectissim[us] fili[us[me[us],[56] and condemning his overweening ambition, which caused him frequently to plot and scheme to increase his own influence in Rome.[57] The *Liber Pontificalis* also cannot make up its mind. In the Life of Benedict III Anastasius is presented as even worse than the Saracens, which seems a little harsh;[58] but in the Life of Hadrian II he is only ever presented as the wise and faithful papal librarian; he is not even mentioned when the *LP* discusses the Eleutherius affair (for which see below).[59] These two Lives certainly had different authors,[60] but it is nonetheless interesting that the 'official line' given by the *Liber Pontificalis* on Anastasius varies so much. Gaurimpotus, the hagiographer of Anastasius I of Naples, describes Anastasius Bibliothecarius, whom he met when he visited Naples, as 'vir eloquentissimus et ad exortandum idoneus', but also noted that he mysteriously always seemed to fail at the task he was entrusted with, e.g. arranging the marriage of Ermengard, or engaging in diplomacy with southern Italian bishops. But he always found other ways of making his visits

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[55] *Annales Bertiniani* s.a. 868 give a very good indication of Leo's views on Anastasius.

[56] *MGH* Epp. 6 p. 711.

[57] Nelson, *Annals of St-Bertin*, p. 149; Forrai p. xix.

[58] *LP* II, p. 142. See the translation of Davis p. 172 - 'The extent and nature of the evil and hapless activities he carried out were such as even a Saracen horde had not presumed or thought to carry out therein' (Duchesne 2.142).

[59] Forrai p. xix. Some indicative quotes in Davis pp. 282 ('Anastasius the holy apostolic see's most eloquent librarian') and 289 ('Anastasius the holy apostolic see's wise librarian') (Duchesne 2.182, 184f).

[60] Anastasius was not the author of the Life of Hadrian II, agreed by both Arnaldi, 'Anastasio', p. 36f, and Davis, p. 249.

productive, which usually seem to have revolved around showing the Neapolitans how clever he was.[61]

The key to Anastasius' rehabilitation was his knowledge of Greek. It is not particularly controversial to say that, by the mid-ninth century, relations with Constantinople were a very high priority for the papacy, and arguably its highest priority (as, indeed, was the case throughout the early middle ages).[62] This reached a new pitch just after Anastasius' failed candidacy in 855 - the Photian Schism began in earnest in 857, and the conversion of Bulgaria can meaningfully if slightly simplistically be dated to Boris' baptism in 863 (see chapter 2 for both of these). In these circumstances, it is not difficult to see how Anastasius could have realised that his knowledge of Greek could stand him in good stead in the papal court, and potentially lead to his rehabilitation, and thus to his regaining of power and influence in Rome. Anastasius would have seen that his knowledge of Greek would provide a valuable tool to the popes in their dealings with Constantinople, and indeed could be used as a weapon in any 'war of words' between the bishops of Rome and the patriarchs of Constantinople. Essentially, it must have become clear to Anastasius that his future lay less in 'front-line politics', and more in being a 'backroom dealer', increasing his own influence by becoming someone the pope needed to rely on. 'L'accesso al pontificato gli era ormai precluso, ma il potere, cui egli ambiva, e che il colpo di mano dell'855 non era stato in grado di assicurarli, lo avrebbe avuto lo stesso, anche se rimanendo nell'ombra.'[63]

Anastasius remained sufficiently *nell'ombra* that we cannot trace him between 855 and 863. When he reemerges in 863, however, he is the abbot of the monastery of Santa Maria in Trastevere,

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[61] *MGH SRL*, p. 447; Forrai p. xx.

[62] See among many works on ninth-century Rome-Constantinople relations, McCormick, 'Byzantium and the west'; Wickham, 'Ninth-century Byzantium'; the relevant chapters of Chadwick, *East and West*; Dvornik, *Photian Schism*; Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, etc. For earlier relations, Herrin, *Formation*.

[63] Arnaldi, 'Anastasio', p. 28.

during the pontificate of Nicholas I.[64] During Nicholas' pontificate, Anastasius set about making himself 'il prezioso ed insostituibile collaboratore di Nicolò'.[65] Our first evidence for Anastasius' activities under Nicholas I actually has nothing to do with Constantinople, nor with his abilities in Greek - we have a letter sent to Nicholas from the Frankish bishops Gunther and Tilgald complaining about Nicholas showing excessive favour towards a priest who had been excommunicated and deposed, and mentions 'assistente lateri tuo Anastasio, olim presbytero ambitus damnato et deposito et anathematizato, cuius scelerato magistero tuus praecipitabatur furor'.[66] Anastasius then seems to have hit his stride over the next few years, working essentially as Nicholas' secretary (he had not yet been made *bibliothecarius*). In this capacity, Anastasius seems to have basically given advice to Nicholas, and, crucially, to have worked on the translation of papal letters into Greek, and indeed to have been involved their composition more generally.[67] Doubtless this included Anastasius having some influence over the papal *scrinium*, but, in keeping with our generally woeful knowledge about how papal letters were actually written, it is not possible to answer the question of whether Anastasius wrote Nicholas' letters, or the exact level of influence he had over Nicholas. That said, it seems beyond dispute that Anastasius had a lot of influence with Nicholas; but this seems to have been more or less the same sort of level that a senior modern British civil servant would have over a prime minister - that is to say, a source of advice and support, but not 'running the show' themselves, and conscious that, ultimately, they are the subordinate person in the relationship.

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[64] ibid; Forrai p. xvi; *MGH* Epp. 7 p. 399. Arnaldi and Forrai both speculate that Anastasius was already abbot during the pontificate of Benedict III, bringing in no evidence whatsoever. This would be very interesting, but is completely unprovable.

[65] ibid.

[66] This is in the *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. Kurze p. 61; Arnaldi, 'Anastasio', p. 28. The priest in question is presumably Anastasius.

[67] Perels, *Papst Nikolaus I und Anastasius Bibliothecarius*, passim.

Another way in which Anastasius proved his value to the papacy during the pontificate of Nicholas I is that he started to produce his translations of saints' lives from Greek into Latin. Anastasius' first documented translation, of the *Life of John the Almsgiver*, is dedicated to Nicholas I.[68] What Anastasius writes in the dedication here is very interesting. Firstly, he emphasizes that he is resigned to the place he has in the Roman curia, and states that he is no longer interested in fulfilling his own lofty ambitions - which is clearly an oblique reference to his activities in 855.[69] He goes on to announce that 'ecce subito quidam strenui ac studiosi viri me cohortari voluerunt, ut in Latinum sermonem verterem Leontium de residuis vitae Iohannis Alexandrini antistitis'.[70] This is very interesting, because it is the first direct evidence we have of Anastasius discovering 'the difference between himself and the others, his secret weapon, his key to power'.[71] Essentially, it shows Anastasius becoming cognisant that his knowledge of Greek meant he could advance to the power and influence he craved within the curia, now that he realised that the road to the papacy was no longer open for him (it should be remembered that Anastasius, despite being an abbot, remained a layman for the entirety of the pontificate of Nicholas I, and therefore would presumably not have been able to see any way to the papacy for himself; given the ongoing Photian Schism, a layman was hardly likely to become bishop of Rome). Furthermore, as Forrai notes, 'the fact that he dedicates his first translation to the pope already shows that not only did he suddenly discover his exceptional competence, but he also knew what use to make of it. In this letter he does more than just dedicate a translation to Nicholas; he is, so to speak, offering his services to the papacy.'[72] In a

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[68] Forrai p. cxxxviii; Laehr, 'Die Briefe', p. 417f.

[69] *MGH Epp.* 7 p. 396 - 'Cogitante ac diu tacite solliciteque mecum considerante, quid in domo Dei commodius ac dignius, operari potuissem, ne ea videlicet praesumerem, quae mihi ex ministerio credito commissa non sunt, nec rursus illa arriperem, quae ingenioli mei vires excedunt.'

[70] ibid p. 396f.

[71] In the slightly overexcited words of Forrai p. cxxxix.

[72] ibid.

sense, therefore, this letter presents us with Anastasius' decision to abandon his path to the papacy, and instead seek power and influence in Rome by becoming a general 'behind-the-scenes' figure in Roman politics.

Nicholas died in 867.[73]. His successor Hadrian II was consecrated on 14th December of that year, and immediately made Anastasius papal librarian (*bibliothecarius* - technically, therefore, he can only be called 'Anastasius Bibliothecarius' after 867).[74] This was an extremely responsible position - as well as retaining his function of advising and assisting the pope, which he already had under Nicholas I, Anastasius was now responsible for preserving the acts of ecumenical councils, registers of letters, and generally looking after the holdings of the papal library.[75] Anastasius' position at the start of 868 is very well summed up by the title *Vat. Reg. lat.* 566 gives to a letter he wrote to Ado of Vienne in late 867/early 868 - 'Epistola reverendi Anestasii [sic] presbiteri et abbatis ac bibliothecarii sacrae Romanae ecclesiae'.[76] The upshot of this is quite clear: going into 868, Anastasius enjoyed a position of great power and influence in Rome, as essentially the right-hand man to the pope, in a scenario that would probably have seemed unimaginable a few years before.

Anastasius may have been riding high at the start of 868, but all was not well in Rome more generally. Notably, the *LP* is very suspicious about the circumstances surrounding the election of Hadrian II. Its account of Hadrian's election is very strange:

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[73] At least temporarily. Incredibly, there is 'an anthroposophic cult in Basel dedicated to the belief that [Helmuth von] Moltke [Chief of the German General Staff in the First World War] was the reincarnation of the ninth-century Pope Nicholas I and would himself be reborn one day…to lead Europe along the true path'. Röhl, 'Goodbye to all that (again?)', p. 160f.

[74] *Annales Bertiniani*, p. 92; Nelson, *Annals*, p. 145.

[75] Arnaldi, 'Anastasio', p. 29. More on the papal library in the introduction.

[76] ibid. The letter is at *MGH Epp.* 7, p. 400, though Paul Kehr only thought it necessary to say that the letter was from 'Anastasius sanctae Romanae ecclesiae bibliothecarius'.

> No one in the whole wide world was found, unless he wanted the promotion of himself or his own favourite, who did not long in his inmost heart for Hadrian to be promoted to this pinnacle. Though the dignitaries were as usual physically divided into two factions, they burned for him with one mind and equal ardour, for it was only great affection and love for this great man that caused their division: each faction were longing for him to be preferred to themselves, so that, if one faction loved him, the other faction deeply hesitated, nor did one faction have the will to hold the other back, except because it reckoned it was destining its votes for another.[77]

It is not easy to see how two separate 'factions' can support the same person, as *LP* claims they are doing here. The logical explanation would seem to be that there was a division between Hadrian and another, unnamed, rival candidate, about whom the author of Hadrian's Life would prefer to keep silent (and who was almost certainly not Anastasius, given that he was still a layman at this point). This seems to be supported by what the *LP* goes on to say. It tells us, almost as an afterthought, that:

> Now at the time of the venerable pontiff's consecration, the duke of Spoleto, Lambert son of Guy, entered the city of Rome like a tyrant as was his custom, and though it was not in rebellion he gave it over as if he had vanquished it to his followers for plundering. He sold the houses of the great for many favours; he spared no monasteries or churches; he even granted the girls of noble family, whether inside the city or without, to his followers indiscriminately for ravishing.[78]

An intervention by the duke of Spoleto does not seem to be an indication of a peaceful transition of power from Nicholas I to Hadrian II. Broadly speaking, it seems that, on Nicholas' death, some kind of dissent broke out, though our sources do not allow us to speculate that much on what this dissent

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[77] Davis p. 260f; Duchesne 2.174.

[78] Davis p. 269; Duchesne 2.177.

may have revolved around.[79] What does seem clear is that Hadrian seems to have been installed as essentially a compromise candidate - 'he was elderly (he had been a candidate for the papacy twice before), and he may have been regarded as a stop-gap. In 855 and 858 he had stood aside, it may be surmised, in favour of the imperial candidates [Benedict III and Nicholas I respectively[80]]…[and] Louis II's reaction…to the election suggests that he found Hadrian acceptable'.[81] The whole affair of Hadrian's election is exceptionally unclear, but it does seem quite plausible that the *LP* is trying to cover up a quite seriously disputed election, in which Hadrian's candidacy emerged as the least unpalatable outcome.

This impression of factional instability in Rome is further supported by a very curious event that took place on 10th March 868. According to the *Annales Bertiniani*:

> On the Wednesday following the first Sunday in Lent [10th March], thanks to Arsenius's plotting, his son Eleutherius cunningly deceived Pope Hadrian's daughter who was engaged to someone else, carried her off and married her himself. The pope was extremely upset. Arsenius made his way to the Emperor Louis at Benevento and, his health ruined by illness, he committed his treasure into the hands of the Empress Engelberga. Then, talking with demons, so it was said, without having received communion, he departed to Hell - his real home. Once he was dead, Pope Hadrian got the emperor to send *missi* to judge Eleutherius according to Roman law. But Eleutherius, on the advice, so it was said, of his brother[82] Anastasius, whom Hadrian at the very outset of his pontificate had appointed librarian of the Roman church, killed the pope's wife Stephanie, and his daughter, whom he himself had carried off. Then Eleutherius was slain by the

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[79] For this and what follows, see Bertolini, 'Adriano II', p. 323.

[80] Ironically in view of his later pontificate, Nicholas I's election to the papacy was substantially influenced by Louis II - Davis p. 190.

[81] Davis p. 250.

[82] It is more likely that Hincmar is mistaken here than that Eleutherius and Anastasius were actually brothers. They were probably cousins - Arnaldi, 'Anatasio', p. 25.

> emperor's *missi*. Pope Hadrian summoned a synod, and following the condemnation already long ago made against Anastasius, he condemned him again…[83]

As with the disputed election of 867, it is not entirely clear what is happening here. Hincmar's explanation is quite clearly that this was all another dastardly plot dreamt up by Anastasius and Arsenius. Hincmar, however, as mentioned above, is not known for his liking for anyone in Rome, and seems to have been especially opposed to Arsenius and his family.[84] Hence, it is necessary to be slightly sceptical about what we are being told here. Clearly, there was some kind of 'Arsenian' plot against Hadrian, though how far Anastasius was involved in this is unclear. Girolamo Arnaldi has given what seems to me to be a perfectly sensible explanation of the episode, which is that Arsenius and Eleutherius were essentially mounting a failed coup.[85] In Arnaldi's view, they were simply taken aback by Hadrian's unexpected resistance to this, which is why Arsenius went to Benevento - he wanted to persuade Lothar to intervene. However, after Arsenius' unexpected death, as soon as he arrived in Benevento, Eleutherius panicked, which is why he killed Hadrian's wife and daughter; he was then himself killed by the emperor's legates. Anastasius was basically an innocent bystander, whom Hincmar knew he could plausibly frame due to his suspicious past, not least the episode of 855.[86]

Anastasius' precise role in the Eleutherius affair will probably never be clear; but what is certain is that fairly quickly he received his punishment for it, whether justly or otherwise. Hincmar tells us that Hadrian condemned Anastasius again at a synod held at Santa Prassede on 12th October

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[83] Nelson, *Annals*, p. 145.

[84] See Forrai p. xviii for Hincmar's view on Anastasius - he clearly did not like him, although he probably never actually met him. Hincmar, of course, did not like anyone much - Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p. 187.

[85] For this and what follows, Arnaldi, 'Anastasio', p. 29.

[86] 'Privato dell'appoggio paterno, Eleuterio dovette allora vedersi perduto e, mentre Adriano premeva su Ludovico II perché trascinasse in giudizio il colpevole, non trovò di meglio che ammazzare la sposa rapita e, insieme con lei, la sua madre Stefania, finendo a sua volta ucciso dai legati dell'imperatore. Ma questa spiegazione…è soltanto nostra: gli *Annales Bertiniani*… addossano ad Anastasio tutta la responsibilità dell'accaduto' - ibid.

868.[87] After quite a long-winded discourse about Anastasius' history of betrayal and generally being an unpleasant person,[88] Hincmar makes Hadrian say the following:

> Now, as many of you, along with me, have heard from a certain priest named Ado, a kinsman of his [Anastasius], and as has been revealed to us in other ways also, he forgot our benefits and sent a man to Eleutherius urging him to commit murders, which as you know, alas! were committed. Therefore on account of all these deeds, and many others whereby he smote and pierced the Church of the Lord, which indeed he has not ceased to strike at up to now with his secret machinations, we have decreed, by the authority of God omnipotent and of all the holy fathers, and of the venerable councils of the said fathers and also by the sentence of our judgement, that the same Anastasius is to be treated in exactly the same way as the pontiffs Lords Leo and Benedict solemnly and synodically decreed concerning him; neither adding nor subtracting anything whatsoever in his anathema or his case, except that he is to remain deprived of all ecclesiastical communion until he gives an account before the synod concerning all the charges on which he is accused to us…But if he goes away, whatever the distance, from the city of Rome, or presumes to seek again, or to receive, either the priesthood or any clerical order or office whatsoever, because he will then be seen to be acting against the statutes of the said bishops and against the oath which he swore, nor to seek the priesthood nor the rank of clerical office, let him be under perpetual anathema, along with all his supporters, sympathisers and followers.[89]

Whether Anastasius was framed or not, it is quite clear that, as a result of the Eleutherius affair, he was not exactly in favour with Hadrian II. Characteristically, however, this setback did not detain him for long. Anastasius' machinations to win back favour in 868 and 869 are not enormously clear, but the upshot is that he recovered sufficiently to be sent in 869 as a legate for

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[87] See Nelson, *Annals*, p. 145 n. 8 - 'Hadrian was trying to assert his independence of this powerful Roman family, using imperial help to defeat Eleutherius.'

[88] ibid pp. 145-149 - note especially the claim that Anastasius had plundered the patriarchate after Nicholas I's death, p. 148. This is impossible to verify either way.

[89] ibid p. 149.

Louis II to Constantinople, to negotiate the marriage of Louis' daughter Ermengard to Constantine, the eldest son of the Byzantine emperor Basil I.[90] Coincidentally or otherwise, Anastasius arrived in Constantinople just in time to participate in the Eighth Ecumenical Council of 869-870, the last session of which started on 28th February 870. Since the official papal legates at the council (Donatus of Ostia, Stephen of Nepi, and Marinus, later Pope Marinus I)[91] all knew no Greek, Anastasius suddenly found that his unique skill could once again come in very useful for the papacy.[92] An example of Anastasius' usefulness to the legates is given by the *LP*:

> Then, with everything wholesomely done which the text of the synod contains in its ten sessions, the holy Roman church's envoys entrusted the synod's text, in case Greek fickleness should swinishly interpolate anything false, to Anastasius the librarian of the holy apostolic see, so that it could be carefully examined before they signed it. It is believed that it was by God's providence that he had at that time arrived at Constantinople after them on the business of our serene emperor Louis, with Suppo the chief counsellor. It was very zealously scrutinized [sic] by him, since he was most fluent in both languages; and they discovered that everything that the holy lord pontiff Hadrian had added in his predecessor's letter, on bishop Arsenius's insistence, in praise of our serene Caesar had been cut out.[93]

Basically, then, Anastasius made himself useful at the council by making sure that the papal legates' ignorance of Greek did not mean that they signed the papacy up to something it did not agree with, and that they generally knew what they were doing in Constantinople.[94] There are many examples

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[90] Forrai p. xvi; Arnaldi, 'Anastasio' p. 30 contains some quite tortuous speculation about how this came about, basically revolving around Anastasius presenting himself as Louis' obvious next 'man in Rome' after Arsenius' death.

[91] For Marinus' participation at the council, see his entries in *DBI* and *EP* (Bonaccorsi).

[92] Forrai p. xvii; cf. *MGH Epp*. 7 p. 413.

[93] Davis p. 279f; Duchesne 2.181.

[94] Anastasius' own account of the council, at *PL* 129.20ff, basically corroborates the *LP*'s account.

of this in addition to that quoted above;[95] but going through all of these would be very tedious, and peripheral to this chapter's basic interest in informing an understanding of the politics of ninth-century Rome. The point here is that Anastasius was highly active during the council - although he was himself an imperial legate, rather than a papal one, it is arguable that nonetheless he was the most influential person in the papal mission, able as he was to advise and guide Donatus, Stephen and Marinus about what was going on.

One other thing which is worth noting about this council is the fact that, somewhat amusingly, on their way back from Constantinople the papal legates were attacked by pirates, who stole the original council documents from them. To quote Anastasius himself:

> It was also I who considered the various things that can happen to men and decided to transcribe into another codex, and bring back all the way to Rome, the acts of this synod which the apostolic see's representatives had written in one volume for themselves to carry. So it happened that when these representatives fell among robbers and lost the actual codex with all their equipment I was recognised as the one who conveyed to Rome the codex which I had brought away. Your holiness [i.e. Hadrian II] received it with gratitude and handed it to me for translation into Latin, a task for which I denied my competence [!], though at the moment I try to make some attempt at translating writings from the archive into the Roman language, and am reckoned to have interpreted and published many already for the edification of many men, especially at the urging of your predecessor (*licet in interpretandis ex archivo in Romanum sermonem scripturis praesenti tempore quoddam conamen arripere nitar, et nonnulla jam ad aedificationem plurimorum, et praecipue vestri decessoris hortatu interpretatus edidisse dignoscar*).[96]

We can infer two things from this letter. Firstly, Anastasius now possessed the only copy of the Acts of the Eighth Council in the west, which would have provided him with a significant amount of

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[95] For which see Davis pp. 281ff; Duchesne 2.183ff.

[96] Davis p. 288 n. 126; for the Latin, *PL* 129.18.

leverage in Rome.[97] In Arnaldi's words, 'l'intera tradizione occidentale del concilio dell'869-'70 dipende dal testo portato in qua da Anastasio o, più precisamente, dalla traduzione che egli ne approntò per incarico di Adriano II'.[98] It is not hard, therefore, to see how he could have used this adventure to once again make himself and his knowledge of Greek indispensable to the papacy, which links with the second major point from this letter, that, presumably, Anastasius now once again became papal librarian, overcoming the setback of 868.[99] From now on, indeed, Anastasius never again fell out of favour in Rome - he remained papal librarian until his death in, most likely, late 878 or early 879.[100]

Anastasius used his position as *bibliothecarius* to develop a highly ambitious programme of literary translations, mostly of Greek texts into Latin. At this point, his librarianship starts to overlap with what Girolamo Arnaldi called the 'tarda e stanca rinascita carolina in territorio romano' during the papacy of John VIII.[101] Arnaldi argued that this 'renaissance' was primarily led by the figures of Anastasius, Gauderic of Velletri and John the Deacon.[102] The latter two of these have been very well-studied elsewhere;[103] the remaining part of this section will concentrate on Anastasius and his role in this 'Roman renaissance' of the late ninth century. It will do this by using the dedications and prefaces to Anastasius' translations to map out his contacts and connections within Rome and the wider world during the 870s, which in turn will help to build up a picture of Roman elite society

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[97] The whole story of Anastasius' presence at the council is a very perfect coincidence for him, but it is not worth speculating what machinations he may or may not have carried out to bring it about.

[98] Arnaldi, 'Anastasio', p. 33.

[99] Cf. Forrai p. xvii - 'From the fact that he translated and commented on the acts of this council for Hadrian II, and that he continued to compose some letters for the pope, it can be assumed that he once again held the position of papal librarian.'

[100] Forrai p. xvii.

[101] Arnaldi, 'Giovanni Immonide', p. 46.

[102] ibid.

[103] John the Deacon: Arnaldi, 'Giovanni Immonide'; Leyser, 'Charisma in the archive'; idem, 'Memory of Gregory'; Chiesa, 'Giovanni Diacono'. Gauderic: Marazzi, 'Gauderico'.

during this ‘Roman renaissance’. It will also examine Anastasius’ role in the ‘papal myth-making’ taking place in Rome during this time, and his participation in the ‘invention’ of a strong, powerful papacy which figures such as Anastasius and John the Deacon were bringing out in Rome in the 870s.

In 873, Anastasius dedicated a retranslation of the Acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council (of Nicaea, in 787) to John VIII.[104] As well as generally complaining about his old age and poor health, Anastasius says in his dedication that he has done this translation because he developed a taste for translating episcopal councils through translating the Acts of the Eighth Council for Hadrian II, and thinks it might be useful for the papal library to have a new translation of the acts of the seventh council.[105] Forrai notes here that Anastasius was also using this translation to signal to John VIII, still new in post in 873, that he was happy to go along with papal policies - ‘reducing the conflicts of the churches to a linguistic problem is clearly a reconciliatory tendency, an attitude not at all characteristic of the younger Anastasius’.[106] In fact, Anastasius no longer being a young man may well help to explain his ‘golden age’ in the 870s - by this point, Anastasius would have been in his 60s or 70s; it had long been clear to him that he was not going to become pope; he presumably no longer had any interest in rocking the boat too much, and he seems to have contented himself with his translations and/or supervising younger people like John the Deacon and Gauderic. Be that as it may, what this dedication shows us is the continuing links between Anastasius and the papacy. It strongly implies that the ‘renaissance’ of 870s Rome, spearheaded by Anastasius, Gauderic and John the Deacon, was not a ‘grassroots’ enterprise - it had papal authority, and they were all working with a papal awareness of what they were doing.

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[104] Forrai p. cxli; cf. Laehr, ‘Die Briefe’, pp. 429-432. For the acts, see Price, *Acts of the Council of Constantinople*, p. 146f.

[105] ibid p. cxlii.

[106] ibid; cf. Arnaldi, ‘Anastasio’, p. 34.

A large part in Anastasius' intellectual circle was played by Gauderic of Velletri. Anastasius sent Gauderic a letter in either 877 or 878, which revolved around the relics of St Clement.[107] The contents of this letter relating to the discovery of the relics of St Clement are discussed in more detail in chapter 3; here, it is sufficient to note that it is evidence for contact between Anastasius and Gauderic, and for a certain degree of collaboration in the papal myth-making taking place in ninth-century Rome. Anastasius says in this letter that Gauderic had commissioned him to find (and presumably translate) Greek texts in the papal library which John the Deacon could use to inform the *Life of St Clement* he was writing.[108] (Incidentally, the letter does seem to prove that the *Life of St Clement* was really a collaboration between Gauderic, Anastasius and John).[109] The *Life* has, of course, not survived, or at least not in full; all the same, the letter is powerful evidence for a strong collaboration between Gauderic, Anastasius and John in the 'papal myth-making' of ninth-century Rome.[110]

At this point, it is worth making a slight detour to look at the cult of St Clement in ninth-century Rome, to which Anastasius, Gauderic and John were clearly all contributing.[111] Clement was either the second or third bishop of Rome, who was exiled, according to tradition, by Domitian or Trajan to Cherson, where he died c. AD 97. According to various sources, discussed fully in chapter 3, Clement's relics were discovered in the 860s by Cyril and Methodios, and were then brought to Rome. The significance of Clement for ninth-century Romans lay in the fact that he was

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[107] For this letter see, in addition to Forrai p. cxlix, Laehr, 'Die Briefe', pp. 453-456; Arnaldi, 'Giovanni Immonide', pp. 34-37, 46, 49, 79; Marazzi, 'Gauderico', with further bibliography. The letter itself is at *MGH Epp*. 7 pp. 435-438.

[108] *MGH Epp*. 7 p. 436 - '…hinc etiam viro peritissimo Iohanni digno Christi levitae scribendae eius vitae actus et passionis historiam ex diversorum colligere Latinorum voluminibus institisti. Ad extremum hinc quoque mihi exiguo, ut, si qua de ipso apud Grecos invenissem, Latinae traderem linguae, saepe iniungere voluisti.

[109] For more on this (huge) topic, see the edition of Orlandi, *Vita sancti Clementis*; plus e.g. Devos and Meyvaert, 'Date de la première redaction'; idem, 'Trois énigmes'.

[110] Forrai p. cxlix. Gauderic's *Life of Clement* is discussed further in chapter 3.

[111] This paragraph is essentially a condensation of Neil, 'Cult of St Clement'. There is strong overlap here with chapter 3 of this thesis.

the first pope after Peter to be both apostolic and a martyr.[112] Therefore, the arrival of Cyril and Methodios brandishing Clement's relics presented an excellent propaganda opportunity for Anastasius et al.[113] Rome in the 870s, indeed, seems to have developed a minor obsession with St Clement - Gauderic, as Bishop of Velletri, whose cathedral was dedicated to Clement, was especially keen on him. According to Anastasius, he installed Clement's relics in his cathedral; he also had an oratory to Clement built in his home in Rome.[114] The potential advantages of using Clement in this way are fairly obvious. To quote Neil:

> Anastasius was aware of various works attributed to Clement which he had not yet seen. Notable among these is the *Epistola Clementis ad Jacobum fratrem Domini*, which sought to reinforce Clement's authority, and that of bishops of Rome generally, by attributing Clement's ordination as successor of Peter to the apostle himself. Clement was not just a vicar of Peter like Linus and Cletus (or Anaclitus) - he was Peter's heir to the *cathedram doctrinae*. The same idea was taken up by the sixth-century author of the early books of the *Liber Pontificalis*, who writes in the *Vita Clementis* that the church was entrusted to Clement by Peter, while Linus and Cletus had been entrusted with sacerdotal ministries.[115]

Broadly speaking, therefore, Clement presented Anastasius, Gauderic and John the Deacon with a golden opportunity to marshal the authority of a very early pope to support and bolster contemporary papal claims. Conrad Leyser's work on John the Deacon's *Life of Gregory the Great*

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[112] Neil, 'Cult', p. 106 - though she does note that 'the late fourth-century Rufinus was the first to make St Clement a martyr…the older and more reliable account of Irenaeus states that Pope Telesphorus was the first to be martyred in c. 130'. Whatever the truth of this, presumably Anastasius et al would have thought Clement was a martyr.

[113] 'Whether Constantine [i.e. Cyril] actually brought the relics to Rome in 867 or 868 is open to question, as there is no mention of it in the *Liber Pontificalis* and no record survives except Leo's twelfth-century account and that of Anastasius, now lost. It is possible that Anastasius actually concocted Cyril's account in order to enhance the reputation of his friend' - Neil, 'Cult', p. 110. Given Anastasius' history, it is also possible that he invented it to enhance his own reputation.

[114] Neil, 'Cult', p. 106f; *MGH Epp*. 7 p. 437.

[115] ibid p. 111f, with refs.

has made it fairly uncontroversial to say that such a project of 'papal myth-making' was taking place in Rome during the 870s; the place of Clement in this has not been particularly noticed,[116] but, as the above paragraphs have shown, it was certainly happening, and Anastasius clearly had a central role in it.

This letter is the main evidence we have for Anastasius' contacts with Gauderic, but we have several more pieces of evidence for his contacts with John the Deacon, who Réka Forrai has persuasively argued had a 'special position' in Anastasius' network.[117] Anastasius sent lots of materials to John, all of which were historical documents, for example the *Chronographia Tripertita* of Nikephoros, George Synkellos and Theophanes, and the aforementioned *Collectanea* about the monothelete controversy.[118] It would seem that these materials were 'intended to serve a plan the two clerics cherished, and which probably also had papal support (if not commissioned by the pontifical court): the composition of a universal church history'.[119] This would certainly fit with Anastasius' and John's significant interest in St Clement, as part of this church history. Regardless of that, we have very clear evidence here for extensive contacts between Anastasius and John. This is corroborated by John's own work - in the *Life of Gregory the Great*, John mentions that 'praeceptor meus' has provided him with a Latin translation of John Moschos' *Spiritual Meadow* to help inform his research on Gregory,[120] and we have already seen the collaboration between John, Anastasius and Gauderic in the 'invention' of Pope Clement in ninth-century Rome. Clearly,

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[116] At least not in published work, though cf. Leyser's paper 'In search of a past: canon law, the cult of the saints, and the Roman church, 860-960' delivered at Oxford, March 2014; he has also, unsurprisingly, frequently discussed how Clement fits into his broader scheme with me.

[117] Forrai p. cl.

[118] ibid; Laehr, 'Die Briefe', pp. 432-435, 437-441.

[119] ibid.

[120] *VG* 2.45, 4.63.

therefore, there was a good degree of contact, and probably indeed friendship, between Anastasius and John.[121]

One further interesting contact Anastasius developed towards the end of his life was Photios. Shortly before he died, Anastasius seems to have tried to bury the hatchet with Photios, after their fierce enmity of the last twenty years. Arnaldi speculated, not implausibly, that this may have been part of John VIII's new 'eastern policy' of reconciliation with the Byzantines, including Photios.[122] Anastasius' letter to Photios does not survive, but we do have Photios' response, where he rather brusquely scorns Anastasius' advances:

> Look, I do not complain about usefulness or intention. I see that the time is past, and it seems well-described by that riddle which depicts [opportunity] in the flesh as long-haired on the forehead and bald from behind. For when someone comes along after the opportunity has passed, even if he pursues it with great skill, he cannot grasp it. But I commend you for your belated sympathetic intention. For friends ought not to measure grace by its usefulness, but judge goodwill by disposition.[123]

This is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, it is an interesting curiosity of Anastasius trying to make peace with an enemy before he died. More pertinently, it is an indication of the papal bureaucracy, and by implication Roman society more broadly, trying to follow John VIII's policy of rapprochement with Constantinople. Given his past, Anastasius is unlikely to have been particularly keen about making peace with Photios/the Byzantines in this way, but, as fitting his status as a subordinate assistant to the papacy, he went along with it anyway. It is therefore, perhaps, an

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[121] Cf. Arnaldi, 'Anastasio', p. 34; Chiesa, 'Giovanni Diacono', p. 6.

[122] Arnaldi, 'Anastasio', p. 35.

[123] *Photii Patriarchae Constantinopoli epistolae et amphilocia,* ed. Laourdas and Westerink, vol. 2, p. 45f.; trans. Neil, *Seventh-Century Popes*, p. 28; cited in Forrai p. clii.

indication that the papal *scrinium* and bureaucracy was to an extent politically neutral: ultimately, it could advise popes, but had to follow the line of whoever was pope at that moment.

The date of Anastasius' death is unknown. Réka Forrai thinks it was probably in late 878 or early 879, as the first signature of the new papal librarian, Zachary of Anagni, dates from 29th March 879.[124] Girolamo Arnadi, however, argued, persuasively in my view, that just because a new *bibliothecarius* took over does not mean Anastasius had died. Arnaldi notes that 'le lettere di Giovanni VIII dopo l'879 risultano, ad un attento esame, redatte dallo stesso autore che ha composte le precedenti; e, dato che queste ultime sono in grandissima parte opera di Anastasio, bisogna concludere che la comparsa di un nuovo bibliotecario non implica necessariamente un allontanamento di Anastasio dalla curia e dalle sue funzioni di *dictator*, né - tanto meno - la sua morte'.[125] It is an interesting dispute, but it does not really matter for present purposes - it seems safe to assume that Anastasius died in the late 870s or early 880s. Whatever the exact date, it is certainly true to say that we have no evidence for what he might have been doing during this time, so this mini-biography must now come to an end.

Anastasius' life tells us much about mid to late ninth-century Rome, and, by extension, about the papacy during this time. I will divide the following two conclusions into two broad groups, which could really be said to follow the *Realencyklopädie*'s division between 'Anastasius Gegenpast' and 'Anastasius Bibliothecarius'. Firstly, I will look at what we can learn about the workings of Roman 'factionalism' and papal elections during this time, before turning to what Anastasius' literary dedications and connections can tell us about educated Roman society and 'papal myth-making' in ninth-century Rome.

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[124] Forrai p. xvii.

[125] Arnaldi, 'Anastasio', p. 35f, citing Ertl, *Diktatoren frühmittelalterlichen Papstbriefe,* pp. 121-126.

To take Anastasius' early career first: it is obvious here that ninth-century Rome underwent political convulsions, as has been noted. [126] This will be demonstrated even more clearly when this chapter comes onto Formosus, but is still worth briefly commenting on here. Anastasius' early career shows us quite clearly that, *pace* the bold claims of the *LP* that ninth-century Rome generally enjoyed a remarkable degree of consent amongst the clergy and people, factional infighting and contested papal elections were a reality, which seem to have cropped up at every papal election. The machinations of Anastasius and Arsenius also demonstrate that the Bishop of Rome often faced quite considerable opposition within Rome itself - that is to say, he could not simply get on with whatever policies he wanted to; he would have had to marshal opinion, and his policies and activities would have been constrained by what Bismarck called 'the limits of the possible'. All this is of course *a priori* fairly obvious; still, though, Anastasius' early career is useful as it allows us to see demonstrable examples of this principle working in action. The activities of Anastasius and Arsenius also show how comparatively uninterested the Carolingians were in Roman politics (or at least Louis II, who was the Carolingian most likely to take an interest in the internal politics of the city of Rome). As mentioned above, there is no evidence that Louis, or imperial representatives more generally, were ever part of Anastasius' and Arsenius' plot to take over Rome in 855 (though this does not necessarily mean that they were unhappy about the plot).[127] This is not to say that the Carolingians *never* intervened in Roman politics, or that they did not care who was pope at any one time; rather, I would argue, with Chris Wickham, that 'the Carolingians usually restricted themselves to intervening when factional struggles seemed too out of control'.[128] This was not the case in 855 because, as far as Louis II was concerned, factional struggles were not out of control -

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[126] Wickham, 'The Romans'; Noble, 'The papacy in the eighth and ninth centuries', inter alia.

[127] This does not necessarily mean Louis II was unhappy about the elections of Nicholas I, Hadrian II or John VIII - all of them enjoyed a degree of imperial support/approval, as can be seen in their entries in *DBI*.

[128] Wickham, *Inheritance*, p. 419.

he had just been told that the Romans had elected Anastasius, and so the issue did not arise. But in 867, for example, Lambert intervened with an army of Franks and Lombards (see above). Clearly, then, if the Carolingians felt intervention was necessary, they were fully able to do so; they simply did not feel they needed to very often. They simply had bigger problems to deal with than the internal squabbling of the Romans.

To come to Anastasius' later career, this potted biography has thrown up a lot of areas worthy of comment. Foremost among these is Anastasius' role in the 'Roman renaissance' of the 870s, together with Gauderic and John the Deacon. This chapter has focussed on Anastasius' contribution to this, for obvious reasons; all the same, it is worth remembering that this renaissance was very much a team effort.[129] It also seems to have been very much under the control of John VIII - it was John who commissioned the *Life of Gregory* from John the Deacon (and who was, indeed, the dedicatee),[130] and John does seem to have maintained a broad oversight of the literary activity taking place in Rome during the 870s.[131] This is presented very nicely by John the Deacon's *Cena Cypriani*, in which we are taken to a scene of John VIII's supporters having a dinner party, no doubt whilst discussing their ongoing work.[132]To further indicate John VIII's overall control of all this literary output, it seems fair to say that one of the main points of the production of the *Life of Gregory* was to implicitly compare Gregory the Great with John VIII.[133] The point is fairly clear - the general thrust of all this literary output and innovation was to bolster the claims of the papacy,

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[129] As Arnaldi put it: 'Giovanni, Gauderico, Anastasio: sono gli stessi nomi che ritornano sempre.' ('Giovanni Immonide', p. 46).

[130] *PL* 75.61f.

[131] Leyser, 'Charisma in the archive', p. 216, describes this quite nicely as 'John VIII's seizure of control of the papal media'.

[132] *MGH Poetae* 4 p. 899 - 'ridens cadit Gaudericus supinus in lectulum, Zacharias [presumably Zacharias of Anagni, who replaced Anasastasius as *bibliothecarius*] admiratur, docet Anastasius'. For a more thorough investigation of John VIII's *Kreis*, see Arnold, *Johannes VIII*, p. 56f.

[133] 'Giovanni VIII e Gregorio Magno: si potrebbe richiamare l'analogia - sia pure soltanto esteriore - delle condizioni politiche in cui pontefici ebbero a trovarsi o la similarità di alcuni problemi particolare che entrambi furono chiamati a risolvere' - Arnaldi, 'Giovanni Immonide', p. 73f.

and the current pope during the 870s was John VIII. Anastasius seems to have been the leader of this group, all of whose members were very clearly fully supportive of John.[134] This is a remarkable turnaround for Anastasius, whose earlier career had of course been marked by his various attempts to overthrow the current pope, driven mainly by his overbearing ambition. However, Anastasius' role as a thorn in successive popes' side had by the 870s been taken by another member of the Roman aristocracy, to whom this chapter shall now turn: Formosus.

Formosus[135]

The problem with writing a biography of Formosus is that the vast majority of our evidence from during his life comes from anti-Formosan sources.[136] Essentially, our contemporary evidence for him consists of the letters of John VIII and the various works of John the Deacon, i.e. (probably) the *LP*'s life of Hadrian II, and (certainly) the *Life of Gregory the Great*. To put it mildly, neither of these people were known for their positive views on Formosus. Therefore, it is very easy to read these sources and come to a very negative view of Formosus; but, of course, our vision is being refracted through these overwhelmingly negative sources. Formosus is also mentioned occasionally in the letters of Nicholas I, which do not seem to betray any strong opinion on him, other than that he very competently fulfilled the various tasks which were entrusted to him, most notably in Bulgaria. There is no hint in Nicholas' letters of any dislike or ambivalence about Formosus.

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[134] Leyser, 'Charisma in the archive', p. 215, mentions Anastasius' 'presiding literary genius' over this circle.

[135] The fullest existing study of Formosus is Sansterre, 'Formoso' (henceforth 'Sansterre'). See also Arnaldi, 'Papa Formoso' and Leyser, 'Episcopal office' (not in the first place about Formosus, but he has a significant supporting role). Grabowski, 'Edition und Analyse', is about the *Streitschriften* rather than Formosus himself, but is now the best study of those.

[136] Most of the *Streitschriften*, of course, are broadly pro-Formosan, but a) they were not written during his lifetime, and b) really they are using him as a proof case for broader arguments about the shifts in episcopal office taking place in the early tenth century. See below for this, plus Leyser, 'Episcopal office'.

Nicholas does seem to have realised that Formosus was very ambitious, but this is not yet seen as a major character defect. There is a sudden shift in the tenor of our sources about Formosus after the mid-870s. As I will argue below, this can be plausibly explained by John VIII and his spin doctors wanting to neutralise a potential source of opposition, and therefore taking every opportunity he had to blacken Formosus' reputation. It does mean, though, that there is scope for a rehabilitation of Formosus here; and the fact that he was elected pope less than 15 years later at least shows that not everyone in Rome was his enemy. In what follows, therefore, I have tried to present as positive a picture of Formosus as possible, reading programmatically against the grain of the sources as a corrective to the traditional acceptance of their perspective.

The first of many similarities between Anastasius and Formosus is that we can say very little about their early lives. Formosus was born around 816, presumably in Rome.[137] We then know nothing about him until 864, when Nicholas I appointed him bishop of Porto (now just outside Fiumicino Airport*)* in place of Radoaldus, who had been condemned for approving the deposition of Ignatios in Constantinople and accepting communion with Photios, a decision hardly likely to appeal to Nicholas.[138] What is clear from the outset is that Formosus had a very forceful personality, visible in almost everything he did after he entered the historical record, and well summed up by Sansterre: 'colto e di austeri costumi, intraprendente ed energico, Formoso si distingueva per la forte personalità'.[139]

In 866, Nicholas I chose Formosus, together with bishop Paul of Populonia, to lead the Roman mission sent to Bulgaria after the arrival of Boris' emissaries in Rome (therefore, the next few paragraphs link tightly to with chapter 2 of this thesis).[140] According to Anastasius, Formosus

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[137] Sansterre p. 55.

[138] ibid.

[139] ibid.

[140] For this embassy, see *MGH Epp*. 6 pp. 568-600; the most recent commentary is Shepard, 'Slavs and Bulgars', pp. 241ff; this is hugely expanded on in chapter 2.

and Paul were highly successful in this mission; they were so successful, indeed, that the Frankish missionaries sent to Bulgaria by Louis the German found that they were somewhat surplus to requirements; an indication of their success can also be found in the fact that Boris decided to expel all Byzantine clergy from Bulgaria, thus rather throwing in his lot with the (western) Romans.[141] Such was Formosus' force of personality, indeed, that he seems to have had quite a compelling effect on Boris - in September/October 867, a Bulgarian embassy arrived in Rome to ask Nicholas to appoint Formosus to a newly-created post of archbishop of Bulgaria. Nicholas refused this request, based, ironically, on the prohibition of transferring from one episcopal see to another; it is highly likely that he also feared that Formosus' leadership could have made Bulgaria more independent of Rome than he would have liked.[142] But the upshot of this is clear: Formosus was already a hugely competent person, who was easily able to get in powerful people's good books. It could also be argued that, as it is unlikely that Boris would have come up with his plan to make Formosus archbishop of Bulgaria without consulting him, we can see an early indication of Formosus' ambition: to put it bluntly, he wanted to be allowed to contravene 400 years of canonical norms to change from one episcopal see to another. But actually, Formosus may well have thought he could make a plausible (and genuine) case here. As this chapter will explore when it comes onto the issue of episcopal transfer, a distinction was always made between episcopal transfer done because of personal ambition (bad), and for the broader good of the church (good). Formosus may simply have believed that the fact that he knew Bulgaria and its people well meant that his undergoing the necessary episcopal transfer to continue to direct missionary work there would indeed have been for the good of the church, and have had nothing to do with his own personal ambition (it should be noted that Formosus would presumably have thought that it would have been

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[141] *PL* 128.1374f.

[142] Sansterre p. 56.

significantly more difficult for him to become pope whilst out in Bulgaria than if he had returned to Rome). But whatever Formosus' motivations, Nicholas clearly disagreed with him.

Despite Nicholas' reluctance to make Formosus head of an independent church province, he trusted him sufficiently that, shortly before his death, he sent him on an embassy to Constantinople, a decision which was confirmed by Hadrian II.[143] However, this embassy does not seem to have ever taken place, probably due to the convulsions in Constantinople in 867, with Basil I's assassination of Michael III and consequent accession to the throne, with the result that Formosus returned to Rome, probably reluctantly, in 868.[144] According to *LP*:

> Earlier on, the venerable bishops Formosus of Porto and Paul of Populonia, who had been despatched with the others [i.e. an embassy to Constantinople which set off with Formosus and Paul] to preach on the order of pope Nicholas, came home, and they refreshed the apostolic see about the Christianity of the Bulgarians and the absolute subjection in which they had specially submitted their devout necks to the holy Roman church; and they presented the Bulgarian king Michael's envoy, named Peter, to the supreme pontiff.[145]

Peter's function in this mission was to ask Hadrian to send Marinus (later Pope Marinus I) back to Bulgaria as archbishop,[146] 'or to send to the Bulgarians for their choice one of the cardinals, provided he was one of his church and a man worthy in wisdom, person and life: after they approved of him he could go back home again, and he could raise him up to the archiepiscopal ministry'.[147] Given what *LP* goes on to say, it seems fairly clear that there was only one candidate Boris was prepared to accept:

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[143] ibid; cf. Lapôtre, *Études sur la papauté*, p. 413.

[144] Grotz, *Erbe wider Willen*, p. 166.

[145] Davis p. 289; Duchesne 2.185.

[146] *LP* says that Boris wanted Marinus because he 'knew [him] well' - ibid.

[147] ibid.

> As Marinus had been, as we have said, allotted the legateship to Constantinople and devoutly resisted it,[148] the supreme pontiff sent one Silvester, a subdeacon, to the Bulgarians for them to choose; but he received him back very speedily as the Bulgarians sent him back with bishops Leopardus of Ancona and Dominic of Trevi,[149] and a letter very brusquely demanding the despatch of an archbishop or of Formosus bishop of Porto. The reply he [Hadrian] wrote them included the statement that the provident pontiff would no doubt bestow as archbishop on the Bulgarians whomsoever the devoted king should express by name.[150]

Clearly the pope in fact meant he would give Boris whomsoever he should express by name except Formosus, which may well suggest a degree of distrust here. Alternatively, it could just be because the *Life* of Hadrian II was probably written by John the Deacon, who was a 'deciso avversario' of Formosus after his trial in 876.[151] Whatever the reason, the fact that Formosus did not in the end go back to Bulgaria at all had nothing to do with any mistrust Hadrian may or may not have felt about him:

> But the king of the Bulgarians was unable to bear waiting and delaying any longer, and…[152] he sent the same Peter [the envoy mentioned earlier] whom he had lately

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[148] Bonaccorsi, 'Marino I', p. 500: 'Adriano II si oppose al suo trasferimento invocando proprio quella norma ecclesiastica - secondo la quale un vescovo non poteva trasferirsi (o essere trasferito) da una sede all'altra senza il consenso di una istituzione ecclesiastica che ne avesse riconosciuto l'utilità per la Chiesa - cui poco tempo prima si era appellato Niccolò I per evitare che quella medesima sede fosse attribuita a Formoso vescovo di Porto.'

[149] Presumably these were the people Hadrian sent to conduct Silvester to Bulgaria - Davis p. 290 n. 135.

[150] Davis p. 289f; Duchesne 2.185.

[151] Sansterre p. 56, who also notes that 'l'insistenza sul nome di Formoso fu probabilmente all'origine di alcune accuse rivolte a quest'ultimo nell'876: egli avrebbe persuaso Boris a impegnasi, sotto giuramento, a non accettare alcun altro come arcivescovo e avrebbe inoltre promesso di tornare al più presto in Bulgaria.'

[152] There is a 'corrupt and lacunose passage' in the Latin here, which Davis p. 290 n. 138 translates as '(he considered) how much greater (the delays) were [from the Romans] than (they would be) from the emperor of the Greeks, (with whom, also, he wanted to be on friendly terms) since, on the occasion of (his) sons' nuptials, they were taking turns to engineer abductions in order to seize kingdoms in turn for themselves, (so)…'. Duchesne 2.185 with p. 190 n. 60.

> received from Rome without achieving his desire, to Constantinople to inquire to whom he ought particularly to belong. There they were clearly shown by our legates that they belonged to the Roman jurisdiction; they have subsequently been persuaded with gifts and promises by the easterners and the Constantinopolitans, and, according to bishop Grimuald, who says he has been repulsed by them, they have accepted Greek *sacerdotes* and thrown ours out.[153]

Despite *LP*'s evident unhappiness about it, this switch to Constantinople rather than Rome remained permanent for the Bulgarian church; thus, Formosus never went back to Bulgaria, and the avenue he had been very successfully going down during the 860s was closed for him, meaning that he had to find other ways to fulfil his ambitions.

Before moving onto Formosus' career during the 870s, it is worth looking at one curiosity remaining from his time in Bulgaria. According to some scholars,[154] at some point (possibly when he was pope, but the exact date is uncertain), Formosus commissioned a painting in a small church near the Temple of Claudius, showing Christ surrounded by Sts Peter, Paul, Laurence and Hippolytus (the patron saint of Porto), with a barbarian prince at his feet on one side and Formosus on the other.[155] The barbarian prince may well be Boris, even if Sansterre has suggested that it could be Guy of Spoleto, Lambert or Arnulf, the rival emperors while he was pope.[156] If it is Boris, this painting quite clearly shows that the Bulgarian mission was a highlight of Formosus' own perception of his life - nearly thirty years after the mission took place, assuming the painting was from Formosus' pontificate, he still thought it worth commemorating in this way. If it is not Boris, it does not have much bearing either way, but it may be that the rival emperors were all too ephemeral

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[153] Davis p. 290; Duchesne 2.185

[154] E.g. Ruysschaert, 'L'oratoire romaine de Formose'; Davis p. 289 n. 133.

[155] The painting, which does not survive, was identified in 1689 and published by de Rossi, *Bullettino* 1869, p. 59. See further Duhr, 'Humble vestige'.

[156] Sansterre p. 56, citing Ladner, *Papstbildnisse*, I, pp. 155-158.

to be worth setting, or safe to set, at the pope's feet in a fresco, so the idea that it could be Boris is plausible enough to tentatively make this point.

Coming back to the main stream of Formosus' career, it seems fairly clear that for the remainder of Hadrian II's pontificate Formosus spent most of his time more or less efficiently running his diocese of Porto. Sansterre says that Formosus 'costituì un punto di riferimento importante per la Curia romana durante il tutto pontificato di Adriano II',[157] and it would be hard to argue against this. As well as ordaining Cyril and Methodios as priests, together with Gauderic,[158] during a Roman synod in June 869, Formosus supported a proposal to set fire to the Acts of the Council of Constantinople of August-September 867, which excommunicated and deposed Nicholas I. Hadrian also sent Formosus on various diplomatic missions: for example he decided to send him to Gaul to prepare a general council to be held in Rome concerning the Lothar and Theutberga affair. When Lothar's death rendered this pointless, Formosus and Gauderic were sent to represent the pope at the negotiations held at Trent in May 872 between Louis the German and Engelberga.[159] The picture that emerges from all this is that, during Hadrian's pontificate, Formosus seems to have been a trusted, popular and competent Roman cleric. Hadrian presumably would not have planned to send him on these missions otherwise, and Formosus' support for burning the Acts of the Council of Constantinople certainly seems to show loyalty, even if was just for show. Indeed, were it not for the fact that Formosus was bishop of Porto, and therefore as far as anyone in the 870s was concerned ineligible to become bishop of Rome, he could almost be seen as Hadrian's heir apparent. Formosus' relationship with Gauderic is also interesting, given that the latter was later a

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[157] ibid.

[158] *Vita Constantini* 17, examined in more detail in chapter 3.

[159] For all this see Sansterre p. 56. For Engelberga's diplomatic role, Bougard, 'Engelberga'; for the general negotiations between 'East Francia' and 'Italy' in the early 870s, Costambeys et al, *Carolingian World*, p. 405f.

firm supporter of John VIII, as discussed above. It would appear that Formosus' later role as the papacy's *bête noire* took place after John VIII's election in 872.

For an indication of why this was, it is necessary to look at the 872 papal election to succeed Hadrian II.[160] Unfortunately, we do not have a huge amount of evidence for this election. What we do have, however, is sufficient to get at least a sense of what was going on. Essentially, Formosus appears to have been suggested (not necessarily by himself) as an alternative to John, the at this point relatively elderly archdeacon of the Roman church.[161] Possibly, the argument that a bishop could not transfer sees won the day, and so John, who was not a bishop, was preferred to Formosus, who was a bishop.[162] Having said that, there is no evidence that this was discussed.[163] Therefore, Pope John VIII was consecrated on 14th December 872. At least to begin with, Formosus does not seem to have caused much difficulty for John, and John in turn 'trattò Formoso con riguardo, coinvolgendo direttamente nella sua politica'.[164] For example, in August-September 875, John was happy to send Formosus, along with Gauderic (again) and John of Arezzo, to Charles the Bald, to tell him that the pope had decided Charles should become emperor, and invite him to Rome to be crowned.[165]

Quite what went wrong in relations between John and Formosus is unclear. Jean-Marie Sansterre and Antonio Sennis, the authors of the *DBI* entries for Formosus and for John VIII respectively, have slightly different explanations. Sansterre argues that 'i rapporti si guastarono…

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[160] Obviously, events now converge with Sennis, 'Giovanni VIII'.

[161] Sansterre p. 56.

[162] Incidentally, John and Formosus certainly knew each other before the 872 election - Sennis, 'Giovanni VIII', p. 560, notes that John read an *Allucutio Hadriani prima* at, and signed the Acts of, the Roman Council of 869 at which Formosus (and, indeed, presumably John) supported the burning of the Acts of the Council of Constantinople.

[163] Cf. Anastasius' support for the transfer of Actard of Nantes: Sommar, 'Hincmar of Rheims'.

[164] Sansterre p. 57.

[165] ibid; Sennis, 'Giovanni VIII', p. 561.

quando Giovanni VIII volle liberare l'amministrazione pontificia dai membri dell'aristocrazia laica che vi avevano acquistato troppa importanza, in particolare il nomenclatore e il genero di questo, Giorgio di Aventino'.[166] Formosus, in Sansterre's view, felt himself too associated with this group and so fled Rome on the night of 14th-15th April 876 (see immediately below for this). Sennis instead places the emphasis (more persuasively) on the fact that 'il pontefice… mirò a dare ulteriore solidità alle proprie posizioni sul fronte interno, fiaccando sul nascere le ambizioni di potere di coloro che lo avversavano'.[167] Neither of these interpretations is wrong as such, but it does seem that Sansterre is underestimating the extent to which the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Rome was intermingled with lay hierarchies (see immediately below for this). As discussed above, John's most fervent supporters, most notably Anastasius, John the Deacon and Gauderic, were all clerics; but more pertinently they were all, as far as our evidence allows us to see, relatively new to the scene of Roman high politics (except Anastasius, obviously); it is entirely plausible, if not easily demonstrable, that the older aristocratic families might have felt threatened by their ascent under John VIII, and therefore needed to have their ambitions nipped in the bud.[168] Here it should probably also be noted that, in February 876, John VIII had appointed his nephew Leo as his apocrisiarius, rather than keeping Gregorio nomenculator in post, which Arnaldi describes as 'una rivoluzione interna, prima conseguenza del nascente nepotismo'.[169] Why Formosus, whose family background we do not know, would have allied with them is unclear. The best explanation is that he was entirely innocent - see below for this.

On 21st April 876, John VIII sent a letter (now lost) to the bishops of Gaul and Germany informing them that a synod had taken place in the Pantheon about an event that had recently taken

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[166] Sansterre p. 57.

[167] Sennis, 'Giovanni VIII', p. 563.

[168] Cf di Carpegna Falconieri, *Il clero*.

[169] Arnaldi, *Natale 875*, p. 23.

place in Rome. According to this letter, a group of dissident Roman nobles had fled Rome on the night of 14th-15th April (i.e. the night before Easter Sunday), and in doing so supposedly left the gates open for the Saracens to plunder the city.[170] They had then escaped through the St Pancras gate, taking as much as they could of the papal treasury with them.[171] Although Formosus was clearly the ringleader of this group, it is worth taking some time to look the lay aristocrats within it, and to see what that can tell us about the people Formosus was associating with, and indeed about Roman factionalism more broadly.[172] The most notable thing about the group is the complexity of the interpenetrations between 'military', 'civilian' and 'clerical' hierarchies in Rome. It is easiest to demonstrate this just by quoting Chris Wickham: the people listed in the letter 'included Gregorio *nomenculator* and Stefano *secundicerius*, sons of Teofilatto *nomenculator*; Giorgio *magister militum* and *vesterarius*, son of Gregorio *primicerius*, who had married Pope Benedict III's niece and then lived with Gregorio *nomenculator*'s daughter; Sergio *magister militum*, son of Teodoro *magister militum*, who had married Pope Nicholas I's niece; and Gregorio *nomenculator*'s other daughter Costantina, who had married in succession the sons of Pipino *vesterarius* and of Gregorio *magister militum*'.[173] We can quite clearly see here the interweaving of the military, civilian and ecclesiastical hierarchies of Rome;[174] indeed Wickham correctly notes that 'there was thus no structural opposition between ecclesiastical and secular hierarchies…They were intertwined; they regularly collaborated in ceremonial, governmental action, and military engagement; they divided

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[170] The letter (not collected in John's Register) is *MGH Epp*. 7 pp. 326ff. This is a reissue of Sirmond's edition: all we know from Sirmond is that he was using a 'codex remensis', now lost. Arnaldi, *Natale 875*, p. 21, amusingly notes that the allegation about the Saracens is 'la solita accusa di connivenza con il nemico esterno del momento'.

[171] ibid.

[172] This discussion is based on Wickham, *Medieval Rome*, p. 189; cf. Arnaldi, *Natale 875*, pp. 20-28, which does not really add much to the more recent studies of Sansterre, Sennis and Wickham.

[173] ibid.

[174] For more on these see ibid pp. 187ff, Toubert, '*Scrinium* et *palatium*'; Noble, *Republic*, pp. 212-241; idem, 'The papacy in the eighth and ninth centuries'.

out into factions along family rather than career lines'.[175] The interconnections in play here are quite complex and confusing, but it does seem that Formosus was allying himself with the internal opposition to John VIII, whether for reasons of personal or family/kin group opposition. This interpretation, in fact, is supported by the reaction of John the Deacon, who seems to have abandoned Formosus and embarked on some kind of PR campaign to turn him into Rome's public enemy number one. This is most obviously seen at the end of John's *Life of Gregory*, where John narrates his recent dream about Formosus appearing to him and trying to put him off writing the *Life*.[176] Formosus actually does very little here apart from wearing strange clothes and being generally irritating; all the same, though, his appearance here, and the fact that John seems to consider his simple statements of fact to be devastating insults,[177] does suggest a certain level of hostility to Formosus among John's supporters, even after 876.

An alternative explanation of the trial, and indeed of the subsequent propaganda campaign against Formosus, is simply that John VIII made it all up. Formosus and John had of course been rivals during the 872 election; it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that John, rather than Formosus, held this grudge through the years, and jumped at the opportunity to frame Formosus in 876. The timing would probably not have had that much to do with the coronation of Charles the Bald in 875, but rather with John's attempts to increase his personal power over the Roman curia, as seen through for example his attempts to install his family members in positions of power, and indeed his promotion of John the Deacon and Gauderic, neither of whose loyalty to John (or, perhaps more accurately, to the person they saw as the legitimate pope, rather than John personally) can really be doubted. Positioning supporters in this way would probably have meant that John was

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[175] ibid.

[176] Devos, 'Mystérieux episode'. John does not explicitly name Formosus, but it is certainly him, as demonstrated by Castaldi, 'Le dediche'.

[177] The best John can make Formosus come up with is 'you are writing about the dead whom you have never once seen living', which is simply an accurate description of almost all history writing. Trans. Leyser, 'Charisma in the archive', p. 217.

powerful enough to act against his opponents within Rome, and then frame them for various crimes, some of which do seem quite far-fetched; for example, John's claim that Stefano *secundicerius* had a reputation for plundering churches around Rome, or that Giorgio *magister militum*/*vesterarius* had been involved in 'diversa homicidia'. John's allegations are not unlike the strange idea that Theutberga conceived a child through intercrural sex with her brother - there is a very remote chance of them being true, but it feels more like these are just imaginary charges designed to blacken people's names by associating them with the most outlandish crimes imaginable.[178] Chris Wickham has likened the hysterical allegations John made against his opponents to the McCarthy trials in the 1950s;[179] a better analogy, for me, would be Stalin's obsessive pursuit of Trotsky in the 30s, and his seeing 'Trotskyist' conspiracies around every corner, for no good reason other than that Trotsky was the other obvious successor to Lenin. This theory of Formosus' innocence, of course, cannot be proven either way; nevertheless, it seems plausible, and actually is an easier explanation than that Formosus, having worked well with successive popes for at least ten years, suddenly decided to start a revolution and take the papacy for himself, with no obvious trigger.

One further interesting anecdote about Formosus from John VIII's pontificate, which may or may not stand as evidence for John framing him at this trial, is that the two men met at the synod of Troyes in 878, at which, apparently, Formosus begged John for forgiveness, and managed to be readmitted to lay communion, in exchange for a written commitment never to return to Rome, and not to try to recover his episcopal see.[180] This does not really prove or disprove the idea that John framed Formosus in 876; nonetheless, clearly John now held all the cards in this relationship, and it is not that difficult to see this episode as John lording it over Formosus and demonstrating that he

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[178] This point was made about Theutberga by David d'Avray in an undergraduate lecture circa 2012. If I am being naive here, it does not affect the argument about Formosus. For Theutberga, see now Mistry, *Abortion*.

[179] Wickham, *Medieval Rome*, p. 22 n. 56.

[180] Sansterre p. 57.

could control Formosus' movements. One of the reasons republican Roman aristocrats disliked Julius Caesar was that they did not like the idea that he could display *clementia* to them, as this implied a certain imbalance of power. It is not too far-fetched to argue that something similar was happening with John and Formosus at Troyes - John was essentially demonstrating his power over Formosus, albeit in the form of displaying a (very limited) example of *clementia* to him. But Formosus' exile from Rome continued. Frustratingly, though unsurprisingly, we do not know what Formosus was doing during his exile from Rome between 876 and 882. Six years is a fairly long time, and, given Formosus' earlier career, it seems hard to believe that he would just have sat around waiting to go back to Rome, rather than doing something productive, but we simply cannot speculate about what this might have been.[181]

Formosus' luck changed when John died on 16th December 882, which actually can be taken as further evidence for the split between the two being caused by John's vendetta against Formosus, rather than the other way round; none of the popes between Marinus I and himself seem to have had any problem with Formosus.[182] Marinus's election, about which we know nothing directly, was in itself a sharp reversal of previous papal assumptions, given that he had been a bishop (of Cere) before his election, and thus maybe represents the victory of a very different Roman faction. Anyway, almost the first act Marinus took as pope was to authorise the return to Rome of everyone who had been condemned in 876; he also discharged Formosus from his obligation to follow the oath he had made to John in 878 never to return to Rome nor to get his bishopric back. Lapôtre believed that the Formosans immediately set about destroying all

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[181] Though cf. Sennis, 'Giovanni VIII', p. 563 - 'Anche Carlomanno, caduto malato, fu costretto a rivedere le proprie ambizioni, e ciò fece si che i duchi Lamberto di Spoleto e Adalberto di Toscana tentassero di forzare la situazione. Essi infatti, con il sostegno del gruppo di esiliati capeggiato da Formoso, entrarono in città, imprigionarono il pontefice e obbligarono la cittadinanza a giurare la propria fedeltà a Carlomanno.' But really, Formosus' (alleged) role in this is too sketchy to investigate in any real detail.

[182] There is a not particularly illuminating debate about whether John was murdered, and whether that is evidence for widespread conspiracies in Rome, but the evidence is not sufficient to come to any conclusions - Sennis, 'Giovanni VIII', p. 565.

documents from the 870s which might have compromised them, among them the ninth indiction of John VIII's Register,[183] but this, as we have seen, seems quite far-fetched.[184] Again, we know nothing about Formosus' activities during the pontificates of Marinus (882-884), Hadrian II (884-885) or Stephen V (885-891),[185] though we do know that, in 885, he avoided being disgraced together with his old friends Gregorio *nomenculator* and Giorgio *di Aventino*; he remained bishop of Porto and therefore presumably participated in the consecration of Stephen V in September 885.[186]

At some point during the period 882-891, Formosus moved house, and established his new episcopal residence on the Isola Tiberina, near the church of John Calabytes.[187] The decision to move the residence of the bishop of Porto was presumably mostly done in response to Saracen raids, but Sansterre plausibly argues that Formosus' desire to be closer to the Roman Curia, after his years of exile, may also have played a role in it;[188] Formosus also transferred the relics of St Hippolytus to the Isola Tiberina, and seems to have founded a *xenodochium* nearby.[189] The significance of this, though, does not really go beyond the fact that it is the only thing we can see Formosus doing between 882 and 891.

After Stephen V died in 891, Formosus became pope, despite the canonical prohibition on transferring sees, which had of course already been broken by Marinus nine years earlier. Formosus' pontificate lasted for five years, and he did various interesting things during this time. He

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[183] Lapôtre, *Études sur la papauté*, p. 135.

[184] Sansterre p. 57. Of course, if John did frame Formosus, there would have been no documents to destroy.

[185] ibid. For Marinus, Hadrian and Stephen, see their *DBI* entries (Bonaccorsi, Bertolini, Capo, respectively); more on Marinus below.

[186] ibid.

[187] For whom see Neil, *Seventh-Century Popes*, pp. 46-48.

[188] Sansterre p. 57.

[189] Testina, 'La basilica di S. Ippolito'.

reorganised the diocese of Hamburg-Bremen, which is interesting, and shows an interest in the frontiers of Christianity, but our evidence is not sufficient to make any sensible statements about this.[190] He also intervened in the interminable Photian dispute, which had flared up again in the late 880s/early 890s. In a letter sent to Constantinople in late 891/early 892, of which only a Greek fragment in an anti-Photian collection survives,[191] Formosus apparently ordered everyone whom Photios had ordained during his second patriarchate to be admitted to lay communion only if they asked for forgiveness. Some scholars have used this letter to argue that Formosus reopened the Photian Schism, in direct contradiction to the policies of his immediate predecessors as pope.[192] However, given the circumstances of its survival, there is reason to be quite cautious of this letter; it is perfectly possible to argue that whoever compiled this collection altered the letter, and that Formosus was only actually talking about people who had been ordained during Photios' first patriarchate, which would put his policy totally in line with his predecessors back until Nicholas I.[193] The second of these actually seems more likely, and acts as further evidence that, in policy terms, Formosus was broadly in line with/loyal to the papacy from the 860s onwards, in turn making John VIII's role in the 870s quarrel seem even more suspicious.

Most of Formosus' time as pope, however, was spent dealing with the political situation following the decline of Carolingian power in Italy.[194] Here, he was primarily occupied with his relations with the house of Spoleto.[195] In February 891, Stephen V had crowned Guy of Spoleto as

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[190] See Sansterre p. 58 for this.

[191] Jaffé n. 3478.

[192] Grumel, 'La liquidation'.

[193] More detail on this at Sansterre p. 58.

[194] This chapter is not about the breakdown of Carolingian power in Italy, but for orientation see Costambeys et al, *Carolingian World*, p. 426f; Sergi, 'The kingdom of Italy'; Tabacco, *Struggle for Power,* pp. 144ff; Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy*, pp. 168ff; plus now the relevant chapters of Valenti and Wickham, *Italia 888-962*.

[195] For significantly more detail on this, Arnaldi, 'Papa Formoso'.

emperor (against his own better judgement); at the insistence of Guy, Formosus on 30th April 892 also crowned his son Lambert.[196] At this point, Guy and Lambert also made an agreement with Formosus, whose text we only know from two short papyrus fragments.[197] However, relations between Formosus and Guy soon went downhill, with the result that, in September 893, Formosus sent legates to Bavaria to ask Arnulf to intervene to free Rome, which he happily agreed to do.[198] This did not go entirely to plan: Arnulf only reached Rome in 895 (mostly because he could not be bothered to do so before), by which point Engelberga, the widow of Louis II and a supporter of the Spoletans, had fortified the city against him, 'dopo aver ridotto Formoso e i sostenitori dell partito pontificio all'impotenza'.[199] Eventually, however, Arnulf overcame this resistance; Engelberga fled to Spoleto, and Formosus crowned Arnulf as emperor. Arnulf then marched to Spoleto, but this expedition ended in tears very early on when he had an attack of apoplexy and was paralysed. Formosus died very soon thereafter, on 4th April 896. Sansterre bizarrely suggests that Formosus died of grief at Arnulf's misfortune;[200] it seems more likely that it was just that he was just in his 80s, not bad going for the early middle ages.

Like Anastasius, Formosus' career sheds much light on late ninth-century Rome. Broadly speaking, three things stand out. Firstly, Formosus' career represents the broad continuity of papal power from Nicholas I's accession in 858 right up to Formosus' death in 896. Nothing any pope did during this period seems to have provoked any significant dissent from Formosus, with the exception of the 876 show trial; as discussed above, even that does not necessarily show Formosus

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[196] Sansterre p. 59, noting also that this ceremony took place in Ravenna, not Rome, because Guy wanted to distract attention away from the pope being there.

[197] Mercati, 'Frammenti in papiro'.

[198] Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy*, p. 170, notes that Arnulf only 'nominally' responded to Formosus, as he wanted to invade Italy anyway, but that would be a matter for a biography of Arnulf.

[199] Sansterre p. 59.

[200] ibid - 'l'infelice esito dell'impresi di Arnolfo dovette colpire profondamente Formoso che non sopravisse a lungo'.

disagreeing with the pope, rather than the other way around. I argued above that Anastasius' career shows that Rome during this period was convulsed by internal divisions and squabbling; Formosus does not disprove this, but he does nuance it somewhat. Basically, putting Anastasius' and Formosus' careers together seems to show that Rome was only really disordered during papal elections (plus Anastasius and Formosus' various show trials, which can plausibly be seen as outplayings of papal elections); during the pontificates themselves, things seem to have proceeded fairly smoothly. A broad analogy can actually be made here with modern politics - elections are certainly 'liminal points', as it were, where disagreements and divisions come out into the open, but once these are done the state usually proceeds fairly sedately onwards (that is the theory, at least). People may have had their own favoured candidates during elections, but there is no real evidence for anyone questioning the basic legitimacy of the person who was ultimately elected (again disregarding 876).[201] Actually, in a way 855 is the exception that proves the rule here - it was not a revolution, but simply an attempt to take over existing power structures; Anastasius presumably was not very interested in moving to the next mode of production, but just wanted to be pope, and indeed he was reintegrated not so long afterwards. The upshot of all this is that papal legitimacy seems to have stayed fairly uncontested in late ninth-century Rome. Opposition or dissent, in as much as it is visible in our sources, was to potential candidates to be pope, not to the existence or legitimacy of the papacy itself.

A second point to be made relates to the extensive links between Rome and the outside world. Almost everyone mentioned in this chapter acted at some point as, effectively, a diplomat: Anastasius, Marinus and Formosus all served as papal legates; and, during their pontificates, Nicholas, Hadrian and John VIII were all heavily involved in extremely complicated geo-ecclesiastical disputes (mostly the Photian Schism). This links up with the more international focus

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[201] A point which has often been made before: see e.g. Wickham, *Medieval Rome*, p. 22; McKitterick, 'The church', p. 137f (both actually talking about the tenth century, but they can be read back).

of the next two chapters of this thesis: simply put, from about the 860s to about the 880s, we can see a very lively, energetic papacy, constantly sending out ambassadors/missionaries and getting itself involved in international disputes; there is certainly a sense in this period that the pope was a player worth listening to in international politics. As will be discussed in chapter 2, this was actually relatively new for the papacy; the point, though is that it seems to have been largely driven by the dense concentration in Rome of several remarkable intellects, of the calibre of Anastasius, Marinus, Formosus, Gauderic and John the Deacon. As this chapter has shown, there is a sense in which these people were the real 'engines' of the reassertion of papal primacy we can see under Nicholas I and John VIII. The image I want to convey here is of this nucleus of energy spreading across Europe - papal involvement in the conversions of Bulgaria and Moravia was fundamentally driven by this myth-making and 'rediscovery' of the papal past going on in late ninth-century Rome, driven primarily by the people under discussion here.

The third thing to note is that this remarkable level of activity seems to have quite suddenly dropped off by the end of the ninth century. It does not seem that this was particularly related to the decline of Carolingian power; rather, it seems that the new sense of the past in late ninth-century Rome simply ran out of steam; not least, perhaps, because educated Romans started getting distracted in the early tenth century by disputes over episcopal transfer (see below for this). Conrad Leyser has argued that 'it is tempting to suppose that the collapse of institutional papal memory correlates directly to the escalation of the schism over Formosus',[202] and it is indeed difficult to resist this temptation. To find out what the reasons for this were, we must now turn to the debate that engulfed Rome in the decades around the turn of the ninth and tenth centuries, that over the legitimacy or otherwise of episcopal transfer.

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[202] Leyser, 'Charisma in the archive', p. 217. Leyser also notes here that Hadrian III and Stephen V were 'anti-Formosan', which does not particularly seem to be the case - or, at least, they did not share John VIII's rabid hatred of Formosus.

No study of Formosus would be complete without quoting Liudprand:

> Once appointed, as if impious and ignorant of holy doctrines, Sergius [Liudprand means Stephen VI] ordered Formosus to be extracted from his tomb and placed on the seat of the Roman pontiffs, dressed in his priestly attire. To him he said: 'When you were bishop of Porto, why did you usurp the universal Roman see in a spirit of ambition?' Once these things were done, he ordered the corpse, stripped of its holy vestments and with three fingers cut off, to be tossed into the Tiber, and, after degrading them to their former stations, he again ordained all those whom Formosus had ordained.[203]

The Synod of the Corpse, then, quite clearly serves in Liudprand as a symbol of the corruption and decadence of the Roman church at this time. Liudprand, though, was more than a straightforward 'propagandist' for the Ottonian regime. He was also a man of his time, and one of the hottest debates in mid-tenth century Europe seems to have been the legitimacy or otherwise of episcopal transfer, i.e. the moving of a bishop from one see to another.[204] Liudprand discusses this at length. For example, Liudprand tells us that Pope John X, who had already twice moved sees from Bologna to Ravenna and back again, was persuaded by Theodora 'to desert the archiepiscopal see of Ravenna - O wickedness! - and to usurp the highest pontificate at Rome'.[205] Despite Theodora's influence, Liudprand makes it clear that John did have ambitions of his own - discussing his move from Bologna to Ravenna, he says that he 'forsook his prior church of Bologna; swollen with the spirit of ambition, and in the face of the canons of the Holy Fathers, he usurped Ravenna for

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[203] Liudprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis* 1.30, trans. Squatriti, *Complete Works*, p. 64.

[204] Leyser, 'Episcopal office'.

[205] Liudprand, *Antapodosis* 2.48, 55.

himself'.[206] In discussing this topic of episcopal transfer, Liudprand seems to be engaging with an issue of some importance in whatever passed for the 'public sphere' of the tenth century. This new interest seems to have been brought on at least in part by the growing phenomenon of the Bishop of Rome transferring from another see, and Formosus, of course, was the standout example of this - though not the first, which was Marinus.[207] Indeed, in many of the surviving texts discussing both Formosus and the issue of episcopal transfer, he seems to be put into action as something of an ideological football to discuss the legitimacy or otherwise of episcopal transfer.

At first glance, it may seem slightly strange that episcopal transfer was indeed so controversial. St Peter, the first Bishop of Rome, was (at least according to tradition) initially the bishop of Antioch, and, given the papacy's general obsession with justifying its power by associating itself with Jesus' commission of the Church to Peter, it may seem odd that repetition of what amounts to the papacy's founding act was seen with such hostility. However, Sebastian Scholz has brought out a key distinction between 'Transmigration', whereby a bishop moves sees due to (what is seen to be) personal interest, and 'Translation', where the move takes place in the interests of the Church, rather than the self-interest of a particular bishop.[208] On this reading, Peter's transfer was justified, as it was done so that the church could expand in Rome and the western empire, out of its roots in the Greek East. 'Transmigration', however, is more problematic. Debates about the legitimacy or otherwise of 'Transmigration' reach back to the very early church, and need not detain us for too long here, except to show that a position for or against 'Transmigration' could fairly

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[206] ibid; Leyser, 'Episcopal office', p. 797f.

[207] Scholz, *Transmigration und Translation*, p. 3 - 'Eine Sonderstellung nimmt im Mittelalter der Wechsel von Bischöfen auf die cathedra Petri ein. Im formosianischen Streit schien sich zunächst die Position der Antiformosianischer durchzusetzen, die den Wechsel eines Bischofs auf die prima sedes grundsätzlich ablehnten. Da diese Haltung jedoch einer bestimmten politischen Situation entsprang, kam es bald zu einem Umschwung. Bereits in der zweiten Hälfte des 10. Jh. galt der Wechsel eines Bischofs auf den Papststuhl offenbar als zulässig. Diese Auffassung hat sich später nicht mehr geändert.'

[208] ibid p. 1.

easily be justified with an appeal to church tradition. For example, in the third century, Cyprian announced that Novatian, the Bishop of Rome, was 'adulter adque extraneus episcopus',[209] and 'adulterum et contrarium caput',[210] and that he sat on an 'adultera cathedra'.[211] Given that the Acts of the Synod of Alexandria compare the 'marriage' of a bishop with his diocese to that of a man and a woman,[212] it would be easy to argue that Cyprian uses this language to descrive Novatian because he has abandoned his old flock to become Bishop of Rome. However, Leo Obers and Sebastian Scholz have both argued persuasively that Cyprian's description of Novatian as 'adulterus' etc in fact refer to his being (in Cyprian's eyes) a heretic, and have nothing to do with episcopal transfer.[213] This is just one among many examples of the church fathers being extremely open to interpretation about whether or not they forbid episcopal transfer. Essentially, the situation seems to have become clearer in the fourth century when episcopal councils started laying down clearer rules, but even then things are still very much open to doubt.[214] The upshot of all this is that it is less than clear to us now, and also to writers in the tenth century, whether or not episcopal transfer was seen as legitimate in the early church. This may go some way to explaining the large amount of ink spilled in attacking or defending bishops who had transferred from one see to another.

Such disputation was not new to the tenth century, either. The debate over episcopal transfer seems to have been well and truly alive in the ninth century, before Formosus became Bishop of

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[209] Cyprian, *Ep.* 55.24.

[210] ibid 45.1

[211] ibid 68.2.

[212] On the basis of 1 Corinthians 7:27 - 'Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free.'; Scholz, *Transmigration* p. 5.

[213] Scholz, *Transmigration* p. 5ff; see also 'Novatian', in *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*.

[214] Scholz, *Transmigration* p. 17f - '[Im 4. Jahrhundert,] das Verbot des Bistumswechsels war nicht Ausfluss einer mystischen Vorstellung, sondern Ergebnis der Form der Wahl und der Weihe des Bischofs sowie der sich entwickelnden Episkopalverfassung. Transmigration und Translation waren mit der Weihe des Bischofs auf eine Kirche nicht vereinbar. Zudem stand die Gemeinde dann vor dem Problem, einen ihr mehr oder weniger Unbekannten wählen zu müssen, über dessen Eignung sie kein Zeugnis ablegen konnte.

Rome. An excellent example of this is the debate over the election of Actard as Bishop of Nantes in 843.[215] Actard was elected following the death of his predecessor Gunhardus at the hands of the Vikings; when Nominoë the Breton gained control of Nantes in c. 849 he expelled Actard in an attempt to establish an independent Breton church.[216] Actard later returned to Nantes after Charles the Bald made peace with the Bretons, only to be forced out again in 868 by Salomon the Breton, who replaced him with the separatist Bishop Gislard.[217] At this point, Pope Hadrian II sent letters to all the Frankish bishops telling them to find a suitable diocese for Actard as soon as possible; he also sent Actard the pallium as a sign of papal support.[218] When Bishop Herard of Tours died in 871, the French bishops in a council at Douzy voted to approve Actard's election by the clergy and people and wrote to Hadrian asking him to confirm Actard as the new metropolitan Archbishop of Tours; Hincmar of Rheims also sent a personal letter to Hadrian asking for Actard to be translated to the archdiocese, and Hadrian gladly approved all this.[219] However, for reasons best known to himself (Sommer thought it was because he did not get Hadrian II to back him), Hincmar later changed his mind about this issue, and wrote a text called *De quibus apud*, arguing that Actard had deserted his own see of Nantes in order to serve his own greed and ambition (conveniently forgetting that Actard in fact was forced out of Nantes due to his personal affiliation with Charles the Bald, which Hincmar clearly states is a perfectly legitimate reason to leave a diocese).[220] Whatever Hincmar's motivations for writing this (Pope Hadrian's clear liking for Actard may have

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[215] Discussed by Sommar, 'Hincmar of Rheims and the canon law of episcopal transfer'; Scholz, *Transmigration*, pp. 130ff.

[216] AB s.a. 843; Smith, *Province and Empire*, pp. 147-161.

[217] Sommar, 'Hincmar', p. 431f.

[218] MGH Epp. 6 pp. 710-712.

[219] MGH Concilia 4 p. 527f (Council); PL 126.642A (Hincmar's letter); MGH Epp. 6 pp. 738ff (Hadrian's approval); Sommar, 'Hincmar', p. 432.

[220] PL 126.215D

had something to do with it), it is reasonably clear that episcopal transfer was a topic of active debate in the Carolingian world in the mid-ninth century.

There also seems to have been some discussion of it in Rome. According to general consensus, in 872 Anastasius Bibliothecarius wrote a treatise entitled *De episcoporum transmigratione et quod non temere iudicentur*.[221] Mary Sommar has argued that this treatise was probably written in response to Hincmar's musings about episcopal transfer, and there does not seem to me to be any good reason to dispute this.[222] Anastasius starts this treatise by listing 16 ancient bishops who have been translated to serve the *utilitas ecclesiae,* before quoting the opinion of the fifth century church historian Sokrates - 'if therefore among the ancients a bishop moved from one city to another without dispute whenever the good of the church called, then it is proper that the same rule be applied in the present situation'.[223] Anastasius also uses material from Pseudo-Isidore to argue that in the appropriate circumstances episcopal translation can be approved by a council of bishops or by the Holy See. An interesting point of comparison between these two treatises, by Anastasius and by Hincmar, is that there is only one common reference to law or to precedent, which is Gregory Nazianzus - 'it is as though Anastasius was trying to show what Hincmar had missed, or had chosen to ignore, and the large amount of Greek material allows Anastasius to showcase his erudition'.[224]

Simply put, then, there was a large amount of debate going on about episcopal transfer in the Frankish world, and in Rome, in the mid- to late-ninth century. The basic distinction between 'good' and 'bad' episcopal transfer (Scholz's *Translation* and *Transmigration*) seems to have been the degree to which the transfer was or was not motivated by self-interest. The earliest texts we have

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[221] Of course, even if Anastasius did not write it, it is still significant as it shows that there is discussion of episcopal transfer going on in Rome in the 870s.

[222] Sommar, 'Hincmar', p. 430.

[223] Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 7.36, PG 67.818-822 (trans. Sommar, 'Hincmar', p. 438).

[224] Sommar, 'Hincmar', p. 439.

from the *Streitschriften* over Formosus reflect this. The pro-Formosan tract by (the author known as) Auxilius, which probably dates from no more than 15 or so years after the Synod of the Corpse, channels a vast array of examples from the early church to attempt to prove the legitimacy of episcopal transfer:

> His hoc modo digestis uideamus, si hortatu cleri et populi ab episcopali ministerio in apostolatus sedem debuit transferri. Antherii papa. *Unde sanctam sedem —- —- ad alteram ciuitatem*. Haec Antherius [‘Antherius’ is really Pseudo-Isidore].
>
> Item apud chronica Graeca. *Imperante igitur Romanorum secundo anno Arthemio, qui est et Anastasius, tertia decima indictione undecima die mensis Augusti translatus est de metropoli Zizico Germanus archiepiscopus Constantinopolim —- —- sanctissimum archiepiscopum*.
>
> Item Gregorius Nazianzenus prius unius ciuitatis Cappadociae fuit episcopus, quae Sasima dicebatur, deine a beato Basilio et aliorum episcoporum consensu Nazianzo constitutus est. Sunt et alii quam plurimi, qui necessitatis uel utilitatis causa de sede ad sedem uel de ciuitate ad ciuitatem translati sunt, quos commemorare fastidium duximus. Haec sancti patres.[225]

We have here a clear attempt to demonstrate the legitimacy of episcopal transfer, so long as it is done, as Auxilius clearly thinks Gregory Nazianzen’s was, in the interests of the church as a whole. But of course, in order for this argument to work, Auxilius needs to show that Formosus’ transfer from Porto to Rome was indeed done in the interests of the church, rather than out of Formosus’ personal ambition:

> …Leontius autem dum esset presbiter, depositus fuit, sed postea in Antiochia patriarchia extitit. Gregorius uero quartus papa Theodosium, quem Eugenius eius antecessor presbiteri honore priuauerat, sanctae ecclesiae Signinae consecrauit episcopum. Ybas namque episcopus iudicatus fuit, sed sancta synodus canonice suam illi restituit ecclesiam.

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[225] Dümmler, *Auxilius und Vulgarius*, p. 67f.

> Rothadum uero episcopum Sessoniensis ecclesiae a synodo, cui Carolus rex interfuit, condemnatum et Soffrenum Placentinum episcopum merito reprobatum Nicolaus papa reconciliauit.
>
> Ex epistola sancti Gregorii papae ad Secundinum inclausum. *Gregorius Secundino seruo dei incluso. Nam tua sanctitas nos requisuit, ut tibi —- —- spiritus contribulatus. Denique beatum Petrum —- —- negare praedixit.*
>
> Ecce quibus et quantis testimoniis patet, quod uir domini Formosus non audacter, sed christiana indulgentia et sanctorum patrum auctoritate Romam introiuit et quod suae ecclesiae misericorditer restitututs fuerit iuxta illud, quod ad ecclesiae ministrum per Iohannem dicitur: *Memento, unde cecideris et age poenitentiam et prima opera fac.*[226]

Although Auxilius is less than clear about exactly *why* Formosus' move from Porto to Rome was done for the good of the church, he is clearly convinced that it was, and uses all kinds of precedents to show that episcopal transfer is not as bad a thing as Formosus' opponents (presumably) made it out to be - the same strategy used by Anastasius Bibliothecarius in his treatise on episcopal transfer. It is difficult to know exactly where this gets us. On the one hand, it may seem that this shared use of *exempla* from the early church shows that Auxilius was trying to draw on some kind of shared literary culture/understanding among members of the Roman church - this certainly existed under John VIII's pontificate, and it is not entirely clear why it should have died down in the intervening years. On the other hand, presumably if one is trying to justify something on historical grounds, i.e. legitimising it by saying that it has been done in the past, one would look for precedents and set them out for one's audience - i.e., exactly what both Anastasius and Auxilius clearly do.

Whether or not Auxilius and Formosus' other defenders[227] were part of a shared intellectual culture in Rome (for the record, I think they are likely to have been), there is other evidence for

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[226] ibid p. 66f.

[227] E.g. the *Invectiva in Romam*

discussion of this going on at the time. The most obvious example of this is Pseudo-Isidore,[228] which is very insistent on the parallel between the marriage between a man and a woman and that between a bishop and his flock. There is not a great deal of evidence for this idea before the production of Pseudo-Isidore - it is not really emphasised by patristic writers, for example.[229] Pseudo-Isidore, however, very much enforces the point - take, as an example, the discussion of this theme by Pseudo-Anterus:

> Et sicut vir non debet neglegere uxorem suam, sed diligere et caste custodire et amare atque prudenter regere, sic episcopus debet ecclesiam suam, quia illud fit carnaliter, istud spiritaliter; et sicut vir non debet adulterare, ita nec episcopus ecclesiam suam, id est, ut illam dimittat ad quam sacratus est.[230]

Why Pseudo-Isidore is so concerned with the marriage between a bishop and his diocese is not relevant here.[231] However, this is clear evidence for a discourse about this topic taking place in ninth century Europe. We know that Pseudo-Isidore was read in Rome (probably with some relish), so it is not surprising that it seems to be informing the debates about episcopal transfer which we

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[228] On which see, obviously, Furhmann, *Einfluss und Verbreitung,* and now the work of Klaus Zechiel-Eckes (most obviously *Fälschung als Mittel*) and Eric Knibbs, for whose publications see the bibliography, but whose work can be most easily accessed online: https://pseudo-isidore.com/introduction/ (accessed 11th September 2019).

[229] Gaudemet, 'Le symbolisme du mariage' p. 113 - 'Le symbolisme du mariage de l'évêque avec son église était resté modeste à l'âge patristique'.

[230] Hinschius, *Decretales Pseudo-Isidorianae et Capitula Angilramni*, p. 90; Leyser, 'Episcopal office', p. 803.

[231] Gaudemet, 'Le symbolisme' p. 113f argues convincingly that it is because Pseudo-Isidore's basic aim is to limit the power of metropolitans over their suffragans, and linking bishops to their dioceses as strongly as possible helps to do this.

find reflected in the writings of Formosus' defenders.[232] However, Pseudo-Isidore does also make clear that episcopal transfer in and of itself is not really a problem:

> Non enim transit de civitate ad civitatem, qui non suo libitu aut ambitu hoc facit, sed utilitate quadem aut necessitate, aliorum hortatu et consilio potiorum transfertur. Nec transfertur de minori civitate ad maiorem qui hoc non ambitu nec propria voluntate facit, sed aut vi a propria sede pulsus aut necessitate coactus aut utilitate loci aut populi, non superbe, sed cum humiliter ab aliis translatus et intronizatus est, quia homo videt in facie, deus autem in corde. Et dominus per prophetam loquitur dicens: Dominus scit cogitationes hominum quoniam vanae sunt.'[233]

Here again, we see the fundamental distinction between moving sees for the good of the church ('good transfer') and for one's own career advancement ('bad transfer'). Moving sees *of one's own will* was seen as being illegitimate, because it was a sign of inconstancy - but if the impulse to move did not come from the bishop himself there was no fundamental problem with it.[234] Indeed, Liudprand himself does not seem to have any problem with Formosus moving sees - his anger in *Antapodosis* is rather directed at Stephen for putting Liudprand on trial despite the fact that he had, in Liudprand's opinion, legitimately moved sees, as opposed to Pope John X, whom Liudprand very much sees as a clerical careerist.[235] This perspective is shared by the *Invectiva in Romam*, written probably in the 910s, which uses Pseudo-Anterus to defend Formosus and attack John X, whose

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[232] And it was very influential outside Rome - 'Les textes du Pseudo-Isidore qui, pour étayer leur défense des droits de l'évêque dans son diocèse et s'opposer à des transferts abusifs, avaient ainsi valorisé le symbolisme du mariage de l'évêque, furent repris dans les Collections canoniques ultérieurs, en particulier par Réginon, Burchard, la Collection en deux Livres, celles on 74 Titres, la *Collectio canonum* d'Anselme de Lucques, Ives de Chartres, avant d'aboutir au Décret de Gratien…Ainsi avec continuité du milieu de IXe au milieu de XIe siècle, les collections canoniques, aussi bien dans l'Empire qu'en France ou en Italie, acceptent le symbolisme du mariage de l'évêque avec son église' - Gaudemet, 'Le symbolisme', p. 114f.

[233] Hinschius, *Decretales Pseudo-Isidorianae et Capitula Angilramni,* p. 152; Leyser, 'Episcopal office', p. 805.

[234] Leyser, 'Episcopal office', p. 805.

[235] ibid p. 805f.

assumption of power in Ravenna, we are told, was 'against all canonical authority', and when he became pope 'with unspeakable daring, he usurped the holy Roman and apostolic church, and now he wishes to bind and loose according to his whim'.[236]

It is fairly clear, then, from our surviving evidence, that it was quite possible for Formosus' defenders to dispute the charge against him of usurping the bishopric of Rome out of his own lust for power, and to argue that Formosus' episcopal transfer presented no problem in and of itself. It also needs to be considered that, before the Synod of the Corpse, Formosus had not only been elected pope, but had remained in the post for five years. Obviously, therefore, there was at least some opinion prevalent in Rome that it was legitimate for him to do so - we do not know exactly how popes were appointed during this period, but if episcopal transfer in and of itself, or indeed Formosus' own specific transfer, was such a problem, surely someone would have pointed this out at the time. This could be argued away by lack of evidence - it is theoretically possible that someone did indeed try to stop Formosus' appointment as bishop of Rome, but for whatever reason was ignored by the majority of the *populus Romanus*, but even if this is the case Formosus remained pope for five years after his initial appointment. It is simply impossible to imagine how he could have remained in position if his claim to the papacy was regarded by a significant section of the population and/or clergy of Rome as fundamentally illegitimate, especially given the somewhat disputed nature of ninth century papal elections, and the generally unstable nature of Italian politics during this period (see above). The most logical explanation seems to me to be that there was a broad current of opinion in Rome that Formosus' position as bishop was fundamentally legitimate and tenable, which is why we have no record of opposition to him during his pontificate.

Conclusion

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[236] PL 129.837A; Leyser, 'Episcopal office', p. 806.

This chapter has three main points of relevance for the thesis as a whole, all of which relate closely to Roman intellectual culture in the later ninth century. Firstly, it has shown the sheer extent of the intellectual energy and dynamism prevalent in Rome during the 860s and 870s. This is shown mostly by Anastasius' translation projects, and by the 'rediscovery' of the papal past by John the Deacon and Gauderic. This 'rediscovery of the past' had direct consequences in the present: the attention lavished by Gauderic, John and Anastasius upon Clement, for example, had extensive linkages to the ongoing missionary activities of Cyril and Methodios in Moravia, which will be explored in chapter 3. The point here, though, is that this intellectual energy seems to have had a very small base. Essentially, it was driven by Anastasius, Gauderic and John, with very little input from anyone else, so far as we can see. That said, although these three took the leadership of the project (and this chapter's discussion of Anastasius has consciously focussed on his/their leadership, rather than the project in and of itself), it is hard to imagine that their work was entirely falling on deaf ears. Although it is difficult to get a sense of papal policy within Rome from papal letters, as was discussed at the beginning of this chapter, it is highly unlikely that Nicholas I, Hadrian II and John VIII would not have been supportive of all this. Not only did all the intellectual luminaries of later ninth-century Rome hold senior positions in the papal entourage, but the papal initiatives that we can see are clearly influenced by the general intellectual initiatives going on in Rome during this time, most obviously Gregory I's serving as a model for Nicholas I's interventions in Bulgaria.

A second main theme of this chapter is the flip side of this point about the shared culture of Rome, namely the fierce rivalries that sprang up between people trying to advance through the ranks of the papal entourage, and in some cases to the papacy itself. Anastasius in many ways was a forerunner of this, but the best example here is that of John VIII and Formosus. The reasons for why this level of competition existed were discussed at the start of this chapter - essentially, the stakes in Rome were high enough that the papacy was worth getting. This was for two reasons: both Rome's position as a more or less independent city state (or at least not a part of the Carolingian empire),

and the fact that the bishopric of Rome was the most important and prestigious bishopric in the Church. For both of these reasons, indeed, it would be more surprising if there was *not* a high amount of competition between various members of the curia. The important point, though, is that this competition was balanced by the 'collective effort' of papal myth-making taking place during the 860s and 870s. People certainly wanted to be pope, but, as far as we can see, once a pope had been elected people do not seem to have had any kind of criticism to make of the papal *system* in and of itself. In a way Anastasius is the exception that proves the rule here: his attempt in 855 to seize the papacy took place after the death of the previous pope, i.e. at a stage when there was no legitimate pope (our sources seem to say that Benedict and Anastasius were proclaimed pope at more or less the same time, thus it seems more that they were both laying claim to the vacant papal throne, rather than Anastasius challenging Benedict as such). Once it had become clear to Anastasius that the papacy was beyond his grasp, though, he seems to have been content to accumulate power for himself within the existing system, without trying to overturn any power structures. He was then able to build up an impressive programme of myth-making, bringing together something of a golden generation in Rome consisting of John the Deacon, Gauderic, Formosus et al in a unified attempt to broadcast the glory of Rome and the papacy to both a 'domestic' and an 'international' audience.

This generation, though, were in many ways the victims of their own success. The career of Formosus seems to show that, among other things, the Romans began to believe their own myth-making. The glorious and powerful papacy which they had conjured up in itself brought their own vision of the papacy to new heights. As the city's bishopric became a more and more attractive prize, so the competition between Roman clerics intensified; this was exacerbated by the opening-up of the bishopric of Rome to groups of clerics which had previously been denied it, namely the cardinal bishops.[237] This is the context in which to see the debate over Formosus and episcopal

[237] See the introduction for this point.

transfer. The debate over episcopal transfer itself may well have been part of the papal myth-making - Anastasius' interest in the case of Actard can plausibly be seen as trying to mark episcopal transfer as an extraordinary circumstance which could be authorised by the bishop of Rome, but not by any other bishop.[238] The obvious question, though, was then who could authorise episcopal transfer to the see of Rome. The debate over Formosus and episcopal transfer is often seen as the beginnings of the papacy's descent into its tenth-century 'pornocracy'. It may be more profitable, however, to see it instead as the beginnings of the working-out of some of the consequential issues raised by the papal myth-making of the later ninth century. Marinus' and Formosus' transfers to Rome were controversial precisely because there was no higher authority to appeal to to legitimise this specific episcopal transfer. Thus the sound and fury surrounding episcopal transfer may simply have been an indication of a working-out of the detail of the new vision of the papacy being created in ninth-century Rome.

Whatever the reasons for it, though, the debate over episcopal transfer certainly distracted Roman clerics from other purposes their considerable intellectual talents could have been directed towards. If it is unfair to call the tenth-century papacy a 'pornocracy', it is less unfair to call the tenth century the papacy's 'dark century' (though it is certainly a simplification). The evidence really does dry up from the ninth into the tenth century: it is not a distortion of the inadequate historiography, but it is really there. As was shown in the introduction, relatively little of our evidence for papal history in the ninth century actually comes from Rome itself; all the same, it is still remarkable that there are nowhere near as many tenth-century papal letters surviving in Rome or in Europe more broadly as there are from the eighth and ninth centuries. So the papacy's quiescence in the tenth century may have been a function of papal authority being 'under construction', so to speak. By the eleventh century, when our evidence picks up again, they seem to have figured this out.

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[238] Conrad Leyser, pers. comm.

Chapter 2: The conversion of Bulgaria

The second major issue to be explored in this thesis is the conversion activities carried out in eastern and central Europe in the mid to late ninth century, and the role of the papacy in these conversions. I will look specifically at two examples of conversion, in Bulgaria and Moravia, to explore the dynamics between popes and these newly-Christianising peoples at this time, and to see what this can tell us about the ideas and assumptions surrounding papal power in late ninth century Europe. To put the argument in a nutshell: due in large part to the ongoing intellectual 'renaissance' in the city of Rome in the mid to late ninth century, and the emphasis this included on the forceful and powerful papacies of late antiquity, the papacy gained a new momentum which propelled it to the forefront of conversion and missionary efforts at this time. So whereas previous conversion attempts were, generally speaking, carried out without a huge amount of papal involvement, the conversions of Bulgaria and Moravia are the first time we can clearly see the papacy actively driving through change and trying to stamp its authority on the entirety of the church, both in the west and in Byzantium. I will bring this out through an account of papal involvement in both Bulgaria and Moravia.[1]

It is important to note that, despite my emphasis on the novelty of large-scale papal involvement in these conversion activities, popes did have a role in conversions in the seventh and (especially) eighth centuries as well. The most obvious example of this is Pope Gregory I's commissioning of the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons in the late sixth/early seventh century. The papacy's interest in England outlasted Gregory's pontificate, indeed: witness, for example,

[1] The last twenty years or so have seen the publication of several excellent discussions of how early medieval conversion might have worked in specific contexts: see e.g. Wood, *Missionary Life*; Rembold, *Conquest and Christianisation*; Dumézil, *Les racines chrétiennes* (especially the prologue, pp. 9-31); Flechner and Ní Mhaonaigh (eds), *Introduction of Christianity*. Their foci, however, are not the same as mine.

Theodore of Tarsus' arrival as essentially a Roman legate in 668.[2] But there is a sense in which the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons has always interested historians precisely because it was a highly unusual thing for the early medieval papacy to do. To quote Judith Herrin, 'in 604, Rome was centuries away from a self-sufficient authority to manage the spiritual life of the West…beyond the walls of Rome its bishop had little power. The papacy was still an almost exclusively local organisation'.[3] One of the many reasons why Gregory is interesting is precisely because the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons went against the general tendency for the bishop of Rome to remain little more than the bishop of the city of Rome, without trying to direct affairs outside of Rome, at least in the west. The reasons why Gregory did this are interesting in and of themselves, but not what this thesis is focussed on. Rather, the point here is that there is not a huge amount of history, at least before Gregory, of papal involvement with missionary or conversion work.

After Gregory's death in 604, however, papal involvement in missionary work in the west did pick up somewhat.[4] Willibrord, for example, was heavily involved with the papacy in his Northumbrian and Danish missions.[5] Boniface also had his missionary work in Frisia and Germany explicitly sanctioned by Pope Gregory II,[6] and during the mission itself he received a lot of advice from Rome about topics such as marriage and divorce.[7] 'Correspondence with the Anglo-Saxon missionaries and with those secular authorities who were asked to assist and protect them occupies

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[2] The best accounts of the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons are Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity,* and Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*. For Theodore, Lin, '"Never had there been such happy times"'.

[3] Herrin, *Formation*, p. 164.

[4] I have based this paragraph on the discussion in ibid, pp. 345ff.

[5] Fritze, '"Universalis gentium confessio";.

[6] LP 1.397; Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas*; idem, 'La chiesa nazionale'.

[7] Kelly, *Pope Gregory II on Divorce and Remarriage.*

a much larger part of the papal record than that with the East.'[8] So there is clear evidence in a growing interest in Rome in the conversion missions taking place in western Europe at this time.

But the case of Boniface does suggest that things were not quite as straightforward as an increasing papal interest in and engagement with western Europe. Most obviously, Boniface was precisely acting as an intermediary between Rome and the Franks. Most of our knowledge for the pontificates of Gregory II, Gregory III and Zacharias comes from letters these popes sent to Boniface, rather than letters sent directly from the popes to the local Frankish potentates.[9] It is true that some letters were sent to princes directly, but the overall impression one gains of the Boniface mission is that the conversion was, as it were, done through Boniface, rather then directly by papal letters sent to the Frankish princes. Furthermore, these popes do not seem to have been particularly interested in any jurisdictional questions. The 'Frankish-Papal alliance' formed in the mid-eighth century is interesting precisely because it was an alliance - there is no real suggestion that the popes were trying to claim sovereignty over the Franks.[10] Rather, the alliance was, put very crudely, a way for the more or less independent 'papal state' to assert their independence from the Byzantine empire, by invoking 'Frankish protection' against the east.[11]

So the papal attitude towards Bulgaria and Moravia in the ninth century was neither completely new, nor totally in keeping with papal missionary policy in the earlier middle ages. As with Gregory and the Anglo-Saxons, we can see a clear missionary drive directed from Rome towards two former regions of the Roman Empire. And as with Willibrord and Boniface, we can see the papacy concerning itself with the ongoing Christianisation of a region of Europe. But all the same there are differences and developments between these cases and Bulgaria and Moravia. One

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[8] Herrin, *Formation*, p. 346.

[9] For the Boniface letters, Jasper and Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters*, pp. 96ff, with further refs.

[10] And actually, the Carolingians never really bothered to claim Rome itself as part of the empire - see e.g. Costambeys et al, *Carolingian World*, p. 68.

[11] Noble, *Republic of St Peter*, chapter 3, discussed properly in the introduction.

obvious example is that the popes can be seen in these two chapters very clearly asserting jurisdictional authority over both Bulgaria and Moravia, in a way which did not really happen with the more limited attempts at an alliance with the Franks. It is true that the popes could never threaten military dominance of either of these places, but ideologically, the mode of argumentation in papal letters sent to Bulgaria and Moravia is qualitatively different from that sent to the Franks/ Carolingians. Boris of Bulgaria, for example, is consistently told that he must submit to Roman jurisdictional authority (although the popes do not seem to mind Bulgaria being self-governing in a non-ecclesiastical sense), in a way that is not really consistent with the alliance the papacy tried to establish with the Franks, who, rhetorically at least, are always treated as partners of the papacy.

By far the most significant difference between Bulgaria and Moravia and earlier attempts to convert, though, is the new ideological conception of itself the papacy was able to draw on at this time. As we saw in chapter 1, Rome in the 860s and 870s was marked by a remarkable ferment of ideas and intellectual culture. Papal policy towards both Bulgaria and Moravia cannot really be seen in isolation from this. Ralph Davis famously asked whether it can be 'that the only way to create a nation is by the creation of a myth'.[12] As an ideal type the question works - not because the papacy was a 'nation', but simply because it would be in keeping with the spirit of what Davis was saying to ask whether a significant way, if not the only one, to create and maintain power is by the creation of a myth. It was the creation of this 'myth' which gave the papacy a new self-confidence and ideological dynamism to start playing an active and central role in these conversions, in a way it had not done in the earlier middle ages. So although Nicholas I, Hadrian II and John VIII were all acting according to earlier precedents, it was the 'invention' of a papal myth in ninth-century Rome which provided the ideological dynamism for them to take centre stage of the processes, in a way their predecessors do not seem to have done.

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[12] Davis, *The Normans and their Myth*, p. 16, quoted by Wickham, *Land and Power*, p. 275.

In 680 Khan Asparukh led an alliance of Bulgars, a group made up of various more or less Turkic ethnic groups, together with a group of Slavs settled in the western Balkans, across the Danube in an attack on the eastern Balkans.[13] The next year, he established his capital at Pliska (near modern Shumen, Bulgaria), and established what is now seen as the first Bulgarian state.[14] The newly-formed state faced a significant problem, namely the necessity of establishing clearly-defined borders. The next 200 years saw various attempts to do these, with drives for military expansion into Byzantine territory, as well as several attempts at centralisation. It is hard to tell how successful these may have been, but they were certainly never complete.[15] By the time Khan Boris I ascended to the Bulgarian throne in 852, it was clear that a new approach needed to be found to try to reach these objectives. Boris' answer was to turn to Christianity.

Christianity was, of course, hardly an obscure mystery cult by the mid-ninth century, and so the appeal of accepting Christianity as an effort to become part of the 'European Community' is easy to see.[16] More significantly, it would have been entirely reasonable for Boris to suspect that Christianity would help him to unite the Bulgars and Slavs. Although most of the Slavs in Bulgaria may have converted to Christianity by the ninth century (though this is hard to tell), the Bulgars had not. Therefore, an obvious religious fault-line existed between the two main groups in Bulgarian society which would have been easy for external enemies to exploit.[17] It is therefore entirely

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[13] The most readable account of the subject is Runciman, *A History of the First Bulgarian Empire*; the most up-to-date one in a western language is Shepard, 'Slavs and Bulgars'.

[14] Crampton, *Concise History*, p. 9.

[15] For a very brief overview, see ibid pp. 11ff; more detail in Runciman, *History*, pp. 1-90.

[16] For more on this, Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth.*

[17] Crampton, *Concise History* pp. 12ff.

possible, if ultimately unprovable, that Boris hoped a 'state' conversion to Christianity would help him unite and strengthen his kingdom against possible outside influences.

The most obvious of these outside influences was the Byzantine Empire. The ninth century saw a Byzantine revival, after the trials and tribulations of the last roughly 200 years, including the Arab conquests and the prolonged battles over iconoclasm, and the impact of this revival seems to have had quite a significant effect in the Balkans.[18] The main cities of the Balkan peninsula began to recover to a state closer to their situation in the later Roman Empire,[19] and there is a remarkable economic recovery visible archaeologically from the ninth century southern Balkans - in Corinth, for example, archaeological excavations so far have produced two coins of Emperor Michael II (820-829), but 157 of Theophilos (829-842), 280 of Basil I (867-886) and 957 of Leo VI (886-912).[20] Furthermore, the Byzantines started attempting during the early ninth century to convert various Slavic groups settled in the Balkans.[21] Part of this conversion drive involved the establishment of a network of bishoprics directly dependent on local metropolitanates, which in turn owed allegiance to the Patriarch of Constantinople. Most of these were ancient sees which had survived the Slavic invasions.[22] For obvious reasons, the liturgical language of all these sees was Greek.

It is therefore hardly surprising that the Byzantines were coming to exert an ever-greater influence on ninth-century Bulgaria. This is particularly noticeable under Khan Omurtag (c. 814-831) and his successors Malamir (831-836) and Pressian (836-852). The majority of surviving

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[18] This is discussed by, inter alia, Whittow, 'The middle Byzantine economy.

[19] Obolensky, *Commonwealth*, p. 69.

[20] Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, p. 117; trends from elsewhere in Greece and the Balkans are admittedly less remarkable, but give the same upwards pattern.

[21] Their efforts are outlined by Obolensky, *Commonwealth* pp. 74ff.

[22] ibid p. 79

inscriptions from this period are in Greek.[23] Khan Omurtag himself was clearly anti-Christian - he was very concerned about the thousands of prisoners whom his predecessor Krum had taken from Roman cities in Thrace during his military campaigns and deported to Bulgaria. Attempts to make these prisoners denounce Christianity failed, and many of them were sentenced to death. Omurtag's son and successor Malamir was also forced to execute his brother Enravotas, who had been baptised under the influence of a Greek captive from Hadrianople.[24] Eleventh century northern and eastern Europe is full of so-called 'pagan uprisings' against Christianisation, some of which will be discussed in chapter 5 of this thesis. Although these 'uprisings' often probably have more to do with class conflict than religion, it is realistic to posit that a similar process may have been underway in ninth century Bulgaria - in the face of increasing Byzantine, and therefore Christian, influence, the pagan Bulgarians, who more or less constituted the ruling class of Bulgaria, 'escaped outwards' by initiating an aggressive anti-Christian policy, as a way of trying to protect their own power against these new developments.

There are various explanations for why Boris decided to end this aggressive policy and instead convert to Christianity. One of the less plausible of these is that a Greek painter called Methodios had been commissioned to paint hunting scenes in the royal palace at Pliska, and, for reasons best known to himself, Boris told him to paint 'something terrible' instead. Methodios, who was a devout monk, decided to paint the Last Judgement, and the awe and terror this inspired in Boris caused him to convert on the spot.[25] Another story tells us that Boris' sister, having embraced Christianity while being kept captive in Constantinople, influenced him on her return to the extent

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[23] ibid p. 82; Petkov, *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria*, pp. 13ff; also Shepard, 'Slavs and Bulgars', p. 236f.

[24] ibid p. 83.

[25] Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1838) p. 162f; Runciman, *History*, p. 102f.

that he became a convert.[26] This is more probable, but hardly provable. In any case, whatever Boris' motivations, it is beyond reasonable doubt that he really did convert to Christianity, or at least set in motion the conversion of Bulgaria to Christianity, either just before or (more likely) just after becoming khan in 852.

The question then arose of where exactly Boris' Christianity would be coming from. Although the Christian Church was of course still one entity at this point, east/west relations had deteriorated dramatically in recent years, and whether Boris chose Rome or Constantinople, it would have been certain that the prelate of the other city would protest. Interestingly, Boris shows every sign of wanting to receive his Christianity from the west and the pope - plausibly due to a wish to keep Bulgaria's independence from the gradually-increasing Byzantine influence in the Balkans. In the early 860s Boris came to a *rapprochement* with Louis, the East Frankish king, which seems eventually to have become an alliance. Boris and Louis seem to have discussed Christianity with each other, to the point that Louis announced himself to be optimistic that Boris 'might be willing to be converted' (*velit converti*) in a letter to the pope in early 864.[27] Unsurprisingly, these friendly relations with the Franks alarmed the Byzantines. Steven Runciman may not have been technically correct in asserting that 'Carolingian influence meant in the end the spiritual control of Rome',[28] but it seems reasonable to assume that this would have been the Byzantine understanding of the situation. In 864, a Byzantine expeditionary corps landed at Mesembria (modern Nesebar, Bulgaria). Boris was powerless to respond (his army was away to the north, campaigning against the Moravians), and so he immediately sent an embassy to ask the

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[26] ibid.

[27] *Annales Bertiniani* s.a. 864; MGH Epp. 6 pp. 290ff; but see the comment of Shepard, 'Slavs and Bulgars' p. 239 n. 43 - 'Louis, as the object of rebukes from [Pope] Nicholas I at that time, had his reasons for propagating such hopes' - this certainly does not disprove Louis' words, but caution must be exercised.

[28] Runciman, *History*, p. 103.

Emperor Michael III's conditions of peace.[29] The most important of Michael's terms was that Boris must accept Christianity imposed on him by Constantinople. Thus, in early September 865, with the emperor himself acting as his sponsor, Boris was baptised into the Church, and rechristened Michael, after his godfather.[30]

The relevance of all this to the papacy is obvious. After Boris' baptism, it was clear that there was a Christian 'state' in eastern Europe, which had shown clear signs of wanting to convert to western (i.e. Roman) Christianity, moving out of the East Roman sphere of influence. Given the forceful personality of Pope Nicholas I, who acceded in 858, it would be surprising if the papacy had not tried to involve itself in the conversion of the Bulgarians. The context of the ongoing Photian Schism (see below) made it even more likely for Nicholas to want to assert himself against Constantinople, and to go forward with his claims for a strong papacy, based ultimately on the Bishop of Rome's position as the successor of St Peter, the *princeps apostolorum*. Bulgaria therefore became a battleground between the bishops of Old and New Rome in their ongoing struggle for influence and predominance over Christendom. Although it is unclear whether either Rome or Constantinople was especially interested in claiming the spiritual allegiance of the Bulgarians for its own sake, acquiring their allegiance would be an impressive coup against their de facto opponents in the other Rome. Bulgaria therefore became a contested 'proxy space' as part of the larger 'cold war' between Rome and Constantinople in the ninth century.

The obvious comparandum here, another newly-Christianising eastern/central European territory over which Rome and Constantinople fought for influence, is Moravia, as we shall see in the next chapter. Superficially, there are indeed a fair amount of similarities between the two cases. Most obviously, they both represent examples of formerly pagan societies converting in the middle

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[29] George Monachus Continuatus, in Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, p. 824; Runciman, *History*, p. 104.

[30] He will continue to be called Boris here for the sake of simplicity.

of the ninth century, and causing disputes to arise between Rome and Constantinople over which sphere of influence they should belong to. They also both provided very good opportunities for the popes involved to put forward the 'Petrine Doctrine' about the pope's position as head of the Christian Church being based on his inheritance (spiritual or otherwise) from Peter, and this theme recurs again and again in the relevant papal letters. However, looking more closely at the two cases seems to indicate that their similarities are outweighed by their differences. Most notably, there seems to be a lot more active engagement with conversion in Bulgaria, as opposed to the more or less 'top-down' Christianisation of Moravia, with the bishops of Constantinople and then Rome sending Cyril and Methodios to act as missionaries to the Slavs. Boris is easily the most proactive figure in the Bulgarian story, and indeed his impatience with both successive popes and patriarchs he deals with is the primary driver of the whole affair. It is entirely possible that this impression comes purely from the contingencies of the survival of the evidence, but it is notable all the same. Another important difference is that, whereas there never seems to have been any real doubt over whether the Moravians would ultimately accept papal authority (at least after the Cyrillo-Methodian mission was hijacked by the papacy), there does seem to have been real uncertainty as to where Bulgaria's future lay. Perhaps more important than all of this, though, is that, unlike Moravia, the Christianisation of Bulgaria is inextricably linked to the Photian Schism. The intricate theological debates involved here, which will be investigated more thoroughly below, provided a powerful impetus preventing either the East or West Romans from backing down in their attempts to persuade the Bulgarians to come to their way of thinking.

Boris, Photios and Nicholas

After his own conversion, Boris set about trying to convert his people. This was easier said than done. According to our sources, Boris' attempts at Christianisation led to a widespread revolt

of the pagan Bulgar nobility.[31] After Boris crushed this revolt, he is said to have killed 52 of the ringleaders. 'The leaders of the clans, the rivals of the monarch, were thus wiped out for ever', in Runciman's memorable phrase,[32] and Boris could proceed with the task in hand, of converting the Bulgarian people to Christianity *en masse*. After suppressing the revolt, Boris seems to have decided that he needed more control over ecclesiastical affairs in Bulgaria.[33] He therefore asked the new patriarch in Constantinople, Photios, to give him a greater degree of control over the Bulgarian church. Boris' original letter does not survive, but we do have Photios' response.[34] This letter has not been short of scholarly discussion.[35] It is very long and complex, and, even in English translation, not easy to understand. Here is a typical passage, discussing Arianism:

> First he [Arius] assumed an overweening attitude towards his own shepherd [i.e. the bishop of Alexandria] and then extended his madness against the Shepherd and Lord of us all. He reduced the Son and Word of God (O, the daring of that tongue and mind!) to a creature and an object, nor would he see something that is true of everything and is self-evident: that every son is of the same being and nature as his begetter. In placing the Son among creatures, he proclaimed that the Father, too, is a creature. Since one knows that the Father's being is that of the Creator and his nature eternal, he should admit that the Son's is the same. Where would be the Son's legitimacy if the Father's being were of one kind, the

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[31] Our fullest evidence for this is the fantastical account of *Annales Bertiniani* s.a. 864. Pope Nicholas I, MGH Epp. 6 p. 577, also alludes to the rebellion - '…insurrexerint unanimiter cum magna ferocitate contra vos…volentes etiam vos occidere et regem alium constituere…'

[32] Runciman, *History*, p. 106.

[33] Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, p. 169, thinks that the revolt may have been caused by resentment among the nobility 'less against [Boris'] faith than against his poor political performance and his defeat at the hands of the Byzantines'. This is plausible but not certain - for various other possible factors, see e.g. Mayr-Harting, 'Two conversions to Christianity, including a fascinating analogy with the conversion to Christianity of the Tipokians in Melanesia, pp. 13ff. I myself see the causes of the revolt as quite straightforward class conflict, but this is more interesting than relevant here.

[34] Translated by Stratoudaki White and Berrigan, T*he Patriarch and the Prince*. The original Greek is in Photius, *Epistulae et* Amphilochia, ed. V. Laourdas and L.G. Westerink, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1983), pp. 5-15. For more on Photios see below.

[35] See e.g. Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, pp. 112-156; Runciman, *History,* p. 106f; Curta, *Southeastern Europe* p. 169f, along with the introduction to White's and Berrigan's translation (n. 34), pp. 1-37.

> Son's of another? How will the polytheism of Greek error not reappear, if the Godhead is divided into greater and lesser, with one God as the first, the elder, the Creator, and the other God as the second, the younger, and the servant?[36]

To further demonstrate the tract's nature as fundamentally a classically-inspired intellectual dissertation by Photios, here is a brief extract from a recent work on another part of the letter:

> Without ever using the word *dēmokratia*…Photios actually describes an idealized version of Athenian democracy. Even the terminology, which he uses, is largely borrowed from the classical moralists: e.g., well-being (*eudaimonia*) of the people and the ruler's care (*pronoia*) for them; lawfulness (*eunomia*) and lawlessness (*paranomia*) in society; popular consensus (*koinē homonoia*) and social discord (*dichostasia*); legitimate power (*ennomos archē,* or *basileia*), tyranny (*tyrannis*), the citizens' goodwill (*eunoia*), and so on. The nation is usually referred to as either *politeia*, or *patris*; the citizens are called *politai*, *hypēkooi*, and *archomenoi*. Yet, unlike Agapetos and Pseudo-Basil, Photios does not refer to the *archon* as being the citizens' co-servant (*syndoulos*).[37]

One cannot help but wonder how useful all this would have been to Boris. Older scholarship indeed generally shared the assumption that Boris could not have understood the letter, as its difficult Greek could not have been translated into Bulgarian.[38] But, as Liliana Simeonova has recently persuasively argued, it seems unlikely that Photios, who had spent a significant portion of his life working as a diplomat, would have made the fundamental error of sending Boris a letter he knew he would be unable to understand.[39] Furthermore, there is plenty of evidence for reasonably

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[36] White and Berrigan, *Patriarch and the Prince*, p. 42.

[37] Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, p. 145.

[38] See e.g. Obolensky, *Commonwealth*, p. 86; Dujčev, 'Au lendemain de la conversion du peuple bulgare, pp. 107ff.

[39] Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, p. 154; Treadgold, 'Photius before his Patriarchate', is interesting on Photios' early career.

widespread knowledge of Greek in Bulgaria even before Boris became khan.[40] The argument that Boris could not understand Photios' Greek is therefore not very persuasive. It is far more likely that Boris simply did not feel Photios had given him any useful information. Complicated discourses on Arian theology and classical Athenian political theory may be fascinating, but the letter gives Boris absolutely no practical advice relating to his predicament of introducing Christianity while also maintaining Bulgaria's political independence. To summarise in a sentence: Boris wanted control over the church but Photios only gave him theology. This may well have been the point of the letter, in fact: it is easy to imagine that Photios would have wanted to 'show off' to Boris, and blind him with complex Byzantine theology as a way to beat him into submission to Constantinople. But whatever Photios' intentions, Boris remained unimpressed. Fortunately, the advice he wanted was forthcoming from another direction.

On 29th August 866, around the time Photios would have been preparing his letter to send to Boris, an embassy arrived in Rome led by Boris' kinsman Peter, with a document from Boris asking for answers to various questions relating to the practical problems of converting a basically pagan society to Christianity.[41] According to Anastasius Bibliothecarius, Nicholas was delighted by this development.[42] Again, Boris' original letter has not survived. However, in November of the same year, an embassy reached Boris bringing with it Nicholas' replies to Boris' questions.[43] As with Photios, Nicholas wrote an extremely long letter (longer, indeed, than Photios'). However, the topics dealt with are quite radically different. In place of Photios' spiritual and intellectual concerns,

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[40] See Beševliev, *Protobulgarische Inschriften,* pp. 30ff; Shepard, 'Slavs and Bulgars' briefly touches on this.

[41] LP II.164

[42] PL 128, cols. 1373f - 'Quod beatissimus audiens papa magna repletus laetitia laudes Christo reddidit amplas, et cum omni sibi divinitus commissa Ecclesia gratulans, infinita praeconia Deo nostro, qui novissimus his temporibus tantum fecit miraculum, devota mente supplici quoque voce resolvit.'

[43] MGH Epp. 6 pp. 568-600. For a commentary, see Dujčev, 'I Responsa di papa Nicolò I. There is a complete English translation in Scott, 'The collapse of the Moravian mission, pp. 222-299.

Nicholas investigates every conceivable (and some frankly inconceivable) topic of practical interest to Boris in establishing Christianity in Bulgaria. The subjects investigated include wedding rings, abstinence from meat and sexual intercourse, the proper time to take a bath, apostasy, adultery, dowries, beating one's breast in church, trousers (an issue Nicholas dismisses as 'supervacuum'[44]), turbans, magical healing, taking auguries, eating alone at a high table, and eating the meat of animals killed by eunuchs.[45]

As well as these somewhat esoteric topics, Nicholas also has some interesting opinions on the theory of the pentarchy. He talks at length about Rome's claims to predominance in the Christian hierarchy, and makes it very clear to Boris that Constantinople is not an apostolic see, and owes its prominence entirely to secular, not ecclesiastical, factors.[46] Nicholas is even more emphatic about this in his reply to Boris' request for an archbishop or patriarch, telling him in no uncertain terms that Rome, and not Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch or Jerusalem, is the correct see to approach for this.[47] Nicholas also ends the letter by warning Boris not to listen to the 'Graeci, Armeni et ex ceteris locis' in Bulgaria trying to corrupt his people with false doctrines, but instead only to trust the missionaries from Rome, as only the pope can provide 'veram et perfectam Christianitatem'.[48]

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[44] ibid p. 588.

[45] Mayr-Harting, 'Two conversions', p. 20f.

[46] MGH Epp. 6 p. 592f, 596f - the Bishop of Constantinople 'favore principum potius quam ratione patriarcha eius pontifex appelatus est'.

[47] ibid p. 593 - 'Vos tamen, sive patriarchum sive archiepiscopum sive episcopum vobis ordinari postuletis, a nemine nunc velle congruentis quam a pontifice sedis beati Petro, a quo et episcopatus et apostolatus sumpsit initium, hunc ordinari valetis.'; Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, p. 218f.

[48] ibid p. 599f; Simeonova, *Diplomacy* p. 220.

One crucial aspect of Nicholas' letter to Boris, which touches on the themes explored in chapter 1 of this thesis, is the use he makes of the letters of Gregory I.[49] In his letter, Nicholas repeatedly cites Gregory to support his own claims against those of 'the Greeks.'

> Porro dicitis, quod affirment Graeci dicentes, quod nullo modo in quarta et sexta feria balneari debeatis, de quo id nos e contra votis consulentibus respondemus, quod beatus papa Gregorius et Anglorum gentis apostolicus Romanis de dominico die sermone quodam habito praedicasse legitur. Ait enim: Ad me perlatum est vobis a perversis hominibus esse praedicatum, ut dominicorum die nullus debeat lavari; et quidem si pro luxu animi atque voluptate quis lavari appetit, hoc fieri nec reliquo quolibet die concedimus: si autem pro necessitate corporis, hoc nec dominico die prohibemus; scriptum quippe est…[50]

This is clear enough as an argumentative strategy. But Nicholas quotes Gregory so much that one may legitimately wonder whether Boris had in fact asked many of these questions, or whether Nicholas is simply including these subjects because Gregory had already talked about them. For example, Nicholas at one point informs Boris:

> Nosse cupitis, si liceat alicui sabbato vel dominico die laborationem aliquam exercere. De hoc saepe memoratus sanctus papa Gregorius Romanos alloquens ait: Pervenit ad me quosdam perversi spiritus homines prava inter vos aliqua et sanctae fidei adversa seminasse, ita ut die sabbato aliquid operari prohiberent. Quos quid aliud nisi antichristi praedicatores dixerim? Qui veniens diem sabbatum atque dominicum ab omni faciet opere custodiri. Quia enim mori se et resurgere simulat, haberi in veneratione vult domunicum diem et, quia iudaizare populum compellit, ut

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[49] For this whole topic, see Mayr-Harting, 'Two conversions''; Leyser, 'Charisma in the archive'; idem, 'Memory of Gregory'.

[50] *MGH Epp.* 6 p. 572 (I have cut the quotation short where Nicholas/Gregory starts quoting Romans 13:14). For the Gregory quotation, *MGH Epp.* 2 p. 368.

> exteriorem ritum legis revocet et sibi Iudaeorum perfidiam subdat, coli vult sabbatum…[51]

This is a word-for-word quotation of Gregory I's letter to the citizens of Rome in September 603, where he informs them that they are permitted to work on Saturdays and Sundays, and uses some fairly antisemitic (though quite standard for the middle ages) reasoning to do so.[52] It is far from clear why Boris would have been interested enough in the minutiae of Christians working at weekends to ask the pope about this subject; it is not impossible that he was, but it is much easier to imagine him concentrating on the military aspects of Christianisation, and how the conversion of Bulgaria would have helped him militarily to evade the Byzantine army on his frontier.[53] The possibility therefore emerges of Nicholas quoting Gregory purely for the sake of quoting Gregory, i.e. bolstering his own authority by marshalling the authority of his illustrious predecessor. This would certainly fit with the ongoing myth-making in Rome during Nicholas' pontificate; the point will be expanded on below.

Nicholas had in mind a specific text of Gregory's: the *Libellus Responsionum* to Augustine'. Indeed his his letter has been accurately described as 'a self-conscious iteration of Gregory's *Libellus*.[54] One example of this comes towards the end of the letter, where Nicholas starts discussing women's ritual impurity:

> Quot diebus viro, postquam mulier filium genuerit, ab ea sit abstinendum, non adinventionibus nostris, sed verbis beatae memoriae Gregorii Romani pontificis et Anglorum gentis apostoli declaratur, qui Augustino episopo, quem in Saxoniam ipse direxerat, scribens inter cetera dicit: Ad eius vero - id est mulieris - concubitum vir

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[51] *MGH Epp.* 6 p. 574.

[52] The letter is at *MGH Epp.* 2 p. 367f.

[53] A point made by Mayr-Harting, 'Two conversions', p. 16.

[54] Leyser, 'Memory of Gregory', p. 191f. Gregory's letter to Augustine is in *MGH Epp.* 2 pp. 331ff.

> suus accedere non debet, quoadusque prolis, quae gignitus, ablactetur. Prava autem in coniugatorum moribus consuetudo surrexit, ut mulieres filios, quos gignunt, nutrire contempnant eosque aliis mulieribus nutriendos tradant; quod videlicet sola causa incontinentiae videtur inventum, qui, dum se continere nolunt, dispiciunt lactare quos gignunt.[55]

This is a direct quote from Gregory's letter to Augustine.[56] Nicholas comes back to this subject very soon afterwards:

> Requisistis, post quot dies mulier possit ecclesiam intrare, postquam genuerit. In quo nos praedecessoris nostri beati Gregorii papae vestigia sequentes eadem quae ipse decernimus, qui pro nova gente, sicut nos modo, instruenda scribens inter alia dixit: Si mulier hora eadem, qua genuerait, actura gratias intret ecclesiam, nullo peccati pondere gravatur; voluptas enim carnis, non dolor in cula est. In carnis autem commixtione voluptas est; nam in prolis prolatione gemitus. Unde et ipsi primae matri omnium dicitur: 'In doloribus paries'. Si ergo enixam mulierem intrare ecclesiam prohibemus, ipsam ei poenam in culpam deputamus.[57]

Again, Nicholas is here directly quoting Gregory' letter to Augustine.[58]

It is quite clear, from these examples, that Nicholas was both able and (very) willing to use Gregory as a figure to voice his own claims. This point ought to be qualified slightly by saying that Gregory is not the only pope whom Nicholas quotes in his *Responsa*; he also quotes by name Celestine I and Anastasius II.[59] The difference between these two and Gregory, though, is that both of them are mentioned once each; Gregory, on the other hand, is mentioned by name no less than eight times in the *Responsa*. Furthermore, the overall form of the *Responsa* is in self-conscious

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[55] *MGH Epp.* 6 p. 590.

[56] For the specific quote, *MGH Epp.* 2 p. 339.

[57] *MGH Epp.* 6 p. 591.

[58] Gregory's original in *MGH Epp.* 2 p. 339.

[59] Anastasius at *MGH Epp.* 6 p. 576; Celestine at ibid p. 587.

imitation of Gregory's *Responsiones* to Augustine of Canterbury.[60] Overall, the *Responsa* is a highly Gregorian document - Nicholas seems to be demonstrating the validity and legitimacy of what he himself is saying by appealing to Gregory as a great figure from the papal past, and by styling himself as Gregory's contemporary avatar.

There are several reasons why Nicholas might have wanted to do this, and an appeal to authority is by no means a novel rhetorical trope for someone wanting to add support to what they are saying. But this specific use of Gregory, at a time when the Roman curia were imaginatively 'rediscovering' Gregory in the papal archive, is surely too perfect a conjunction of events to be a coincidence. In searching for an authority to appeal to for backing-up his conversion activities in Bulgaria, Nicholas seems to have alighted upon Gregory as the most obvious pope to have been actively involved in missionary work. As we have seen, Gregory's sending of Augustine to England, and his directing of affairs from Rome, show a much more active and direct papal involvement in missionary activities than Gregory II and III's at-a-distance oversight of Boniface's mission; earlier ninth-century popes are also not especially notable for their oversight of, say, Anskar and Rimbert in Scandinavia. So Gregory could be a literary template for Nicholas' efforts in Bulgaria. As we will see, this Bulgarian enterprise ultimately ended in failure for the papacy, but the idea of using glorious figures from the papal past, such as Gregory, remained prevalent among educated clerics in Rome. Conrad Leyser puts this very well by saying that 'although (or because) the Bulgarian mission failed, the Gregorian programme gathered momentum'.[61] Some of the ways in which it gathered momentum were seen in chapter 1, with the intellectual exploits of Anastasius, Gauderic and John the Deacon; most notable of these here is obviously John the Deacon, due to his *Vita Gregorii*. It is plausible, therefore, to argue that there was some kind of 'snowball effect' in Rome

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[60] For this see Mayr-Harting, 'Two conversions', p. 16. On Gregory's libellus and its reception, there is an extensive literature: see in particular Meyvaert, 'Le Libellus responsionum'; Friesen, 'Answers and Echoes'; Elliot, 'Boniface, Incest, and the Earliest Extant Version'. An edition by Rob Meens is in preparation.

[61] Leyser, 'Memory of Gregory', p. 192.

from this original engagement with Gregorian charisma - the intellectual luminaries of Rome in the 860s and 870s were so taken with Nicholas' branding of his Bulgarian intervention in this way that they started exploring other glorious figures from the papal past whom they could use for similar purposes. We will see one further example of this, that of Clement, in chapter 3. The key point here, though, is that Gregory seems to be being used by Nicholas almost as a 'proof case' for what he is doing in Bulgaria - the appeal of this letter to the distant papal past, both in content and in form, is a powerful example of the 'papal myth-making' which this thesis argues occurs in Rome in the 860s and 870s, and in which the papacy took a central role.

Nicholas also promised Boris that he would send two bishops, Paul and Formosus, to Bulgaria in order to ordain priests, consecrate churches, and, presumably, eventually report back to Nicholas on the progress of Christianisation in Bulgaria. This mission was to be accompanied by another mission, led by Bishop Donatus, Presbyter Leo and Deacon Marinus (the future Pope Marinus I), going to Constantinople.[62] The point of this other mission was to make the Byzantines aware of the decisions of the Roman synod of 863.[63] They carried papal letters for Michael III and his wife Eudocia, as well as the Empress Theodora, Ignatius, Photios, the Byzantine church, Bardas, and the senate;[64] Nicholas also gave his legates copies of every letter he had previously sent to Constantinople.

The two missions left Rome in November 866 and reached Pliska either at the end of 866 or the beginning of 867.[65] However, when they arrived at the Byzantine-Bulgarian border, the Constantinople mission was not allowed to go any further and spent 40 days waiting for a permit to enter the Roman Empire. Eventually, a government official called Theodoros, who had been

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[62] Anastasius, in PL 128, col. 1373f.

[63] Which declared Photios as having been consecrated illegally; see below on this.

[64] Cf. Nicholas I, MGH Epp. 6 Epp. 90-97.

[65] The following narrative owes a lot to Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, pp. 190ff; see also McCormick, *Origins*, p. 143f.

despatched to Constantinople to secure the permit, returned and told the papal legates that they had been denied entry to the empire. He then supposedly began hitting the legates' horses.[66] The other papal mission, to Bulgaria led by Formosus and Paul, was far more successful - according to Anastasius, they were received by Boris with great honours, and they immediately started preaching in Bulgaria and baptising a wide variety of people.[67] Indeed, they were so successful in doing this that when the East Frankish mission led by the bishop of Passau arrived in Bulgaria, they were no doubt disappointed to find that they were surplus to requirements, as the papal missionaries were doing a more than adequate job of spreading Christianity.[68] Furthermore, Boris himself was so taken with the Latin bishops Paul and Formosus that he decided to expel all of the Byzantine missionaries from Bulgaria.[69] There is also, as we have seen, strong evidence that Boris wanted to make Formosus patriarch of Bulgaria, further hinting at the high regard in which he held this Roman priest (and future pope).[70] Overall, this initial stage of Rome's Christianisation of Bulgaria seems to have been a resounding success. With very little visible effort beyond writing one letter and sending two legates, Nicholas seems to have succeeded in winning Boris over entirely to the Roman cause, and persuading him to abandon eastern Christianity. Perhaps inevitably, however, the papacy's resounding success was not to last. The Byzantines presumably became aware of happenings in Bulgaria when the legates expelled by Boris began to arrive back in Constantinople.[71] A response to

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[66] This is all in Anastasius, *De vitis*, cap. 609, in PL cols. 1373f.

[67] Anastasius, *De vitis* cap. 609, in PL 128 cols. 1374f - 'Porro a prenominato rege Bulgarorum apostolici missi mente alacri magnaque suscepti devotione coeperunt salutaribus edocere polulum monitis, et a minimo usque ad maximum sacro fonte cum Deo gratia abluerunt, omnemque ritum Christiane fidei, sicuta sanctissimo papa instructi fuerant, in consuetudinem Bulgarorum tradierunt'.

[68] *Annales Fuldenses* s.a. 867 - 'Sed cum illuc pervenissent, episcopi a pontifice Romano missi totam illam terram praedicando et baptizando iam tunc repleverant. Quapropter isti, accepta a rege licentia, redierunt in sua.'

[69] Anastasius, *De vitis* cap. 609, PL 128, cols. 1374f - 'ut omnes a suo regno pellens alienigenas'.

[70] See chapter 1 for more on this, plus Duhr, 'Humble vestige'.

[71] Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, p. 193.

these worrying developments in Bulgaria was obviously required - it would not do to have a militaristic power on the empire's border, accepting their instructions from Rome rather than Constantinople. To properly understand the Byzantines' next move, it is necessary to delve back into the history of ninth-century Constantinople.

The Photian Schism[72]

When Methodios, the first Patriarch of Constantinople after the end of iconoclasm, died in 847, there was some dispute over who should succeed him. Ultimately, the Empress Theodora chose Ignatios, the abbot of a monastery on the Prince's Islands.[73] Ignatios then proceeded to offend various citizens of Constantinople, most notably by banning Gregory Asbestas, the archbishop of Syracuse, from the imperial procession at Hagia Sophia during Ignatios' enthronement.[74] In 856 Empress Theodora was displaced and her son, Michael III, became emperor, with Theodora's brother Bardas acting as de facto regent. Ignatios also provoked Michael's ire by also banning him from Hagia Sophia. It is not hugely surprising, then, that in 858 Ignatios was forced to resign as patriarch,[75] and Photios was enthroned in his place on 25th December 858.[76] Before becoming patriarch, Photios had been a senior minister, and, more importantly, a layman. Byzantine laymen

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[72] The Photian Schism is an unusually well-documented topic, and anything short of a book-length treatment cannot do full justice to it. The two best accounts in western languages are Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, and, more recently, Simeonova, *Diplomacy*.

[73] Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, p. 70.

[74] ibid p. 70f; Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, p. 18f.

[75] Whether or not he was forced to resign or did so willingly is highly debatable - Dvornik, *Photian Schism* pp. 39ff - but it is not really relevant here.

[76] Hussey, *Orthodox Church* p. 72.

becoming patriarch was however not in and of itself a novelty - there were at least three precedents in Byzantine history, Paul III in 687, Tarasios in 784, and Nikephoros in 806.[77]

Soon after his enthronement, Photios sent the customary letter to the pope announcing that he was now patriarch. In this letter he mentioned the 'retirement' (*hypexelthontos*) of Ignatios.[78] Michael III also wrote to the pope asking him to send legates to Constantinople for a council to confirm Ignatios' deposition. In his reply, Nicholas I says that he is surprised that Ignatios was deposed without the pope being consulted, and makes it clear that he is not convinced that Ignatios received a fair trial. He is also extremely concerned about the legitimacy of a layman being appointed patriarch. Therefore, Nicholas announced that he would not recognise Photios' nomination until his (Nicholas') legates had gone to Constantinople to investigate the matter.[79]

The papal legates reached Constantinople in early 861, and at the first session of the council declared that Ignatios had been legally deposed.[80] After the council, Photios and Michael both sent letters to Nicholas explaining what had happened. Photios in particular sent an extremely deferential letter - 'he insisted that he had been forced to accept a dignity which in no way appealed to him; he also tried to justify his rapid promotion from the laity to the patriarchate, since the Church of Constantinople, he said, had not accepted the canon of Serdica quoted by the Pope in his letter to Michael III, prohibiting such rapid rise of laymen to episcopal dignities.'[81] Nicholas, however, was unimpressed. In letters sent to Constantinople on 18th March 862, Nicholas repudiated his legates'

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[77] Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, p. 50.

[78] PG 102 col. 588C; Hussey, *Orthodox Church* p. 73.

[79] MGH Epp. 6 pp. 433ff - 'Igitur a vobis Constantinopolim congregatum concilium, ut vestris apicibus nostris intimatum est auribus, huius tenoris seriem parvipendens ab institutis supradictis manum considerationis suae reflectere non trepidavit, adeo ut Ignatium, supra iam nominate urbis patriarcham, sine Romani consultu pontificis ibidem coetus conveniens proprio privasset honore**.** Quod quam sit reprehensione dignum…canonica institutio prohibet et invidiose datos manifeste claret, quoniam nec ipse proprio ore manifestavit, ut directionis vestrae asserunt litterae, illa, quae ei obiciebantur, neque accusatores illius secundum sacrorum canonum instituta probaverunt.'

[80] The events at the council are set out by Dvornik, *Photian Schism* pp. 76ff.

[81] Dvornik, *Photian Schism* p. 92.

assent to the legal deposition of Ignatios, and declared that the case was in fact still open.[82] Therefore, he could not recognise Photios as the legitimate Patriarch of Constantinople. In another letter to the patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem, Nicholas made it abundantly clear that, as Bishop of Rome and successor of St Peter, the decision as to whether Photios was legitimate or not was ultimately his.[83] Eventually, at a council in Rome held in 863, Ignatios was declared the legitimate Patriarch of Constantinople, and Photios was deprived of his title and declared to be a layman.[84]

The Photian Schism then rumbled on throughout the next decade. One of the more important factors in the dispute became whether the Bishop of Rome or the Patriarch of Constantinople should be able to exercise power and authority over Bulgaria. Nicholas made it clear that he thought Bulgaria belonged to the Roman sphere of influence, together with various other parts of the Balkans (most notably Illyricum) which had been transferred to the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople in 732-3.[85] Indeed, John VIII later claimed that Nicholas had thought that by backing Ignatios he would be able to regain papal control over Illyricum.[86] The Byzantines, however, were unsurprisingly not willing to accept this, and instead went ahead with their attack on Bulgaria and conversion of Boris to Byzantine Christianity, as outlined above. The exchanges of letters between Nicholas, Michael and Photios continued, with the principal result being that they

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[82] MGH Epp. 6 pp. 442ff. For Nicholas' reasons for doing this, see Dvornik, *Photian Schism* pp. 91ff.

[83] ibid pp. 440ff.

[84] ibid pp. 517ff and 556ff.

[85] ibid p. 435f - 'Oportet enim vestrum imperiale decus…ut antiquum morem, quem nostra ecclesia habuit, vestris temporibus restaurare dignemini, quatenus vicem, quam nostra sedes per episcopos vestris in partibus constitutos habuit, videlicet Thessalonicensem, qui Romanae sedis vicem per Eperum veterem Eperumque novum atque Illiricum, Macedoniam, Thessaliam, Achaiam, Daciam riperensem, Daciam mediterraneam, Misiam, Dardaniam et Praevalim'; on this see Anastos, 'The transfer of Illyricum', and Chadwick, *East and West*, p. 75f.

[86] MGH Epp. 7 p. 294 - 'Sub ea enim condicione Ignatius a nostris predecessoribus solutus est, ut, si per Bulgariam, quod neque Photius ille tempteverat, aliquid contra iura apostolica temptavisset, sub pristine dampnacionis sue sentencia nichilominus permaneret.'

became much more incensed with each other, and came to no productive conclusions relating to Bulgaria. Importantly, Photios also became increasingly obsessed with the issue of the *filioque*, which, despite not being formally endorsed by the papacy, had been introduced by the Frankish missionaries in Bulgaria.[87] Eventually, relations between the two Romes deteriorated to such an extent that Photios excommunicated Nicholas in 867.[88] There is, though, no evidence that Nicholas excommunicated Photios.[89] Simply put, relations between Rome and Constantinople could have been better by the end of 867.

This all changed, though, very quickly. This came about through the deaths of most of the interested parties. Michael was the first to go - he was assassinated on 23rd/24th September by his co-emperor Basil the Macedonian, who then became sole emperor.[90] Having become emperor through murder, Basil was aware that he was not, to begin with, in an especially strong position. He seems to have decided that one way of strengthening his position was to win the pope's support, and he therefore sent letters to Rome in late November or early December 867 announcing that he had deposed Photios, and re-appointed Ignatios as patriarch instead.[91] The pope who received this letter when it arrived in Rome in early 868 was Hadrian II, Nicholas having died the previous November.[92] Hadrian held an enquiry at St Peter's in June 869 which condemned Photios as illegitimate, and declared that Ignatian bishops should only be recognised if they signed a statement

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[87] For the whole *filioque* issue see Chadwick, 'East and West', pp. 83ff; and now Sicienski, *The Filioque.*

[88] Photios excommunicating Nicholas: Nicetas Choniates, PG 140, col. 537; Dvornik, *Photian Schism* p. 121.

[89] Although he did write a letter to Hincmar of Rheims trying to mobilise the western church against the Byzantines - MGH Epp. 6 pp. 600ff.

[90] More details in Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, pp. 207ff, and Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, pp. 132ff.

[91] This letter is preserved in the Acts of the Eighth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople, 869-70) - Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, pp. 157ff.

[92] LP Nicholas I 83.

anathematising all heresies, as well as Photios specifically.[93] In the autumn of 869 Hadrian's decisions, together with this statement, were taken by the Roman legates Donatus, bishop of Ostia, Stephen, bishop of Nepi, and the deacon Marinus, to Constantinople, where Basil was planning on holding a council. The council met in Hagia Sophia and was not spectacularly well-attended - in the first session only five metropolitans and seven bishops turned up, and even by the end of the council there were only about 103 bishops present.[94]

Towards the end of the council, an unexpected development occurred, in that a delegation from Khan Boris suddenly appeared yet again bringing up the question of whether Bulgaria belonged ecclesiastically to Rome or Constantinople. The reasons for Boris' third change of mind are not very clear, but he seems to have grown impatient with the pope for refusing to grant him his own patriarch.[95] Our main evidence for this Bulgarian intervention at the end of the council comes from a rather difficult passage of the *Liber Pontificalis*.[96] There seems to be some reference being made here to Boris having family difficulties - possibly with his son Vladimir, who, indeed, eventually succeeded him and attempted to institute a Julian-esque pagan revival. It is therefore not difficult to speculate with Dvornik that 'it is possible…that Boris was afraid of Byzantium taking advantage of his son's ambition, to overthrow him'.[97] All this is speculation, though. Whatever Boris' reasons were, the fact of the embassy is not in dispute. A conference was immediately called to discuss the issue, of which Anastasius Bibliothecarius wrote a lengthy account (despite not

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[93] MGH Epp. 6 p. 758.

[94] Hussey, *Orthodox Church* p. 80. The acts of the council are in Tanner (n. 65).

[95] Dvornik, *Les Slaves, Byzance et Rome*, pp. 193ff; but 'it is possible to argue that all Boris's approaches to the West were purely diplomatic - intended to frighten Constantinople into making him this very concession [giving him his own patriarch] out of fear of losing Bulgaria altogether.' (Vlasto, *Entry of the Slavs*, p. 162). But all this is really speculation.

[96] Ed. Duchesne, p. 185 - 'Vulgarorum rex expectationum moras diutius ferre non valens, quanta esse quam a Graecorum imperatore, quoniam natorum thororum [?] occasione alterna regna sibi alternatim rapere machinabantur abductus, eundem Petrum quem a Roma sine desiderii sui effectu sero reciperat, cum aliis e latere suo Constantinopolim…emisit.'

[97] *Photian Schism* p. 152.

attending it himself).[98] The papal legates were not invited to the discussions; only the representatives of the eastern patriarchates were allowed to discuss Bulgaria's future. Eventually, to no one's surprise, the eastern legates decided that Bulgaria should come under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople. At this point, the papal legates suddenly produced a hitherto unknown letter from Pope Hadrian forbidding Ignatios from doing anything in Bulgaria contrary to Rome's interests.[99] Ignatios refused to read this, probably wisely. At this point, Bulgaria was de facto under eastern control. Boris asked all Latin missionaries to leave Bulgaria, and Ignatios immediately appointed Bulgaria's first archbishop. It might be thought, therefore, that that was the end of the story. That view is incorrect.

John VIII and Bulgaria

John VIII, who became Bishop of Rome upon Hadrian's death in 872, was nothing if not persistent. Although we know very little about his career before becoming pope, we do know that he was an archdeacon, and he was certainly a member of what can loosely be described as the 'pro-Nicholaite' faction in Rome.[100] It is therefore not surprising that from the surviving letters in his Register we can very clearly see a policy broadly in line with Nicholas' views on papal primacy. Indeed, within months of becoming pope John wrote a letter to Boris complaining about the 'Grecorum perfidia' and generally complaining about how all the Greek priests currently in Bulgaria have been tainted by (allegedly) being ordained by Photios, and therefore not really being priests, as they are tainted

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[98] LP 2.182ff.

[99] The letter is preserved in LP vol. 2 p. 184. Dvornik thinks that 'it must be supposed that the Pope had written another letter in which he forbade Ignatius to trespass on Bulgaria, and which the legates were not to produce, unless the interests of the Roman See in Bulgaria should be in peril' (*Photian Schism* p. 154). This is possible, but I think it is more likely that the legates simply fabricated it.

[100] For John's early life see Arnold, *Johannes VIII.*, pp. 53ff.

by their association with an excommunicated person. John also threatens that he will excommunicate Boris if he does not expel these priests from Bulgaria.[101] At no point subsequently did John ever really say anything of substance that was not broadly the same as his thoughts set out in this letter. He 'never tired of repeating that the Roman church had *principatus* over *omnes gentes* and was, therefore, to be viewed as *unam matrem* and *unum caput* by all nations'.[102] This was not limited to Bulgaria - John sent various letters to the princes of Serbia and Croatia, enjoining them in much the same way that they should not follow the treacherous Greeks and instead return to the Roman fold, headed by the Bishop of Rome as the successor of St Peter.[103]

John's fundamental difficulty with his Bulgaria policy, though, was that there was very little he could do about it. He lacked any effective means of compelling the Bulgarians to comply with his wishes. He was therefore reduced to making empty threats about the dire consequences that might befall the Bulgarians if they did not comply with his wishes. In another letter to Basil, sent in either 874 or 875, John again fulminates against Ignatios, Photios and the Byzantines more generally. John reminds Basil in this letter that Ignatios had only been absolved by Nicholas I and Hadrian II on the condition that he would not do anything contrary to Rome's interests in

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[101] MGH Epp. 7 p. 277 - 'Nam et ex maxima parte Photii dicuntur esse manus impositionis vel communionis et sensus, sed et vos tamquam apostatas et refugas et tergiversatores et vestrarum corruptores professionum una cum illis anathematis vinculis innodabimus et cum ipso, quam imitati estis, diabolo, qui ab inicio mendax et in veritate non stetit, portionem vestram locabimus.' [NB: John is here drawing on John 8:44 - 'You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.' He alludes to Bible verses all the time, perhaps unsurprisingly, and I'd like to look at this more closely.

[102] Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, p. 298.

[103] John's Croatian policy is discussed by Dzino, *Becoming Slav, Becoming Croat,* pp. 193ff, and by Curta, *Southeastern Europe*, pp. 134ff. For Serbia, Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, pp. 301ff. As Simeonova notes, there is no evidence for John making any effort to win over the Serbs in a similar way to the Bulgarians.

Bulgaria.[104] John therefore announces that he is going to anathematise all the bishops and priests currently in Bulgaria.[105] This is all well and good until one considers how many divisions the pope had. Very tellingly, John's threats against Boris and the Bulgarians always remain threats. There is never any indication in the Register that he has delivered on his promises. Presumably, therefore, John realised a basic fact that is obvious to anyone looking at the scene now - it is very difficult to see what exactly John would have achieved by anathematising the Bulgarians. Presumably it would have brought about another schism between Rome and Constantinople. But this would hardly have played to John's advantage. Indeed, given the precedent of the Council of Constantinople of 869-70, and how easily the Byzantines defeated the papal legates then, it can be assumed that John would not have wanted to provoke the Byzantines into causing another large-scale dispute. The papacy, indeed, stood to lose a great deal by provoking the Byzantines in this way. The settlement of 870 had let both sides claim victory over the Bulgarian issue - although Constantinople was de facto in control, the general authority of Rome over all of Christendom was recognised in theory. What would have been the point of John causing a battle over this which he knew he could not win, and which may well have ended with significantly less satisfactory terms to the papacy? By the mid-870s, therefore, the Bulgarian issue seems to have reached some kind of stasis - although John was far from happy about the situation, he realised the limits of the potential of his own authority, and was intelligent enough to realise that the calculus of risk over Bulgaria was too great to do

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[104] MGH Epp. 7 p. 294 - '…Quodsi solutionis Ignacii [iudicium] ab apostolica, ut diximus, sede prolatum a nemine refutari potuit, constat, quia et obligacionis sententia ab eadem sede apostolica promulgata resolvi minime prevelebit. Sub ea enim condicione Ignatius a nostris predecessoribus solutus est, ut, si per Bulgariam, quod neque Photius ille temptaverat [despite being the Devil], aliquid contra iura apostolica temptavisset, sub pristine dampnacionis sue sentencia nichilominus permaneret.'

[105] ibid p. 294f - 'Aut ergo in Bulgariam contra institucionem sedis apostolice nil temptans vere solutus est, aut, si temptaverit, pristinis utique laqueis inretitus est. Hinc est, quod sedes apostolica eos, qui vobis a Grecis directi sunt, in episcoporum numero minime recipit, quinimmo in depositionem illorum eosque mittentium anathema dicere, nisi resipuerint, cito disponit, ut, qui salubribus adquiescere monitis differunt, non esse, quod dicuntur, episcopi veraciter videantur.'

anything other than launch vague threats about anathematisation and excommunication which everyone knew he would not make good on.

When the Bulgarians next appear in John's letters in 877,[106] things have however changed somewhat. Before looking at this, it is worth looking in outline at developments in Rome and Italy more broadly over the intervening years. On Christmas Day 875, John, looking for assistance against the marauding Arabs in southern Italy, crowned Charles the Bald as emperor in Rome, making him Emperor Charles II.[107]. Soon after this, though, John's plans started to unravel. Charles the Bald died near Grenoble in October 877,[108] and so John found himself in a difficult situation. His attempts to unite the southern Italian city-states in a defensive league against the Saracens were a miserable failure.[109] During this time, John was even desperate enough to attempt to enlist Alfonso III of Asturias and Leon to help him, having vaguely heard that he had been moderately successful in fighting against the Moors.[110] Ultimately, the only option left to John in his plight was to seek a reconciliation with the east Romans.

Not quite yet, though. In April 878, John sent Basil a letter telling him that he was sending legates to Constantinople. These legates are named as the bishops Paul and Eugenius.[111] John has entrusted them with two tasks: to inform Basil about all the ways in which Ignatios has infringed on

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[106] At MGH Epp. 7 p. 67.

[107] The best account of John's manoeuvres in the Carolingian succession disputes is Arnold, *Johannes VIII*, chapter 2.

[108] Charles the Bald: Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 221ff; also McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms,* pp. 169ff.

[109] Engreen, 'Pope John VIII and the Arabs',, is still the foundation stone on all this; but see also Skinner, *Medieval Amalfi and its Diaspora*; eadem, *Family Power in Southern Italy*.

[110] He is interesting in and of himself - Collins, *Caliphs and Kings,* pp. 76ff - but hardly likely to be able or willing to help John.

[111] MGH Epp. 7 p. 67 - '…his missis nostris, Paolo et Eugenio episcopis…'

Rome's prerogatives in Bulgaria and to ask him for help in fighting the Arabs.[112] Rather amusingly, in another letter sent at the same time John also attempts to pretend to Basil that he wants Paul and Eugenius to visit Bulgaria for what he presents as little more than a friendly visit.[113]

John also wrote letters to Boris, as well as his courtier Peter and another Bulgarian who presumably belonged to Boris' inner circle.[114] These three letters are more or less identical to each other. In them, John warns Boris et al not to trust the Greeks, and implores Boris to return to the *sedes Petri*.[115] One of the ways in which he does this is by comparing Greek beliefs and doctrines with those of the Pneumatomachi, an obscure heretical sect condemned at the First Council of Constantinople in 381.[116] John also mentions the case of Sergius, a Slavic eunuch who was appointed bishop of Belgrade by someone called George, and asks Boris to depose him, in what seems to be a rhetorical way of demonstrating that the pope is indeed the head of the entire Christian Church.[117] In his letters to Boris' friends, John turns to prayer in his attempts to get Boris back into the Roman fold. The courtier Peter is rather flatteringly compared to St Peter, and told that

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[112] ibid - 'Huius rei gratia maximam de vobis fiduciam assumentes, quicquid eandem sanctam matrem vestram Romanam ecclesiam oppido affligit et lacerat, vobis singulari quadem spe committimus audiendum et corrigendum. Tamen ne vos, quos secretorum nostrorum conscium esse cupimus, lateat, quod his diebus contra Dei voluntatem contraque salutem totius Christianae fidei ac contra privilegia sanctae Romanae ecclesiae seu contra morem reique publicae statum Romae peractum est.

[113] ibid p. 64f - 'Verumtamen ignorare pium imperium vestrim nolumus nos apostolicae sedis precepisse legatis, ut causa tantum visitationis gloriosum eiusdem provinciae principem adeant et de optata memoria ei apostolorum, ut concedet, expletis officiis persalutationis edicant. Ideoque rogamus, ut aditu eis annitentibus vobis concesso, talem illis industriam virum, qui eos usque ad predictum principem salvos ducat atque reducat, facta in scriptis de ea minime iterum usurpanda professione.'

[114] ibid pp. 58ff.

[115] E.g. p. 59 - 'Revertimini ergo ad beatum Petrum apostolorum primum, quem amastis, quem elegistis, quem quaesistis cuiusque in necessitatibus patrocinium percepistis et fluenta doctrinae salubriter et convenienter hausistis cuiusque vos protectioni cum subiectis omnibus commendastis et tradidistis.'

[116] ibid - 'Dic itaque, rogo, karissime fili, quid faceres tu vel populus tuus, si tempore pneumatomachi Macedonii Constantinopolitani antistitis, quando et impius illic imperabat Constantius, essetis eorum societate fruentes, nonne dogma eius contra Spiritum sanctum blasphemans cum illis sequeremini?' Cf. *ODCC* s.v. 'Pneumatomachi'.

[117] ibid p. 60; Simeonova, *Diplomacy* p. 309f.

the best thing he can do about the situation is pray for Boris.[118] In all, John gives every appearance of pulling out all the stops in his attempts to return Boris and Bulgaria to faithfulness to Rome and Peter.

Although when John sent his letters Ignatios was (probably) still patriarch, by the time the legates reached Constantinople seven or eight months later he had died. Basil had decided to re-appoint Photios patriarch. The important point is that, presumably, neither John nor his legates would have remotely expected to find out that this was the situation in Constantinople. Given that Photios was hardly the most popular man in Rome, it is not out of the question that they did indeed have 'a nightmare to trouble their sleep on the banks of the Bosphorus.'[119] There was very little Paul and Eugenius could have done in this situation other than send to Rome for instructions.

The response took a while to come, but eventually, in August 879, John sent an extremely long letter to Basil announcing that he was prepared to recognise Photios as the legitimate patriarch.[120] This did not, however, come without John demanding something in return - he makes it very clear that papal recognition of Photios is dependent on Bulgaria being transferred to Rome, and

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[118] ibid p. 61 - '…Christum Dei vivi filium revelatum et singulariter dictum: "Ego pro te rogavi, Petre, ut non deficeret fides tua."'; cf. Luke 22:32 - 'But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.'

[119] Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, p. 173.

[120] MGH Epp. 7 pp. 166ff. The relevant section is at p. 173f - 'Hoc etiam modo ista excellentiae vestrae praecibus moti fieri iubemus, si ipse patriarcha Bulgariorum diocesem, quam piae memoriae Nikolaus predecessor noster Michaele ipsorum rege petente apostolicis doctrinis docuit et per venerabiles episcopos suos sacri lavit unda baptismatis omnique ecclesiastica regula et disciplina, prout oportebat, instruxit, amodo suo iuri vendicare vel retinere nullo modo praesumpserit nec aliquam cuiuscumque honoris ibidem ordinationem fecerit - ibidem sunt inlicite ordinati episcopi vel sacerdotes [ab] archiepiscopo vel episcopis, qui ibidem videntur existere - [nec] sacrum pallium, quo inter sacra missarum sollempnia uti pontificibus solitum est, ipse patriarcha mittere praesumpserit.'

the Greeks must promise that they will never attempt to take it away from Rome again.[121] John and the papal curia sent out various other letters in preparation for the upcoming church council Basil was planning on holding in Constantinople, all of which repeated more or less the same things as John had said to the emperor.[122] Broadly speaking, John made it absolutely clear to the Byzantines before the opening of this council that the one essential condition for his recognition of Photios' legitimacy was that the Byzantines must cede control of Bulgaria back to Rome. 'Other than that, 'Ignatios was dead and the pope saw no reason why he should not recognise Photios as patriarch of Constantinople.'[123]

The council of 879-880 achieved very little of theological or historical significance, and I will therefore not describe it in depth here. The most significant thing about it, for our purposes, is that it represented something of a surrender of papal claims over Bulgaria. According to the acts of the council, the papal legates sent by John VIII decided to abandon their initial plans to force Photios and the Byzantines to settle the Bulgarian question in Rome's favour.[124] The acts of the council were brought to John VIII in August 880, whereupon he immediately wrote a thank you letter to the emperor expressing his gratitude for the military ships which Byzantium had sent to Rome, and for the transferral of Bulgaria to papal control - an act done from the kindness of the emperor's heart to the grateful see of Peter (*pro amore nostro gratanti animo Petro*).[125] The problem

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[121] ibid p. 173f - 'Hoc etiam modo ista excellentiae vestrae praecibus moti fieri iubemus, si ipse patriarcha Bulgariorum diocesem, quam piae memoriae Nikolaus predecessor noster Michaele ipsorum rege petente apostolicis doctrinis docuit et per venerabiles episcopos suos sacri lavit unda baptismatis omnique ecclesiastica regula et disciplina, prout oportebat, instruxit, amodo suo iuri vendicare vel retinere nullo modo praesumpserit nec aliquam cuiuscumque honoris ibidem ordinationem fecerit - ibidem sunt inlicite ordinati episcopi vel sacerdotes [ab] archiepiscopo vel episcopis, qui ibidem videntur existere - [nec] sacrum pallium, quo inter sacra missarum sollempnia uti pontificibus solitum est, ipse patriarcha mittere praesumpserit.'

[122] ibid pp. 177ff.

[123] Simeonova, *Diplomacy* p. 314.

[124] Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum*, vol. 17, cols. 475-492; Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, p. 191f.

[125] MGH Epp. 7 p. 229 - '…vero vobis grates multas referimus, quia Uulgariorum diocesim pro amore nostro gratanti animo sancto Petro, ut iustum erat, permiseritis habere.'

here, of course, is that John's letter is our only evidence for this: there is nothing in the Byzantine sources to suggest that Bulgaria was indeed transferred to Roman ecclesiastical sovereignty.[126] Why, then, did John say this? The short answer seems to be that John, struggling as he was with continued Arab raids on Lazio and southern Italy, had by now decided that the prospect of Constantinople's military support was more valuable to him than authority over Bulgaria. This is why John decided to make peace with Photios - his ability to fight off these raids depended on Byzantine support, and a necessary condition of winning Byzantine support was recognising Photios' legitimacy as patriarch of Constantinople.

This climbdown, however, could not be represented as such. John in fact goes out of his way in his letters to represent his capitulation to the east as being done from a position of papal strength. He therefore states that he has decided to recognise the acts of the council because of the support the Byzantines promised to give to Rome during a dangerous time.[127] John thus presents Rome's acceptance of Photios' legitimacy, and indeed of Constantinopolitan authority over Bulgaria, as being done from a position of Roman and papal strength. This will be explored further in the next chapter. For now, though, we must leave Bulgaria to Byzantine influence, and make our way to Moravia to examine its own ninth-century Christianisation.[128]

Overall, the conversion of Bulgaria, and the involvement that the popes had with it, is interesting because it is a clear demonstration of the results of the papal myth-making and intellectual culture in Rome that were discussed in chapter 1. The figure of Gregory the Great is

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[126] Simeonova, *Diplomacy*, p. 324, criticising Dvornik, *Photian Schism* pp. 206ff, who argues that a compromise was reached wherein Constantinople transferred de jure control to Rome but itself maintained de facto control.

[127] MGH Epp. 7 p. 229 - 'Unde obnixe petimus, ut vestro potenti solacio sanctam Romanam ecclesiam in hoc periculoso tempore in omnibus adiuvare defendereque non dedignemini, quatenus ex hoc vestra imperialis gloria apostolicis suffragantibus meritis per cunctas mundi partes magis ac magis accrescat et apud omnipotentem Dominum dignum retributionem percipiat.'

[128] There is an article on the Lives of Cyril and Methodios forthcoming in *Early Medieval Europe* (in April/May 2020).

crucial here. Gregory's involvement in the Anglo-Saxon mission provided the template for Nicholas I's involvement with Bulgaria, seen most obviously in his *Responsa*, consciously modelled as they are on Gregory's *Responsa* to the Anglo-Saxons. Indeed, a plausible argument could be made that the conversion of Bulgaria would not have happened at all without the myth-making taking place in ninth-century Rome. As was mentioned at the start of this chapter, popes were, generally speaking, not particularly interested in converting non-Christian regions of Europe throughout most of the early middle ages. As soon as Nicholas launched his quest to bring papal memory back to Rome, though, Roman intellectuals like Anastasius and John the Deacon were able to uncover a fairly impressive history of conversion done by one specific pope. Thus, the popes were able to legitimise their interactions with Bulgaria, and indeed with eastern Europe more broadly, by using the example of Gregory as a glorious precedent for their activities. The popes of the later ninth century were able to use this example to support, and indeed to a certain extent to determine, their activities in the present.

Gregory, though, was only one of the possible papal precedents being uncovered by the glorification of the papal archive in ninth-century Rome. Other precedents, indeed, could in fact be more useful than Gregory in supporting papal actions in specific places. One excellent example of this is the creative use of St Clement (i.e. Pope Clement I) in the ninth-century conversion of the Moravians to Christianity, taking place more or less contemporaneously with the conversion of Bulgaria.

Chapter 3: The papacy and the conversion of Moravia

If the conversion of the Bulgarians can be seen as one outplaying of papal myth-making, and indeed of the development of relations between eastern and western Christendom, in the late ninth century, another key example of this is the papacy's involvement in the ongoing conversion of the Moravians during this time. As with the conversion of the Bulgarians, this process was eventually directed at Rome by, above all, Popes Nicholas I, Hadrian II and John VIII. Although in many ways this conversion process bears noticeable similarities to that of the Bulgarians (most notably the sending of various papal letters to the people to be converted, the initiation of the process by the Bulgarians/Moravians themselves, and the general sense of competition between eastern and western Christendom in these cases), though it does have some differences. Most importantly, the papacy seems to have had very little interest in developments in Moravia until after it developed its interest in Bulgaria - contrast Nicholas I's (over-)eager attempts to convert Khan Boris with his total lack of interest, at least as reflected in his papal letters, in the ongoing conversion of Moravia by the Byzantine missionaries Constantine (Cyril) and Methodios.[1] Despite this significant difference, however, the conversions of Moravia and Bulgaria are more similar than different. Most pertinently for this thesis, both of them are marked by the papal myth-making that went along with them: the papacy used *exempla* from the distant past to bolster their activities in the present. This can be seen most clearly in the story of the relics of St Clement, which this chapter will go into in some detail (it was also glanced at in chapter 1). With Clement, we have an example of the authority of the past being used to legitimate the papacy's conversion activities in Moravia, and especially its assertion that Moravia should owe allegiance to Rome/the Western Church, rather than to Constantinople.

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[1] Constantine's monastic name, and the one by which he is far better known, is Cyril. He became a monk five days before his death in 869. This thesis will refer to him as Cyril throughout, for ease of reference. I have standardised the title of the *Vita Constantini* to the *Life of Cyril* to reflect this. Where the name 'Constantine' appears in quotations, however, I have left it unchanged.

Thus, the conversion of Moravia is part of the general story this thesis is telling of the use of the mythical past to support contemporary papal activity.

Where is Moravia?

Before launching an investigation into papal interest in Moravia, it is first necessary to establish precisely where these efforts were geographically located. This is not as simple as it sounds - 'impartial and rationalistic enquiry has not on the whole been characteristic of the historiography of the Slavs composed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries'.[2] The 'traditional' understanding of the location of Moravia was always, unsurprisingly, the region of the modern Czech Republic and Slovakia known as 'Moravia'. This understanding was fixed by Josef Dobrovský in 1823.[3] This 'traditional' thesis was developed by František Palacký, who in 1848 published the Czech version of his *Geschichte von Böhmen*, with the title *Dějiny národu českého v Čechách a v Moravě* ('History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia').[4] In the words of Betti:

> Palacký proposed an account of state formation north of the Danube which reached its maximum extent through the military and strategic abilities of Svatopluk. Above all, he recognised in the Great Moravia of Svatopluk the establishment of a supranational Slavic empire (which included principally Moravian and Bohemian Slavs, but also the 'Austrian' Slavs), which successfully held out against the kingdom of Germany and introduced a strong Slavic element into Romano-Germanic Europe.[5]

This vision, of course, had contemporary relevance:

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[2] Fletcher, *Conversion of Europe*, p. 332.

[3] Dobrovský, *Cyrill und Method*; Betti, *Making* p. 16.

[4] (Prague, 1939); Betti, *Making* p. 17.

[5] Betti, *Making* p. 18.

> Palacký's reading of the Moravian past provided a template for legitimating nineteenth-century national aspirations…[Palacký] issued to nineteenth-century Czechs a call to return to the culture and tradition of the Great Moravian state to which they were the natural heirs, with the warning not to repeat the mistakes of the medieval Přemyslid state which had been weakened by fratricidal struggles among the Slavs, and had been unable to secure the establishment of a legitimate national church.[6]

When the state of Czechoslovakia gained independence from Austria-Hungary in the early twentieth century, Palacký's ideas gained extra resonance. In looking for some way to legitimate their new state, the leaders of Czechoslovakia became very fond of the theory of 'Great Moravia', which 'took on the role of the first common state of the Czechs'.[7] Eventually, this led to something of an explosion of archaeological investigations in Czechoslovakia under the communist governments of the 1950s and 60s. Among other things, archaeologists uncovered early hill-forts, from about the mid-ninth century, at Mikulčice, Staré Město, Modra u Velehradu and various other sites, thus lending support to Palacký's vision of 'Great Moravia'.[8] The main point here, though, is that these investigations were ultimately carried out in the service of Czech nationalism - Palacký was a famous nationalist - and the archaeological investigations of the 1950s and 60s need to be seen in the context of the communist government's support for forging Czechoslovak nationalism to serve their own interests.

In 1971, the Hungarian historian Imre Boba launched a remarkable counterblast against this 'traditional' view of the location of Moravia. In his book *Moravia's History Reconsidered*, Boba argued that, contrary to Moravia's traditional location in (then) Czechoslovakia, 'the…sources unequivocally attest that the jurisdictional territory of Archbishop Methodios was in Pannonia and

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[6] ibid p. 19.

[7] ibid p. 20.

[8] ibid p. 24; see further below.

could not cover areas north of the Danube'.[9] Therefore, according to Boba, 'the analysis of sources show that the *Marvani*, or, as modern historiography prefers, the Moravians, controlled the easternmost part of *Pannonia inferior* around the city of Marava, the *Sirmium* of antiquity'.[10] Boba's hypothesis was based principally on what seems to be often somewhat forced philological sophistry,[11] together with an apparent misunderstanding of Methodios' ecclesiastical title, based on Boba's apparent belief that all bishops must be bishops of a specific city.[12] Although Boba's arguments were mostly ignored by historians immediately after their publication,[13] two powerful syntheses of philological and historical evidence published in the 1990s forced them to examine his claims in more depth.[14] Although both of these books make some interesting suggestions in favour of a dramatic reassessment of Moravia's geographical location in the late ninth century, on balance it does seem as though Moravia should be placed in its 'traditional' location in what is now the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The archaeological finds in modern Moravia, especially at Mikulčice and Staré Město, do seem to imply a reasonably developed 'civilisation', which it seems somewhat awkward to try to fit into Boba's schema of Moravia in fact being in Serbia. Simply put, there is no good reason, faced with the archaeological evidence currently available as well as the generally unconvincing nature of Boba's arguments, to move ninth-century Moravia away from its

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[9] Boba, *Moravia's History Reconsidered*, p. 2.

[10] ibid p. 4 (Boba's italics).

[11] 'The endings *-ianin*, *-ienin* (singular) and *-iane*, *-iene* (plural), added to the name of a place, form adjectives, which in turn are used as appellatives, for citizens of a place. These endings correspond to the Latin *-ensis*; thus the Latin *burgenses* in Church Slavonic is *grazhdane* and *grazhdanin*; both, the Latin and the Church Slavonic forms, refer to "citizens", inhabitants of a city' - Boba, *Moravia's History* p. 25f. This is one example among many of Boba's baffling logic.

[12] ibid p. 11f.

[13] Betti, *Making* pp. 28ff; see also Curta, 'The history and archaeology of Great Moravia'.

[14] Bowlus, *Franks, Moravians and Magyars* (which used additional, though still unconvincing, arguments based on the *Annales Fuldenses*); Eggers, *Das 'Großmährische Reich'*.

'traditional' location.[15] The traditional location of Moravia seems to be the simplest explanation of the evidence, and therefore the best.

The evidence

There are no sources for the conversion of Moravia which come from the Lateran *scrinium*. There is no record of Cyril or Methodios in the *Lives* of Nicholas I or Hadrian II in the *LP*, and there is no reference to them in the surviving letters of either Nicholas or Hadrian.[16] This is very difficult to explain. The *Lives* of Nicholas and Hadrian are both extremely detailed, and make much of, among other things, the relationships the two popes maintained with the khan of Bulgaria, and their role in Bulgaria's Christianisation. As this thesis has already investigated, this was done in part to present these popes as successors to Gregory I, being involved in the Christianisation of a formerly pagan region on the fringes of Europe.[17] In this case, quite why the *Lives* do not mention Cyril and Methodios, who would have provided them with an excellent 'case study' for Nicholas' and Hadrian's efforts in this regard, is a problem in need of an explanation.

Maddalena Betti has made a very interesting attempt to resolve this conundrum by focussing on the role played by Pope Stephen V (885-891).[18] Stephen appears not to have agreed with the political priorities of his predecessors.[19] Essentially, Betti argues, Stephen supported the position of

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[15] Wickham, *Inheritance*, p. 488.

[16] Betti, *Making*, p. 42.

[17] Cf. Leonardi, 'L'agiografia romana'; Leyser, 'Charisma in the archive'; Mayr-Harting, 'Two conversions'.

[18] For this and what follows, see Betti, *Making*, pp. 45ff.

[19] For a detailed analysis of Stephen's politics, see Peri, 'Il mandato missionario'. For evidence from Stephen himself, see *MGH Epp.* 7, p. 352-358.

the Frankish church, which opposed the inclusion of any vernacular language in the liturgy.[20] This, though, left the figure of Methodios in an awkward position, and Stephen's solution to this was to perform a *damnatio memoriae* on Methodios. Therefore, Betti, argues, 'Stephen's new approach provides sufficient grounds to speculate about the conscious elimination from the *Liber Pontificalis* of compromising material which could have been used as a testimony, not only of the conscious and profitable cooperation between Methodios and previous popes, but also of Roman approval of the growing Slavonic church'.[21] To summarise, therefore, the upshot of Betti's (persuasive) argument is that the absence of Cyril and Methodios from any papal sources is a product of the decision taken by Stephen V and his papal *scrinium* to airbrush their Moravian mission out of history.

Fortunately, however, we are not entirely dependent on the Orwellian tendencies of the papal bureaucracy for our knowledge of Cyril and Methodios. Aside from Anastasius Bibliothecarius, discussed in more detail below, we also have the Slavic *Vitae* of both of them on which to base an investigation.[22] These are both very interesting texts. To take VC first, more or less the one thing that can be known about it with any certainty is that it has a very late manuscript tradition. This tradition is itself dichotomous - it includes a southern Slavic branch, which includes older manuscripts dating back to the mid-fourteenth century,[23] and an eastern Slavic branch, the codices of which only date back to the fifteenth century.[24] Most Slavic philologists argue that, in spite of this late manuscript tradition, VC is in fact one of the earliest examples of Old Church

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[20] The famous example of this is Stephen prohibiting the use of Slavic in the liturgy. MGH Epp. 7 p. 353 - 'Missas et sacratissima illa ministeria, quae Sclavorum lingua idem Methodius celebrare praesumpsit, quamvis decessoris sui temporibus, domni videlicet Iohannis sanctissimi papae iuraverit se ea ulterius non praesumere, apostolica auctoritate, ne aliquo modo praesumatur, penitus interdicit.'

[21] Betti, *Making*, p. 53.

[22] In what follows, I abbreviate these Lives as VC (Cyril) and VM (Methodios). Slavic philology is notoriously difficult for non-specialists to follow, so in this section I have heavily relied on Betti's summary of the arguments at pp. 73ff.

[23] The oldest of which is Moscow, Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheski Musei, Barsov 619.

[24] Betti, *Making*, p. 73.

Slavic literature - Francis Dvornik, for example, claimed that the language of VC 'corresponds clearly with the origins of Slavonic literature', and was therefore happy to date it to the late ninth century.[25] A.P. Vlasto, with no particular supporting evidence, also declared that VC was one of the sources for Gauderic of Velletri's *Life of St Clement*, and was therefore written before 882.[26] The problem with both of these arguments, however, is that they depend upon comparison of VC with a work that has been lost. Our knowledge of Gauderic's *Life of St Clement* comes entirely from a twelfth-century revision of the original text, known as the *Vita Constantini-Cyrilli cum translatione S. Clementis*.[27] We therefore have no way of knowing whether the language of VC does indeed match up with other late ninth-century Slavic texts. It may well do, but there is no certainty either way. This does not necessarily mean that VC is 'unreliable' (see below), but it is certainly fair to say that caution needs to be exercised when using it as evidence.[28]

We are on slightly firmer ground with VM. It is only preserved in eighteen manuscripts, the oldest of which is in the Codex Uspenskij (Uspenskij Sbornik), which is a homiliary dated to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.[29] There are no known southern Slavic forms of VM, and only one eastern Slavic form exists, which presents a significantly more stable and homogeneous picture of its textual transmission than that for VC. The text of VM as we have it was almost certainly written in 885, the year of Methodios' death and the expulsion of his disciples from Moravia; there is no serious Slavic philologist who significantly dissents from this view, and it would be unwise for a historian with no philological training to argue against it.[30] It is, however,

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[25] Dvornik, *Les Légendes.*

[26] Vlasto, *Entry*, p. 30.

[27] Betti, *Making*, p. 74. Cf. Orlandi (ed), *Excerpta ex Clementinis Recognitionibus*; Devos & Meyvaert, 'La date de la première redaction'.

[28] It is also important to note Betti, *Making*, p. 76 - 'We have no firm information on the author, the date, or the place of composition of the *Life of Constantine*.'

[29] Betti, *Making*, p. 77, with refs.

[30] ibid.

worth noting in passing that Vaillant argued for a (very) slightly later dating for VM - the defence it maintains of Methodios made him think it was written in Bulgaria after the expulsion of Methodios' disciples.[31] It is not really a relevant point here - the important thing for our purposes is that VM is clearly an early text, almost certainly from the late 880s, which goes into a considerable amount of detail about both Methodios' missionary wanderings in Moravia, and his extensive contacts with Popes Nicholas I, Hadrian II and John VIII.

It would be overly simplistic to assess the 'reliability' or otherwise of either VC or VM. This is partly because no text that has ever been written is entirely 'reliable' or an objective guide to facts. But at a more fundamental level, it is because the uncertainties we have around VC are precisely uncertainties, rather than decisive knowledge that it is or is not an early text. I myself suspect that it is quite likely that VC is indeed a ninth-century text, and therefore (roughly) contemporary with the life it is describing. It seems more likely to me that a text would have been written immediately after Cyril's death, rather than people suddenly developing an interest in him in the fourteenth century. But we cannot be sure. As a general rule of thumb, in this chapter I have tended to use VC when it is corroborated by the indisputably early VM. A lot of the information it gives which is not corroborated by VM is itself about Cyril's early life before he went to Moravia, and therefore not directly relevant to this chapter. In the places where it is corroborated, it also often includes details not included in VM which, whether they are historically accurate or not, are nonetheless worthy of comment. I therefore see no reason not to admit its evidence in this chapter.

Cyril, Methodios, Nicholas, Hadrian and Moravia

We are told by the *Life of Cyril* that at some point in the 860s:

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[31] ibid.

> Rostislav, the prince of Moravia, through God's admonition took counsel with his Moravian princes and appealed to the emperor Michael, saying: '[…] we have not a teacher who would explain to us in our language the true Christian faith; so that other countries which look to us might emulate us. Therefore, O Lord, send us such a bishop and teacher […].'
>
> And…the emperor summoned Constantine the Philosopher and had him listen to this matter. And he said: 'Philosopher, I know that you are tired, but it is necessary that you go there. For none other than you can attend to this matter.'
>
> And the Philosopher answered: 'Though I am tired and sick in body, I shall go there gladly if they have a script for their tongue.'
>
> [The emperor announces that there is no Slavonic alphabet]…And right away Constantine composed letters and began to write the language of the Gospel, that is, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God', and so forth. The Emperor…sent Constantine to Moravia with many gifts…[32]

The more reliable *Life of Methodios* basically corroborates this:

> And it came to pass in those days that the Slavic prince Rostislav together with Svatopluk sent emissaries from Moravia to Emperor Michael, saying thus: 'We have prospered through God's grace, and many Christian teachers have come to us from among the Italians, Greeks and Germans, teaching us in various ways. But we Slavs are a simple people, and have none to instruct us in the truth, and explain wisely. Therefore, O kind Lord, send the type of man who will direct us to the whole truth.'
>
> …And then God revealed Slavic writing to the Philosopher [Constantine]. And right after forming the letters and composing a discourse, he set out for Moravia, taking Methodios along.[33]

Several points stand out here. Firstly, the initial request to Byzantium for missionaries, whether made by Rastislav alone or with Svatopluk, is very much a 'bottom-up' phenomenon - there is no

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[32] *Life of Cyril* (VC) 14 - the translation of VC and VM used throughout is *The* Vita *of Constantine and the* Vita *of Methodius* (trans with commentaries by M. Kantor and R. White) (Ann Arbor, 1976).

[33] *Life of Methodios* (VM) 5f.

indication in the *Lives*, or indeed in any other source, that the Byzantines had any particular interest in converting the Moravians before receiving Rastislav's embassy.

Second, there is no papal involvement - indeed, in the context of the deteriorating relations between the eastern and western churches during the 860s, it seems significant that Rastislav chose to send his envoys to the emperor in Constantinople, rather than the pope in Rome. There were probably two main reasons for his doing this. The first of these lies in the context of ninth-century Moravian princes' attempts to gain a greater degree of independence from the Franks and the Bavarian church. The Carolingian Empire lacked fiscal strength because it never instituted a general tax on agricultural production; therefore, the central government could not raise enough money to maintain the support of the landowning elites. This tendency could only be reversed by outward expansion, which gave the central government sources of funds and new lands which they could use to 'buy friends' among the elites (this is an oversimplification, but more or less correct in essentials).[34] Many of these raids were undertaken into Moravian lands, which lay more or less on the Eastern Franks' Bavarian frontier. Although we do not have any sources written from the Slavs' point of view, it seems reasonable to suppose that this would have caused a degree of resentment among the Moravians.[35] It is therefore possible to propose a model of the Moravians 'escaping outwards' from the grip of Frankish domination - rather than sending to the Franks' (supposed) allies in Rome for their missionaries, they chose instead to ask the Byzantines as something close to a symbolic rejection of the Franks.

There is also independent empirical evidence suggesting that fear of Frankish 'dominance' may have motivated Rastislav in his request for Byzantine missionaries. In 866, Louis the German, having told his son Carloman to lead a campaign against Rastislav, would no doubt have been

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[34] For this, see Reuter, *Medieval Polities*, chapters 13 and 14; Leyser, *Rule and Conflict*, chapters 1-2, and Heather, 'Frankish imperialism and Slavic society', p. 173. The argument has its critics, notably Wickham, *Medieval Europe*, pp. 65ff, but that debate is not relevant here.

[35] Heather, 'Frankish imperialism', p. 174; also idem, *Empires and Barbarians*, pp. 515ff.

somewhat disappointed when Carloman instead formed an alliance with him. Carloman seems to have ceded Lower Pannonia to Rastislav in exchange for his (Rastislav's) support.[36] When Louis returned to East Francia following an unsuccessful attempt to conquer West Francia in 859, he responded to this alliance by increasing the power of his own *fideles* in the Ostmark (i.e. roughly modern Austria). Eventually, Louis negotiated his own alliance with Khan Boris of Bulgaria, and in the summer of 863 Louis and Boris carried out a pincer movement on Carloman, at this point in Carantania. This episode ended with Louis arresting Carloman and taking him into custody.[37] At this point, Louis must have loomed large in Rastislav's imagination. Thus, it is not difficult to see what might have motivated him to 'escape outwards' - lacking allies in the west, Byzantium must have seemed the logical next step for a new alliance.[38]

A second possible reason for Rastislav's decision to ask for Byzantine, not Roman, missionaries, can be seen in the Byzantine 'revival' of the early/mid-ninth century, discussed in the last chapter. One example of this is the re-emergence of Byzantine missionary activity.[39] The 'gravitational pull' of this new mood may well have influenced Rastislav's decision to look east - the attraction of Byzantium's 'intellectual renaissance', together with the benefits of the Moravians becoming part of the 'Byzantine commonwealth' of eastern Europe, would probably have been an appealing one to the 'leader' of a still-emerging Slavic 'state' at this point. It seems unlikely that this factor seemed equally important to Rastislav as his aforementioned desire for a new anti-Louis alliance, and it is unclear how much he himself would have been aware of this Byzantine 'revival', but the point still stands that any request from Moravia for a Christianising mission would have

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[36] Goldberg, *Struggle* p. 266, citing *Die Urkunden Ludwigs des Deutschen* n. 100. Cf. Airlie, 'True teachers and pious kings'.

[37] A*nnales Fuldenses* s.a. 863; *Annales Bertiniani* s.aa. 864, 866; Goldberg, *Struggle* p. 269.

[38] Goldberg is probably right in his view that 'by asking Constantinople for a bishop, Rastislav sought to place Moravia under the protection of the Byzantine emperor and thereby free himself from Louis' overlordship' - *Struggle* p. 270.

[39] See e.g. Fletcher, *Conversion* p. 341; Treadgold, *Byzantine Revival*. For the Avars, see now (for an earlier period) Pohl, *The Avars.*

been warmly welcomed in Constantinople. Thus, although Rastislav's initial decision to appeal to the east may require some explanation, on reflection it is not overly surprising.

If Rastislav and the Moravians seem to have been uninterested in the papacy, there is also not a lot of evidence for papal interest in Moravia, at least initially. Moravia is never mentioned among the surviving letters of Pope Nicholas I, and neither is it emphasised in his Life in the *Liber Pontificalis*.[40] However, if we can believe the *Life of Cyril*, the papacy seems to have developed a sudden interest in the Christianisation of Moravia in 867, when Cyril and Methodios were both in Venice seemingly about to return to Constantinople - 'upon learning of Constantine, the pope of Rome sent for him'.[41] Fortunately, the *Life of Methodios* provides some level of corroboration for the *Life of Cyril*: 'when he learned of these two men, the Apostolic Father, Nicholas, sent for them, wishing to see them as much as the angel of God'.[42] How can we explain this sudden papal interest? The simplest answer seems, again, to involve East Frankish politics. The East Frankish church was much less involved with the papacy than the West Frankish church - Nicholas I, Hadrian II and John VIII all frequently interfered in West Frankish church affairs, but had hardly any dealings with the East Franks.[43] Furthermore, the False Decretals were not made use of in East Francia until the council of Mainz in 888 - the East Franks seem to have been simply uninterested in what they had to say about papal primacy.[44] It therefore seems possible to propose that Nicholas, on learning of Cyril and Methodios' activities in Moravia, saw an opportunity to try to impose his ideas of papal primacy onto the new polity gradually emerging on the East Frankish border, and to try to limit the

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[40] Betti, *Making* p. 64. According to VM 8, Pope Hadrian II claimed in a letter that Rastislav asked the pope for a teacher for the Slavs, but the authenticity of this is extremely dubious (ibid - and see below).

[41] VC 17.

[42] VM 6.

[43] Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages*, p. 103.

[44] ibid p. 104. For Pseudo-Isidore in general, see Fuhrmann, *Einfluss und Verbreitung*; Harder, *Pseudoisidor und das Papsttum*.

growing influence of the Bavarian church.[45] Although it is also entirely possible to see Nicholas' sudden interest in the context of the development of relations between Rome and Constantinople, the 'Bavarian element' does seem likely to have had a role in Nicholas' thinking with regard to Cyril, Methodios and Moravia - although he was not involved from the beginning, learning of their conversion activities presented an opportunity to open up the battle for papal primacy on another front.

Nicholas invited the brothers to Rome, but he was not the pope they met on their arrival, due to his death:

> When he [Cyril] came to Rome, the Apostolic Father himself, Hadrian, and all the citizens came out to meet him, carrying candles. For he was carrying the relics of St Clement, the martyr and Pope of Rome. And at once God worked glorious miracles for his sake…
>
> Accepting the Slavic scriptures, the Pope placed them in the church of St Mary called Phatne [Santa Maria Maggiore]. And the holy liturgy was sung over them. Then the pope commanded two bishops, Formosus and Gauderic, to consecrate the Slavic disciples. And when they had been consecrated, they at once sang the liturgy in the Slavic tongue in the Church of the Apostle Peter. And the next day they sang in the Church of St Petronilla, and on the following day in the Church of St Andrew. And then they sang the entire night, glorifying God in Slavic once again in the Church of the Apostle Paul, the great universal teacher. And in the morning they again sang the liturgy over his blessed grave with the help of Bishop Arsenius, one of the seven bishops, and Anastasius the librarian.[46]

> He [the pope][47] consecrated their teachings, placing the Slavic Gospels on the altar of Saint Peter the Apostle. He also consecrated the blessed Methodios to the priesthood. But there were many other people who reviled the Slavic Scriptures, saying: Except for the Jews, Greeks and Latins, it is improper for any people to have their own writing according to the

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[45] Betti, *Making*, p. 62f, thinks that it was more to do with limiting the expansion of the archdiocese of Salzburg. The two theories are not mutually exclusive.

[46] VC 17.

[47] VM seems to think that Nicholas met the brothers in Rome, but it is impossible to reconcile this with the timings of their journey from Venice to Rome - see Vlasto, *Entry* p. 54.

> inscription which Pilate wrote on the Lord's cross.' Calling them Pilatists and trilinguists, the Apostolic Father condemned them. He commanded a bishop, who was afflicted with the same disease, to consecrate three of the Slavic disciples as priests, and two as lectors.[48]

Again, there are many interesting points here. The translation of the relics of St Clement to Rome by the brothers speaks to the mythologization of the papal past in the 860s and 870s.[49] Indeed, a letter of Anastasius Bibliothecarius tells us that Gauderic, the bishop involved in the above passage of VC, started to prepare a *Life of St Clement* after the brothers brought his relics back to Rome (according to VC and VM, Cyril and Methodios had Clement's relics in the first place as a result of their trip to convert the Khazars living in Cherson, modern Ukraine).[50] Unfortunately, only two short fragments of this are preserved,[51] but its existence is testament to the 'spiritual capital' bringing Clement's relics back to Rome would have enabled the brothers to claim for themselves.

The 'spiritual capital' thus gained, however, is somewhat suspicious. It is rather strange that, at precisely the moment the churchmen of Rome were becoming interested in the legend of St Clement,[52] two Byzantine missionaries suddenly appeared in the city brandishing his relics. Further investigation of the VC's account is therefore called for. VC tells us:

> When he heard that St Clement was still lying in the sea, he prayed and said: 'I believe in God and place my hope in St Clement, for I shall find him and take him from the sea.'
>
> After prevailing upon the archbishop, he boarded a ship with all the clergy and pious men and set out for that spot. A great calm came over the sea and they arrived and began to dig, singing. And immediately a fragrance arose as if there were many censers; and then the

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[48] VM 6. Dvornik, 'Sts. Cyril and Methodius in Rome', argues for the true historicity of these events, but this is highly dubious - see below.

[49] Betti, *Making* p. 96. For more on Clement, see Neil, 'Cult of St Clement'.

[50] MGH Epp. 7 pp. 435ff.

[51] BHL 1851.

[52] Their interest almost certainly predated Cyril and Methodios' arrival - see e.g. Meyvaert and Devos, 'Trois énigmes', and Neil, 'Cult', p. 104. The whole issue is discussed in chapter 1.

> holy relics appeared. To the glory of all the citizens, they raised them with great reverence and carried them into the city, as Constantine [Cyril] writes in his *Discovery*.[53]

The mention of Cyril's *Discovery* refers to his alleged work *Discourse on the Discovery and Translation of the Relics of St Clement*, which we are told about in the above-mentioned letter from Anastasius to Gauderic, where Anastasius says that he has translated this work from Greek into Latin.[54]

This is a lovely story, but the main issue with it is that the only evidence we have for it is VC, as well as Anastasius' account.[55] There are several aspects of the accounts which, when looked at together, do not make sense. Firstly, if it is true that Cyril found Clement's relics in Cherson, why is there no mention of this event in any contemporary Byzantine source? VC tells us that Cyril returned to Constantinople after his visit to the Khazars, and there is no particular reason to doubt this ; and, if Cyril really was of the belief that he was carrying with him the genuine relics of the third Bishop of Rome, one would expect far more of a fuss to have been made about this in Constantinople than is detectable in our sources, i.e. none.[56] Even a mention of either Clement or Cyril in (say) a sermon of Photios would do, but there is no such reference. This is especially strange given the general climate of mistrust between Rome and Constantinople in the first millennium. The arrival of a very early Bishop of Old Rome would surely have provided the government in Constantinople, in both its 'civil' and 'ecclesiastical' manifestations, with a very useful propaganda *coup* to hurl at the 'Old Romans'. Even if they had not done this at the time, it is

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[53] VC 8.

[54] MGH Epp. 7 pp. 435ff.

[55] Ibid p. 436f.

[56] Dvornik, *Les Légendes,* pp. 172ff, thinks that these relics are a case of mistaken identity - the Clement Cyril found in Cherson (and Dvornik thinks VC is reliable as to the actual fact of relics being found) was not Clement of Rome, but in fact a local saint with no connection to Rome or the papacy. This seems like trying to square an extremely round circle, but even if Dvornik is right, he himself acknowledges that Cyril would still have assumed that he had Clement of Rome, and so this does not undermine the points made above.

very strange that Clement is never mentioned in any letter sent between popes, emperors and patriarchs at the height of the Photian Schism. The absence of any evidence for any sort of cult of Clement at Constantinople at this time casts a significant amount of suspicion on VC's account.

A second problem is thrown up by the issue of whether Cyril and Methodios knew they would be going to Rome after they had been to Moravia. If so, and assuming the accounts we have of Cyril's discovery of Clement's relics are correct, which is doubtful, it would make a lot more sense that they would be willing to take Clement's relics along with them. However, it seems unlikely that they ever planned to go to Rome. When they left Moravia in 867, it seems unlikely that the brothers thought they would be returning, as indicated by the very valuable gifts they exchanged with Rastislav on their departure.[57] On the balance of probabilities, it seems more likely that, as the Balkan route back to Constantinople which they had followed on their way to Moravia was now too dangerous to use, the brothers decided to go through Kocel's principality of Lower Pannonia and on to Venice, whence they would sail back to Constantinople.[58] Once they reached Venice, however, they received Pope Nicholas' invitation to meet him in Rome. As the churches of Rome and Constantinople were at this point officially in communion with each other, there would have been very little reason for the brothers to refuse this, and so they decided to accede to the pope's request. The main point here is that Cyril and Methodios' visit to Rome was a historical contingency - they almost certainly did not leave Constantinople with the intention of eventually visiting Rome. The obvious question therefore arises of why exactly they would have taken Clement's relics to Moravia with them for no discernible reason, rather than leaving them in Constantinople where they would probably have got a lot more attention.

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[57] Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs* p. 133.

[58] On the rapidly-deteriorating ease of travel through the Balkans, see Obolensky, 'The Balkans in the Ninth Century; - this argues that the Balkans became far safer to travel through after about 870, but this is of course long after Cyril and Methodios would have wanted to do so.

The only other evidence we have for the existence of the relics of St Clement comes from the literary circle of Anastasius Bibliothecarius in Rome. There is no mention of Clement's relics being brought to Rome in the *Liber Pontificalis* (which is admittedly far from satisfactory for the reign of Hadrian II), and Leo of Ostia's twelfth-century account, although it is fundamentally about the translation of Clement's relics, is precisely a twelfth-century account, and therefore slightly suspect as a source for what was happening in ninth-century Rome.[59] There is a very brief mention of it in an alleged letter of Pope Hadrian II, *Gloria in excelsis Deo*,[60] but the authenticity of this letter is highly debatable (see below). The extremely suspect areas of VC's account, highlighted above, cause one to wonder what exactly was going on in Anastasius' literary circle at this time. On balance, it seems highly unlikely that Cyril and Methodios carried 'Clement's' relics all the way from the Crimea to Rome via Constantinople and Moravia. It is conceivable that they picked something up between Venice and Rome and claimed it was Clement's relics, but this cannot be proven either way. The main point here, though, is that there does seem to be something happening in Rome which is very difficult to explain. Cyril and Methodios' arrival, at the exact point when the Romans are developing an interest in early popes including Clement anyway, seems too fortuitous to be a coincidence.

Another important point relates to the issue of language. VC and VM both highlight very clear papal acceptance and approval of the Slavic translations of the bible and the liturgy, and papal opposition to the 'trilingualists' (whom Hadrian somewhat uncharitably decided to refer to as 'Pilatists'), who believed that the only legitimate languages for church use were the 'sacred' languages of Hebrew, Greek and Latin. In the Byzantine Empire, it was fully acceptable to use local languages, e.g. Georgian, Syriac, Armenian et al. for religious purposes, and so it is unlikely that

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[59] Neil, 'Clement', p. 110.

[60] MGH Epp. 6 p. 763f - 'Truly those men [sc. Cyril and Methodios], knowing that the regions belonged to the holy see, did nothing against the canons, but came to us carrying the relics of St Clement.'

Cyril and Methodios would have thought translating scriptures into Slavic to be remotely controversial. Western Christianity, however, after the fall of the Roman Empire, 'had amalgamated the newly-arrived ethnic groups with the Latin-speaking population already living there, and had extended to all, in order to unite them, the Latin language, liturgy and culture that had been transmitted by the Church of Rome'.[61] With Latin being used for unity in this way, it is not difficult to see how Cyril and Methodios' introduction of the Slavic liturgy might have been controversial among the Roman clergy. Hadrian's supposed acceptance of these translations is therefore interesting - we have the pope openly approving of an eastern practice introduced into central Europe by eastern missionaries, which seems somewhat incongruous with other developments of the late 860s, especially Nicholas' and Hadrian's quite hardline stances on the illegitimacy of Photios as Patriarch of Constantinople.

> And after many days, the Philosopher, nearing Judgement, said to Methodios, his brother: 'Behold, brother, the two of us have been yoke-mates, plowing one furrow. Now my days are ending and I fall on the field. Though you have great love for the mountain,[62] still leave not your teaching for the mountain's sake, for you can sooner be saved through it.' Then Kocel[63] sent to the Apostolic Father, asking him to delegate our blessed teacher Methodios to him. And the Apostolic Father said: 'Not only to thee alone but to all the Slavic lands send I him, a teacher from God and the Holy Apostle Peter, the first successor and keeper of the keys to the heavenly kingdom.' And he sent Methodios […].[64]

Thus says the *Life of Methodios*. We are told that Methodios was consecrated by Hadrian II as bishop of Pannonia, the ancient seat of St Andronicus.[65] We are also told that Methodios was sent

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[61] John Paul II, *Apostoli Slavorum*, p. 12.

[62] I.e. Methodios' monastery.

[63] The ruler of Lower Pannonia.

[64] VM 7f.

[65] ibid 8.

back to Moravia by Hadrian with a letter, known to scholars as *Gloria in excelsis Deo*, the text of which is preserved in *VM*.[66] The authenticity of this letter, however, is uncertain at best. Put simply, the main thrust of the letter seems to agree with VM's themes of Moravian/Slavic 'ethnicity' and 'independence' too perfectly, and its 'jurisdictional theme' was probably far more relevant in the 870s and 880s than in the 860s, by which time Methodios and the papacy had become embroiled in a jurisdictional dispute with the Bavarian church over the limits of Methodios' missionary activity.[67] Furthermore, some of the content of the letter copies too closely some things John VIII says in his Register. For example, in letter 225, John says: 'in all the churches of your land, as a sign of reverence, read the Gospel in Latin and then in its Slavic translation, for all those who cannot understand Latin'.[68] Contrast 'Hadrian's' 'read the Apostolos [sic] and Gospel, first in Latin, then in Slavic, that the words of the Scripture might be fulfilled: "Praise the Lord, all ye nations"'.[69] Ultimately, it seems, to me at least, that *Gloria in excelsis Deo* is too suspect to be taken as authentic. However, it is still relevant that VM claims that, by 870, Methodios had been sent by Hadrian to Moravia as a papally-sanctioned bishop of a seemingly ancient see. Thus, leaving to one side the question of Methodios' personal allegiance to Rome or Constantinople, it seems that the papacy had successfully managed to take over a conversion initiative initially directed from Constantinople.

John VIII and Moravia

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[66] ibid.

[67] Betti, *Making* p. 86.

[68] MGH Epp. 7 p. 87 (trans. adapted from Betti, *Making* p. 87).

[69] VM 8.

There is no further surviving communication between Hadrian II and Methodios. This may be due to the contingencies of survival, or may have something to do with the papal chancery's apparent declining interest in 'foreign affairs' towards the end of Hadrian's pontificate. Either way, this breakdown in communication seems to have led to the papacy remaining unaware of an important development in Methodios' missionary career. When Methodios returned to Moravia in 870, he was almost immediately arrested and put on trial in Regensburg. The Bavarian bishops' main charge against Methodios was that he had been trespassing on their ecclesiastical preserve,[70] meaning Pannonia, not Moravia, and they claimed that for over fifty years the bishops of Salzburg had enjoyed exclusive and unchallenged rights over Pannonia.[71] Methodios' counterclaim was that, as a representative of the pope, he had authority over both Pannonia and Moravia, rather than the Bavarian bishops - he was not transgressing in their territory, but they were transgressing in the pope's territory.[72] Ultimately, Methodios 'lost' the case, and was imprisoned in a monastery in Swabia.[73] Perhaps the most interesting thing about this case, from the point of view of an investigation into the papacy, is that Methodios (or at least the author of VM) seems to have believed that his appeal to papal primacy could have worked, or at least that it was a rational appeal to make, despite the aforementioned lack of especially close relations between the papacy and the East Frankish church. This may well tell us a fair amount about how the papacy expected to be viewed by the wider Christian community - an appeal to Roman primacy by a Byzantine missionary in Bavaria is seen as a legitimate appeal to make (at least by the author of VM). Although ultimately the appeal was unsuccessful, it may well imply something about the unspoken assumptions of where power and authority was believed to lie in the church.

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[70] ibid 9.

[71] *Conversio Carantanorum et Bagoariorum* 14; Vlasto, *Entry* p. 69. The standard discussion of the *Conversio* is Wolfram, *Die* Conversio.

[72] VM 9.

[73] ibid; Vlasto, *Entry* p. 69 thinks it was Ellwangen.

John VIII seems to have been aware of suspicion at the Roman Curia about the fact that Bishop Anno of Freising, who had recently made a visit to Rome, claimed to be unaware of the existence of a Bishop Methodios.[74] Having sent Bishop Paul of Ancona to find out what was happening, and having therefore become aware of Methodios' imprisonment, John sent a letter confirming that Methodios should be regarded as *episcopus noster*.[75] Methodios was eventually released in about May 873.[76] All three prelates involved in Methodios' imprisonment died within a year, which was inevitably seen by some as a divine judgement.[77] However, John did give the Bavarian bishops one concession - he imposed several restrictions on the use of Slavic liturgy (albeit making it clear that the use of Slavic was still permissible in and of itself), about which Hadrian had supposedly been so enthusiastic.[78] Here again, we have an interesting reflection on the assumptions surrounding Roman primacy - it seems that as soon as independent evidence arrived from Rome backing up Methodios' claims to have been sent by the pope, the Bavarian bishops realised that they could not continue to imprison him against the pope's wishes, and so had to release him. Although John did give up the use of Slavic in the liturgy, this should probably not be seen as a huge concession - his authority, sufficient to have had Methodios released from his

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[74] Vlasto, *Entry* p. 69f.

[75] MGH Epp. 7 p. 286 - 'Audacia tua et presumptio non solum nubes, sed et ipsos celos transcendit. Usurpasti enim tibi vices apostolice sedis et quasi patriarcha de archiepiscopo tibi iudicium vindicasti, immo, quod est gravius, fratrem tuum Methodium, Pannonicum archiepiscopum legatione apostolice sedis ad gentes fungentem, tyrannice magis quam canonice tractans…ipsius sancte sedis iudicium concedi minime permisisti…' (the original Latin gives a better sense of the strident tone of this letter than a translation can; it is worth noting that John presumably thought this letter would *work*, despite its frankly rude tone). *Episcopus noster* - MGH Epp. 7 p. 285 - 'fratrem et coepiscopum nostrum Methodium carceralibus penis afficiens…'

[76] MGH Epp. 7 p. 281f - 'reddito ac restituto nobis pannoniensium episcopatu liceat predicato fratri nostro Methodio qui illic a sede apostolica ordinatus est, secundum priscam consuetudinem libere que sunt episcopi genere'.

[77] VM 10.

[78] This cannot be directly proven, but is strongly implied at MGH Epp. 7 p. 161 - 'Audimus etiam, quod missas cantes in barbara, hoc est in Sclavina lingua, unde iam litteris nostris per Paulum episcopum Anconitanum tibi directis prohibuimus, ne in ea lingua sacra missarum sollempnia celebrares, sed vel in Latina vel in Greca lingua, sicut ecclesia Dei toto terrarum orbe diffusa et in omnibus gentibus dilatata cantat'.

imprisonment, would probably not have been overly diminished by the fact that the Moravians could not now practice the liturgy in their own language - in common with most other people of western Europe.

Why were the Bavarian bishops so concerned about Methodios' preaching? Broadly speaking, they were worried about the threats posed to what they regarded as their own missionary sphere in Moravia, as well as, apparently, to western Christendom more broadly. Fortunately, we have available to us a document, the *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*, which more or less puts forward the Bavarian Church's view on ongoing events in Moravia.[79] The *Conversio* was either written or commissioned by Adalwin, the archbishop of Salzburg, in the early 870s.[80] Most of it describes the conversion of Bavaria to Christianity, but the latter sections discuss the Christianisation of the Carantanian Slavs. We are told that in 798, Arno, the then-bishop of Salzburg, goes to Rome to receive the pallium from Pope Leo III. Upon returning to Salzburg, he receives a message from Charlemagne, ordering him to preach to the Slavs. He does so, and also consecrates churches and ordains priests. Arno then appoints Deoderic as essentially his emissary to *Sclavinia*, and tells him to preach, consecrate churches and ordain priests subject to Salzburg.[81] In 833 Mojmir, the *dux* of the Moravians, exiles the Carantanian chief Priwina, who flees to Ratbod, the official in charge of the defence of the Ostmark, who presents him to Louis the German. As a result he is given Christian instruction and baptised at Traismauer. He is then made subordinate to Ratbod, but soon falls out with him, and flees to Bulgaria.[82] After this, however, he makes his peace with Louis and is given a benefice in Pannonia Inferior. He builds a church at Nitra, which is consecrated by archbishop of Salzburg Liupram in 850. Liupram then spends a lot of time going

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[79] Ed. Wolfram, *Conversio*.

[80] Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 168.

[81] *Conversio* 7.

[82] *Conversio* 10; Wood, *Missionary Life* p. 170.

around Moravia consecrating churches and ordaining priests. Finally, Louis the German gives Priwina a *beneficium* consisting of everything he already has in Moravia, except everything belonging to the Church of Salzburg.[83] This arrangement between Priwina and the archbishops continues under Liupram's successors Swarnagal and Rihpald, and the *Conversio* tells us that this remains the state of affairs until the arrival of Methodios.[84]

The *Conversio* is a strange document, and has 'no clear model' as a history of Christianisation.[85] Its closest basis seems to be Bede, but the *Historia Ecclesiastica* is much less tightly-focussed than the *Conversio*. The next Church subject to a history of its own Christianisation similar to Bavaria is Hamburg-Bremen, in Adam's 11th century *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*.[86] The form of the *Conversio* is also very strange. Bede's narrative has many accounts of saints, but the only 'clearly hagiographical section' of the *Conversio* is the opening chapter, and the work as a whole has an extremely legalistic, as opposed to 'spiritual', feel to it.[87] Indeed, there are several points in the *Conversio* where very legalistic language is used - for example, the description of Louis the German's definition of the rights of Salzburg in 848 uses the phrase *ad sanctum Petrum principem apostolorum et beatissimum Hrodbertum, ubi ipse corpore requiescit*, which is a diplomatic formula; the statement is provided with a witness list and date;[88] the dedication of the church at Nitra during Adalram's visit in 850 is provided with a witness list, and the whole episode is defined as a *complicitatio*.[89] The *Conversio* is not interested in the work or mission of holy men, but in legal claims. 'As a result, Adalwin of Salzburg, or the author of the *Conversio*, effectively

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[83] All this information is in *Conversio* 10ff.

[84] *Conversio* 12.

[85] Wood, *Missionary Life* p. 172.

[86] ibid.

[87] ibid.

[88] *Conversio* 12.

[89] ibid 11; both examples from Wood, *Missionary Life* p. 172.

created a way of writing missionary history in terms of jurisdiction and the creation of a church organisation. Such an approach was…made necessary by the presence of Methodios.'[90] To all intents and purposes, the overall impression one gets of the function of the *Conversio* is that it is the case for the prosecution of Methodios at his show trial in 870. It is full of legalistic language purporting to show that the Moravian church is legally subject to the archbishop of Salzburg (and through him, presumably, to the pope). But the fundamental point is that the arrival of Methodios, with his strange Greek ways and refusal to acquiesce to the wishes of the Bavarian bishops, has disrupted the balance in Moravia between local customs and Bavarian jurisdiction.

One possible motivation for the Bavarians' rather strong feelings on Methodios is the form of the liturgy he had introduced into Moravia with Cyril on their first visit there in the 860s. The *Conversio* refers to Methodios as 'quidam Graecus', and this provides an intriguing insight into what seems to have been the Bavarians' fundamental problem with the brothers' missionary activity.[91] Before the arrival of Cyril and Methodios, we have no reason to think that Moravia had ever been anything but totally western in its 'geo-ecclesiological' outlook.[92] Missionary activity by western churches in Moravia is very well-attested, for example by a number of Latin clerics Cyril and Methodios are said to have met there, and it does seem fairly clear that Moravia had a more or less western orientation before they arrived.[93] The Bavarian bishops' problem with Cyril and Methodios seems not to have been their translations into Slavic as such, but rather what exactly it was that they were translating. Several Slavic manuscripts from the late ninth century were discovered at Mount Sinai in 1975 and published by I.C. Tarnanidis in *The Slavonic Manuscripts*

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[90] Wood, *Missionary Life* p. 172.

[91] Ševčenko, 'Three Paradoxes', p. 221.

[92] The term 'geo-ecclesiological' is borrowed from Blaudeau, 'Between Petrine ideology and Realpolitik'.

[93] Tarnanidis, 'Latin opposition', p. 54.

discovered in 1975 at St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai.[94] There are 41 manuscripts altogether, some of which are from as late as the fifteenth century. Amongst these manuscripts is a 32-folio section of a Slavic Glagolitic Psalter, which comprise the last part of codex and contain Psalms 138-151 and prescribed the order of service for the office of Vespers. Study of it demonstrated that this is the Great Monastic Vespers of the Eastern Church - therefore it is the first Slavic Psalter, dating to the later ninth century. We therefore have an answer to the very old question of whether the Slavic Psalter reflects Eastern or Western tradition - it is eastern/Byzantine, and is based on a Byzantine liturgical book.[95] A second interesting manuscript is 'neither less ancient nor less important than the Psalter'[96] - it is part of a codex called the Slavic Sinai Euchologion. This comprises 29 folios, most from the early part of codex, and 'includes important features relating to the codex's origin: the prayers and antiphons from the offices of hours, vespers and matins, and the readings for a broad cycle of festivals with the corresponding *prokeimena,* the *stichoi* and the *alleluiarias*. All these faithfully reflect the Byzantine devotional tradition, and at some points, indeed, they demonstrate the transitional stage in the ninth century, when the Jerusalem rite was gradually replacing the sung rite, which had hitherto prevailed in the Church of Constantinople'.[97] A third find is a fragment of an unknown codex of roughly the same date - a bifolio from oldest Slavic menaion - which comprises the end of the service of nativity of St John the Baptist and canon from the office of matins for the Feast of St Peter and St Paul, again following the Eastern liturgical tradition, and likely to have been one of the first text translated by Cyril and Methodios for the Moravians.[98] The broad trend of the Sinai evidence is fairly clear - the

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[94] (Thessaloniki, 1988).

[95] Tarnanidis, 'Latin opposition', p. 56f.

[96] ibid p. 57.

[97] ibid.

[98] ibid p. 57f.

texts translated by the brothers into Slavic reflected an eastern outlook, and therefore the danger the Bavarian bishops might have felt them to pose is easily understandable. It is unlikely that the Roman clergy noticed this when Cyril and Methodios introduced their Slavic liturgy to Rome - it is impossible that even the most educated Roman intellectual would have been able to read Slavic, given that it had only just been invented as a written language, and so the Romans would probably never have realised that Cyril and Methodios were essentially introducing an eastern rite into the western church. The Bavarian bishops, however, would have been able to see this liturgy being performed 'on the ground', and would therefore have been fully aware of its eastern nature. This apparent 'eastern outlook' of Cyril and Methodios' Slavic liturgy may therefore go some way to explaining the Bavarians' seemingly extreme hostility to Methodiuo.

Both the *Life of Methodios* and the Register of John VIII seem to concur that, during the 870s, Methodios got on with his mission without a great deal of papal direction or interference. There are, in total, fifteen letters on Moravian issues in John's Register, nine of which were sent in 873 and revolve around John establishing Methodios' (papal-derived) authority within Moravia.[99] Methodios seems to have gone about his business without notable incident until 879, when John of Venice arrived in Rome with a new charge levelled against Methodios by the Frankish clergy. The charge now revolved around Methodios' alleged lack of inclusion of the *filioque* in the creed - a subject which, despite there being very little evidence of any real papal interest in, the Frankish church was extremely exercised about. The pope summoned Methodios to Rome to answer these charges of linguistic disobedience.[100] Although John's decision in favour of Methodios' orthodoxy was a foregone conclusion, John seems to have been motivated primarily by the opportunity presented by the Franks' complaints to re-affirm papal confidence in Methodios, and the authority Methodios derived from papal backing. John sent Methodios back to Moravia with a letter, now

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[99] MGH Epp. 7 pp. 280ff; cp. VM 10ff.

[100] MGH Epp. 7 p. 161 (n. 60).

known as *Industriae tuae*,[101] where, after appointing Wiching as bishop of Nitra, he made it clear that Wiching was supposed to submit to Methodios' authority as papal archbishop.[102] John also confirmed (unlike Hadrian) that it was permissible to use Slavic in the liturgy.[103] John then reiterated his support for Methodios in a further letter sent in March 881, presumably in response to further complaints from Frankish clergy within Methodios' missionary area.[104] There seems to be something of an ongoing cumulative effect here - whenever Methodios was opposed by the Frankish clergy, the pope reiterated his approval of him, and this approval seems to have been assumed to be something Methodios could rely on to continue his work within Moravia. Methodios' authority in Moravia therefore by now came not from himself, but from the legitimacy conferred on him by the pope.

Conclusion

One extremely interesting feature of the conversion of the Moravians is that it represents the papacy's remarkable ability to adapt to changing circumstances. As noted above, Cyril and Methodios' mission came about essentially because ambassadors from Moravia appeared at the court of the Byzantine emperor asking for a conversion mission to be sent to them. The emperor then sent Cyril and Methodios to Moravia, where they embarked on the work of conversion,

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[101] MGH Epp. 7 pp. 222ff.

[102] Ibid - Wiching is described as 'suo archiepiscopo in omnibus obedientem'.

[103] 'Nec sane fidei vel doctrine aliquid obstat sive missas in eadem sclavinisca lingua canere, sive sacrum evangelium vel lectiones divinas novi et veteris testamenti bene translatas et interpretatas legere, aut alia horarum officia omnia psallere; quoniam qui fecit tres linguas principales…ipse creavit et alias omnes ad laudam et gloriam suam. Iubemus tamen ut in omnibus ecclesiis terrae vestrae propter maiorem honorificentiam evangelium latine legatur et postmodum sclavinisca lingua translatum in auribus populi latina verba non intelligentis adnuncietur, sicut in quibusdam ecclesiis fieri videtur…et si tibi [Svatopluk] et iudicibus tuis placet missas latina lingua magis audire praecepimus ut latine missarum tibi sollemnia celebrentur.'

[104] MGH Epp. 7 p. 243f.

translating the Gospel into Slavic, and so forth. What is notable here is that it is not until the end of this initial mission, when the brothers had almost certainly decided to return to Constantinople, that the papacy seems to have become aware of their existence, and of their mission in Moravia. Once it had become aware of Cyril and Methodios' existence, and that of their mission, however, the papacy wasted no time in capitalising on the opportunity to boost its 'spiritual capital' through associating itself with the (more or less) successful conversion activity, as well as the authority lent to it by Cyril and Methodios taking the alleged 'relics' of St Clement to Rome with them, and the opportunities that brought for associated glory for the papacy, in connection with the prestige brought by being able to associate itself with the third Bishop of Rome. This adaptability of the papacy, and its ability to respond to apparently unexpected events, is an interesting feature of the late ninth century, and one which does not seem to have been especially noticed in previous work.

The most interesting thing about the conversion of Moravia, though, is that it represents another clear outplaying of the papal myth-making taking place in later ninth-century Rome. Historians have known for some time that this sort of myth-making took place in relation to the conversion of Bulgaria, where the use of the past coalesced around the figure of Gregory the Great. The conversion of Moravia, however, is less noticed as an example of this. But, as this chapter has shown, the figure of Clement, and the authority which both the papacy and Cyril and Methodios gained from (allegedly) having possession of his relics, was a vital part of the Moravians' conversion. As we saw in chapter 1, several figures in Rome, such as Anastasius Bibliothecarius and Gauderic of Velletri, had an existing interest in Clement; the arrival of Cyril and Methodios in Rome brandishing his relics provided another excellent opportunity for the Roman *literati* to return to the papal archives to investigate another ancient pope, building on the work they had already done with Gregor. In a sense, Clement is the central figure in the conversion of Moravia, more central, indeed, than any individual pope, or indeed Cyril and Methodios themselves. We have here,

therefore, another excellent example of the sorts of practical effects that the new papal myth-making could bring about.

The rough framework put in place ‘on the ground’ in Moravia by Cyril and Methodios did not last very long, and there is almost no evidence for its survival beyond the Magyar invasions in the 890s. Rather, the future of the papacy’s involvement with Slavic conversions lay to the north, in what is now Poland and Bohemia. It is to these issues that this thesis shall now turn.

Chapter 4: The conversion of central Europe in the tenth century

This thesis has already looked in some detail at conversion activities in Bulgaria and Moravia in the ninth century, and the roles of Rome and Constantinople in these conversion activities. This chapter will look at conversion activities in two specific places, namely Bohemia and Poland, to examine, firstly the mechanisms of conversion 'on the ground' in these places, and secondly the extent of papal involvement in these conversions. Broadly speaking, it will argue that the conversion activities the papacy used for its conversions of Bulgaria and Moravia in the ninth century collapsed with the advent of the tenth. This is, I suggest, at least partly due to the moving of the control of cultural memory away from the papacy in the tenth century, and towards local monasteries and laymen.[1] Thus, the papal myth-making that we saw with in connection with the conversions of Bulgaria and Moravia is essentially invisible in the tenth century. Some of the reasons for this were discussed in chapter 1. Put simply, the great age of papal myth-making ran out of steam with the death of its main proponents, as well as the diversion of energies in Rome to debates over Formosus and episcopal transfer more broadly, but all the same, this is an interesting outplaying of developments in Rome and central Italy in the tenth century, in a broader European context, and therefore is part of the story of the ninth-, tenth- and eleventh-century papacy which this thesis is investigating.

In the ninth and tenth centuries, for reasons that are beyond the remit of this thesis, several mostly Slavic groups in central and eastern Europe started 'ethnogenesising' at roughly the same time as each other.[2] After the destruction of the so-called 'Great Moravian Empire' in the ninth

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[1] This is one of the themes of Leyser, 'Charisma in the archive', and 'Memory of Gregory'; discussed above and below.

[2] There are many attempts to explain why this was, with varying levels of persuasiveness - see e.g. Heather, *Empires and Barbarians*; Urbańczyk, *Early Christianity in Central and Eastern Europe*; idem, *Origins of Central Europe* - although this is only a very small sample of the vast amount of work published on the precise chronology of and reasons for Slavic ethnogenesis.

century, caused mostly by the Magyar invasions, the tenth century saw the development of increasingly complex structures in Bohemia, Hungary and (central) Poland, which can loosely be described as 'states' (I use the word 'state' here entirely as a shorthand, without wanting to go into the long debate over the existence or otherwise of medieval 'states'). A key factor in the conglomeration of these states, and an important mechanism by which their leaders were able to consolidate their power, was the introduction of Christianity, in a similar way to the conversion of Bulgaria. Five leaders stand out in this process, namely Wenceslas and Boleslav in Bohemia, Mieszko and Bolesław Chrobry in Poland, and Stephen in Hungary, whose roles in these conversion activities will be discussed in turn below. Broadly speaking, much like Boris in Bulgaria, these *potentes* were aware of the usefulness of Christianity for consolidating their gradually developing realms, and therefore went to some effort to develop their own more or less autonomous 'national' churches in their own territories. Obviously, this tended to bring them into contact with the ecclesiastical authorities in both Rome and Constantinople, as well as with the more developed diocesan church structure in western Europe, especially Germany. It is these interactions, and these rulers' attempts to build church structures to consolidate both Christianity and their own authority in their realms, with which this chapter is primarily concerned.

Two issues need to be flagged up at the start. Firstly, although the chapter does not directly discuss it, the growing dominance of Germany over central Europe in the tenth and eleventh centuries informs everything in it.[3] As with Moravia, a large factor in the increasing coherence and unity of these states was the desire to break free from imperial dominance, and preserve the vaguely unified culture which has been suggested to have existed by recent archaeological reports.[4] For the Bohemians, this was not a significant problem. Bohemia has an extremely useful natural frontier in

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[3] 'Germany' is of course another useful anachronistic shorthand, but what I am using it to mean does more or less map onto what is now modern Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The growing dominance of Germany is discussed well by e.g. Reuter, *Germany*, pp. 163ff; see now also Wilson, *The Holy Roman Empire.*

[4] For this see most accessibly Berend et al, *Central Europe,* pp. 99ff, with further refs.

the west consisting for the most part of forests and mountains - this is the modern border between Germany and the Czech Republic.[5] This may well go some way to explaining why the Bohemians seem to have been significantly less interested than the Poles in making any kind of alliance with Rome or the papacy. Poland, however, famously has no such natural boundary constituting its western border with Germany.[6] Thus, it should not be surprising that Poland in the tenth century seems to have been significantly more interested than Bohemia in forming external alliances to try to counteract the threat of German dominance to its west.

Secondly, I will frequently refer in this chapter to concepts like 'Germany', 'Poland', 'Hungary' and 'Bohemia'. These should not in any way be interpreted as referring to the modern nation states bearing these names (the Czech Republic in the case of Bohemia). There is no reasonable sense in which any of these places can be described as being remotely similar to modern day nation states at any point until the late nineteenth century at the very earliest.[7] All the evidence we have points to them being extremely weakly-organised, somewhat inchoate conglomerations that were more or less subject to a general king/overlord at an extremely abstract level. The debate about pre-modern identity and the extent to which various places can be described as 'states' is interesting and productive, but is not really what this chapter is about. Rather, using these labels is a convenient shorthand for the loosely connected tribal groupings around these areas in the tenth century. Repeating this throughout my discussions of 'Germany', 'Poland' and 'Bohemia' would be extremely tiring for both author and reader, but this disclaimer must be kept in mind throughout this chapter.

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[5] Wickham, *Inheritance*, p. 489.

[6] A useful geographical overview of all the regions that have at some point been part of Poland can be found in Davies, *God's Playground* volume 1, pp. 23ff.

[7] For an example of the complete lack of 'national identity' among large sections of the population, even in the mid-nineteenth century, see Evans, *Pursuit of Power*, p. 481 - 'when a state inspector of education visited a village school in the mountainous department of the Lozère in south-east France in 1864, he asked the pupils what country they lived in. None of them could answer him. "Are you English or Russian?" he asked. They did not know.'

In this chapter I also go into detail on the narratives of the conversions of Bohemia and Poland in the tenth century. These processes were both more or less internal ones, i.e. they were the results of decisions made by princes and ruling elites within these regions, rather than being forced on them by outside forces. Hence, popes are fairly absent from my narratives of these conversions. This therefore takes us away from the main focus of the thesis. However, these detailed narratives provide vital context for the final section of this chapter, which analyses the effect of these conversions on the papacy, and specifically the contribution they made to new forms of papal self-understanding and self-definition. The reader should therefore bear in mind throughout that popes will come back in at the end; and when they do the material on Bohemia and Poland will make far more sense.

Bohemia

The so-called 'Great Moravian Empire' collapsed, primarily as a result of Magyar raids, in 896. There are no surviving written sources for Moravia for the period immediately after this, and what archaeological evidence there is tends to suggest that the political and ecclesiastical infrastructure which had been built up by Cyril, Methodios, Rastislav et al collapsed more or less immediately.[8] The collapse of Great Moravia seems to have created a geopolitical vacuum in the area, into part of which, through processes which will probably always remain extremely obscure, the Bohemian princes in Prague eventually stepped, and established dominance over what is now the Czech Republic.[9] Essentially, these developments together led to the centre of political power in this area of Europe moving from Mikulčice to Prague, where it has stayed ever since.

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[8] Berend, Urbańczyk and Wiszewski, *Central Europe*, p. 82; Somme et al, 'Bohemia and Moravia', p. 216.

[9] Berend et al, *Central Europe*, pp. 82ff - which now supersedes Graus, 'Böhmen im 9. bis 11. Jahrhundert'.

It is likely that there was some kind of Christian infrastructure already in place in Bohemia in the earlier ninth century. We are told, for example, by the *Annales Fuldenses* that in 845 fourteen Bohemian *duces* arrived at Louis the German's court in Regensburg asking to be baptised.[10] Furthermore, according to Cosmas of Prague, writing in the eleventh century, Methodios himself baptised the Bohemian prince Bořivoj in 894.[11] Although this seems highly dubious, not least because Methodios was in fact dead in 894, it does seem reasonable to assume that at least some of the clergy who fled Moravia in 885 probably ended up in Bohemia, together with their Slavic liturgy and books - so the presence of some kind of Slavic clergy in Bohemia, probably influenced to a fair extent by Cyril and Methodios, is conceivable at any time after 870, and highly likely after around 885.[12] Interestingly, according to Vlasto, there are some early Czech forms of the names Clement and Demetrius, which are 'embedded in place names [which] point to a period when Greek forms were current there, which could only have come about through the propagation of Old Church Slavic from Moravia to Bohemia. They are demonstrably older than the eventually dominant Latin forms.'[13] One could respond to this that Clement is in fact a western saint, so early Czech forms of the name do not necessarily point to a period where Greek is current; but this does not change the general fact that, although our knowledge of Bohemia before the tenth century is extremely murky, it does seem reasonable to assume that its tenth century Christianisation did not fall on entirely virgin ground.

Things do become somewhat clearer for the history of tenth-century Bohemia. Unlike in the ninth century, we have several roughly contemporary sources dealing with the conversion of

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[10] *Annales Fuldenses* s.a. 845.

[11] 'Anno domini incarnationis 894 Borivoy baptizatus est primus dux sancte fidei catholicus', and also 'Borivoy qui primus dux baptizatus est a venerabili Metudio episcopo in Moravia' - Cosmas of Prague, *Chronica Boemorum*, 1.14 and 1.10. Edition: *Cosmae pragensis chronica boemorum*, ed. B. Bretholz, MGH SRG n.s. 2 (Berlin, 1923). There is also an English translation: Cosmas of Prague, *The Chronicle of the Czechs*, trans. L. Wolverton (Washington, DC, 2009).

[12] Vlasto, *Entry*, p. 88.

[13] ibid.

Bohemia. Probably the earliest of these is the *First Latin Legend of Wenceslas*, a.k.a. *Crescente fide*, which most experts have guesstimated to date from around 973 or 983.[14] We also have Christian's *Legend*, which calls itself the *Vita et Passio sancti Wenceslai et sancte Ludmile avie eius*, written around the year 994. This text principally interests itself in 'the Cyrillomethodian origins of Bohemian Christianity' and in the martyrdom of St Wenceslas, discussed below.[15] 'The oldest extant manuscript is of the first half of the fourteenth century, but the Latin style is estimated by most scholars to be typical of the earlier period'.[16] Another roughly contemporary source is the Old Church Slavic *Life of St Wenceslas*, 'surely a mid-tenth-century Glagolitic text',[17] which is only now extant in Cyrillic manuscripts of the sixteenth/seventeenth century, and Croatian Glagolitic manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This text is remarkably early - it was begun around 940 at the time of the translation of Wenceslas' relics to Prague, and was 'reshaped towards the end of the tenth century with additions from *Crescente fide*, and other sources'.[18] This Life is usually called the 'First OCS Legend'. As well as these early texts, we also have an interesting Latin source known as *Fuit in provincia Boemorum* - this has a very uncertain dating, but has been plausibly connected with the Slav monastery of Sázava and therefore was perhaps composed in the later eleventh century.

On the basis of these texts, it is surprisingly easy to reconstruct the broad themes of the life of St Wenceslas, still today the patron saint of both Prague and the Czech Republic. Wenceslas was probably born around 904, and all the sources agree that, from early life, he displayed an unhealthy

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[14] ibid p. 90.

[15] ibid p. 91.

[16] ibid, noting also that 'those who still consider "Christian" a late pastiche characterise the style as "deliberately archaic". See also Pekař, *Die Wenzels- und Ludmilalegenden und die Echtheit Christians.*

[17] Vlasto, Entry, p. 91 - although a more cautious note is struck by Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 193, who, while not thinking it is possible to date this source to more specifically, thinks it is likely to still be very early.

[18] ibid.

obsession with piety and scholarly pursuits - according to *Crescente fide*, for example, he 'constantly yearned for learning through divine inspiration.' His father King Vratislav of Bohemia therefore apparently sent him to Budeč to study with a monk called Učen, an experience Wenceslas greatly enjoyed before it was unfortunately cut short by his father's death in (probably) 920.[19] When Wenceslas came of age in about 924, his position was apparently sufficiently secure that he could pursue his own policies without being boxed in by his advisors - although he remained extremely pious and learned.[20] At this point, his life becomes both interesting and relevant to general conversion activities in Bohemia. Wenceslas seems to have thought, on coming to the throne, that Bavaria was exerting too great an influence on Bohemia, in an interesting parallel to the Bavarian bishops' meddling in the affairs and Cyril and Methodios fifty years earlier. In the 920s, Henry the Fowler, the king of Saxony, was strengthening his position in relation to various other German local rulers, and it may well have seemed to Wenceslas that Bohemia's future lay in an alliance with this newly-developing power to the north, rather than with Bavaria.[21] Although Wenceslas does not seem to have made his new leanings especially explicit, a suggestion that this may have occurred to him can perhaps be seen in his decision to dedicate the new church he had built in Prague to St Vitus, the patron saint of Saxony.[22] This is very much a matter of inference, but it does seem to fit our general picture of German, and indeed Slavic, ecclesiastical politics in the late ninth and early tenth centuries.

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[19] *Crescente fide* (CF) 1, trans. in Kantor, *Origins of Christianity in Bohemia,* p. 145.

[20] CF 1 - 'And after that, the above-mentioned noble lad, despite having to cope with his princely office, did not stray from his pious way of life. For he was faithful, wise and truthful in speech, and just in judgement.'

[21] This is not made explicit by the evidence. For the rise of Saxony, see Althoff, 'Saxony and the Elbe Slavs in the tenth century'. Wenceslas' internal thought processes are an inference from these developments, and what we know about Bavarian domination of the Bohemian church in the ninth century. But they are supported by Vlasto, *Entry* p. 94, who adds that 'Bavarian separatism… might make attachment to the Bavarian church…awkward in the future.'

[22] This church is treated at great length in the sources - see Kantor, *Origins* pp. 62 (First OCS Legend), 79f, 147f (*Crescente fide*), 161 (Fuit in provincia Boemorum), 171ff (Christian).

Almost as soon as he started this drift towards Saxony, however, Wenceslas was murdered by his brother. The author of *Crescente fide* tells us:

> And as was often his habit, that night, before the next day dawned, he set off for matins. But into his way stepped his brother, to whom he said: 'You served us well yesterday. May you receive ample reward from the Lord.' However, he drew a sword from his scabbard and, upon striking the holy man on the head, said: 'And this is how I wish to serve you today!' But blood scarcely appeared, for he was weak because of his horrible fear. Now the Blessed Wenceslas could have easily overcome him, but he did not wish to defile himself. But that villain called in a loud voice, saying: 'Hey, where are you, my men? Help me!' Then all those scoundrels came running from their hiding-place with swords and spears and, inflicting many blows upon him, killed him. And his soul, liberated at that battleground from the prison of this world and glorified by blood, departed to the Lord on the twenty-eighth day of September.[23]

There is some creative reconstruction going on here. It seems unlikely, obviously, that Boleslav decided to kill Wenceslas purely because he was 'deceived by the Devil's guile', as *Crescente fide* has it.[24] Rather, given Wenceslas' apparent Saxon turn at around this time, it seems reasonable to infer that some kind of behind-the-scenes machinations are going on here. We know that Boleslav had some pro-Bavarian tendencies - for example, he sent one of his sons to be educated in St Emmeram and seems to have been a personal friend of Arnulf of Bavaria.[25] We also know that in 929--so very shortly before his murder--Wenceslas had betrothed his infant son Boleslas to Emma, who was an Anglo-Saxon princess with some kind of association with the Saxon royal house.[26] Given that, as far as we can tell, Bavaria exerted an extremely strong influence in Bohemia before Wenceslas' reign, it seems reasonable to assume that there was some kind of pro-Bavarian 'party'

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[23] *Crescente fide 8*, trans. Kantor, *Origins*, p. 149f.

[24] CF 6. It may have had something to do with it, though.

[25] At least according to the 2nd OCS Legend - Kantor, *Origins*, p. 84.

[26] This from the ninth century Legend of Gumpold, Bishop of Mantua, chapter 16. (MGH SS 4).

operating in Prague, which has been deliberately obscured by our overwhelmingly ecclesiastical, and therefore pro-Wenceslas, sources. On this reading, it is not too difficult to imagine that Wenceslas' murder was essentially a political move by this pro-Bavarian, anti-Saxon faction - our later sources, in order to create a more dramatic and exciting story, instead transferred all the opprobrium onto Boleslav.

The last paragraph is partially speculative, and runs against the dominant line of historiography on Wenceslas' murder, which basically agrees with Vlasto's views in *The Entry of the Slavs into Christendom*. Vlasto thought that, in his words, Wenceslas' murder 'has…the aspect of a family quarrel allowed to go too far'.[27] Also, Vlasto wants Wenceslas to have been murdered 'for being too much under the thumb of priests, too little attentive to government. Rulers of barbarian peoples, German and Slav, had been essentially military leaders and continued to be so when their peoples formally became Christian, since political needs as such had not changed. To be labelled "pious" or the like…was a reproach implying incapacity as a ruler, however saintly as a man'.[28] In support of this view, Vlasto cites the verdict of *Crescente fide*, which describes Wenceslas as 'qui princeps debebat esse perversus est a clericis et ut monachus'.[29]

He may be right. But Vlasto's view seems to me to give too much credence to what the sources tell us. There may have been some element of family feud in Wenceslas' murder, but the evidence we have for the playing-off of Bavarian and Saxon interests in Bohemia against each other does seem to suggest a greater political element than Vlasto would like there to be. Further, Vlasto does not seem sufficiently alert to the obvious fact that all our surviving sources do seem to be quite vociferously anti-Boleslav (mostly by contrasting him to Wenceslas' piety) - accusing Boleslav of his murder in the way that they do does seem to be some kind of an attempt to blacken his name by

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[27] Vlasto, *Entry*, p. 95.

[28] ibid p. 95f.

[29] CF 12 - CF goes on to say (ch. 16) that Wenceslas contemplated going to Rome to become a monk.

accusing him of a fairly horrific crime. But we will never really know, and all interpretations, mine included, are built on the basis of little more than guesswork.

We are on far surer ground in exploring events in Bohemia after Wenceslas' murder. Extraordinarily soon after his death, Wenceslas became the Bohemian national saint. In fact, describing him as a 'national saint' is, if anything, an understatement - by the end of the tenth century the Czechs were referring to Bohemia as *terra s. Wenceslai*, he became the main image on the royal seals, and one of the earliest surviving texts in what is recognisably the Czech language is a hymn of praise to Wenceslas entitled *Svatý Václave, vévodo české země*.[30] In 932 some kind of 'divine revelation' commanded that Wenceslas' relics needed to be moved to Prague. Our sources do not agree on precisely what form this revelation took, nor on the extent to which Boleslav, now king of Bohemia, knew about it, but we do know with reasonable certainty that the relics arrived at St Vitus' Cathedral by March 932.[31]

It would be nice to be able to say something about what effect this creation of a 'national saint' out of Wenceslas had on the development of Bohemia in the tenth century, but unfortunately the evidence does not really allow us to do this. Most of our sources are significantly more interested in the actual fact of translation of Wenceslas' relics to Prague than in what exactly happened next.[32] Having said this, though, we can make a general reconstruction of events in Bohemia over the next few decades. Broadly speaking, it seems that, ironically, Boleslav ended up needing to accept Saxony's dominance over Bohemian affairs. We also know that, towards the end of the tenth century, Prague became one of the most important centres of the slave trade (and

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[30] Vlasto p. 96f; Wenceslas on seals - Macůrek, *Češi a Poláci v minulosti* vol. 1, figs. 7-8.

[31] The translation of Wenceslas' relics is discussed by Christian and by *Crescente fide*. Despite its inherent interest, this episode has been disappointingly little-discussed in modern historiography. There is a discussion of relic translations in Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, pp. 276ff, but this book suffers from its misguided focus on the cultural backwaters of Britain and France.

[32] Not least because almost all of our sources for the origins of Bohemia are Lives of Wenceslas.

therefore trade more generally) in Europe.[33] As for Christianisation, we can see a relatively complete picture by the later tenth century, but are not very well-informed about how this state of affairs came about. Churches built in the second half of the tenth century have been identified at various places in the Czech Republic, such as Dobřichov, Malín and Plzeň, and the locations of these churches do suggest some kind of radiation outwards of Christianity from Prague.[34] The extent of Christianisation should not be overstated. Allegedly, in 974 Bishop Wolfgang of Regensburg felt able to scold the Bohemians for their lack of knowledge about 'orthodox religion',[35] and as late as 1039 Duke Břetislav I gave an official condemnation of people burying bodies outside Christian cemeteries in the woods, i.e. in a pagan way.[36] But despite this, it does seem reasonably clear that Christianity was at least rapidly expanding in the Bohemian lands, at least as far as the elites were concerned, in the second half of the tenth century.

This growth of Christianity in Bohemia forms the backdrop for the papacy's sudden intervention in Bohemian affairs. In 962, John XII wrote to Otto I to discusses ecclesiastical organisation among, or more accurately on the borders of, a Slavic people, specifically the establishment of an archbishopric of Magdeburg and a bishopric of Merseburg.[37] This letter is remarkable for several reasons. Firstly, John mentions '…Sclauos, quos ipse devicit, in catholica fide noviter fundaverat…', testifying, not only to a developing Slavic consciousness in Bohemia, but, more significantly for our purposes, to the papacy's awareness of the Slavs' new Catholic faith

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[33] Bohemian trade routes are discussed by Ibrahim ibn Ya'qub - see below.

[34] Vlasto, *Entry*, p. 97.

[35] *Othloni Vita sancti Wolfkangi episcopi*, ch. 29, ed. G. Waitz, MGH SS 4 (Hannover, 1981).

[36] Cosmas of Prague, *Chronicle of the Czechs*, 2.4.

[37] Zimmermann, *Papsturkunden*, no. 154, described by Zimmermann as 'Johannes teilt die nach der Kaiserkrönung Ottos (I) auf dessen Bitten erfolgte Errichtung des Erzbistums Magdeburg und des Bistums Merseburg mit'.

and interest in engaging with it.[38] Indeed, the entire letter is essentially a charge to Otto I to use the new diocesan structure John is setting up in Germany to help bring the Slavs into the Christian faith, and more specifically into the political orbit of the papacy. John describes how he is doing this by setting up a new archdiocese in Magdeburg, a city very close indeed to the border between the Holy Roman Empire and the newly-ethnogenesising Slavic territories of Bohemia and Poland.[39] What John goes on to say after this is very interesting indeed. He makes clear, in no uncertain terms, that the task of converting these new Slavic groups to Christianity is entirely delegated to Otto and the Holy Roman Empire, i.e. the 'Germans'.[40] This is to be done through the bishoprics in 'agreed places' which John is setting up for Otto.

In practice, John's plans as set out in this letter proved impossible to realise. This was mostly due to the obstruction of Bernard of Halberstadt, and it was only after his death in 968 that his successor Hildiward could be persuaded to agree to the new archbishopric. At this point, as further evidence for the papacy's reorientation of the German church towards the conversion of the Slavs, Brandenburg and Havelburg were also added to the province of Magdeburg.[41] We also know from a letter sent to Boleslav by Pope John XIII (965-972), preserved by Cosmas of Prague, that

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[38] John is obviously thinking of Poland as well as Bohemia here, though Mieszko converted a little later. But this section specifically relates to Bohemia; Poland is discussed below. It is difficult to work out who 'quos ipse devicit' refers to here, as the only obvious recent victory for the Ottonians in 962 is over the Hungarians at Lechfeld in 955 (of course, John may not have known that the Hungarians were not Slavs).

[39] 'Et quia tot gentes sub uno pastore regi minime possunt, volumus et per nostre auctoritatis privilegium censemus, ut censum et decimationem omnium gentium…subdendi Magdaburgensi, Mesreburgensi vel cuiunque velint future unicuique sedi. Volumus etiam, carissimi confratres, et ex beati Petri iussione apostoli precipimus, ut Moguntiensis, Treuerensis, Coloniensis, Salsaburgensis, Hamaburgensis ecclesie archipresules Magdaburgensis monasterii in archiepiscopalem et Merseburgensis in episcopalem translationis sedem totis cordis corporisque viribus consentanei fautoresque persistant.'

[40]'Cum vero omnipotens Deus per pretextatum servum suum, invictissimum inperatorem suumque filium regem successoresque eorum viciniam Slauorum gentem ad cultum Christiane fidei perduxerit, per eosdem in convenientibus locis secudum oportunitatem episcopatus constitui et in eisdem per consensum predictorum quinque archipresulum successorumque eorum ab archiepiscopo Magdaburgensi episcopos consecrari volumus suffraganeos.'

[41] Reuter, *Germany*, p. 164.

there was some kind of attempt to establish a bishopric in Prague, with the very specific proviso that the new diocese needed to use Latin in the liturgy, rather than Slavic - although this is probably a later anachronism introduced by Cosmas, as indicated by the use of the word 'Ruzie' to describe a polity, Rus', which was certainly not Christianised yet.[42] Despite the assertion of Nora Berend et al that the foundation of the bishopric of Prague is no more than a 'dubious story',[43] there seems little reason to doubt that this letter does in fact represent an authentic attempt by John XIII to initiate a church structure in Bohemia. Interestingly, the new bishopric seems to have been made subordinate to Mainz, rather than Magdeburg - although this is probably most easily explained as being a result of Magdeburg's apparent new focus on Poland at this point rather than Bohemia (see below). What it does not disprove is the notion that Germany played a fundamental part in the erecting of church structures in Bohemia, and that the papacy was happy to support these developments.

This thesis has, in a large number of places, emphasised that our 'knowledge' of the events it describes, such as it is, is extremely incomplete and unsatisfactory. Nowhere is this more the case than in the ethnogenesis and Christianisation of Bohemia and Poland. However, it does seem more or less safe to make a few tentative conclusions about Bohemia, on the basis of what I have written here. Firstly, Christianisation of these new territories cannot be seen in isolation from the concurrent growth and consolidation of royal power. Put at its crudest, without the impact of individuals such as Wenceslas and Boleslav and their desire to increase their own power, it is impossible to imagine

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[42] Zimmermann, *Papsturkunden*, no. 181 - 'Unde apostolica auctoritate et sancti Petri principis apostolorum potestate, cuius licet indigni tamen sumus vicarii, annuimus et collaudamus atque incanonizamus, quod ad ecclesiam sancti Uiti et sancti Wencezlai martirum fiat sedes episcopalis, ad ecclesiam vero sancti Georgii martiris sub regula sancti Benedicti et obediencia filie nostre, abbatisse Marie, constituatur congregacio sanctimonialum. Veruntamen non secundum ritus aut sectam Bulgarie gentis vel Ruzie aut Sclauonice lingue, sed magis sequens instituta et decreta apostolica unum pociorem tocius ecclesie ad placitum eligas in hoc opus clericum latinis adprime literis eruditum, qui verbi vomere novalia cordis gentilium scindere et triticum bone operacionis serere atque manipulos frugum vestre fidei Christo reportare suficiat.' The letter itself does not survive, but is preserved in Cosmas of Prague, 1.22.

[43] Berend et al, *Central Europe*, p. 114. Presumably this is an over-extrapolation from the confusing mention of Russia - but this is hardly an argument for dismissing the letter in its entirety.

the Christianisation of Bohemia proceeding in the way it seems to have done. As well as this, the role of relics and memory cannot be underplayed. In a similar way to Clement's relics in the case of Cyril and Methodios, the relics and development of the cult of Wenceslas do seem to have dramatically sped up the processes of Christianisation in Bohemia, even though our sources do not really allow us to interrogate this process in any real depth. But what stands out above all else in the conversion of Bohemia is the dominant influence of Germany. Nothing in the above section makes any sense unless it is seen in the context of the expanding power and influence of Germany under the Ottonians at this time. Not only can we see several developments within Bohemia taking place almost entirely because of German influence (most notably the assassination of Wenceslas, in my view), but we have clear evidence for the restructuring of the German church entirely to convert the Slavic lands, and in so doing establish German dominance over them - whether this was intentional or not.

With regard to the papacy, what must be emphasised from the Christianisation of Bohemia is its essentially reactive nature. The first evidence we have for any papal interest in Bohemia is John XII's letter of 962 - until that year, there is no visible papal involvement in Bohemian affairs at all. This may be due to poor survival of evidence. But given what else we know about the operations of the early medieval papacy, this seems unlikely. During the conversions of Anglo-Saxon England and of the Netherlands and Germany, the papacy was certainly involved, but in both cases it does not seem to have provided the initial dynamic for conversion.[44] In England, Gregory the Great was basically responding to a request for missionaries from the princes of Kent; but it was a highly proactive response, and with Boniface, the papacy was not really directing missionary efforts itself,

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[44] For this and what follows, see Wood, 'Christianisation and the dissemination of Christian teaching'.

rather than generally supporting and providing guidance to Boniface.[45] The conversions of Bulgaria and Moravia were then really papal responses to local and/or Byzantine initiatives, rather than the papacy initially setting out to 'make its mark' on the world stage by directing conversion activities here; it did that principally through 'latching onto' conversion activities already underway. So, when seen in the *longue durée* history of papal missionary activity, the conversion of Bohemia is unlikely to have been directed from the start by the papacy. Still, though, the papacy did intervene, and did so quite forcefully, in a way which does not imply any doubt about its position at the head of the (western) Church, and the legitimacy of its attempting to organise affairs in both Bohemia and Germany. What is different, though, is that the 'papal myth-making' we saw in ninth-century Rome, and its marshalling in the conversions of Bulgaria and Moravia (with Nicholas I rewriting Gregory I's *Responsa* to the Anglo-Saxons/Bulgarians, and with the story of Clement in the conversion of Moravia), has more or less died out by the tenth century and the conversion of Bohemia. The most logical explanation for this is probably that the centre of this myth-making enterprise had moved away from the papacy itself, and to local abbots and lay rulers.[46]

Why, then, did the papacy not continue its 'myth-making' with the tenth-century conversion of Bohemia? As argued earlier, the answer seems to be that the papacy had simply lost interest in myth-making by this point. Throughout the tenth century, there is no real evidence for sustained Roman intellectual culture like that surrounding Nicholas I and John VIII.[47] Here I follow Conrad Leyser, who thinks that the 'collapse of institutional papal memory' in tenth-century Rome, and the

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[45] For Boniface, see my comments in chapter 2; and also Sullivan, 'The papacy and missionary activity in the early middle ages', p. 72 - 'Boniface came to Rome inspired with an urge to do missionary work, but without any specific programme of action in mind…so he turned to Rome for further guidance.'

[46] Leyser, 'Charisma in the archive'; the point is also implicitly made in 'Memory of Gregory', the last section of which, 'Europe's Gregory: church after empire', never mentions Rome; the action has moved to Italy outside Rome.

[47] Though there is a great deal of it outside Rome - Leonardi, 'Intellectual life'. It is certainly not a major theme of Wickham, *Medieval Rome*, which does discuss eleventh- and twelfth-century intellectual culture at some length.

related ‘Formosan Schism’, ‘may be part of a larger, less juridical encounter between Montecassino and Rome as arbiters of cultural memory, negotiating for possession of the moral giants of the past, St Benedict and Gregory the Great’.[48] If the papacy had indeed lost its control over papal memory in the tenth century, it is in a sense unsurprising that the papacy made no real attempt to marshal the ‘mythic past’ in its conversion of Bohemia. All the same, this is a key part of the history of the ninth- and tenth-century papacy: the rhetorical legitimation strategies popes had been using in their conversion activities in Bulgaria and Moravia stop being used in the tenth century.

It should also be noted that both Rome and Bohemia seem to have been fairly happy for the Bohemian church to be subject to the German church.[49] The reasons for this were probably twofold: for one thing, Boleslav’s power had not been entirely consolidated throughout Bohemia, so it was easier for him to have an outside force to assist him in holding the Bohemian lands together. Secondly, as mentioned above, Bohemia has a very obvious natural border with Germany - the border of what are now the Czech Republic and the German state of Saxony is covered in quite dense forest, which takes a surprisingly long time to traverse even by train, and the border between Bavaria and the Czech Republic consists of mountains. The following section, on the conversion of Poland to Christianity only very slightly after Bohemia, is, among other things, an object lesson in the importance of geographical factors in historical development.

Poland

In the third quarter of the tenth century, through processes which are, if anything, even more obscure than the emergence and Christianisation of Bohemia, some kind of polity also developed in

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[48] Leyser, ‘Charisma in the archive’,

[49] Vlasto rightly notes that ‘we may tend to exaggerate Bohemia’s desire for independence’ - *Entry* p. 99.

the northern European plain, in what is now Poland. In the very early middle ages, this area was home to various tribes, some of which may or may not have had some Slavic characteristics. There is some archaeological evidence for some sort of 'common culture' among these tribes before the tenth century, but it does not really make sense to refer to 'Poland' before this point.[50] However, in the first half of the tenth century 'a previously marginal area became densely settled and strongholds appeared; in the second quarter of the tenth century, these were built on a unified model in Bnin, Giecz, Gniezno, Grzybowo, Ostrów Lednicki, Poznań and Smarzewo'.[51] Bearing in mind the provisos given in the introduction, it does seem that this represents some kind of conglomeration into an at least partially coherent state, and it is convenient to refer to this henceforth as 'Poland'.

This conglomeration was a result chiefly of the rise of the Piast dynasty in the early tenth century.[52] According to tradition, the Piasts initially ruled over the tribe of the Polanie, whose centre was at Gniezno.[53] By the first half of the tenth century, they had extended their rule over parts of Kujawy and Masovia to the east, and of Małopolska and Silesia to the south.[54] The earliest Piast ruler about whom we have any knowledge is Mieszko I, who seems to have come to power at the latest by about 960. Mieszko is first referenced in our sources as 'Misacam regem', in Widukind of Corvey's description of Mieszko's attempt in the early 960s to conquer Western Pomerania (roughly what is now northeastern Germany and northwestern Poland).[55] Mieszko's reign brought more

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[50] For a summary of this evidence see, inter alia, Kurnatowska, 'Die Christianisierung Polens' - one of the better articles in a very frustrating collection.

[51] Berend et al, *Central Europe*, p. 118.

[52] This view is contested by Urbańczyk, 'Who named Poland?'. But for present purposes this caveat is more interesting than important.

[53] There is an attempt to reconstruct the rise of the Piast dynasty in Berend et al, *Central Europe*, pp. 99ff. But this is really just guesswork - in contrast to Bohemia, we have no surviving sources describing the Piasts themselves.

[54] Vlasto, *Entry*, p. 113.

[55] Widukind of Corvey, *Res gestae saxonicae* 3.66, in MGH SS 3, p. 463.

development and coalescence of the Polish polity - we know that in the mid-tenth century the trade route linking Prague and Kiev started going through Poland, bringing in both Islamic and Byzantine coins from the east, and German and Anglo-Saxon ones from the west.[56] This development of the Polish economy would clearly have aided Mieszko's attempts to consolidate his own power, and assisted the coagulation of the Polish 'state'. These developments are reflected in the description of Poland provided by Ibrahim Ibn Yakub: 'as far as the realm of Mesko [sic] is concerned, this is the most extensive of their [the Slavs'] lands. It produces an abundance of food, meat, honey, and fish. The taxes collected by the King from commercial goods are used for the support of his retainers. He keeps three thousand armed men divided into detachments…and provides them with everything they need, clothing, horses and weapons…[The Poles] inhabit the richest limits of the lands suitable for settlement, and most plentiful in means of support. They are especially energetic in agriculture…Their trade on land and sea reaches to the Ruthenians and to Constantinople.'[57] All this should not be exaggerated. But it does seem difficult to deny that there was some sort of developed structure, even if only a loose association of tribes, in Poland at this time.

Mieszko and Wenceslas had a lot in common. Perhaps the most notable similarity between them is the German pressure on their western frontiers. As with Bohemia, and to a lesser extent Moravia, it is in this context that Mieszko's, and therefore Poland's, decision to convert to Christianity must be understood. Otto I had, of course, triumphed at the Lechfeld in 955, and in 962 had been crowned emperor by Pope John XII in Rome - the same year as John had ordered that Magdeburg should become a missionary diocese for converting Slavs. Mieszko's baptism is conventionally dated to 966, although there does not seem to be any primary source actually saying

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[56] A brilliant discussion of these issues is Jankowiak, 'Two systems of trade'. Jankowiak's forthcoming monograph on the tenth century European economy will provide a much-needed background to many of the issues in this chapter; in the meantime I am grateful to him for some very enjoyable discussions on the tenth century European slave trade.

[57] Quoted in Davies, *God's Playground* p. 3, citing the edition of Ibn-Yakub in *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* vol. 1.

this, and we do not even know the location of Mieszko's baptism.[58] What we can date with some certainty is the foundation of the bishopric of Poznań (probably Mieszko's main residence after his baptism), which took place in 968.

Establishing the first Polish bishopric at Poznań would certainly have caused problems for Mieszko. As with Wenceslas in Bohemia, Mieszko would have had to spend a large amount of time worrying about the German threat on his western frontier. Unlike the Bohemians, however, as already noted, Mieszko had no kind of natural border with the Germans, or at least a frontier relatively difficult to cross, as the border between Germany and Bohemia was and is. It is therefore unsurprising that over the next fifty years or so the dominant theme in Polish history seems to have been establishing a Polish church, and something along the lines of a 'national identity', at the same time as attempting to resist German domination of Poland and the Polish church. After his papal dispensation of 962, Otto I was quite keen that any new bishopric among the Slavs should come under the jurisdiction of the new bishopric of Magdeburg.[59] Oddly, though, given that Otto had appointed him, Pope John XIII (965-972) seems to have been considerably less keen than his predecessor John XII to allow Otto to have whatever he wanted. Although John does not seem to dispute that Magdeburg is the metropolitan see when it comes to Slavic conversions, his (apparently undateable) letter to Otto does seem quite cool towards the idea of Magdeburg having completely

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[58] Urbańczyk and Rosik, 'The kingdom of Poland', suggest at p. 276 that Mieszko could have been baptised anywhere out of Gniezno, Poznań, Ostrów Lednicki and Regensburg. No one knows. But the date of 966 is so generally accepted, with so little evidence for or against, that it makes no sense to argue against it.

[59] The official line, as put forward in the *Gesta Archiepiscoporum Magdeburgensium*, was that 'statuit, eum esse metropolitanum totius ultra Salam et Albiam Slavorum gentis tunc ad Deum converse vel convertende, et ut secundum desiderium imperatoris in hiis civitatibus, in quibus olim barbari ritus maxima viguit superstitio, id est Cyzi, Misni, Merseburg, Brandeburg, Havelburg, Poznam in honore Domini episcopa fundarentur, quorum pastores secundum canonicam auctoritatem Magdeburgensi archiepiscopo fidem et subiectionem debendo sociarentur.' - MGH SS 14 p. 381.

free rein over the affairs of the Polish church.[60] In a similar vein, it has been argued that Jordan, the first bishop of Poznań (and thus of Poland), was directly subordinate to the Bishop of Rome, not the Archbishop of Magdeburg, and various historians have described him as 'episcopus immediate subiectus sedis apostolicae.'[61] This seems likely.[62] Whatever Jordan's exact status, though, we do have very solid evidence of direct contact between Mieszko and his heirs and Rome over the next fifty years or so.[63] For example, in 997 Adalbert was sent directly from Rome to Poland to convert its pagan neighbours. The first Polish archbishop, Gaudentius, was ordained in Rome in 999 specifically to become an archbishop in Poland, and travelled to Gniezno the next year.[64] Furthermore, during his wars with Henry II in the eleventh century, Bolesław Chrobry at one point reproaches Henry for hindering his attempts to send the tribute he owes to Rome.[65]

These examples do seem to show a remarkable degree of direct contact between Rome and Poland at this time. The most remarkable piece of evidence available to us, though, is the very short document known as *Dagome Iudex.* This was written in the 990s. The original document does not survive, but we do have a summary copy from the later eleventh century, preserved in the canonical collection of Deusdedit. This is worth quoting in full:

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[60] '…censemus, ut censum et decimationem omnium gentium, quas idem piisimus imperator baptizavit, vel per eum suumque filium aequivocum regem successoresque eorum Deo annuente baptizandae sunt, ipsi successoresque eorum potestatem habeant distribuendi, subdendi Magdeburgensi, Merseburgensi, vel cuique velint futurae sedi…Cum vero Deus omnipotens per praetextatum servum suum invicissimum imperatorem suumque filium regem successoresque eorum vicinam Slavorum gentem ad cultum Christianae fidei perduxerit, per eos in convenientibus locis secundum oportunitatem episcopatus constitui…[et] ab archiepiscopo Magdaburgensi episcopos consecrari volumus suffraganeos' - PL 133, xii, col. 1029.

[61] Berend et al, *Central Europe* p. 120, with further refs.

[62] The objection of Berend et al, *Central Europe* p. 120, that 'such an institution was unknown at the time', displays a baffling ignorance of Methodios' exact same position.

[63] Collected in Urbańczyk and Rosik, 'The kingdom of Poland', at p. 282.

[64] Thietmar 4.45.

[65] Thietmar 6.94-95.

> Item in alio tomo sub Iohanne XV papa Dagome iudex et Ote senatrix et filii eorum: Misicam et Lambertus - nescio cuius gentis homines, puto autem Sardos fuisse, quoniam ipsi a IIII iudicibus reguntur - leguntur beato Petro contulisse unam civitatem in integro, que vocatur Schinesghe, cum omnibus suis pertinentiis infra hos affines, sicuti incipit a primo latere longum mare, fine Bruzze usque in locum, qui dicitur Russe et fines Russe extendente usque in Craccoa et ab ipsa Craccoa usque ad flumen Oddere recte in locum, qui dicitur Alemure, et ab ipsa Alemura usque in terram Milze recte intra Oddere et exinde ducente iuxta flumen Oddera usque in predictam civitatem Schinesghe.[66]

This is very interesting. *Dagome Iudex* is the earliest surviving document referencing an area or polity recognisable as 'Poland'.though 'Polonia' appears on coins around 990. It is essentially a description of the realms Mieszko was more or less in control of in northern central Europe.It seems fairly clear from *Dagome Iudex* that Mieszko sought somehow to directly tie his realm to the bishopric of Rome - the description afterwards is basically a description of precisely *where* it was that Mieszko ruled. At first, this does seem quite surprising. There are no parallel contemporary examples for any of the rulers involved in early medieval conversions directly subordinating themselves in quite this way. So what did Mieszko think he was doing? Broadly speaking, the answer, as touched on above, seems to be the pressure being exerted on Mieszko by German eastern expansionism. As has been repeated in this chapter, Poland lacks a clear natural western border with Germany. Every other Christianising 'state' in the ninth and tenth centuries did have some obvious geographical definition - whether it be the Morava basin for Moravia, the Vltava basin for Bohemia, the Danube basin for Hungary and so on. It therefore does not seem unreasonable to suppose that, lacking any such clear geographical definition for 'Poland', Mieszko felt the need to resort to some kind of papal protection. This probably explains why *Dagome Iudex* is so keen on delineating the precise geographical definition of Poland - its boundaries on four sides are quite clearly defined,

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[66] For the text, see von Glanvell, *Die Kanonessamlung des Kardinals Deusdedit*, lib. III, cap. 199, p. 359f.

but, whereas its eastern boundaries are simply said to finish at Russia, *Dagome Iudex* is far more specific about where it is that Poland stops in the west, and so, by implication, where Germany begins. As for the direct subordination of Poland to the Bishop of Rome, this too is presumably intended as some kind of 'escape outward' from Mieszko to get away from German expansionism to a more distant, and therefore to his mind presumably less threatening, power.

This brings us to one of the most-discussed episodes in tenth-century history, namely the German emperor Otto III's 'pilgrimage' to Gniezno, in Poland, in 1000.[67] There is an intense and ultimately not very fruitful debate about quite what Otto III was doing when he went to Gniezno. No one seems to dispute that something interesting happened relating to the formal position of Mieszko's successor Bolesław Chrobry both in Poland itself and in relation to Otto as Holy Roman Emperor. Unsurprisingly, though, interpretations tend to divide among national lines. Most German historians tend to argue that Otto named Bolesław as a *patricius*, thereby making Otto a 'deputy' for Bolesław. Therefore, Bolesław was subordinate to Otto, and Poland was part of (what would become) the Holy Roman Empire. Most Polish historians, on the other hand, tend to argue that Bolesław was in fact elected to the Polish kingship in Gniezno (technically speaking Mieszko was not a king, as he was never crowned), and therefore Otto's pilgrimage represents something like Poland's original 'declaration of independence'.[68] I tend toward the second interpretation myself. But I would argue that the entire debate is in fact not very important. Especially for this thesis, which is not an investigation into either the development of the Polish state or early medieval German eastern expansion, it hardly matters what Bolesław's precise position was in relation to Otto. What *does* matter, though, is that an event of some significance clearly took place in Gniezno, which stuck in the mind of many contemporaries for quite some time afterwards, to the extent that

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[67] The best modern account of this is Althoff, *Otto III,* pp. 90ff.

[68] The debate is set out briefly in Althoff, *Otto III*, p. 90.

they felt the need to write quite a lot of narrative accounts of it.[69] It is therefore worth looking at some of these narrative accounts.

One of the less interesting narrators of the Gniezno incident is Thietmar of Merseburg. Thietmar really tells us little more than that Otto established the archbishopric of Gniezno, and then subordinated the bishoprics of Kołobrzeg, Kraków and Wrocław to it (apparently the Bishop of Poznań refused his consent to this), and then goes back to Germany.[70] Fortunately, Gallus Anonymus is significantly more informative. Although his account of the Gniezno affair is far too long to reproduce here in full, he does tell us that 'on this day they had come together in such high opinion of each other that the emperor made him [Bolesław] his brother and helper of the empire (*fratrem et cooperatorem imperii constituit*) and named him friend and ally of the Roman people'.[71] Crucially, Gallus goes on to say that 'he turned over to him and his successors power over ecclesiastical offices in the kingdom of Poland and in the other barbaric lands conquered by him or still to be conquered that belonged to the empire. With a privilege of the holy Roman Church, Pope Sylvester confirmed the decree recording this agreement'.[72] He also explicitly refers to Bolesław as a *rex*. There is not much here to choose between the rival 'German' and 'Polish' readings of Gniezno - neither interpretation really presents a catastrophic misreading of the evidence, and in any case the debate has more to do with modern nationalism than medieval politics. I myself think

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[69] Althoff, *Otto III*, p. 101, thinks that the German interpretation is more likely (perhaps unsurprisingly), but converges with my view that overall the debate has generated a lot more heat than light.

[70] Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon* 4.45 - 'Qualiter autem cesar ab eodem tunc susciperetur et per sua usque ad Gnesin deduceretur, dictu incredibile ac ineffabile est. Videns a longe urbem desideratam nudis pedibus suppliciter advenit et ab episcopo eiusdem Ungero venerabiliter succeptus aecclesiam introducitur et ad Christi gratiam sibi inpetrandam martyris Christi intercessio profusis lacrimis invitatur. Nec mora, fecit ibi archiepiscopatum, ut spero legitime, sine consensu tamen prefati presulis, cuius diocesi omnis haec regio subiecta est; committens eundem predicti martyris fratri Radimo eidemque subiciens Reinbernum, Salsae Cholbergiensis aecclesiae episcopum, Popponem Cracuaensem, Iohannem Wrotizlaensem, Vungero Posnaniensi excepto; factoque ibi altari sanctus in eo honorifice condidit reliquias.'

[71] Gallus Anonymus, trans. Althoff, *Otto III*, p. 99.

[72] ibid.

that Gniezno meant different things in Germany and in Poland. It is entirely possible that Bolesław misunderstood, or at least claimed to misunderstand, an act by Otto meant to do little more than give him a greater share in his imperial power as a more total giving away of control over Bolesław's realms. It is also entirely possible, indeed it is likely, that our later narrative accounts are choosing not to give us the full picture. But it does not really matter. Whatever happened, it seems fairly clear that Otto gave some degree of recognition that there was a significant Slavic state conglomerating on his eastern frontier. Whether he made Poland part of the empire or not is not really relevant to the status of the Polish church and its impact on the papacy - and, from our eleventh century evidence, it is very clear that this had far more to do with Germany than with Rome.[73]

Conclusion

The big absence from this chapter has been popes. This is for a good reason. As was explored in chapter 1, at the end of the ninth century and the beginning of the tenth, the papal myth-making going on in Rome during the ninth century seems to have essentially run out, and the city's intellectual life instead descended into debates about the legitimacy or otherwise of episcopal transfer, and whether bishops of other sees should be allowed to become the bishop of Rome. This could be put succinctly, if a little simplistically, as Roman intellectual culture turning inwards on itself, and abandoning the confident engagement with the outside world we saw with the conversions of Bulgaria and Moravia in the ninth century, which were themselves driven largely by the glorification of the papal archive under Nicholas I and his subordinates, and the new interest this produced in the distant papal past, and in great 'missionary' popes like Gregory I. The conversions of Bohemia and Poland in the tenth century, however, reflect the dying off of this papal myth-

[73] For a brief overview of this, see Vlasto, *Entry*, pp. 130ff.

making. Some of the reasons for this were discussed in chapter 1. But the upshot, at least so far as it related to papal missionary endeavours, is clear: the tenth-century conversions of eastern Europe, which were not, after all, very much separated in either time or place from the ninth-century conversions of Bulgaria and Moravia, do not have the same amount of papal initiative as the ninth-century conversions. It would be taking it a little too far to argue that there was no papal involvement *at all* in these conversions, though it is not difficult to imagine this argument being made - both of the tenth-century conversions can meaningfully be said to be the products of local initiatives rather than external Roman/papal intervention. To put it very simply, the popes and the Romans were doing other things during the tenth century.

The shortest answer to the question of what those other things were can be found in the advent of the Ottonians, both in 'Germany' and in Rome, in the mid-tenth century. As was noted at the start of this chapter, the driving force of the conversions of Bohemia and (especially) Poland was the growth of German power throughout central/eastern Europe in the tenth century.[74] This thesis is not about the Ottonians, nor about medieval Germany in and of itself; all the same, it is crucial to note that the initiative of conversion had moved, by the mid-tenth century, north of the Alps, i.e. away from Rome. In a way, therefore, the papacy had come full circle. This thesis started by noting that the 'myth-making generation' active in Rome under Nicholas I can profitably be seen as an attempt by the papacy to take back its own historical memory to Rome, and thus away from the Franks. Really, though, this was only successfully done for about twenty years. Whether it was sustainable *a priori* is impossible to say; clearly, though, in practice it was not sustained for any significant amount of time. When our evidence begins to pick up again in the middle of the tenth century, the papacy's interest in its past has more or less disappeared. Not just its distant past, either - there does not appear to have been any significant institutional memory in tenth-century Rome of

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[74] The best accounts of which, at least in English, are Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages*; idem, *Medieval Polities;* see also *NCMH* 3, almost every chapter of which is concerned with the Ottonians in some way.

the role played by the papacy in the conversions of Bulgaria and Moravia to Christianity in the ninth century. Rome had lost the initiative again. In the same way as the eighth-century Frisians probably cared more about the Franks than the Romans, the tenth-century Poles certainly cared more about the Germans than about the popes. Essentially, the popes had reverted to type. After a short blaze of glory at the end of the ninth century, the papacy returned to its more comfortable role responding to outside requests, rather than taking any great initiative in converting Europe itself. One consequence of this, namely the less than favourable opinion of the ninth-century papacy held by the eleventh-century reform movement, will be the subject of the epilogue.

Epilogue: phantoms of papal remembrance in the eleventh century

The most significant development of the eleventh century, at least in terms of the history of the papacy, is the emergence of the 'reform papacy', encapsulated most of all in the figure of Gregory VII. That topic in its own right is outside the focus of this thesis, which is principally on the ninth and tenth centuries. However, one aspect of Gregorian reform which does deserve some comment is the interest that eleventh-century clerics displayed in the late ninth-century papacy. The interest Gregory and his collaborators had in the distant past, principally in late antiquity, in their battles against simony and nicolaitism, is so well known as not to be worth going into here. A lesser-noted aspect of this, however, is the interest displayed in the great age of papal myth-making in the ninth century by eleventh-century clerics. It is worth briefly investigating this here, before bringing this thesis to a close.

The point which this epilogue is making fits into the arguments of two books published in the early 1990s, namely Patrick Geary's *Phantoms of Remembrance*, and James Fentress' and Chris Wickham's *Social Memory*.[1] The basic arguments of both of these books are so well-known that a brief summary will suffice here. To take Geary first: the eleventh century saw a more or less conscious rewriting of the recent past, with historical documents destroyed, altered or forged to better legitimise the needs of powerful aristocrats in the eleventh century. Geary focussed his arguments mostly on what is now France, which is fair enough, but, unlike other historiographical debates dominated by French evidence, his basic arguments can be applied all over eleventh-century Europe (his arguments seem to hold best for what had been the Carolingian empire, but can still be used profitably for other regions). Essentially, Geary argued for a process prevalent throughout his regions of 'forgetting' the tenth century, and legitimising contemporary power

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[1] Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*; Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*; cf. Bouchard, *Rewriting Saints and Ancestors*, whose methodology was clearly inspired by both of these works.

groups by appealing to the past of the middle distance, as, at that point, the Carolingians were. It is fairly easy to see how this would have worked: a not insignificant amount of the rhetoric around Brexit has focussed on the British Empire, or at least historically ignorant fantasies of them; the now fairly-distant past of imperial supremacy can be used to legitimise highly questionable policies, and indeed politicians, in the present. The Carolingians, on Geary's reading, played more or less the same role in eleventh-century Europe - the empire was sufficiently distant that people could essentially make up stories about it to present themselves as acting in a similar light, but not so distant that these stories would have been meaningless; people knew who Charlemagne was in the eleventh century, however vaguely and however refracted that 'knowledge' may have been through mythologising, and so presenting themselves with the reflected glory of Charlemagne would have *worked* as a legitimation strategy for Geary's Pannonian aristocrats. Geary's model informs this epilogue: the eleventh-century papal reform movement bathed itself in the reflected glory of the heroic papal past in much the same way as French aristocrats did. This was mostly done through late antiquity, but the earlier age of ninth-century papal myth-making also had a role to play.

The second main stimulus for this epilogue is James Fentress and Chris Wickham's book on social memory.[2] Again, this book is too well-known to be worth expounding its arguments in detail here, but essentially it is an account of how societies choose to remember or forget, and the strategies that are used to remember specific historical or cultural episodes in a society's history.. As with Geary, the book's detailed case studies have little to no relevance for this chapter; all the same, it works as a stimulus, and as a model for understanding how societies choose to remember or forget things.

The most obvious, and most important, use of the ninth-century past by eleventh-century clerics was the copying of the Register of John VIII. This is in and of itself significant, as it shows us that, as well as the individual clerics interested in the ninth-century papal past discussed above,

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[2] Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*.

there was also a systematic attempt to (re)discover and use ninth-century papal history in eleventh-century Rome/Lazio. Therefore, I will examine it somewhat more systematically than Pseudo-Liudprand, Humbert and Damian. The definitive treatment of John VIII's Register is of course Dietrich Lohrmann's 1968 study.[3] As noted earlier Lohrmann was really more interested in the copying of the Register in the eleventh century than in its original production in the ninth. Although the immediate circumstances surrounding the copying of the Register in the eleventh century are less than clear, Lohrmann made various interesting suggestions. It is not the task of this epilogue to agree or disagree with any of these suggestions, as the thesis is fundamentally about the ninth century rather than the eleventh; rather, what follows will constitute an attempt to explore what Lohrmann's suggestions imply about clerical and papal memory, at Montecassino and at Rome, in the later eleventh century.

As discussed in the introduction, the Register as we have it as a creation of Santa Maria in Pallara, a dependent house of Montecassino in Rome. Perhaps the first question that strikes the modern historian is precisely why the scribes of Montecassino decided to copy out John VIII's register, rather than that of a more obviously (to us) significant papal figure, such as (say) Leo I, Nicholas I or Gelasius I. The answer to this question may well be that they in fact did copy out the Registers of these other figures, but the codices have simply not survived. The *Chronicon Casinensis* contains information about several abbots of Montecassino and which books they ordered to have copied. The longest list by far belongs to Abbot Desiderius (Abbot 1058-1086; Bishop of Rome 1086-1087); the Chronicle tells us that Desiderius 'in libris describendis operam dare permaximam studuit'. The Chronicle tells us about two items that are especially interesting in the context of John VIII's Register, under the headline 'Codices namque nonnullos in hoc loco describi praecepit', where it lists 'Registrum Leonis papae' and 'Registrum Felicis papae'.[4]

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[3] Lohrmann, *Das Register*.

[4] *Chron. Cas.* 3.63, *MGH SS* 7.46; Lohrmann, *Das Register*, p. 95f.

Presumably, the Leo and Felix this refers to are Popes Leo I (440-461) and Felix III (483-492). It is important to note, with Eric Caspar, that 'ob es sich wirklich um verlorene Register oder nur um Canones-Sammlungen mit Briefen dieser Päpste handelt, diese Frage muss offen bleiben';[5] nonetheless, the general sense of the Latin here would seem to imply some specific interest in the letters of Leo and Felix. However, the *Chronicon Casinensis* is the only evidence we have for the existence of these registers (or for this interest). Lohrmann suggested that the most likely explanation for this is simply that these codices were later lost - he mentions that neither of them is ever heard of again in any source other than the *Chronicon Casinensis*.[6] Lohrmann also speculates that the 'registrum Leonis papae' may in fact refer to an extract of Leo's Register in something along the lines of the *Collectio Quesnelliana* or *Grimanica* - he gives what he freely admits is a wild guess that the 'registrum' referred to in the *Chronicon Casinensis* in fact refers to Desiderius' personal copy of Leo's letters, and that this was then replaced by what is now *Cod. Cas.* 2.[7]

Lohrmann's discussion of the putative production of other papal registers in eleventh-century Montecassino is too speculative to discuss in any great depth here; the salient point is that it is at least plausible enough that registers were being copied from popes other than John VIII that a respected German document editor could take the thought seriously. It is also worth mentioning here that Montecassino definitely had a codex of at least some of the letters of Gregory I; clearly, there was an interest in the papal past which encompassed more than just John VIII.[8] It is therefore possible that John VIII's Register was one of a series of papal registers copied at Montecassino in the later eleventh century, rather than the sole witness to early medieval papal history it is sometimes seen as.

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[5] Caspar, 'Zur ältesten Geschichte', p. 94.

[6] Lohrmann, *Das Register*, p. 96.

[7] ibid p. 96f.

[8] For Gregory's letters, ibid p. 97.

Nonetheless, the question remains of why John's Register was seen by the Cassinese monks as especially worthy of preservation. Despite Lohrmann's speculation about Leo and Felix, there is no evidence for any kind of systematic copying-out of papal registers in eleventh-century Montecassino; that is to say, there is no reason to think that every single early medieval pope had their register copied out. The question therefore becomes not so much why John VIII was seen to have a unique significance, but rather why he met whatever criteria the monks had for selection for preservation. Lohrmann makes an intriguing suggestion here. He argues, correctly, that the 'political' letters of John VIII can broadly be divided into three groups, that is, letters to West Francia, letters to southern Italy complaining about Saracen attacks, and letters to the east aimed at broadcasting the idea that the bishop of Rome was the head of the entire church (mostly through the medium of interventions in the Photian dispute). He then remarks that, although the political situations in West Francia and southern Italy had changed dramatically in the intervening 200 years, by the eleventh century 'im Verhältnis zum Osten war eine entscheidende Umwälzung noch nicht erfolgt'.[9] Indeed, as Lohrmann says, developments were taking place with regard to the eastern church in the eleventh century which may well have reminded contemporaries of late ninth-century events. Although there is no evidence for either east or west seeing 1054 as a decisive date until 1274 at the earliest, they must have been aware nonetheless that some sort of schism had taken place (given Humbert of Silva Candida's insistent writings on the subject, they could scarcely not be); and the most recent schism between east and west, at least that we know of, had been the Photian Schism in the late ninth century. Therefore, the popes most connected with that schism, i.e. Nicholas I, Hadrian II and John VIII, would have gained a new significance in Rome and Montecassino in the mid-to-late eleventh century.

Why Nicholas I and Hadrian II do not seem to have had their Registers copied in eleventh-century Montecassino (or, more accurately, why we cannot see them having their Registers copied)

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[9] ibid p. 109f (for this whole paragraph).

is unclear. Our evidence is too fragmentary to really make any serious argument, but it may well be relevant that, as discussed in the introduction, the manuscript tradition of both of their letters is not Roman at all. We can, however, see an active interest in the Register of John VIII from Gregory VII. For example, Gregory's Letter 1.78,[10] on the subject of a dispute between Bishops Gebhard of Prague and John of Olomouc, explicitly refers to the contents of John's Letter 255,[11] on the tribulations of Methodios in Moravia. Gregory, indeed, goes into some considerable detail about how Methodios' treatment at the hands of the Bavarian bishops means that central European bishops in general are an untrustworthy group, and his general tone in this letter does come over as one of frustration more than anything else: it is almost as though Gregory cannot believe that, after 200 years, the pope is still being frustrated by these bishops (Bohemia is not Moravia, and Gebhard and John were not Bavarian, but everything is close enough that the rhetoric still works).[12] Indeed, Gregory produces another echo of John's Letter 255 in his Letter 7.11,[13] where he outlaws the Slavic liturgy; although neither John VIII nor Methodios is explicitly referred to in this letter, given that Gregory had clearly read John's Letter 255, which itself permits the Slavic liturgy, this does suggest that this echo of John's letter was itself deliberate and meaningful. To quote Lohrmann, 'nur wird der Gebrauch der slawischen Liturgie von Johannes mit biblischer Begründung erlaubt und von Gregor mit dogmatischer Begründung verboten'.[14] Obviously, neither of these Gregorian letters are directed at the east/Constantinople per se. Nonetheless, they do seem to support Lohrmann's argument; the idea that Gregory read John's letters out of Constantinopolitan interests can very easily lead to him finding other uses for them having read them.

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[10] *MGH Epp. Sel.* 2.1.112f.

[11] *MGH Epp.* 7.222ff (discussed in chapter 3).

[12] The way Lohrmann puts this, in *Das Register* p. 110 is: 'Gregor hatte ständig einzugreifen. Unwillkürlich denkt man zurück an Methodius und Wiching von Mitra, die sich nicht minder feindlich gegenübergestanden hatten…Es ist bei manchen Unterscheiden derselbe Vorgang'.

[13] *MGH Epp. Sel.* 2.2.473f.

[14] Lohrmann, *Das Register*, p. 110.

It is interesting here that, although Gregory (or the eleventh-century Roman chancery; the distinction is not important in this context) frequently cited or drew on John's letters, this does not seem to have been from a position of admiration for John. In fact, it seems from the fragments of evidence that we have that Gregory was actually quite negative about John's policies. In Lohrmann's words, 'die gängige Meinung über Johann VIII. zur Zeit des Desiderius war in Süditalien wie später in ganzen Abendlande keine gute'.[15] It would seem that John's conciliatory attitude towards Photios, and therefore symbolically to the east more generally, was not looked favourably upon by the eleventh-century reformers. Deusdedit himself was certainly not a fan of John. In his *Canonical Collection*, Deusdedit reproaches John for reinstating Photios as patriarch. He first points out that 'universalis et apostolicus papa Johannes hanc potestatem a principe apostolorum Petro accipiens dedit Photio patriarche, ut habeat potestatem ligandi et solvendi'; he then thunders that John had abused this Petrine authority to go against the very sensible decisions of his predecessors to excommunicate Photios: 'nullus sanctorum predecessorum meorum Nicolai et Adriani sententias contra eum causetur'.[16] Although obviously Deusdedit's views cannot be transcribed wholesale onto Gregory VII, the two men had sufficiently close relations that it seems unlikely that Gregory would have significantly disagreed with Deusdedit.

It is therefore interesting that the production of John VIII's Register does not seem to have been a celebration of the papacy's 'heroic past'; or at least, that does not seem to have been the main purpose for which it was used. Here we come to the question of where the impetus for the copying of the Register came from. At its most basic level, the question is whether the copying of the Register was a project initiated in Montecassino, which the reform papacy found helpful to use for its own purposes, or whether it was directed and promoted from the beginning by Rome and the papacy, with Montecassino effectively playing a support role of providing monks to copy out the

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[15] ibid p. 112.

[16] Deusdedit, *Coll. can.* 4.437, 434.

Register. Following Lohrmann, it seems far more likely that the first of these scenarios is correct. Although Lohrmann's detailed arguments need not detain us here,[17] he essentially argued that Gregory VII's clear disdain for John's policies, together with the basic irrelevance of John's letters to western Francia and southern Italy, does make it seem quite unlikely that the papacy would have been very interested in providing the initiative/motivation for the copying of John's Register; this is, of course, not the same thing as popes not being interested in the Register once it had been copied. Through a process of elimination, therefore, Lohrmann decided, 'nicht ohne erhebliche Reserven',[18] that the impetus for the production of John's Register lay in Montecassino, rather than Rome. As well as the negative evidence that the Gregorian reformers were themselves unlikely to have taken a particular interest in John's Register, Lohrmann also cited Montecassino's geopolitical position, and the monastery's own history, as plausible reasons why Desiderius became interested in John's Register. Firstly, Montecassino lay on a geopolitical faultline: although it very clearly owed ecclesiastical allegiance to Rome, politically it was on the Byzantine boundary in Italy.[19] Thus, it is perhaps not overly surprising that the monks of Montecassino would have been interested in John's Register, with the emphasis that it has on eastern affairs. The other reason Lohrmann gave is that Montecassino was sacked by Arab raiders in 883, i.e. the year after John VIII died. Lohrmann argued that 'Johannes VIII. Register eine Reihe einschlägiger Schreiben für die Vorgeschichte der zweiten Zerstörung von Montecassino bot'.[20] Essentially, therefore, Lohrmann's argument is that the copying of John VIII's Register was basically a function of what Walter Pohl called Montecassino's 'Werkstätte der Erinnerung'.[21] John's Register, with its interest in Arab attacks on southern Italy,

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[17] See Lohrmann, *Das Register*, pp. 108ff for all this.

[18] ibid p. 121.

[19] ibid p. 112.

[20] ibid p. 122.

[21] Pohl, *Werkstätte der Erinnerung*; idem, 'History in fragments'.

could essentially be used by the monks to ‘paint the scene', as it were, of Montecassino's history before the sack of 883, and to give context for the causes and consequences of the sack.

It is not within the remit of this thesis to argue that Lohrmann was either right or wrong here.The thesis is not an examination of John's Register in and of itself, and so simply setting out the view of the leading authority on the Register is sufficient. Rather, the important thing is simply to note that Lohrmann's view, qualified though it is, that Montecassino is more likely than Rome to have been the driving force behind the copying of the Register in the eleventh century. To put it simply, the Register seems to have been a Cassinese, rather than a Roman, product. This does not, of course, mean that no one in Rome ever used it; we can clearly see knowledge of John's Register in the letters of Gregory VII, discussed above. But the important point here is that the copying of John's Register, which was at base a Cassinese project, seems to have been part of a separate project from Peter Damian and Humbert of Silva Candida’s marshalling of the ninth-century past in their own writings. The papacy was certainly aware of, and able to interact with, this project. But the picture is one of Cassinese, not Roman, initiative.

It is consequently interesting that these two different projects both existed during the eleventh century. Clearly, the social memory of the later ninth-century papacy, and/or ninth-century ecclesiastical history more broadly, was significant enough to eleventh-century clerics that two separate, if related, ‘memory projects’ were able to spring up around them. These projects were of course trying to do different things, but what they shared was a desire to orientate contemporary issues around discussions of the past. The interesting thing, though, is that neither of these projects are especially notable for their attempts to glorify the ninth century. The copying of John VIII’s Register at Montecassino, if it was indeed done there, was used to provide a picture of southern Italy, and of east-west ecclesiastical relations, in the later ninth century, and does not seem to have been aiming in the first place to particularly glorify the ninth century. Rather, it seems more of a neutral setting-out of facts for a future person (like Leo of Ostia) to examine the monastery’s

history. Of course, once the Register had been copied, it could be used for the purposes of glorifying previous popes, but that does not seem to have been its primary purpose; and, indeed, it was not the purpose Gregory VII and/or his curia put it to. Indeed, there is a sense in which the monks copying out the Register at Montecassino may in fact have seen the product they were creating as a history of failure - the sack of 883 followed on so closely from John VIII's pontificate that it is not difficult to read the Register, especially its letters related to southern Italian affairs, as an inexorable march towards 883, with its relentless Arab attacks eventually leading towards the destruction of the monastery.

This interpretation is reinforced when one considers Gregory VII's attitude to the Register. In the letters examined above, Gregory's attitude towards John is hardly overwhelmingly positive. We have already seen Gregory overturning John's approval of the Slavic liturgy; but the way in which he cites John's dealings with Methodios and the central European bishops does not exactly cover John in glory. Rather, it can also be seen as a history of failure - John was unable to control these bishops, but Gregory implies that he himself is forceful and powerful enough to force through the centralised papal vision (which does, of course, fit in with Gregory's general worldview). This is the crucial difference between the ninth-century papal myth-making which this thesis has examined in detail, and its remembrance in the eleventh century. In the ninth century, the Roman curia was using the glorified past of Gregory the Great and his conversion of the Anglo-Saxons (among other things) as ways of legitimising, and indeed inspiring, their own activities by implicitly or explicitly comparing them to the glorious papal past. But by the eleventh century, the monks of Montecassino, who were certainly connected with the 'reform papacy', had a very different, and much more negative, attitude to the past.

This is wholly in fitting with the theories of Geary, Fentress and Wickham, mentioned above. As I have already noted, it is hardly a revelation to say that eleventh-century church reformers marshalled the distant late antique past to further bolster and legitimise their own

positions, and to justify their programme of church reform. Peter Damian and Humbert of Silva Candida were both very interested in late antique *exempla*, and indeed the entire debate over simony and 'nicolaitism' was framed by New Testament and late antique rhetoric.[22] The point here is that the reformers were using the *distant* papal past to carry out these activities; the ninth century, by contrast, does not especially seem to have been used as a legitimating strategy. Rather, there is a sense in which Gregory VII et al were using ninth-century debates as a model of how *not* to do things. As has already been argued, John VIII's Register, in relation to Montecassino's position in southern Italy, is essentially a history of failure. Furthermore, Gregory VII seems to have drawn on the Register in a sense to gloat about what he achieved which John was not able to (i.e. dealing with central European bishops and restoring propriety to the use of Slavic, and by extension other vernaculars, in the liturgy). Thus, the people discussed in this epilogue were doing precisely what Patrick Geary's aristocrats were doing in the eleventh century, i.e. using the distant past as a means of forgetting the more recent past. Essentially, the eleventh-century reformers' view of papal history still frames the view prevalent in modern overviews, which I discussed at the start of this epilogue, and indeed bemoaned in the introduction: the ninth century, and indeed the eighth and tenth, have been neglected due to what comes before and after. This is in large part the result of its conscious downplaying by eleventh-century clerics. Through focusing on the ninth century as a test case for how not to go about doing things, they paradoxically managed to de-emphasise that century in a long-term view of papal history, with the result that attention was consequently deflected to the late antique papacy (up until Gregory I, let us say); and indeed, attention has generally fixed on popes of the eleventh century and after in investigations produced since then. Our vision of papal history is in and of itself a result of these 'phantoms of remembrance' in the eleventh century. What we see is framed and conditioned by what copyists and clerics wanted to be preserved; and the strategies that determined what they wanted to be preserved were themselves conditioned by two main aims: to

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[22] See e.g. among many Cowdrey, 'Simon Magus in Southern Italy'.

glorify the distant late antique past, and to forget the more recent lowering of the papacy (as they saw it) to the state it had been at the end of the ninth century, when John VIII was unable to deal properly with central European bishops, to stem the tide of the vernacular being used in the liturgy, or to stop the Saracen attacks in southern Italy.

Conclusions

There are two interrelated themes which this thesis has followed closely. The first is the creative use made of the past, both the positive use made of the past in ninth-century Rome, and the negative use made of the past by eleventh-century clerics. The ninth century's process of papal myth-making, and the reflected glory provided by the great figures of late antiquity such as Gregory the Great and St Clement, have been a key driving force throughout the entire thesis. They indeed provide essential context for the other main theme which has run through the thesis, that of the papacy's involvement in the history of the conversion of central and eastern Europe, specifically Bulgaria, Moravia, Bohemia and Poland, and how these newly-Christianising polities interacted with Christianity in their own contexts, and indeed interacted with the papacy to introduce the new religion into their kingdoms. This conclusion will discuss these main strands, bringing together the arguments of the thesis, before looking to some broader questions which the thesis relates to.

To take the uses of the past first. It is not particularly novel to say that all regimes, throughout all periods, creatively shape and reshape the past to suit their own purposes. To take a random example: anyone who has ever studied the late Roman republic will be familiar with the role played by ancestor masks in aristocratic funerals - by showing their lineage down through the centuries, and the role their family had played in Roman politics since time immemorial, late republican aristocrats gained reflected glory which they could use to support their own political purposes in the present.[1] George Orwell put it best by saying that 'he who controls the past controls the present'.

On one level, this thesis' investigation of ninth-century papal myth-making has simply been an analysis of a universal human truth in one specific context. But at a more fundamental level than that, it has investigated which uses of the past are the most productive ones for power groups to use

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[1] Flower, *Ancestor Masks*.

at specific times. This very much comes out with the conversions of Bulgaria and Moravia. The conversion of Bulgaria could meaningfully, if not wholly satisfactorily, be said to have been driven primarily by the memory of Gregory the Great in Rome during the 860s and 870s. As the conversion of Bulgaria was highly successful for the papacy, at least in the short term (Boris seems to have enjoyed far better relations with Rome than with Constantinople, and one gets the feeling that his eventual decision to stick with Byzantine Christianity had more to do with being an easy target for the Byzantine army than anything else), it could be expected that the figure of Gregory would have had a leading role to play when the papacy turned its attention to Moravia, a conversion activity which took place at more or less the same time, with more or less the same group of people in powerful/influential positions in Rome. This, though, is not the case. The 'patron saint' of the Moravian mission, as it were, was not Gregory, but Clement. We can therefore see that the papacy did not just stick to one ‘template’ during its engagement with the outside world, and in its engagement with the past. It could adapt what it was doing depending on circumstances. The papal entourage in Rome was clearly aware that Gregory would not have been an appropriate figure to employ in the conversion of Moravia; or, more precisely, they were aware that a more appropriate figure was available, in the form of Clement. Even if the entire story of the discovery and translation of Clement's relics by Cyril and Methodios was made up, (as I strongly suspect it was), the fact remains that Clement served a function in the Moravian mission that Gregory could not serve - i.e., he could plausibly be connected with Cyril and Methodios, and therefore instrumentalised in the Moravian mission, in a way that was more helpful than Gregory’s role with Bulgaria, which itself amounted to little more than serving as a literary template. The point here is quite simple: the popes and their surrogates knew what they were doing, and were perfectly able to pick the models from the past which best served their aims in the present.

The point here is not that ninth-century popes made creative use of the papal past. Rather, it is that this use of the past directly influenced papal policy in the present. As mentioned above,

everyone knows that Roman aristocrats flaunted their family histories, or that the Russian Orthodox Church derives legitimacy from Moscow being the ‘third Rome', or that the modern British monarchy consciously uses and manipulates centuries-old ideas and symbols. But with these three examples, the past is used to justify and legitimate policies and courses of action which have already been decided on. The ninth-century papacy is different because, to put it very crudely, we can see the past *affecting* present policy. The connection of the advent of papal myth-making in ninth-century Rome and the increased involvement of the papacy in missionary efforts is surely too close to be a coincidence; the ‘fetishisation of the archive’ by Nicholas I and John VIII can plausibly be seen as *directly leading* to the new papal initiatives in ‘outer' Europe which this thesis has stressed. Gregory’s missionary endeavours with relation to the Anglo-Saxons provided a model template upon which Nicholas I could base his engagement with the Bulgarians. To be sure, Nicholas would not have been able to do this had Bulgaria not been Christianising anyway. But the form which papal involvement with Bulgaria took was shaped and formed by the ‘memory’ of the past which was being produced in ninth-century Rome. The conversion of Bulgaria would have looked very different had Nicholas not had Gregory's involvement with the Anglo-Saxons to draw on.

Mention of Bulgaria and Moravia brings us to the second main theme of this thesis, namely the papacy’s involvement in the Christianisation of central and eastern Europe. In a way, this is inextricable from the papal myth-making taking place in ninth-century Rome: as mentioned above, the papacy’s involvement in these conversion histories would have looked very different if not for the late antique *exempla* that were available to them in the papal archive. But more broadly, these conversions are significant because they mark something of a turning-point in papal history. Throughout the early middle ages, it was very rare for popes to initiate, rather than respond to, contact with the non-Christian world. This can certainly be nuanced: Gregory the Great became of course the archetypical missionary pope, and the papacy’s involvement with Boniface, for example,

was not inconsiderable. Boniface, though, was effectively a missionary acting under his own initiative who secured Roman 'branding', as it were - there is not much evidence that popes were especially interested in Frisia and northern Germany before Boniface started his activities there, and, as argued in chapter 2, Boniface was basically an intermediary figure between the popes and the converting peoples of northwestern Europe; we cannot see the same kind of direct papal initiative as we can in Nicholas I's letters to Bulgaria, or John VIII's sending Methodios to Moravia as a papally-directed legate. Boniface was certainly papally-sanctioned, but there is not a huge amount of evidence that his activities were explicitly and consistently directed from Rome. So papal involvement in the conversions of Bulgaria and Moravia was qualitatively different from that of Frisia. It was much more similar to Gregory the Great's engagement with the Anglo-Saxons, for the obvious reason that Gregory served as the literary template for the ninth-century missions. Still, though, it cannot be seen as being fully in continuity with previous papal policy. Gregory has always been interesting precisely because he is an exception to the rule so far as papal missionary activity is concerned - popes were not especially interested in Christianising 'pagan' areas before Gregory, and, Boniface aside, would not regain their interest for nearly three hundred years after his death (obviously there were local initiatives to Christianise pagan areas, for example in Ireland, but these were not papally-directed). So, although the papal attitude was not fully new in the conversion of Bulgaria and Moravia, it was certainly not consistent with the overall sweep of the early middle ages of popes reacting to outside initiatives, rather than starting them up themselves.

There is a sense in which papal involvement with central and eastern Europe in the late ninth century represents the papacy, to coin a phrase, reaching its turning point and failing to turn. As this thesis has argued, the remarkable drive and energy that went into the conversions of Bulgaria and Moravia at the end of the ninth century was not repeated by the tenth-century papacy during the conversions of Bohemia and Poland; the papacy, indeed, seems to have been gloriously indifferent to these two latter conversions. The reasons for this are obscure, and the surviving evidence is not

sufficient to investigate properly, but it seems that the most likely explanation is that the myth-making of the late ninth-century papacy had simply run out of steam. By the 880s, the only surviving member of the great myth-making generation was Formosus; after he died in 896, the social memory of Rome turned from Nicholas I's glorification of the papal archive to interminable disputes about Formosus' episcopal transfer, and how it related to wider debates about episcopal transfer. Thus, when new areas started converting to Christianity, in areas close enough to Moravia for meaningful rhetorical comparisons to be made, no one in Rome seems to have been very interested in resurrecting the memory of the Methodian mission. As far as we can see in our evidence, indeed, popes were studiously ignoring goings-on in early tenth-century Bohemia. They became slightly more interested in the conversion of Poland and Hungary at the end of the tenth century, but even then papal interest seems to have been driven largely by Ottonian dominance of the papacy, rather than any particular attempt to assert some line of continuity between the late tenth-century conversions in eastern Europe and those of the late ninth. It feels a bit like the 1848 revolutions being totally unaware of the French Revolution - that is to say, major events, with close parallels in the not particularly distant past, went by without any attempt to connect them to their historical analogies. Judging by its position at the end of the ninth century, the papacy could have moved into a new role directing the conversion of the remaining pagan regions to Christianity, and then building up authority in the 'Latin Christendom' which emerged from it. As it happened, though, that development was delayed by 200 years.

It may well be, indeed, that the tenth-century papacy's failure to capitalise on the ninth-century papacy's leadership in conversion activities may have caused the somewhat ambivalent attitude towards the ninth century which we saw in the epilogue. Gregory VII et al were clearly aware that the late ninth-century papacy had had a significant level of engagement with central and eastern Europe, as is evidenced by, for example, his letters to the bishops of Prague and Olomouc mentioned in the epilogue. Given that Gregory's main goal for the papacy was, arguably, precisely

to establish a 'papal monarchy' over all of Christendom (and, indeed, is often seen as doing precisely that), it is interesting to speculate that his fairly negative attitude to John VIII may have been driven by a sense that John had not taken the opportunities to establish papal authority which Gregory was now taking, thus driving the papacy into the preceding 200 years of decline and 'pornocracy'. This is pure speculation, but it would fit with what we know about the eleventh century more broadly. It is not controversial to say that eleventh-century writers systematically created a vision of the tenth century as one of stagnation, with very few interesting events taking place at all;[2] with the papacy, there seems to have been some kind of attempt to extend this back into the late ninth century, or at least to blame the late ninth century for the perceived failures of the tenth. Essentially, the eleventh-century reformers seem to have been frustrated with their ninth-century predecessors for not taking the opportunities presented to them to extend papal power and influence further, or indeed for making too many concessions to non-papal actors. So for example Gregory vents his frustration at John for not being more forceful with the central European bishops, and prevents the Slavs from celebrating the liturgy in the vernacular, rather than in Latin. As discussed in the epilogue, eleventh-century reformers were also far from impressed with John VIII's resumption of relations with Photios. Theorists of social memory, such as Geary, Fentress, Wickham et al have rightly focussed a lot of attention on how the glorified past can be used to support and justify actions and policies in the present. What has been studied less is the flip side of this, i.e. how the past can be used as a model of 'how not to do things'. I would cautiously suggest that the late ninth-century papacy's interaction with central and eastern Europe provided such an example for the eleventh-century reformers.

In a way, this thesis has been a sustained attempt to look again at the intellectual activity of the ninth-century papacy. It has argued that the creative reinterpretation of the papal past which took place in ninth-century Rome itself provided the concepts and categories for large amounts of papal

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[2] This is precisely the argument of Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*.

policy in the late ninth century. As a result of Nicholas I's interest in the papal archives, a new vision of the papacy was 'invented' by late ninth-century clerics like John the Deacon, Formosus, John VIII, Gauderic and Anastasius. The problem, however, was that once these clerics had invented this glorious papal past, they had to live up to it themselves. They were victims of their own success - they brought Gregory the Great to such heights of exaltation that no one would be able to reach the standard he had set 300 years earlier. Thus, the papal myth-making descended into bickering and infighting, which we can see most clearly in the arguments surrounding Formosus. The drop in energy which this then caused for the papacy was not overcome for nearly 200 years, until the Gregorian Reform movement in the eleventh century, which itself was conscious of the more or less failed effort by the late ninth-century papacy to reach a new level of ascendency over Latin Europe. So having built itself up by comparison with the glorious papal past, the ninth-century papacy was then itself brought down by the eleventh century, which emphasised its failures to capitalise on the opportunities it had created for itself, whether in southern Italy, eastern Europe or Byzantium.

What this thesis has argued above anything else is that, if we get rid of a teleology which can only see the papacy in its later medieval 'papal monarchy' form, some form of rehabilitation of the ninth century can take place. The myth-making prevalent in ninth-century Rome is interesting in its own right, and rather belies bold assertions about the death of culture in the early middle ages, or the idea that the early middle ages produced no intellectual figures worthy of study, or indeed that western Christendom lagged behind Constantinople in terms of intellectual output in the ninth century (although the last of these is still generally true for most periods). If we ignore the later medieval history of the papacy, we can see a very interesting effort to establish papal power and authority over newly-Christianising areas of Europe, based primarily on a reinterpretation of the great figures of papal history. The ultimate failure of these efforts, indeed, was hardly the popes' fault - there was nothing they could do about the military prowess of Byzantium in relation to

Bulgaria, or of the Magyars in relation to Moravia. The ninth-century popes were also considerably more conciliatory towards and understanding of the patriarchs of Constantinople than their predecessors had been - although Nicholas I and John VIII certainly had their differences with Photios, things never reached a permanent schism, as they would do in the eleventh century.

As was mentioned in the introduction, modern awareness of the papacy, and indeed of the Roman Catholic Church, is dominated by late antiquity, and then by later medieval events. The early middle ages therefore falls by the wayside (as, indeed, it does with various more secular-minded historians). There is no good reason why this should be the case. There is enough evidence, and it is very interesting on its own terms. Above all, to an ecclesiastical historian, it is useful in challenging received narratives about papal power and east-west splits. The modern papacy, and indeed the modern church more broadly, would do well to reacquaint itself with its early medieval past.

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MGH - *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*

NCMH - *New Cambridge Medieval History*

PL - *Patrologia Latina*

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