

THE INTERPLAY OF POLITICS AND PIETY: CHRISTIAN PILGRIMAGE TO ROME AND
THE BASILICA OF SAN PAOLO FUORI LE MURA

A Thesis by

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The following faculty members have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts with a major in Liberal Studies.

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DEDICATION

To my mom on Mother's Day

To come to the knowledge you have not
you must go by the way in which you know not.

John of the Cross
The Ascent of Mount Carmel

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ABSTRACT

This thesis delves into three different fields of study: religion, history, and art history. The purpose is to highlight the impact that religious pilgrimage had on Rome and on the city's church dedicated to St. Paul. Pilgrimage, during the Middle Ages, played a crucial role in both the artistic and architectural developments at St. Paul's basilica, San Paolo fuori le mura (St. Paul's Outside the Walls). While the journey to Rome was the ultimate expression of piety for many pilgrims, not all the early church fathers viewed it as efficacious or necessary. By understanding the arguments raised for and against the pilgrimage to Rome, one is better equipped to assess the motivations for the pilgrims who made the oftentimes dangerous journey.

During the Middle Ages, the papacy promoted various practices that created additional motivation for the pilgrims. For instance, the church leaders advocated the cult of the saints and martyrs, disbursed saints' relics stressing their miracle working powers, and offered indulgences to those who made the journey. By far the most significant method used to encourage pilgrims to come to Rome was the creation the Jubilee Year in 1300 CE, during the pontificate of Boniface VIII. By integrating pilgrimage and indulgences, Boniface flooded Rome with pilgrims.

From its original construction through the Medieval Period, St. Paul's basilica underwent a series of renovations which were focused primarily on its artistic elements. Such projects were typically sanctioned by members of the church and were done in order to accentuate the pilgrim's experience once they arrived. There is evidence to conclude that the methods employed by the papacy were used in order to highlight Rome's importance, and, in turn, affected both the art and architecture of St. Paul's basilica.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

St. Paul's basilica in Rome, San Paolo fuori le mura, has a long, rich history. In the fourth century, the Emperor Constantine (306-37 CE) believed it was the Christian god who had favored him in battle against Maxentius. In return, Constantine pledged his devotion to this god and began erecting Christian monuments in both Jerusalem and Rome. Just outside Rome's city wall Constantine constructed a memorial where, according to tradition, St. Paul had been buried.

Although St. Paul was not called as a disciple during Jesus' lifetime his apostolic authority was highly influential in the development of the early Church. His importance among early Christian communities is illustrated by the circulation, collection, and canonization of his letters. The story of St. Paul's conversion, missionary activity and martyrdom inspired early converts. His letters served as guides, written as instructions, which if followed a Christian's "spirit, soul, and body" would be "sound and blameless" at Jesus' return.¹ Pilgrimage to the basilica built over St. Paul's grave has enjoyed a special significance equal to that of St. Peter's throughout the Middle Ages.

Prior to the fourth century, pilgrimages were most often made to Jerusalem. Primarily, these journeys were undertaken in order to visit the land in which Jesus had preached. As soon as Christianity acquired imperial recognition, at the beginning of the fourth century, the roads to Rome also became well traveled. Once the threat of persecution diminished, Rome quickly became an important pilgrimage destination. From the fourth century onwards, Rome held a chief position among Christians, in part, because of its possession of the relics of Sts. Peter and Paul.

¹ 1 Thess. 5:23, Holman Christian Standard Bible.

With the promotion of the cult of the saints and martyrs and the admiration paid to saints' relics, shrines dedicated to the apostles and other important figures quickly became abundant throughout Europe. This steady increase in the number of shrines caused the focus of pilgrimage to shift. The goals that had prompted a pilgrim to make such a journey gradually became less about one's personal closeness to Jesus and more about individuals seeking the intercessory powers offered through the saints. Pilgrims made the journey to a saint's shrine for many reasons. They made the sometimes long and treacherous journey to pray for a recently deceased family member, to be cured of an illness, to do penance, or to fulfill a vow made to a specific saint.

Due to the surge in pilgrimage, competition between saints' shrines soon emerged and varying views ignited impassioned debates. In the first three centuries following the death of Jesus different opinions regarding religious pilgrimage centered on its efficacy and necessity as a form of piety. Some, like Jerome (347-420 CE), believed that a pilgrimage to Jerusalem was very important. He argued that many of those who had traveled to Jerusalem came "from a feeling that their devotion and knowledge would be incomplete and their virtue without the finishing touch."² For this reason, they made the journey and, "adored Christ in the very spot where the gospel first flashed from the gibbet."³ Jerome was not the only one to recognize in pilgrimage its fundamental importance. Cyril (313-86 CE), bishop of Jerusalem, and Paulinus of Nola (354-431 CE) also held pilgrimage in great esteem. However, others such as Eusebius (263-339 CE) and Gregory of Nyssa (335-94 CE) were directly opposed to this way of expressing piety. Such condemnation of pilgrimage would continue sporadically until the

² Jerome, *Epistle XLVI: Paula and Eustochium to Marcella*, vol. 6 in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 60.

³ Ibid.

Reformation, culminating with the harsh denunciations against this and other church practices voiced by Martin Luther (1483-1546 CE) and other reformers.

In spite of the objections raised against pilgrimage throughout the Middle Ages, in Rome the papacy largely supported these pious journeys and specifically sought to attract pilgrims to the illustrious city. Various methods were employed in order to highlight Rome's importance, and, consequently, the importance of St. Paul's basilica. Within a century of Constantine's original construction, the edifice underwent a series of alterations. This is largely due to the development of the primacy of the papacy, as Rome gradually became regarded as the center of the Christian world. And, as such, the city enjoyed exceptional recognition as a pilgrimage destination. Rome's significance was bolstered by those who had the most to gain by elevating the city's status. This process, and the impact that religious pilgrimage had on the development of both the architecture of this basilica and its interior ornamentation, will be the focus of this thesis.

1.1 The Biblical Origins of Christian Pilgrimage

Early Christian pilgrimage has its roots in the Hebrew Bible. The Jews who were the first to convert to Christianity would have likely been familiar with making a journey to the temple in Jerusalem. Jesus himself had made the journey several times, both with his parents as a child, and before his death.⁴ Jesus' annual trips to Jerusalem, especially the one preceding his death, had profound effects on many early Christians. Jesus' journey prompted some early Christian pilgrims to travel to Jerusalem as a means of recreating for themselves his last moments. Sites associated with Jesus' birth, crucifixion, and resurrection, for example, would become places of devotional gathering. Regarding this experience Jerome would later remark,

⁴ See: Luke 2:21-24, 41-42.

“As often as we enter it [the tomb] we see the Saviour in His grave clothes, and if we linger we see again the angel sitting at His feet.”⁵ For many early Christians, traveling to Jerusalem meant being able to visualize the glory and great sacrifice of Christ.

1.1.1 Old Testament

In the Hebrew Bible, there are three festivals dedicated to Yahweh: the Feast of Passover/Unleavened Bread, Harvest/Weeks, and Tabernacles/Booths. The requirements for these feasts are outlined in Exod. 23:14-17, 34:18-23, 26; Leviticus 23; Num. 28:16-31, 29:12-40 and Deut. 16:1-17. Exod. 23:14-17 is the shortest version, stating little more than when the people of Israel were required to celebrate these three festivals each year. After the Golden Calf incident and the creation of new stone tablets, Exod. 34:18-23 provides the same basic information; however, this text also integrates a reference back to Exod. 13:2, 12-13, as a reminder of what Yahweh did in Egypt, and how the Israelites were spared.

Leviticus 23 gives detailed provisions for the celebration of these festivals, including the ways in which sacrifices were to be prepared and presented. The most curious element of Leviticus 23 is the inclusion of the phrase “sacred assembly” (מקרא קדש) repeated eleven times in these forty-four verses.⁶ Another feature, not included in the other texts, is the phrase, found in vv. 14, 21, and 31, which commands that these festivals “be a permanent statute throughout your generations, wherever you live.”⁷ The focus in Num. 29:12-40 is primarily on the sacrifices that are to be brought before Yahweh. Deut. 16:1-17 is set apart from the others by its inclusion, in vv. 2, 6, and 11, of the statement “in the place where the LORD chooses to have His name

⁵ Jerome, *Epistle XLVI*, 61.

⁶ Num. 28:16-31 and 29:12-40 also use the phrase “sacred assembly.”

⁷ Alternately, v. 17 begins, “from your settlements,” and v. 41 omits, “wherever you live.”

dwelling.”⁸ Additionally, Deuteronomy uses phrases found in the Exodus passages that had been left out in the others. For instance, in Deut. 16:16-17, Moses reports, “Three times a year all your men must appear before the LORD your God” and that “No man should appear before the LORD empty-handed.” Together, these passages seem to indicate that while originally these festivals were a gathering of the people of Israel, in which they presented to Yahweh their firstborn and the first fruits of their harvests, over time, there is a progression in the organization of these feasts.

After King David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem and his son, King Solomon, built the temple, such festivals are believed by some scholars to have become focused, almost exclusively, in Jerusalem. For Baruch Bokser the Passover feast, for example, slowly developed from a “domestic rite to part of a national gathering.”⁹ Bokser points to 2 Chron. 30:1-27 and 35:1-19 which describe the Passover festivals during the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah. These festivals appear to Bokser, to have become “a celebration centralized in Jerusalem.”¹⁰ Consequently, according to Dee Dyas, with the building of the temple in Jerusalem, “Jewish spirituality” began to shift “from a relationship with God which was independent of place, to one which linked the presence of God with a particular city and place of worship.”¹¹

Evidence supporting the promulgation of a single site becoming identified with these celebrations might be found in the recurring phrase in Deuteronomy 16 in which Yahweh declares to the people of Israel, “All your males are to appear three times a year before the Lord your God in the place He chooses.” Despite the biblical narratives, it is difficult to determine

⁸ This phrase is worded slightly different in vv. 5, 15, and 16.

⁹ Baruch M. Bokser, “Unleavened Bread and Passover,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 6 (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1992), 758.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 759.

¹¹ Dee Dyas, *Pilgrimage in Medieval English Literature, 700-1500* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 20.

with certainty how these changes developed historically. However, during the Second Temple Period, various practices involving a pilgrimage to Jerusalem began to evolve. As will be discussed below, by the first century these annual journeys to Jerusalem, especially for the feast of Passover, will have become well established.

1.1.2 New Testament

Each of the festivals dedicated to Yahweh is mentioned in the New Testament. However, two of them are particularly important to the gospel writers: Pentecost, originally the Jewish festival of Harvest/Weeks, and Passover, which commemorated Yahweh's protection of His chosen people, and their liberation from Egypt. Each of these takes on a new significance within the gospels.

There are two aspects of the Jewish Passover that are useful in understanding the later motivation of early Christians who expressed a need to travel to Jerusalem. The first of these is the gospel writers' use of the Passover festival in elevating the importance of Jesus' life, ministry, and sacrificial death. Matthew, Mark and Luke give new meaning to Passover by associating it with the Last Supper, drawing together the meal and Jesus' impending death. Each of these gospels report that Jesus and his disciples gathered together at the Last Supper during Passover. Mark and Luke specifically note that the Last Supper occurred at the time in which the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed.¹²

The second is the synoptic gospels' identification of Jesus' death as the Passover sacrifice. Jesus' speech at the Last Supper links his impending death with a new covenant being made between the LORD and His people. In Mark 14:24, Jesus says, "This is My blood [that establishes] the covenant, it is shed for many." Matthew's description in 26:28 adds, "it is shed

¹² See: Mark 14:12 and Luke 22:7.

for many for the forgiveness of sins.” Similarly, Luke 22:20 recalls, “This cup is the new covenant [established by] My blood; it is shed for you.” The two most noticeable differences in Luke’s retelling are that this part of Jesus’ speech is said to have taken place after the meal, and the addition of the phrase, found in v. 19, “Do this in remembrance of Me.” This phrase is also found in Paul’s retelling of the Last Supper.¹³ According to Stephen Harris, in the synoptic gospels Jesus is regarded as a “deliverer greater than Moses and a sacrifice that epitomizes the essential meaning of Passover.”¹⁴

Just as Jesus’ new covenant is superior to the covenant delivered to Israel by Moses, so is the redemptive power of this new covenant, greater than the old. In the story of Jesus’ feeding of the five thousand in John’s gospel Jesus’ superiority is clearly revealed. Negating the miraculous manna provided to the Israelites in the desert, in John 6:32 Jesus affirms, “I assure you: Moses didn’t give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the real bread from heaven.” Likewise, in v. 51, Jesus asserts, “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.” While this story is present in the synoptic gospels, only in John’s gospel is Jesus’ life giving covenant assessed in these terms.

The festival of Pentecost, like Passover, also took on a new meaning after the death of Jesus. Pentecost became remembered as the day in which the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles resulting in the baptism of nearly 3,000 people. This event, reported in Acts 2:1-42, is also believed to have a two-fold meaning. According to Meyer and Ronan, “The Pentecostal event is presented as the restoration of mankind’s unity, the reverse of Babel, and as a new Sinai

¹³ 1 Cor. 11:25 states, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” For Paul, this also takes place after Jesus’ meal with the disciples.

¹⁴ Stephen L. Harris, *The New Testament: A Student’s Introduction*. 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 137.

in which the Law of the Spirit takes the place of the Mosaic Law.”¹⁵ Secondly, as Mark Olson notes, this “baptism of the Spirit at Pentecost” is believed to have initiated “the mission and expansion of the church to people of every nation.”¹⁶ According to the New Testament, Jesus, in instituting a new covenant, makes what had only been previously obtainable by Israel as the LORD’s chosen people, accessible to all of mankind.

1.2 Reactions to Christian Pilgrimage

Reactions to pilgrimage varied. Conflict arose out of the theology that God, through acceptance and faith in the gospel, was accessible to everyone and shouldn’t be identified with any particular place. As noted by Dyas, nascent Christianity believed, “that God was invisibly present” but, with early Christians traveling to Jerusalem, was “reverting to an orientation to ‘place’.”¹⁷

Paul, in his address to the men in Athens, reported in Acts 17:22-34, argues against the sanctity of specific places. He held that no single place should be considered more holy than any other. Supporting his claim, Paul states in vv. 24 and 29, “He is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in shrines made by hands...we shouldn’t think that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image fashioned by human art and imagination.” For Paul, the LORD cannot be confined to an altar made by man. Thus, the worship of the Athenians’ deities at sacred altars was nothing more than “worship in ignorance.”¹⁸

¹⁵ B. F. Meyer and J. L. Ronan, “Pentecost,” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 11, 2nd ed. (Washington DC: Gale, 2003), 102.

¹⁶ Mark J. Olson, “Pentecost,” in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 5 (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1992), 223.

¹⁷ Dyas, *Pilgrimage in Medieval English Literature*, 55.

¹⁸ Acts 17:23.

1.2.1 Opposition to Holy Journeys

The argument that God cannot be restricted to any one place was the most commonly used against pilgrimage through the fourth century. An early example can be found in Origen's (185-254 CE) work *Against Celsus*. According to Henry Chadwick, this work was written as a "vindication of Christianity against pagan criticism" in order to refute the arguments made against Christianity by the second century Greek philosopher Celsus.¹⁹ Condemning Celsus's claims, Origen argues, "we do not ask the question, 'How shall we go to God?' as though we thought that God existed in some place...God is of too excellent a nature...He holds all things in His power, and is Himself not confined by anything."²⁰ Origen is making an argument similar to the one, described above, reportedly made by Paul in Acts 17:22-36.

Eusebius, using John 4:23-24 as evidence also defends the omnipresence of God. In his work *Proof of the Gospel*, he states, "our Lord and Saviour rightly says to those who suppose that God ought only to be worshipped in Jerusalem, or in certain mountains, or some definite places: 'true worshippers...must worship him in spirit and in truth'."²¹ Eusebius might also be pointing to a concept, found elsewhere in the New Testament, in which the earthly Jerusalem is inferior to an idealized, heavenly Jerusalem. This view can also be traced back to Paul, in his letter to the Galatians.

In order to highlight the freedom offered to those who have faith in Christ, in Gal. 4:21-31, Paul creates an allegory using Abraham's wife Sarah and her slave Hagar. For Paul, Sarah represents the true covenant of Christ and Hagar signifies the inferior covenant given to the Jews

¹⁹ Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 111.

²⁰ Origen, *Against Celsus*, vol. 4 in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and Arthur C. Coxe (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 625.

²¹ John 4:23-24 states, "But an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth...God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." Eusebius, of Caesarea, *The Proof of the Gospel Being the Demonstratio Evangelica of Eusebius of Caesarea*, trans. W. J. Ferrar (New York: Macmillan, 1920), 35.

at Mount Sinai. In vv. 25-26, Paul declares, “Hagar is Mount Sinai...and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children,” whereas, “the [heavenly] Jerusalem above is free, and she [Sarah] is our mother.” This principle is alluded to again in Colossians and in the letter to the Hebrews. In Hebrews, the concept of a heavenly Jerusalem is spun into a debate pertaining to Christ’s superiority and the necessity of faith. In Colossians the focus is on repudiating heresies that disregard Paul’s teaching by promoting ascetic practices which emphasize denying the body in order to spiritualize the soul.²²

Unlike Origen and Eusebius, Gregory of Nyssa takes a slightly different approach in his stance against religious pilgrimage. In his treatise *On Pilgrimages*, he argues that pilgrimage is a fruitless endeavor. At the opening of this work he writes, “When the Lord invites the blest to their inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, He does not include a pilgrimage to Jerusalem amongst their good deeds; when He announces the Beatitudes, He does not name amongst them that sort of devotion.”²³ Gregory challenged the motivations behind pilgrimage because it, as an expression of piety, was not supported by Jesus’ preaching in the New Testament.

1.2.2 The Importance of Pilgrimage

Just as there were stringent criticisms of pilgrimage there were also some who insisted on its importance. For instance, Cyril, appointed bishop of the Jerusalem church in 348 CE, was extremely influential in his endorsement of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. During his episcopate he wrote a series of catechetical lectures. Scattered throughout these lectures he highlights the sanctity of the city. Cyril is writing in response to the belief held by his near contemporary

²² Heb. 12:22 declares, “you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God the heavenly Jerusalem.” Similarly, Col. 3:1-2 states, “So you have been raised with the Messiah, seek what it above, where the Messiah is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth.”

²³ Gregory, of Nyssa, *On Pilgrimages*, vol. 5 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 382.

Eusebius, that Jerusalem had been condemned by Jesus to everlasting destruction and that Christians should instead seek the heavenly Jerusalem.²⁴ Cyril maintained that “[Jesus] bewailed Jerusalem which then was; for that which now is shall not be bewailed; for that Jerusalem crucified the Christ, but that which now is worships Him.”²⁵

For Eusebius Jerusalem was no longer significant. What was important was preparing one’s body for the heavenly Jerusalem. Thus, in his *Proof of the Gospel*, he testifies, “[Jesus’] own body was raised up, and many bodies of the sleeping saints arose, and together with Him into the holy and real City of Heaven.”²⁶ Cyril argues against Eusebius’s claim, repeating his words verbatim; however, Cyril adds, “and [they] went into the Holy City, (evidently this city, in which we now are) and appeared unto many,” recalling the events which transpired during Pentecost.²⁷ For Cyril, evidence of Jerusalem’s continued importance could be found in the places that witnessed Christ’s life on earth. Cyril insisted, in the earthly city of Jerusalem, “thou hast this very place of the Resurrection; thou hast also the place of the Ascension towards the east; thou hast for witnesses the Angels which there bore testimony; and the cloud on which He went up, and the disciples who came down from that place.”²⁸ As noted by Peter Walker, each of these events is used “explicitly,” in order to “bolster his arguments for Jerusalem as a ‘holy city’.”²⁹

²⁴ In Matt. 23:37-24:2 and Luke 13:34-35, 21:5-6, 20-24 Jesus foretells the impending destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, whereas, in Mark 13:1-2, Jesus only envisions the destruction of the temple.

²⁵ Cyril, of Jerusalem, *Lecture XIII*, vol. 7 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 84.

²⁶ Eusebius, *The Proof of the Gospel*, 186.

²⁷ Cyril, of Jerusalem, *Lecture XIV*, vol. 7 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 98.

²⁸ Cyril, of Jerusalem, *Lecture XIV*, 100. See also: Cyril, of Jerusalem, *Lecture XVI*, vol. 7 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 116.

²⁹ Walker, Peter. “Pilgrimage in the Early Church.” In *Explorations in a Christian Theology of Pilgrimage*, edited by Craig Bartholomew and Fred Hughes (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 78.

Jerome was another major proponent of pilgrimage. An example of his understanding of Jerusalem's continued significance can be found in a letter written to a Roman woman named Marcella, in which he asks her to join him in living in Jerusalem. Once reunited with Marcella, he hoped that they could together travel throughout the Holy Land, to visit sites referred to by Jerome as "places...set up like standards to commemorate the Lord's victories," the place of Jesus' birth, miracles, death, and burial.³⁰ Jerome wrote a similar letter to Desiderius and Serenilla, asking them to likewise leave Rome for life in Jerusalem.³¹ In contrast to Gregory of Nyssa's negation of the efficacy of making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Jerome implores them to visit saying, "it is still your duty as believers to worship on the spot where the Lord's feet once stood, and to see for yourselves the still fresh traces of His birth, His cross, and His passion."³²

To note one final example, I turn to Paulinus of Nola. In a letter written soon after becoming bishop, Paulinus expresses the same thoughts as Jerome concerning the piety inherent in making a trip to Jerusalem. Paulinus concludes, "No other sentiment draws men to Jerusalem but the desire to see and touch the places where Christ was physically, and to be able to say from their own experience: We have gone into His tabernacle, and have adored in the places where His feet stood."³³ It was these feelings of necessity, poignantly expressed by Jerome and Paulinus, which drove so many towards Jerusalem.

³⁰ Jerome, *Epistle XLVI*, 65.

³¹ Jerome, *Epistle XLVII to Desiderius*, vol. 6 in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 65-65.

³² *Ibid.*, 66.

³³ Paulinus, of Nola, "Letter XLIX," in *Letters of St. Paulinus of Nola*, trans. P. G. Walsh, vol. 36, bk. 2 of *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation*, ed. Johannes Quasten, Walter J. Burghardt, and Thomas C. Lawler (New York: Newman Press, 1967), 273.

1.2.3 The Significance of Particular Sites

For the early Christians, Jerusalem retained its importance for several centuries. As noted by Martin Robinson, Jerusalem provided the pilgrim the “opportunity to re-enact the events of the life of Christ,” and as a result the chance “to be as close as possible to the last place on earth where the physical presence of Christ was laid.”³⁴ However, despite Jerusalem’s continued significance, Rome also became an important place for early Christian pilgrims to visit.

Christianity, during the first century, became one of the many religions to be practiced in the city. Rome’s prominence attracted Christian visitors for a number of reasons, including the size and diversity of the city, its status as capital and, strangely enough, the number of Christians suffering there on account of their faith. As noted by Boatwright, Gargola, and Talbert, the persecutions against Christians, “actually strengthened Christianity: They provided inspiring examples of brave Christians whose faith was unshakable.”³⁵ To visit and honor the burial places of the martyrs became a major attraction. This form of piety will be described at length in the following chapters.

³⁴ Martin Robinson, *Sacred Places, Pilgrim Paths: An Anthology of Pilgrimage* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), 3.

³⁵ Mary T. Boatwright, Daniel J. Gargola, and Richard J. A. Talbert, *The Romans: From Village to Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 429.

CHAPTER 2

ST. PAUL

Our earliest sources of information about St. Paul's life and work come from his own letters written in correspondence to the Christian communities that he developed and from Luke's Acts of the Apostles. There are differences between these two sources that create challenges in developing a complete and accurate time line for Paul's life.³⁶ The differences and occasional omissions in the texts fostered the creation of various legends throughout the Middle Ages. For instance, the date, nature, and place of Paul's death, for which there is no biblical evidence, was the subject of many stories that began circulating by the end of the first century.

2.1 St. Paul's Life Prior to His Conversion

In Acts 21:39, Paul announces that he was "a Jewish man from Tarsus in Cilicia." In 22:3, Paul repeats himself; this time however, he states specifically that he was "born in Tarsus."³⁷ In addition to these two instances reported by Luke, in several of Paul's own letters he indicates his Jewish heritage, specifying that he was Jewish by birth (2 Cor. 11:22; Phil. 3:5), and that he belonged to the tribe of Benjamin (Rom. 11:1; Phil. 3:5). In the Acts of the Apostles we are also told that Paul was a Roman citizen (16:37, 22:26-29).

At an unspecified time, Paul traveled to Jerusalem, most likely for the purpose of education in accordance with his Jewish background. While Paul was there, we are told that he

³⁶ For a brief discussion of the issues in attempting to establish an accurate chronology by an important New Testament scholar, see Hans Dieter Betz, "Paul," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 5 (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1992), 190-192.

³⁷ See also: Acts 9:11. St. Jerome in his treatise, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, believed that Paul was actually born in Galilee, that his parents were sold as slaves and only later ended up in Tarsus. Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, vol. 3 in *Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 362. For support of this claim see Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 32-37.

studied under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3), a high-ranking member of the Sanhedrin. Both sources report that in upholding his strict Pharisaic adherence to the Law (Phil. 3:5; Acts 26:5) Paul acted out his absolute zeal for the LORD by persecuting the followers of Jesus (Acts 22:3; Gal. 1:13-14; cf. Acts 8:1-3, 9:1-2). The action taken against them by Paul, motivated by his own convictions, contrasts sharply with the tolerance demonstrated by his teacher Gamaliel (Acts 5:34-39).

2.2 Conversion, Ministry, and Writings

According to the book of Acts, while Paul was traveling on the road to Damascus to seek out and persecute Christians, he had a vision of Jesus (Acts 9:3-9, 22:6-11, 26:12-19). As a consequence of his encounter with the risen Christ, Paul found himself commissioned to take the teachings of Jesus to the Gentiles (1 Cor. 9:16-17; Rom. 1:5). Mentioned only in the Acts of the Apostles, Paul is known as Saul prior to his conversion. After Luke's first description of Paul's conversion in 9:3-9 it is not until 13:9 that he begins introducing Saul as also being known as Paul.³⁸

Once he converted to Christianity Paul immediately began pursuing his apostolic mission throughout the Mediterranean. Paul spent the next several years traveling throughout Greece and Asia Minor, establishing and visiting numerous Christian communities in Antioch, Galatia, and Macedonia. During Paul's travels he wrote a series of letters to the churches that he had founded. This correspondence was made in response to various issues that were causing distress within these new communities. Paul's letters were likely his most significant contribution to the

³⁸ Jerome believed that Saul changed his name to Paul in honor of the Proconsul of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, who "was the first to believe on his preaching." Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, 362. See: Acts 13:6-12.

formation of the early church. As previously mentioned, his letters' circulation and ultimate collection and acceptance into canon testify to their importance.

2.3 Death and Subsequent Legends

In Acts 21-28 Luke relates Paul's return to Jerusalem where members of the Jewish community are said to have arrested him. He was accused of apostasy, of insubordination to the Law because he had allowed his Christian converts to abstain from circumcision and the strict adherence to the Law. By calling attention to his Roman citizenship Paul was sent directly to Rome for trial. Luke describes Paul's journey and his various hardships but gives no details of the outcome of Paul's imprisonment in Rome (28:17-31).

Various reasons have been given for the silence of Luke's conclusion. One commentator suggests that this was done for literary purposes; that Luke's intention in writing the Acts of the Apostles was not to convey a detailed narrative of Paul's life ending with his release from prison or his death, but rather, the efforts of God to bring everyone into his grace.³⁹ Another commentator suggests, using Paul's farewell address to Miletus (Acts 20:17-38) as evidence, that after the two years Paul spent in Rome he was put to death, and nothing more needed to be said.⁴⁰ Harry Tarja supports each of these claims as being plausible and also asserts Luke's possible political motivation. Tarja maintains, "In relating Paul's legal history, Luke was aiming less at giving a full biography of the Apostle or a detailed account of the trial proceedings than at

³⁹ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*. Sacra Pagina, vol. 5 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992), 474-476.

⁴⁰ Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 226-228.

achieving toleration and recognition by the Roman State of the nascent Christian communities.”⁴¹

An early legend says that Paul was released from prison and continued his missionary activity to Spain prior to his martyrdom. The first appearance of this legend is found in a letter to the Corinthian church from Clement of Rome (30-100 CE). Clement’s letter to the Corinthians, written at the end of the first century, states that Paul was released from prison and was able to carry on with his missionary work. While this letter does not specifically state that Paul went to Spain it has been interpreted as indicating Paul’s journey there, based on his intention to do so given in his letter to the Romans (15:24, 28).

While scholars’ opinions vary regarding the accuracy of this source some regard it to be reliable. For example, Tarja, supporting the possibility that Paul did go to Spain, concludes, “Clement’s testimony, for one, is very ancient and quite likely to be rooted in eyewitness accounts, his own or those of his contemporaries.”⁴² By the end of the second century this legend had become tradition. The apocryphal *Acts of Peter*, written at the end of the second century, begins with Paul traveling to Spain, in accordance with a command directly from God.⁴³ Likewise, the Muratorian Canon, an early list of the canonical books, written around the same time as the *Acts of Peter*, also indicates Paul’s journey to Spain from Rome.⁴⁴

Even more legendary are the accounts describing his martyrdom. Whether or not Paul actually traveled to Spain, all of the earliest post-biblical sources, including Eusebius, Jerome, and Gregory of Tours (538-94 CE), agree that he was martyred in the imperial capital during the reign of Nero (54-68 CE). The exact date of his martyrdom, however, was debated by the early

⁴¹ Harry W. Tarja, *The Martyrdom of St. Paul: Historical and Judicial Context, Traditions and Legends* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1994), 37-39, 51.

⁴² Tarja, *The Martyrdom of St. Paul*, 106.

⁴³ M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (1924; repr., Berkeley: Apocryphile Press, 2004), 804.

⁴⁴ Edgar Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. R. McL. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1991), 44.

church fathers. Eusebius seems to agree with Dionysius, bishop of Corinth (*fl.* 2nd cent.), whom he quotes in his *History of the Church*, that Peter and Paul “suffered martyrdom at the same time.”⁴⁵ Jerome, in his *Lives of Illustrious Men*, understands the two saints to have been martyred, not at the same time, but on the same day.⁴⁶ Prudentius (348-413 CE), in agreement with Gregory of Tours and Augustine (354-430 CE), asserted that Peter and Paul were martyred on the same day, but separated by a year. In Prudentius’s work, the *Crowns of Martyrdom*, he states, “The same day, but recurring after a full year, saw each of them win the laurel by a splendid death.”⁴⁷

According to tradition, Paul was beheaded, a punishment appropriate for a Roman citizen.⁴⁸ After his death fantastic stories would emerge demonstrating that not even death could conquer Paul’s ability to convert. According to the second century work called the *Acts of Paul*, “when the executioner struck off his head, milk spurted upon the soldier’s clothing” causing everyone present to convert to Christianity, and they “glorified God who had given Paul such glory.”⁴⁹ Gregory of Tours likewise reports that “Paul was struck with a sword” and that “milk and water flowed from his holy body.”⁵⁰ Most fantastic of all might be the legend of the three fountains. Paul is believed to have been martyred at a place called the Aquas Salvias, where according to legend, “fountains...sprung up at the spots where Paul’s head struck the ground three times after the decapitation.”⁵¹

⁴⁵ Eusebius, of Caesarea, *History of the Church*, vol. 1 in *Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 129.

⁴⁶ Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, 363.

⁴⁷ Prudentius, *Peristephanon*, trans. H. J. Thomson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), 323.

⁴⁸ Tajra, *The Martyrdom of St. Paul*, 200.

⁴⁹ Willis Barnstone, trans. *The Other Bible* (New York: Harper Collins, 1984), 457.

⁵⁰ Gregory, of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs*, trans. Raymond Van Dam (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988), 46

⁵¹ Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 130, n. 16.

2.4 Patron Saint of Rome

The clearest way to understand the role that St. Paul played in devotional experience throughout the Middle Ages is to look at his significance as a co-founder of the Christian church. Sts. Peter and Paul have a long history of being described as the co-founders of the church in Rome. According to Alan Thacker, Peter and Paul were “invoked as fathers of the city,” replacing Rome’s traditional founders, Romulus and Remus.⁵² Leo the Great (400-61 CE) made this association in one of his sermons. Sermon LXXXII states, Peter and Paul are “thy holy Fathers and true shepherds, who gave thee claims to be numbered among the heavenly kingdoms, and built thee under much better and happier auspices than they [Romulus and Remus], by whose zeal the first foundations of thy walls were laid.”⁵³

The promotion of Peter’s status has long been thought to be based on Matt. 16:18-19 in which Jesus proclaims to Peter, “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church...I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth is already bound, and whatever you loose on earth is already loosed in heaven.” Paul’s status, on the other hand, was likely based on the impact of his missionary activity and his final demise at Rome, like Peter, martyred for his faith in Christ. Due to the prominence accorded to his letters after his death, St. Paul has remained an important figure all through the Christian world.

⁵² Thacker, Alan. “Rome of the Martyrs: Saints, Cults and Relics, Fourth to Seventh Centuries.” In *Roma Felix: Formation and Reflections of Medieval Rome*, edited by Éamonn Ó Carragáin and Carol Neuman de Vegvar, 43. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007).

⁵³ Leo, the Great, *Sermon LXXXII*, vol. 12, in *Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 195.

2.4.1 Canonization of the Pauline Epistles

According to Arthur Patzia, “There is sufficient evidence to conclude that by the end of the first century some of Paul’s letters were being circulated and collected in various churches.”⁵⁴ Clement of Rome, Ignatius the bishop of Antioch (35-108 CE), and Polycarp of Smyrna (69-155 CE) are examples of persons who make use of or allude to various letters of Paul. Likewise, Marcion (85-160 CE) is often pointed to as evidence for an early formation of a collection of Paul’s letters. Marcion, considered “the most formidable of heretics,” was excommunicated from the church in 144 CE.⁵⁵ In his work *Antithesis*, Marcion disputed the unity of the Old and New Testaments, and in doing so made a list of the early Christian writings that he regarded as authoritative including ten of Paul’s letters.⁵⁶ Marcion also included the Gospel of Luke because he believed that it had originally been composed by Paul.⁵⁷ Another important piece of evidence is the Muratorian Fragment, which originated in Rome at the beginning of the third century, and mentions thirteen of Paul’s letters.⁵⁸ Marcion also mentioned a letter that Paul had written to the Laodiceans which the Muratorian Fragment condemns along with others spuriously attributed to Paul.⁵⁹

Patzia concludes that “References/allusions to Paul’s epistles by church fathers from the second century onward,” offer valuable evidence pointing to the “increasing appeal to Paul’s authority and theology in the church.”⁶⁰ By the end of the fourth century, the official canon was

⁵⁴ For a brief analysis of the various views held by scholars regarding the collection process of Paul’s letters, see Arthur G. Patzia, *The Making of the New Testament: Origin, Collection, Text & Canon* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 80-8.

⁵⁵ Chadwick, *The Early Church*, 39.

⁵⁶ Lee Martin McDonald, *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority*, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 324-5.

⁵⁷ Chadwick, *The Early Church*, 38.

⁵⁸ Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 44.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* The pseudepigraphal letter to the Colossians mentions the church in Laodicea, 4:13-16. See also: McDonald, *The Biblical Canon*, 282.

⁶⁰ Patzia, *Making of the New Testament*, 88.

established. Canon XXIV of the Council of Carthage, held in 397 CE, declared, “besides the Canonical Scriptures nothing be read in church under the name of divine Scripture.”⁶¹ Included in the list of canonical books was the entire Pauline corpus. From very early on, his status was thus promoted by the top of the church hierarchy.

2.4.2 Sts. Peter and Paul, Co-founders of the Church

In Clement’s letter to the Corinthian church he calls Peter and Paul “the greatest and most righteous pillars” of the Christian faith.⁶² Irenaeus (*fl.* 2nd cent.) refers to Peter and Paul as “the two most glorious apostles.”⁶³ Leo the Great likewise concludes, “About their merits and virtues... we must not make distinctions.”⁶⁴ To him, Peter and Paul “were equal in their election, alike in their toils, undivided in their death.”⁶⁵ In the earliest depictions of Paul he is commonly shown with Peter; most often the two apostles are shown meeting one another in Rome. As noted by Cartlidge and Elliot, together they are meant to represent the cohesiveness of “Jewish-Christian against Gentile-Christian contentions in the early church.”⁶⁶

Whether Peter and Paul died at the same time, on the same day or if, in fact, their deaths were separated by a year or even two; their feast days have long been jointly celebrated on June 29th. Early evidence of a joint feast day comes from the Calendar of 354, in the section entitled *Commemorations of the Martyrs*, which describes the feast day (June 29) shared by Sts. Peter

⁶¹ Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., “The Seven Ecumenical Councils,” in *Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 14 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 453.

⁶² Clement, of Rome, *Letter to the Corinthians*, vol. 1 in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and Arthur C. Coxe (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 6.

⁶³ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, vol. 1 in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and Arthur C. Coxe (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 415.

⁶⁴ Leo, the Great, *Sermon LXXXII*, 196.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ David R. Cartlidge and J. Keith Elliot, *Art and the Christian Apocrypha* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 137.

and Paul.⁶⁷ According to Michele Salzman, this is considered, “the earliest record of the veneration of the two saints.”⁶⁸ The Hieronymian Martyrology, composed in the fifth century and spuriously attributed to Jerome, also mentions the shared feast day. However, by this time Peter was being venerated at the Vatican.

2.4.3 San Paolo Fuori le Mura

There are many sites in Rome, dedicated to preserving some memory of Paul that held a special significance to the many pilgrims who traveled there. For instance, according to Gregory of Tours, writing in the sixth century, “there are two small indentations in the stone upon which the blessed apostles [Sts. Peter and Paul] knelt and delivered their oration to the Lord against that Simon Magus.”⁶⁹ Gregory, recalling the miraculous power present near this stone, states, “When rain water has collected in these indentations, ill people gather it; once they drink it, it soon restores their health.”⁷⁰ There is also the prison where Peter and Paul were believed to have been detained and the catacombs that were, for a period of time, the place of their burials.

Where St. Paul was buried after his martyrdom is unknown. Much of the information concerning the transfer of Paul’s body is veiled in mystery, born out of contradicting traditions. The mention of the year 258 in the Calendar of 354 is significant because it gives the year in which the bodies of these saints are believed to have been relocated to the catacombs because of the persecutions during the reign of Valerian (253-60 CE).⁷¹ By the fourth century their bodies were again moved, this time to the places in which their basilicas would be built. Additional

⁶⁷ The calendar records, “Petri in Catacumbas et Pauli Ostense, Tusco et Basso Cons A.D. 258.” See: Michele Renee Salzman, *On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 46.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Gregory, of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs*, 45-6.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 46.

⁷¹ See: n. 67 above.

evidence of their bodies' placement and subsequent removal from the catacombs is illustrated by an epitaph of Pope Damasus (366-84 CE) found in the catacombs of San Sebastiano. Damasus wrote, "Here you must know the saints dwelt aforetime; their names, if you ask, were Peter and Paul. The East sent the disciples, as we gladly admit; on account of the merit of their blood--and having followed Christ through the stars, they sought the ethereal havens and the realms of the just--Rome rather deserved to defend her citizens. Let Damasus thus recall your praises, ye new constellations."⁷²

An alternate tradition, found in the *Book of Pontiffs*, states that during the pontificate of Cornelius (251-53 CE) the bodies were removed from the catacombs. In contrast to the tradition mentioned above, which asserted that the bodies were moved to the catacombs in 258 CE, Peter's body was reportedly taken by the pope to Vatican hill, while Paul's body was tended to by a woman named Lucina. She is said to have buried Paul on her private property. The *Book of Pontiffs* states, "At the request of a certain lady Lucina, he [Cornelius] took up the bodies of the apostles Saints Peter and Paul from the Catacombs at night...the blessed Lucina took the body of St Paul and put it on her estate on the Via Ostiensis close to the place where he was beheaded."⁷³ Because of the evidence supporting the former tradition, this one is largely regarded to be unreliable.

⁷² Henry P. V. Nunn, *Christian Inscriptions* (New York: Macmillan, 1920), 32-33.

⁷³ Raymond Davis, trans., *Liber Pontificalis or The Book of Pontiffs: The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Bishops to AD 715* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 9.

CHAPTER 3

CONSTANTINE'S AND THEODOSIUS'S IMPACT ON THE JOURNEY TO ROME

The early history of Christianity begins with bloodshed and martyrdom. From the beginning of the second century Christians faced persecution sporadically throughout the empire. Periodic outbreaks of violence and discrimination against the Christians occurred “during the rule of Domitian in Rome, under Trajan in Bithynia-Pontus, in Smyrna during the 150's, in Lugdunum in 177, and in Carthage and Alexandria at the beginning of the third century.”⁷⁴ During the third and fourth centuries these intermittent persecutions would turn into violent exterminations.

The first great persecution occurred under the emperor Decius (249-51 CE). Decius ordered everyone in the empire to make a sacrifice to the Roman deities to which they would then be given a certificate as proof. Valerian was also intolerant of the Christians and subsequently sought them out, determined to force them to renounce their faith. The third, and final, of the great persecutions began in 303 CE under the emperors Diocletian (284-305 CE) and Galerius (293-305 CE). These emperors sought to impose a unified system of justice inspired by Roman gods and traditional Roman virtues. While Diocletian is said to have ended the persecutions in the West in 305 CE they persisted in the East until 311 CE when Galerius issued his Edict of Toleration.⁷⁵ That is, until Galerius became ill and near death.

⁷⁴ Boatwright, Gargola, and Talbert, *The Romans*, 426.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 429.

3.1 Constantine

Following the dissolution of the tetrarchy, Constantine came to power after the death of his father in 306 CE. He found himself in the middle of politically unstable times caused by a divided empire. According to Boatwright, Gargola, and Talbert, “the senate and people of Rome chose to acclaim Maxentius as the new Augustus of the West,” a title that Constantine wanted.⁷⁶ Six years later he came upon his enemy and praying for divine approval before the battle at the Milvian Bridge just outside of Rome, Constantine is said to have had a vision of the Chi-Rho symbol in the sky accompanied by a prophecy indicating the symbol’s divine properties.⁷⁷ He believed it would aid in the battle against Maxentius and had the image placed on the shields of all his soldiers.

3.1.1 Constantine’s Conversion to Christianity and the Edict of Milan

Constantine won the decisive battle against Maxentius and proclaimed his triumph as having been divinely ordained. Three years after the battle the Arch of Constantine was dedicated commemorating Constantine’s victory. The dedication inscription recalls his divine assistance, “Since through divine inspiration and great wisdom / He has delivered the state from the tyrant / And his party by his army and noble arms, / Dedicate this arch, decorated with triumphal insignia.”⁷⁸ Although Constantine is said to have converted to Christianity at this battle, the Senate who commissioned the Arch was made up of non-Christians. Therefore, as

⁷⁶ Boatwright, Gargola, and Talbert, *The Romans*, 450.

⁷⁷ Eusebius, of Caesarea, *Life of Constantine*, vol. 1 in *Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 490-494.

⁷⁸ Michael Maas, *Readings in Late Antiquity: A Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 105.

noted by Maas, “the inscription upon it treads a delicate line in attributing Constantine’s victory to an unnamed god.”⁷⁹

Regardless of the ambiguity of the inscription, in 313 CE Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, which allowed the Christians to worship their god alongside the variety of pagan cults in Rome. This edict gave Christians a distinctly improved status in Rome, compared to the persecutions that they had previously suffered. According to Eusebius’s *History of the Church*, Constantine guaranteed religious tolerance to the Christians, stating, “We resolved, that is, to grant both to the Christians and to all men freedom to follow the religion which they choose, that whatever heavenly divinity exists, may be propitious to us and to all that live under our government.”⁸⁰ By issuing this edict, scholars such as Matilda Webb believe that Constantine initiated the gradual transformation of the ancient pagan Rome into the center of Western Christendom.⁸¹

What is frequently overlooked, according to John Curran, is that while the “significance of this [edict] for the Christian community is well known...the same [edict] also declared...no action to be taken against the non-Christian cults.”⁸² In addition, because Constantine was focusing his attention on the establishment of Constantinople, Rome was left largely unattended, to be run almost entirely by the senatorial class. These upper-class persons continued to worship the ancient pagan deities. Thus, it is fair to conclude that Constantine likely exerted little influence over the development of Rome into the large Christian city that it would become.

While there are some scholars who accept that Constantine was, in fact, converted to Christianity

⁷⁹ Maas, *Readings in Late Antiquity*, 105.

⁸⁰ Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 379.

⁸¹ Matilda Webb, *The Churches and Catacombs of Early Christian Rome: A Comprehensive Guide* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2001), xvi.

⁸² John Curran “Constantine and the Ancient Cults of Rome: The Legal Evidence,” *Greece & Rome* 43 (April 1996): 69

by his vision at the Milvian Bridge, some, according to Boatwright, Gargola, and Talbert, “are more skeptical, stressing the utility of divine sanction in a civil war and his continued respect for non-Christian religions.”⁸³ Perhaps this was, in part, the reason why Constantine wasn’t officially baptized until shortly before his death.⁸⁴

3.1.2 The *Acts of St. Sylvester* and the *Donation of Constantine*

Due to the uncertainty surrounding Constantine’s support of Christianity, accounts documenting examples of his piety began to appear, such as the early sixth century *Acts of St. Sylvester*. Legends such as this helped to promote Constantine’s image as a devout believer in the teachings of Christianity. This particular legend describes Constantine as having had a vision of Peter and Paul, who directed the emperor to go to Sylvester, the bishop of Rome (314-35 CE), in order to be cured of leprosy. Constantine was miraculously cured and then baptized by the bishop. Its immediate circulation is testified to by Gregory of Tours who alludes to this legend in his *History of the Franks*.⁸⁵ Jacobus de Voragine, in his work *The Golden Legend*, written at the end of the thirteenth century is evidence of this legend’s longevity and influence.⁸⁶

By the eighth century the legend found in the *Acts of St. Sylvester* had developed further to include the emperor’s alleged donation of a substantial amount of authority to the office of the bishop in Rome in addition to numerous allotments of land and property. Beginning with the reputation accorded to Constantine in the text known, during the Middle Ages, as the *Donation of Constantine* Roman bishops displayed an aura of superiority. The *Donation* was inserted into Gratian’s work on canon law in the twelfth century, most likely to enhance its influence. The

⁸³ Boatwright, Gargola, and Talbert, *The Romans*, 454.

⁸⁴ Chadwick, *The Early Church*, 127.

⁸⁵ Gregory, of Tours, *History of the Franks*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (London: Penguin Group, 1974), 144.

⁸⁶ Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*. Translated and edited by Ryan Granger and Helmut Ripperger (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 74.

purpose of the document was clearly to reinforce the papacy's legitimacy in subsequent centuries. According to Anat Tcherikover, "The *Donation of Constantine* thus came to be regarded not only as grounds for papal rule, but also as the Church's favoured model of the relationship between Pope and Emperor."⁸⁷

By the end of the Middle Ages, the *Donation of Constantine* was denounced as a forgery by Nicolas of Cusa (1401-64 CE) who, in 1433 CE, made a claim against its authenticity in his *Catholic Concordance*. After collecting "all the histories...the acts of the emperors and Roman pontiffs, the histories of St. Jerome who was very careful to include everything, those of Augustine, Ambrose, and the works of other learned men...the acts of holy councils which took place after Nicaea," Nicolas of Cusa was unable to find any reputable "confirmation of what is said about that donation."⁸⁸ Lorenzo Valla (1406-57 CE), in his *Discourse on the Forgery of the Alleged Donation of Constantine*, published in 1440 CE, likewise condemned the *Donation* to be a forgery.⁸⁹

3.1.3 Constantine's Building Program in Jerusalem and Rome

After Constantine's Edict of Milan was issued pilgrims were allowed to come and worship in Rome alongside the burial sites of such important Christian martyrs as Sts. Peter and Paul. Therefore, the need arose for their shrines to be built up. To demonstrate his munificence, Constantine began erecting places for Christians to gather and worship in both Jerusalem and Rome. According to Robinson, "for Constantine the renewed interest in Jerusalem as a focus for

⁸⁷ Anat Tcherikover, "Reflections of the Investiture Controversy at Nonantola and Modena," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 60 (1997): 157.

⁸⁸ Nicolas, of Cusa. *The Catholic Concordance*, trans. Paul E. Sigmund (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 217.

⁸⁹ Lorenzo Valla, *The Treatise of Lorenzo Valla on the Donation of Constantine*. Translated by Christopher B. Coleman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922), 7.

worship became also a means of emphasizing the unity that the Christian faith could bring to the empire itself.”⁹⁰

Constantine and his mother Helena (248-328 CE) transformed Jerusalem and the surrounding area into a region devoted to Christ. Eusebius’s *Life of Constantine* is the primary source for information regarding Constantine’s building activity in and around Jerusalem.⁹¹ Eusebius recounts Constantine’s orders to have the place of Jesus’ burial, and subsequent resurrection, excavated. After which, the emperor is said to have organized the building of the Holy Sepulchre. Much of the narrative is spent describing the activities of Constantine’s mother Helena.

Constantine also contributed to the Christians in Rome by organizing the construction of various shrines. Prior to his decree of toleration, Christians visited the spot believed to be the site of St. Paul’s burial by locating the memorial that had been placed there.⁹² While scholars disagree concerning what Constantine actually constructed at the site known as St. Paul’s burial the general consensus seems to be that Constantine built only a small memorial church rather than a grand basilica.⁹³ That Constantine did construct something at the site is clear from a number of sources.⁹⁴ For instance, the sixth century *Acts of St. Sylvester* marks the date that a structure patronized by Constantine was built and dedicated, closely linking Constantine’s building programs to Sylvester, the bishop of Rome. Also, according to Prudentius’s *Crowns of Martyrdom*, “the emperor Constantine built a basilica to St Paul the apostle at the petition of

⁹⁰ Robinson, *Sacred Places, Pilgrim Paths*, 4.

⁹¹ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 526-530.

⁹² Andrea Braghin, *The Jubilee Guide to Rome: The Four Basilicas: The Great Pilgrimage* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 62.

⁹³ See, for instance, Herbert L. Kessler and Johanna Zacharias, *Rome 1300: On the Path of a Pilgrim* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 159; Debra Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome in the Middle Ages: Continuity and Change* (Rochester: Boydell Press, 1998), 34-35.

⁹⁴ June Hager, *Pilgrimage A Chronicle of Christianity Through the Churches of Rome* (London: Weidenfeld, Nicholson, 1999), 199.

bishop Silvester and he buried and sealed his body in bronze just like St Peter's."⁹⁵ Similarly, the *Marvels of the City of Rome*, written at the beginning of the twelfth century states that Constantine "also built a basilica for the Blessed Apostle Paul on the Via Ostiense and put his body in brass and copper just like the body of the Blessed Peter."⁹⁶

The earliest Christian basilicas in Rome were associated with the burial place of a specific saint. They surrounded the city, situated just outside its walls. This was purposely done, in part because of regulations against burials within the city in accordance with the ancient laws found in the *Twelve Tables*.⁹⁷ However, I would suggest that these outlying sites also functioned as a form of early Christian propaganda, as anyone leaving or entering the city would have come into contact with them. In addition, because Paganism continued to exist in Rome, political reasons also likely governed the decision to build these basilicas outside of the city.

3.2 Theodosius and the Banning of Paganism

After the death of Constantine in 337 CE, Christianity would again fall into disfavor with some of his successors. The best known example is Julian the Apostate, sole emperor from 361 to 363 CE. Julian's primary focus was the restoration of Paganism which thrived in the empire during his reign. In 362 CE as an illustration of his disapproval of Christianity, Julian wrote an edict against Christian teachers, banning them from teaching the classics. Julian held that they could only be read by those who believed in the traditional deities.

This changed when, at the end of the fourth century, the Emperor Theodosius (379-95 CE) banned Paganism completely and made Christianity the official state observed religion. The

⁹⁵ Davis, trans., *Liber Pontificalis*, 21; Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome*, 34-35.

⁹⁶ F. M. Nichols, trans., *Mirabilia Urbis Romae or The Marvels of Rome* (New York: Italica Press, 1986), 30.

⁹⁷ Lucilius, *The Twelve Tables*, vol. 3 of *Remains of Old Latin*, trans. and ed. E. H. Warmington (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), 497.

Theodosian Code decrees, “We authorize the followers of this law to assume the title of Catholic Christians; but as for the others, since, in our judgment, they are foolish madmen, we decree that they shall be branded with the ignominious name of heretics...They will suffer in the first place the chastisement of the divine condemnation, and in the second the punishment which our authority, in accordance with the will of Heaven, shall decide to inflict.”⁹⁸ From this time on Paganism was considered illegal, and Christianity was allowed to flourish throughout the empire unabated.

3.2.1 Rebuilding San Paolo Fuori le Mura

In a letter written in 403 CE, Jerome remarked, “Every temple in Rome is covered with soot and cobwebs. The city is stirred to its depths and the people pour past their half-ruined shrines to visit the tombs of the martyrs.”⁹⁹ In order to accommodate the number of pilgrims who visited St. Paul’s burial site throughout the year, what was originally a small memorial chapel was, by the fifth century, beginning to be transformed into a large, elaborate basilica.

Theodosius commissioned a large scale rebuilding of St. Paul’s basilica, wishing to turn the site into a lavish place of devotion but its reconstruction was left incomplete when he died. A dedication found on the triumphal arch inside the church declares the basilica to have been completed by Theodosius’s son, Honorius (393-423 CE). The quotation reads, “Theodosius began and Honorius finished the hall consecrated by the body of Paul, the teacher of the world.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Henry Bettenson and Chris Maunder, ed., *Documents of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1999), 24.

⁹⁹ Jerome, *Epistle CVII to Laeta*, vol. 6 in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 190.

¹⁰⁰ Nunn, *Christian Inscriptions*, 10.

The Spanish writer Prudentius traveled to Rome shortly after the rebuilding was completed. In his *Crowns of Martyrdom*, he describes the glory of the renovated San Paolo fuori le mura carried out by the two emperors. He gives a firsthand account of the grandeur a pilgrim would have observed coming upon the great basilica. Prudentius movingly proclaims, “The splendor of the place is princely, for our good emperor dedicated this seat and decorated its whole extent with great wealth. He laid plates on the beams so as to make all the light within golden like the sun’s radiance at its rising, and supported the gold-panelled ceiling on pillars of Parian marble set out there in four rows. Then he covered the curves of the arches with splendid glass of different hues, like meadows that are bright with flowers in spring.”¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Prudentius, *Peristephanon*, 326-327.

CHAPTER 4

REASONS FOR THE RENOVATIONS MADE TO SAN PAOLO FUORI LE MURA

4.1 The Cult of the Saints and Martyrs

There is evidence that the veneration of those that had died for the faith began as early as the second century. This reverence was shown in two ways. The first was demonstrated by the care taken in tending to and burying the bodily remains of a martyr. Secondly, emphasis was placed on the remembrance of their date of death. As an example, in one of his letters written at the beginning of the third century, Cyprian (*fl.* 3rd cent.) spoke of those that had died in Carthage saying, “you should keep note of the days on which they depart this life; we will then be able to include the celebration of their memories in our commemoration of the martyrs.”¹⁰² Similarly, in another letter he states, “As you recall, we never fail to offer sacrifices on their behalf every time we celebrate in commemoration the anniversary dates of the sufferings of these martyrs.”¹⁰³

During this early period and throughout the Middle Ages the papacy employed various methods in order to encourage pilgrims to come to Rome and to highlight the city’s importance as being apostolically founded. For instance, the *Commemorations of the Martyrs*, part of the Calendar of 354, “strongly suggests,” according to Thacker, “that interest in recording and venerating Rome’s local martyrs began in the earlier fourth century and that it was closely associated with the developing role of the papacy.”¹⁰⁴ During the fifth century the Roman church began publically endorsing the cult of the Christian saints and martyrs in an attempt to

¹⁰² Cyprian, of Carthage, “Letter XII,” in *Letters of Cyprian of Carthage*, trans. G. W. Clarke, vol. 1 of *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation*, ed. Johannes Quasten and J. C. Plumpe (New York: Newman Press, 1984), 82.

¹⁰³ Cyprian, of Carthage, “Letter XXXIX,” in *Letters of Cyprian of Carthage*, trans. G. W. Clarke, vol. 2 of *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation*, ed. Johannes Quasten and J. C. Plumpe (New York: Newman Press, 1984), 55.

¹⁰⁴ Thacker, “Rome of the Martyrs,” 21.

establish its preeminence. Prior to this time, before Theodosius's edict, it was likely difficult to commemorate a martyr for fear of facing persecution.

4.1.1 Damasus

Pope Damasus is often viewed by historians as being instrumental in making Rome into the official seat of the papacy. His ascension to the papal throne occurred, as noted by Thacker, "after the violent and bloody expulsion of a rival, and his pontificate remained troubled."¹⁰⁵ In order to promote the papacy, Damasus emphasized the importance of the Roman martyrs. According to Thacker, Damasus's pontificate "was to prove a crucial turning point for martyr cult in Rome."¹⁰⁶ Some scholars, such as Orazio Marucchi, believe that Damasus felt as though he had prevailed in becoming pope under the guidance of the martyrs and "in gratitude for the favor he immediately set to work preserving, embellishing and restoring their tombs."¹⁰⁷

The catacombs in Rome, where many Christian martyrs had been buried, were Damasus's main priority. As an aid to pilgrims, Damasus made the catacombs more accessible to pilgrims. He is also credited with several inscriptions carved on the tombs of martyrs buried there. With his restoration of the catacombs, according to Webb, "the emphasis began to change from these being places of burial to places of pilgrimage."¹⁰⁸ Thus, during his pontificate the building program initiated by Constantine flourished. The author of the *Book of Pontiffs* credits Damasus with the building of two basilicas in Rome in addition to proclaiming Damasus' involvement with the shrines of martyrs. "At the Catacombs, the place where lay the bodies of the apostles St Peter and St Paul," Prudentius recalls that Damasus "dedicated and adorned with

¹⁰⁵ Thacker, "Rome of the Martyrs," 21

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 30.

¹⁰⁷ Orazio Marucchi, *Manual of Christian Archeology*, trans. Hubert Vecchierello. 2nd ed. (Patterson, NJ: St. Anthony's Guild Press, 1949), 253.

¹⁰⁸ Webb, *Churches and Catacombs*, xx.

verses the actual tablet at the place where the holy bodies lay.” Damasus, is also said to have “searched for and discovered many bodies of holy martyrs, and also proclaimed their acts in verses,” in the epitaphs throughout the city.¹⁰⁹

4.1.2 Leo I

Pope Damasus initiated the organization of the cult of the saints and martyrs at the end of the fourth century. However, a century later, during the pontificate of Leo I (440-61 CE), the cult of the saints and martyrs began to reach a peak in its effectiveness. And, in turn, Leo I is credited with initiating and organizing several redecoration projects at the basilica of San Paolo fuori le mura. During his pontificate many new artistic elements were added to the church. For instance, he is believed to have commissioned papal portraits to be placed in roundels lining both sides of the nave beginning with St. Peter, whose portrait is located near the apse of the basilica. As noted by Kessler and Zacharias, the positioning of St. Peter nearest the apse is significant because, it “conforms to the now-familiar order in Roman church decoration, in which proximity to the altar reflects importance.”¹¹⁰ It was also during this time that fresco paintings were commissioned to run along each side of the nave.¹¹¹ These frescoes included, on the right side of the nave, forty scenes illustrating important stories from the Old Testament. On the nave’s left side were forty scenes representing moments of St. Paul’s life, scenes largely adapted from the Acts of the Apostles.¹¹²

Such an iconological program as that commissioned for San Paolo fuori le mura, sheds light on the various functions of religious art at this time. Art produced during the Middle Ages

¹⁰⁹ Davis, trans., *Liber Pontificalis*, 30.

¹¹⁰ Kessler and Zacharias, *Rome 1300*, 165.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 167-174.

¹¹² Luba Eleen, “The Frescoes from the Life of St. Paul in San Paolo fuori le mura in Rome: Early Christian or Medieval?” *Canadian Art Review* 12 (1985): 251-259.

was displayed with certain intentions. Art could serve both religious and political agendas. Political statements were often represented intertwined with religious imagery. Such propaganda, observed by the lay community, was intended to convey an important message and to foster certain reactions. These images also aided the faithful in understanding the important doctrines and decrees that had been determined at ecumenical councils. They were also used to promote the status of particular individuals. In the case of the papal portraits the viewer would clearly recognize the authority inherited by the current pope from each prior pope, traced back to St. Peter.

4.2 Further Renovations

Besides those renovations initiated by Leo I, also in the fifth century the Emperor Theodosius's daughter, Galla Placidia (392-450 CE) reportedly funded the large, elaborate mosaic on the triumphal arch. The commissioning of this mosaic took place with the support of Pope Leo I. The inscription on the arch demonstrates their mutual involvement by declaring, "Placidia's devoted heart is delighted that all the dignity of her father's work shines resplendent through the zeal of Pope Leo."¹¹³ St. Paul and St. Peter are shown on either side of the arch, demonstrating the equality of each. As already discussed, pairing these two saints together aided the church in Rome in communicating the city's ancient ties to the earliest Christian martyrs, co-founders of the church itself.

Other renovations to the basilica include the addition of an elaborate confession, which refers to "the burial-place of one who had 'confessed' Christ by martyrdom."¹¹⁴ According the *Book of Pontiffs*, this was added by the Emperor Valentinian III (425-55 CE), the son of Galla

¹¹³ Webb, *Churches and Catacombs*, 212.

¹¹⁴ Davis, trans., *Liber Pontificalis*, 121.

Placidia, at the request of Sixtus III (432-40 CE).¹¹⁵ During the pontificate of Symmachus I (498-514 CE) many new additions were made to the basilica, some were artistic while others were architectural. Recorded in the *Book of Pontiffs*, “he renewed the apse...provided a picture as decoration behind the confessio...built an apse-vault and a matroneum...Over the confessio he placed a silver image of the Saviour and the 12 apostles...He built steps in front of the basilica’s doors...and a fountain.”¹¹⁶ Perhaps Symmachus’ most significant contribution was the hospice for pilgrims that he built near the basilica.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Davis, trans., *Liber Pontificalis*, 37.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹¹⁷ M. C. McCarthy, “Pilgrimages,” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 11, 2nd ed. (Washington DC: Gale, 2003), 345.

CHAPTER 5 COMPETITION AND CONTROVERSY

5.1 Restrictions Against the Pilgrimage to Rome

In 395 CE Jerome wrote a letter to Paulinus of Nola in which Jerome attempted to dissuade him from making a journey to Jerusalem. Jerome does this on the basis that he feels that Paulinus, as one who has committed himself to the monastic life, should focus his efforts appropriately. Jerome argues, “if you [Paulinus] desire to be in deed what you are in name- a monk, that is, one who lives alone, what have you to do with cities which are the homes not of solitaries but of crowds?”¹¹⁸ In this letter Jerome uses arguments similar to those used by Origen and Eusebius discussed above. “Each believer is judged not by his residence in this place or in that but according to the deserts of his faith,” according to Jerome, “access to the courts of heaven is as easy from Britain as it is from Jerusalem; for ‘the kingdom of God is within you’.”¹¹⁹ Like Eusebius, he uses John 4:23-24 as support against restricting God to a specific place. Jerome concludes, “I do not presume to limit God’s omnipotence or to restrict to a narrow strip of earth Him whom the heaven cannot contain.”¹²⁰

Jerome’s comments may seem contradictory in light of the letters discussed above, in which he had spoken so favorably of Jerusalem, of the overall necessity for a Christian to make a pilgrimage there. In this letter, Jerome himself anticipates the awareness of such discrepancies, and counters predicted reactions stating, “In speaking thus I am not laying myself open to a charge of inconsistency or condemning the course which I have myself taken.”¹²¹ His purpose in writing this letter is not to condemn the act of pilgrimage or to lessen Jerusalem’s importance.

¹¹⁸ Jerome, *Epistle LVIII to Paulinus*, vol. 6 in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 121.

¹¹⁹ Luke 17:21. *Ibid.*, 120.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

Rather, Jerome is trying to convince Paulinus that each has been raised in their own vocation in which they are to serve the LORD. Yet, this letter is an early example of negative reactions to certain people making a pilgrimage to places such as Jerusalem, or in particular, to Rome. For reasons quite similar to those found in Jerome's letter to Paulinus, frequently monks and other members of the clergy were dissuaded from making such journeys.¹²²

During the eighth and ninth centuries there were varying views towards pilgrimage, some more hostile than others. For instance, Claudius of Turin (*fl.* 9th cent.), before his death wrote of the pilgrimage to Rome saying, "I neither approve nor disapprove of that journey, since I know that it is neither of disadvantage nor of advantage to everyone, nor does it hurt or help everyone."¹²³ In contrast, an Irish poem composed in the ninth century declares, "To go to Rome means great labor and little profit; the king you seek can only be found there if you bring him within yourself."¹²⁴ It was during this time that a series of councils were held, in which various restrictions were leveled against pilgrimages.¹²⁵

5.2 Competition With Other Pilgrimage Sites

During the Middle Ages, with the rise in the number of sacred places dedicated to various martyrs and saints scattered all throughout Europe, there naturally arose, some competition between these cities and their pilgrimage sites. According to Debra Birch, "Rome was the richest of all the cities in the West in relics and shrines and thus the development of the cult of

¹²² Constable's article is a summary of arguments relating to monasticism and pilgrimage during the Middle Ages. Giles Constable, "Opposition to Pilgrimage in the Middle Ages," *Studia Gratiana* 19 (1976): 123-46.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 129.

¹²⁴ Rudolf Thurneysen, *Old Irish Reader*, trans. Daniel A. Binchy and Osborn Bergin (Dublin: Dublin Institute, 1949), 41.

¹²⁵ According to Murphy, "Councils at Verneuil (755), Aquileia (796), and Châlons (813) forbade monks to go to Rome." F. X. Murphy, "Pilgrimages, Roman," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 11, 2nd ed. (Washington DC: Gale, 2003), 354.

saints undoubtedly enhanced the city's importance as a pilgrimage center."¹²⁶ The city of Rome had, in part, gained popularity by emphasizing the intercessory powers of Christian saints and martyrs. This had been very effective largely because of what the city personally had to offer to the pious pilgrim, particularly because it controlled the shrines of two important Christian martyrs. However, despite Rome's popularity amongst travelers, during the Middle Ages, the city found itself to be in competition with other cities that boasted of their own important relics.

One city that attempted to compete with Rome was Milan. Ambrose (339-97 CE), in the latter part of the fourth century imported relics in order to contend with Rome. According to Thacker, "Quite brazen in his expressed desire to remedy Milan's lack of martyrs, his first moves were to import relics, especially apostolic relics, from the east."¹²⁷ Likewise, Paulinus of Nola believed that Constantinople had achieved a status equivalent to that of Rome. In one of his poems he poignantly declared, "When Constantine was founding the city named after himself...the godsent idea came to him that since he was then embarking on that splendid enterprise of building a city which would rival Rome...He then removed Andrew from the Greeks and Timothy from Asia; and so Constantinople now stands with twin towers, vying to match the hegemony of the great Rome."¹²⁸ The most famous pilgrimage destination, viewed by Rome to be its biggest competitor, was the site of St. James' relics in Spain. St. James' supposed tomb was discovered in Galicia in 830 CE. According to Edwin Mullins, "More than half a million travelers are said to have used the road to Compostela each year at the height of its popularity, in the 11th and 12th centuries."¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome*, 23.

¹²⁷ Thacker, "Rome of the Martyrs," 38.

¹²⁸ Paulinus, of Nola, "Poem XIX," in *The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola*, trans. P. G. Walsh, vol. 40 of *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation*, ed. Johannes Quasten, Walter J. Burghardt, and Thomas C. Lawler (New York: Newman Press, 1975), 142.

¹²⁹ Edwin Mullins, *The Pilgrimage to Santiago* (New York: Interlink Books, 2001), 3.

5.3 Itineraries and Badges

In order to promote a particular pilgrimage destination, itineraries produced during the Middle Ages were used to publicize what a particular city had to offer, as well as functioning as guidebooks for those set to travel. These itineraries were used as an important publicity tool in order to combat competition between other pilgrimage sites. An itinerary compiled in the late-eighteenth century, the so-called Einsiedeln Itinerary is considered to be “one of the most precise and vivid of all the Itineraries.”¹³⁰ Another similar itinerary is the *Marvels of the City of Rome* which dates from 1150 CE. Later these booklets would list what special indulgences were given to pilgrims who visited certain sites in Rome. For instance, the *Stacions of Rome*, specifically records the benefits of going to San Paolo fuori le mura. The author of this text asserts that visiting San Paolo daily for a year was equal, in terms of indulgence, to making the long and difficult journey to St. James’ in Spain. In view of that, Hubert believes this English poem “was one of a class of documents which evidently formed part of an organized propaganda to attract pilgrims to Rome.”¹³¹

During the latter part of the Middle Ages pilgrimage badges also began to gain popularity. According to Birch, these badges were “a good means by which pilgrimage centers advertised themselves,” in addition to also being a communicative means for pilgrims to express their personal dedication.¹³² For the pilgrim the purpose of these badges was two-fold. They were a material expression of a pilgrim’s piety, recording the previous pilgrimages that they had made. Additionally, they functioned as a form of protection because wearing these tokens marked them as pilgrims.

¹³⁰ Ethel Ross Barker, *Rome of the Pilgrims and Martyrs* (London: Methuen, 1913), 120.

¹³¹ J. R. Hulbert, “Some Medieval Advertisements of Rome,” *Modern Philology* 20 (May, 1923): 404; Hager, *Pilgrimage*, 179-180.

¹³² Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome*, 77-79.

The token commemorating one's pilgrimage to Rome came in different forms. As noted by Judith Champ, Rome's badges varied, being "either the keys of Peter, alone or with the sword of Paul."¹³³ Each of these, Peter's keys and Paul's sword, are elements commonly found in artistic representations of the saints. Another pilgrimage badge from Rome had on it the image of the Sudarium of St. Veronica. According to Diana Webb, "The 'Veronica' of Rome...was reproduced not only as a badge, but as a small cloth replica, which of course could easily be sewn on to a hat or other garment."¹³⁴ This badge became common especially after 1300 CE, in connection with Boniface VIII's ceremonial Holy Year, which will be discussed below.

5.4 The Promotion of Relics

As already mentioned, before Christianity received its imperial endorsement special care was already being taken to preserve the bodies of those who had been martyred for their faith. The earliest example of a martyr's remains being cared for after their death is Polycarp of Smyrna. *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, written mid-second century, reports that those who witnessed his martyrdom, "afterwards took up his bones, as being more precious than the most exquisite jewels, and more purified than gold, and deposited them in a fitting place...to celebrate the anniversary of his martyrdom, both in memory of those who have already finished their course, and for the exercising and preparation of those yet to walk in their steps."¹³⁵ Gregory the Great (590-604 CE) recalls a tradition, which he refers to as "well known" that, after the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, "believers came from the East to recover their bodies as being

¹³³ Judith F. Champ, *The English Pilgrimage to Rome: A Dwelling for the Soul* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2000), 38.

¹³⁴ Diana Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2001), 128.

¹³⁵ Arthur C. Coxe, ed. "Epistle Concerning the Martyrdom of Polycarp," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 43.

those of their own countrymen.”¹³⁶ Two hundred years earlier, in the epitaph at the catacombs, discussed above, Damasus may have been alluding to this same event. The fourth century *Acts of Peter and Paul* also records this episode.¹³⁷ Each of these examples illustrates the special significance held by Christians regarding the bodies of those who had passed away before Christ’s return.

With Constantine’s promotion of Christianity there came a shift in the topography of the empire. Constantine’s building programs initiated a change in the way a Christian was able to worship, namely by going and visiting a specific, holy site. By creating these shrines worship became focused on a place, usually associated with the body or relics of a martyr. According to Wilfrid Bosner, by the end of the fourth century, the veneration of relics such as these were “approved and encouraged by such men as SS. Ambrose and Augustine of Hippo in the West and SS. Basil and Chrysostom in the East: and it prospered exceedingly from that time.”¹³⁸

After a shrine was established, whether in Rome, Jerusalem, or somewhere else, accounts of miracles occurring at such shrines began to appear. These stories encouraged those seeking aid to make a pilgrimage in hope of finding their own miracle. As noted by Kenneth Woodward, “Augustine was particularly influential in defending the idea that miracles were signs of God’s power and proof of the sanctity of those in whose name they were wrought.”¹³⁹ In Augustine’s *City of God* he describes several miracles in order to combat criticism against the devotion seemingly paid unto saints and martyrs as though they themselves were gods. Augustine asserts

¹³⁶ Gregory, the Great, *Epistle XXX to Constantina Augusta*, vol. 12 in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 155.

¹³⁷ Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and Arthur C. Coxe, eds., “Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul,” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 8 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 485.

¹³⁸ Wilfrid Bosner, “The Cult of Relics in the Middle Ages,” *Folklore* 73 (Winter, 1962): 236.

¹³⁹ Kenneth L. Woodward, *Making Saints* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 62.

that “the same God who effected the miracles we read of is at work in the performance of many miracles by what agents he chooses and by what means he chooses.”¹⁴⁰

According to John Crook, “the saint was believed simultaneously to be physically present at the grave and resident in heaven. It was therefore at the grave that mortals could most effectively invoke the power of the saint to intercede on their behalf in heaven or to effect a miracle on earth.”¹⁴¹ Around this same time we begin to see the distribution of relics. “Contrary to Eastern practice, at Rome during this period,” according to Murphy, “bones were not distributed as relics, but openings were made above the tombs, and articles could be let down to touch the interior.”¹⁴² Since the power of procuring miracles existed within the bodily remains of a martyr, it was believed that anything that had touched or been near to the body was also able to perform miracles. In his work, *Against Julian*, Gregory Nazianzen (329-89 CE) describes the transference of power from a saint’s body. “The drops of blood and little relics of their passion,” which had been in contact with their remains could then, according to Gregory, “produce equal effect with their bodies.”¹⁴³ Leo I is said to have sent strips of cloth, such as those described by Murphy, to the Greek churches.¹⁴⁴ In doing so, as noted by Thacker, he “developed a wholly non-corporeal form of contact relic, manufactured from incubating small strips of cloth on the sacred tomb.”¹⁴⁵

By the beginning of the sixth century, during the pontificates of Symmachus and Hormisdas (514-23 CE) the trading of relics between churches became a more frequent enterprise. These exchanges were typically initiated by a major political figure. For instance,

¹⁴⁰ Augustine, of Hippo. *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin Group, 2003), 1044-5.

¹⁴¹ John Crook, *The Architectural Setting of the Cult of Saints in the Early Christian West c.300-c.1200* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 16-17.

¹⁴² Murphy, “Pilgrimages, Roman,” 353.

¹⁴³ Charles William King, trans., *Julian the Emperor: Containing Gregory Nazianzen’s Two Invectives and Libanius’ Monody* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1888), 39.

¹⁴⁴ Gregory, the Great, *Epistle XXX*, 155.

¹⁴⁵ Thacker, “Rome of the Martyrs,” 38.

King Sigismund of Burgundy (516-24 CE) wrote to Symmachus in order to attain “a further consignment of relics, having distributed all he himself obtained in Rome.”¹⁴⁶ In his letter Sigismund states, “As for the sacred relics with which, through me, you have enriched your own land of Gaul with a spiritual gift, since I do not presume to deny them to those who ask for them, I too am compelled to go to the ever-flowing fount of Your Apostleship to ask for the patronage of the saints.”¹⁴⁷ Similarly, Justinian I (527-65 CE) had written to Pope Hormisdas for several relics in order to consecrate a basilica in honor of the apostles. Hormisdas was asked, “to bestow to him [Justinian] abruptly the sanctuaries of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul...He also asks for the chains of the blessed apostles, if possible, and also the gridiron of the blessed martyr Lawrence.”¹⁴⁸

Likewise, the Empress Constantina (560-605 CE) asked Gregory the Great that the head of St. Paul be sent to her in order to consecrate a church in Byzantium. Gregory denied her request on the basis that “it is not the custom of the Romans, when they give relics of the saints, to presume to touch any part of the body...it is unendurable and sacrilegious for any one by any chance to desire to touch the bodies of the saints.”¹⁴⁹ Gregory informs her of the cloths that are placed in a box near the body of the saint. Once a cloth of the this type is placed within a consecrated church, Gregory reports, “such powerful effects are thereby produced there as might have been if their [Sts. Peter and Paul] bodies had been brought to that special place.”¹⁵⁰ In order to pacify Constantina’s request Gregory notifies her that he will instead send filings from the chains that had held St. Peter.

¹⁴⁶ Murphy, “Pilgrimages, Roman,” 352.

¹⁴⁷ Danuta Shanzer and Ian Wood, trans., *Avitus of Vienne: Letters and Selected Prose* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002), 226.

¹⁴⁸ Hormisdas, *Epist.* 77, translated by Dr. Tomas Zahora; personal communication.

¹⁴⁹ Gregory, the Great, *Epistle XXX*, 155.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

According to Crook, “The reluctance of the popes to supply corporeal relics may well reflect, above all, their desire to retain control over the relic cults associated with Roman churches.”¹⁵¹ While this may be, in part, true, there are other possible reasons for their unwillingness. For instance, these popes likely viewed Sts. Peter and Paul as the most important martyrs to have died for the faith and therefore may have instinctively wished to protect their sanctity. In addition, there were laws in place that were meant to protect the bodies of the deceased. In the Theodosian Code, compiled in the mid-fifth century, there is a decree which was put into effect in 386 CE that states, “No person shall sell the relics of a martyr; no person shall traffic in them.”¹⁵²

In his work, *Glory of the Martyrs*, Gregory of Tours describes pilgrims, presumably from Gaul, who traveled to St. Peter’s shrine at the Vatican in order to obtain relics. The relics that he describes are the pieces of cloth that had been lowered down and after a period of time the pilgrim was called to return to the church in order to claim their relic.¹⁵³ Another of Gregory’s works, the *History of the Franks* is littered with references to the procuring of relics of various saints and martyrs. For instance, book X begins with the story of Agiulf, the deacon of Tours, who had traveled to the city of Rome and returned “with relics of the Saints.”¹⁵⁴

According to Webb, “that these strips of cloth were considered to be relics after they had been in close contact with the bones of martyrs and saints, derived partly from a passage in the Bible.”¹⁵⁵ As evidence, Webb points to Acts 19:11-12 which states, “God was performing extraordinary miracles by Paul’s hands, so that even facecloths or handkerchiefs that had touched

¹⁵¹ Crook, *Architectural Setting of the Cult of Saints*, 23.

¹⁵² Clyde Pharr, trans., *The Theodosian Code and Novels* (Clark, NJ: Lawbook Exchange, 2008), 240. See also: Justinian Code 1.2.3.

¹⁵³ Gregory, of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs*, 45-6.

¹⁵⁴ Gregory, of Tours, *History of the Franks*, 543.

¹⁵⁵ Webb, *Churches and the Catacombs*, 212.

his skin were brought to the sick, and the diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them.” This passage was used in order to substantiate claims professing the healing powers of relics. Miracle stories helped to promote this claim. For instance, in the *Acts of Peter and Paul*, which dates back to the fourth century, there is a story of a woman named Perpetua. Perpetua had an injured eye but was miraculously cured by a handkerchief that Paul had taken from her as he was being led away to be executed. The handkerchief was used to blindfold Paul prior to his death and was later returned to Perpetua. This text reports that “the handkerchief, having on it drops of blood, was restored to the woman. And as she was carrying it, straightway and immediately her eye was opened.”¹⁵⁶

There are other passages in the New Testament that are often overlooked despite their connection. For example, Acts 5:15 states that sick people were carried into the street and laid on beds “so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on some of them.” Likewise, Matt. 9:20-21 tells of “a woman who had suffered from bleeding for 12 years approached from behind and touched the tassel of His [Jesus’] robe, for she said to herself, ‘If I can just touch His robe, I’ll be made well’.”¹⁵⁷

The popularity of relics amongst pilgrims created for the churches that possessed them a certain amount of prestige. Such prestige, and, in some cases, power, left other churches or whole cities desiring the same status. Thus, as noted by Dee Dyas, “the passionate and frequently uncritical devotion offered to the saints opened the door to all manner of abuses and, since possession of relics meant profit for those whose community they graced, there were substantial temptations to indulge in fraud and exploitation.”¹⁵⁸ One of the most commonly occurring abuses involving relics was theft. “Relics were burgled,” according to Christine

¹⁵⁶ Roberts, Donaldson, and Coxe, eds., “Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul,” 485.

¹⁵⁷ See also: Mark 5:27-30 and Luke 8:43-44.

¹⁵⁸ Dyas, *Pilgrimage in Medieval English Literature*, 63.

Quigely, “by individuals hoping to make a profit from them, but they were also stolen by other churches or monasteries...Ironically, a story of theft attached to a relic actually increased its value.”¹⁵⁹

Specific churches were inherently more appealing than others if they possessed a notable saint’s relics. For this reason, relics from Rome, especially those that had in some form come into contact with the body of Peter or Paul, were highly sought after. Evidence of this has already been discussed above. At San Paolo fuori le mura, in order to control and accentuate the pilgrim’s experience, St. Paul’s crypt which is located in the transept of the church, experienced several stages of remodeling throughout the Middle Ages. Much of the information about such renovations comes from the *Book of Pontiffs*, which was put together in the sixth century in order to record the events that took place during each pope’s pontificate, and also to document specific donations made to particular churches.

Gregory of Tours had described the tomb of St. Peter at the Vatican as being inaccessible.¹⁶⁰ This may have also been true at San Paolo fuori le mura, necessitating some of the alterations that were carried out during the Middle Ages. Some of the most significant changes made to this basilica are those made to the crypt. For instance, during the pontificate of Gregory the Great the crypt was altered in such a way as to allow mass to be said directly over St. Paul’s body. According to the *Book of Pontiffs*, Gregory the Great is said to have done the same at St. Peter’s basilica.¹⁶¹ Later, Leo III (795-816 CE) is said to have added a flight of stairs that made the crypt more accessible.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Christine Quigley, *Skulls and Skeletons: Human Bone Collections and Accumulations* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001), 168.

¹⁶⁰ Gregory, of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs*, 45.

¹⁶¹ Davis, trans., *Liber Pontificalis*, 36.

¹⁶² Kessler and Zacharias, *Rome 1300*, 177.

According to Crook, “a canon was passed at the so-called Fifth Council of Carthage that altars without the proven body of a bishop or relics of a martyr should if possible be destroyed.”¹⁶³ By the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 CE it had become mandatory for every church to have a saint’s relics before it could be consecrated.¹⁶⁴ From this council, canon VII states, “We decree therefore that relics shall be placed with the accustomed service in as many of the sacred temples as have been consecrated without the relics of the Martyrs. And if any bishop from this time forward is found consecrating a temple without holy relics, he shall be deposed, as a transgressor of the ecclesiastical traditions.”¹⁶⁵ According to Nerida Newbigin, “relics were replicated all over Europe and held in great esteem...Roman relics were the ‘parent’ relics, and all other relics derived from them.”¹⁶⁶ Thus, once again great throngs of pilgrims began to make the journey to Rome, and one of the most popular destinations was San Paolo fuori le mura because it preserved the relics of St. Paul.

¹⁶³ Crook, *Architectural Setting of the Cult of Saints*, 13.

¹⁶⁴ Bosner, “The Cult of Relics,” 236.

¹⁶⁵ Schaff and Wace, “The Seven Ecumenical Councils,” 560; Bosner, “The Cult of Relics in the Middle Ages,” 236-237.

¹⁶⁶ Nerida Newbigin, “‘Del grasso di Lorenzo un’ampolletta’: Relics and Representations in the Quest for Forgiveness in Renaissance Rome,” *The Journal of Religious History* 28 (February, 2004): 59; Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome*, 26.

CHAPTER 6

THE POWER OF THE PAPACY AND ITS CAMPAIGNS TO REESTABLISH THE PILGRIMAGE TO ROME

By filling Rome with relics and by promoting and highlighting the history of the city in its itineraries the papacy, in addition to the continual economic growth, was able to maintain its superiority over other pilgrimage destinations. However, the eminence with which the papacy in Rome was recognized throughout the Middle Ages went through several periods of ups and downs, which the church in Rome had to actively work to overcome in order to sustain this dominance. As already discussed, throughout the Middle Ages Rome's popularity as a pilgrimage destination created by the promotion of the cult of the saints and martyrs experienced times in which it found itself struggling against other sites for predominance. In order to promote Rome's centralization in the midst of competition and controversy the papacy sought to develop new methods in order to maintain its dominance. This had been easily achieved by emphasizing, along with the cult of the saints and martyrs, the primacy of holy relics.

6.1 Securing the Papacy's Primacy

In the latter part of the Middle Ages the papacy would look for new ways to reclaim Rome's importance. The papacy accomplished this by proclaiming their absolute authority. The *Dictatus Papae*, believed to have been written by Gregory VII (1073-85 CE) at the end of the eleventh century, expresses the complete, unquestionable authority of the pope. Some of the principles of papal power described in the text include, "That the Roman church was founded by God alone, That the Roman pontiff alone can with right be called universal... That he himself may be judged by no one... That the Roman church has never erred; nor will it err to all eternity,

the Scripture bearing witness...That he who is not at peace with the Roman church shall not be considered catholic.”¹⁶⁷

In the fourteenth century, Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303 CE) upheld Gregory’s affirmation of papal authority. In his papal bull, *Unam Sanctam* (1302 CE), he describes the power of the two swords and the authority of one over the other. “Both swords, the spiritual and the material,” according to Boniface, “are in the power of the church; the one, indeed, to be wielded for the church, the other by the church; the one by the hand of the priest, the other by the hand of kings and knights, but at the will and sufferance of the priest. One sword, moreover, ought to be under the other, and the temporal authority to be subjected to the spiritual...it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman pontiff”¹⁶⁸

At the beginning of the sixteenth century this bull was confirmed at three of the twelve sessions of the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-17 CE).¹⁶⁹ As successors of St. Peter, such authority was maintained by the papacy throughout the Middle Ages based entirely on the continued possession of the keys given to St. Peter by Jesus. Evidence of St. Peter’s primacy can be seen as early as Irenaeus, who at the end of the second century, had written, “it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church [Rome], on account of its preeminent authority, that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolic tradition has been preserved continuously.”¹⁷⁰ The importance of these declarations, for this study, is the indisputable and limitless power the papacy effectively gained.

¹⁶⁷ Ernest Henderson, *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1905), 366-7.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 436.

¹⁶⁹ William R. Russell, “Martin Luther’s Understanding of the Pope as the Antichrist,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 85 (1994): 38.

¹⁷⁰ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 415-6.

6.2 Indulgences

As the cult of the saints and martyrs spread and the trading of relics produced shrines all throughout Europe the papacy had to create new ways to encourage pilgrims to travel to Rome. The church did so through its endorsement of special indulgences. At the Council of Clermont in 1095 CE, Pope Urban II (1088-99 CE) awarded participants in the crusade to retake the Holy Land the plenary indulgence, which granted them full remission from their sins.¹⁷¹ Prior to the eleventh century only partial indulgences had been given, which in contrast to the plenary indulgence, simply commuted the penance required by the sinner. According to Philip Schaff, Paschalis I (817-24 CE) and John VIII (872-82 CE) were the earliest popes to issue an indulgence.¹⁷²

Indulgences became increasingly popular throughout the Middle Ages, first as an incentive to participate in the crusades, and then with those who couldn't take part but still wanted to aid the movement. Secondly, they were distributed to those who undertook the great pilgrimage to Rome and then, lastly, to those who wished to purchase them as a form of penance. By the beginning of the thirteenth century they were being given for other reasons as well. Evidence of these extensions comes from the Fourth Lateran Council. Canon III allows that "Catholics who have girded themselves with the cross for the extermination of the heretics, shall enjoy the indulgences and privileges granted to those who go in defense of the Holy Land."¹⁷³ Additionally, according to canon LXII, "on the occasion of the dedication of a church an indulgence of not more than one year be granted...and on the anniversary of the dedication the

¹⁷¹ Gary Dickson, "The Crowd at the Feet of Pope Boniface VIII: Pilgrimage, Crusade and the First Roman Jubilee (1300)," *Journal of Medieval History* 25 (1999): 280-181 and 285-286.

¹⁷² Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 385.

¹⁷³ Harry Rothwall, ed., *English Historical Documents 1189-1327*. Vol. 3, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1996), 646.

remission granted for penances enjoined is not to exceed forty days.”¹⁷⁴ This council was convened by Pope Innocent III in 1215 CE. During his pontificate he did much to reclaim Rome’s status as a pilgrimage city. According to James Harpur, “Pope Innocent III and his successors improved facilities for pilgrims, created badges to rival those of other shrines, and increased the number of indulgences that could be obtained.”¹⁷⁵

6.2.1 Boniface’s Holy Year

By far the most decisive method used by the church during the Middle Ages to encourage pilgrims to come to Rome occurred in 1300 CE. Pope Boniface VIII drew together indulgences and pilgrimage by issuing a papal bull that instituted the first Christian Holy Year, the first Jubilee. In his bull Boniface announced, “We, by the mercy of almighty God, and trusting in the merits and authority of those same ones [Sts. Peter and Paul] his apostles, by the counsel of our brethren and from the plenitude of the apostolic power, do concede, in this present year and in every hundredth [sic] year to come, not only full and free, but the very fullest, pardon of all their sins to all who in this present year 1300...and in every hundredth year to come, shall reverently go to those churches, having truly repented and confessed, or being about to truly repent and confess.”¹⁷⁶

From Boniface’s decree one can infer that his reason for pronouncing the Holy Year was in celebration of Christ’s birth. While the decree was delivered on February 23rd, he declares that each Holy Year be celebrated, “counting from the feast just past of the nativity of our Lord

¹⁷⁴ Rothwall, *English Historical Documents*, 670.

¹⁷⁵ James Harpur, *Sacred Tracks: 2000 Years of Christian Pilgrimage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 96.

¹⁷⁶ Henderson, *Select Historical Documents*, 350.

Jesus Christ, and in every hundredth year to come.”¹⁷⁷ Yet, it is possible that Boniface also had in mind celebrating the transfer of the relic of St. Veronica’s veil, the Sudarium, to the Vatican. According to Matthew Bunson, “The Veil of Veronica was purportedly seen in Rome from the eighth century, being translated to St. Peter’s by Pope Boniface VIII in 1297.”¹⁷⁸ This translation leads James Rhodes to conclude, “Since a replica of the image of Christ’s face was one of the more prized of pilgrimage badges, the pilgrimage to Rome was doubly desirable...Not surprisingly, the *Veronica* became one of the more widespread and readily identifiable of all pilgrim badges.”¹⁷⁹

Dickson notes that a pilgrim’s complete repentance of sins “was a prerequisite for the receipt of the indulgence.”¹⁸⁰ In addition, pilgrims were required to visit the basilicas of Sts. Peter and Paul each day for a predetermined length of time. For those who lived in Rome it was thirty consecutive days, while it was fifteen days for those who had made their way to Rome. According to Lisa Jardine, indulgences were “marketed with increasing energy by a clergy for whom raising money for the Church had become a legitimate activity...the individual ‘bought’ salvation, an intangible asset, whose efficacy depended on their trust in the Pope and his Church in Rome.”¹⁸¹

In Boniface’s decree he specified that each pilgrim would be required to visit San Paolo fuori le mura in addition to St. Peter’s which would have flooded these churches with penitent pilgrims. Likewise, Boniface also proclaimed, “Each one, however, shall be the more deserving and shall more efficaciously obtain the indulgence, the more often and the more devoutly he

¹⁷⁷ Henderson, *Select Historical Documents*, 350.

¹⁷⁸ Matthew Bunson, *OSV’s Encyclopedia of Catholic History* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Pub. 2004), 949.

¹⁷⁹ James F. Rhodes, “The Pardoner’s ‘Vernycle’ and his ‘Vera Icon’,” *Modern Language Studies* 13 (Spring, 1983): 32.

¹⁸⁰ Dickson, “The Crowd at the Feet of Pope Boniface VIII,” 286, 294.

¹⁸¹ Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 335-336. In contrast to Jardine, Nerida Newbiggin argues that the act of obtaining an indulgence was much more complex. Newbiggin, “Relics and Representations,” 52.

shall frequent those churches.”¹⁸² For the Jubilee, “contemporary estimates of the numbers visiting Rome that year,” according to Harpur, “varied between 200,000 and two million.”¹⁸³ Villani (*fl.* 13th cent.), who was present in Rome for the Jubilee, reports that throughout the year there were “no fewer than 200,000 pilgrims.”¹⁸⁴ Villani’s trip to Rome, “beholding the great and ancient things therein,” gave him the inspiration to write his work, the *Chronicle*.¹⁸⁵ While Villani wrote in praise of his pilgrimage to Rome, Dante (1265-1321 CE), on the other hand, associated the pilgrims in Rome with the movement of the demons in his eighth circle of hell. According to Dante, “Just so the Romans, because of the great throng in the year of the Jubilee, divide the bridge in order that the crowds may pass along...everywhere along that hideous track I saw horned demons with enormous lashes move through those souls, scourging them on the back.”¹⁸⁶

After Boniface convened the first Christian Jubilee changes were quickly made by succeeding popes. For instance, Boniface had originally declared the Jubilee to be celebrated every hundred years doubling, what some scholars regard to be its Old Testament ancestor.¹⁸⁷ However, the span between each celebrated Holy Year was quickly shortened, each pope using a different set of circumstances in order to validate their pronouncement. Eventually the Christian Jubilee was to be celebrated every twenty-five years. Boniface IX (1389-1404 CE) changed the celebration of the Jubilee from one hundred years to every thirty-three years “in deference to the length of Christ’s life on Earth.” Nicholas V (1447-55 CE) then decreased the intervals again,

¹⁸² Henderson, *Select Historical Documents*, 350.

¹⁸³ Harpur, *Sacred Tracks*, 96.

¹⁸⁴ Barbara Reynolds, *Dante: The Poet, the Political Thinker, the Man* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 38.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Inferno*, XVIII.28-36. Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, trans. John Ciardi (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 142.

¹⁸⁷ As evidence scholars refer to Lev. 25:1-55. For instance, see Kessler and Zacharias, *Rome 1300*, 2. June Hager also cites Luke 4:16-30; Hager, *Pilgrimage*, 186. However, others such as Gary Dickson and Andrea Braghin do not agree with the connection. Dickson, “The Crowd at the Feet of Pope Boniface VIII,” 285; Braghin, *The Jubilee Guide to Rome*, 5.

this time to twenty-five years.¹⁸⁸ Additional churches were also added to the list of sites pilgrims had to visit in order to qualify for indulgences. In 1350 CE Pope Clement VI added the Lateran and in 1390 CE Pope Urban VI (1378-89 CE) added Sta. Maria Maggiore.¹⁸⁹

Considering the Christian Jubilee and the quick changes made to the frequency with which it would be celebrated, and the number of churches a pilgrim had to visit, it seems likely that the primary motivation for such changes is closely linked to economic benefits.¹⁹⁰ The revenue created by the mass amounts of pilgrims visiting Rome in order to gain their indulgence generated a great deal of wealth. William Ventura visited Rome in 1300 CE and reported, in his *Chronicle of Asti*, “The pope received an infinite amount of money from them, for day and night two clerics stood at the altar of St Paul holding rakes in their hands and raking in endless money.”¹⁹¹

6.3 Treasury of Merits and Jurisdiction Over the Souls in Purgatory

Indeed, the marketing of indulgences and the creation of special holy years provided Rome an avenue in which to preserve their prominence. In addition, the papacy’s supremacy was maintained by the substantiation of two other dogmatic decrees. The first of these was initiated in 1343 CE by Clement VI who wrote concerning the nature of a “treasury” looked after by the pope. It was from this treasury that indulgences were believed to be granted. Clement claimed, “Nor did he [Christ] redeem us with corruptible things with silver and gold but with his own precious blood, which he is known to have poured out as an innocent victim on the altar of

¹⁸⁸ Hager, *Pilgrimage*, 188. Braghin, in contrast to Hager, argues that it was Clement VI (1342-52 CE), in 1343 CE who ordered the Jubilee to be celebrated every fifty years, Urban V (1378-89 CE) who changed the Jubilee to thirty-three years, and Paul II (1464-71 CE), who, in 1470 CE, set it at twenty-five. Braghin, *The Jubilee Guide to Rome*, 8-9.

¹⁸⁹ The churches that a pilgrim was required to visit and frequency with which the Jubilee was celebrated has remained the same since the end of the Middle Ages.

¹⁹⁰ Birch, *Pilgrimage to Rome*, 201.

¹⁹¹ D. Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West*, 118.

the cross....What a great treasure, then, did the holy Father acquire therefrom for the church militant, lest the mercy of so great an outpouring be made empty, useless or superfluous.... The mass of this treasure is known to have been increased by the merits of the blessed mother of God and of all the elect...Nor is there any fear of its being used up or diminished, as well because of the infinite merits of Christ.”¹⁹² The indulgences granted during the Clement’s Jubilee of 1350 CE were distributed from this treasury.

The second decree came little more than a century later. In 1476 CE Sixtus IV (1471-84 CE) made the concession that souls in purgatory were also able to benefit from the indulgences received by the living. Sixtus concluded, “We wish by our apostolic authority to draw on the treasury of the church and to succor the souls in purgatory who died united with Christ through love and whose lives have merited that such intercessions should now be offered through an indulgence of this kind.”¹⁹³ Some forty years later Martin Luther would argue against the church’s jurisdiction over the souls in purgatory in his *Ninety-five Theses*.

¹⁹² Denis R. Janz ed. *A Reformation Reader: Primary Texts With Introductions* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 52.

¹⁹³ Shaffern discusses the debate among theologians that took place during the 13th and 14th centuries concerning souls in purgatory and whether they could also receive the benefits of indulgence. Robert W. Shaffern, “Learned Discussion of Indulgences for the Dead in the Middle Ages,” *Church History* 61 (December, 1992): 367-381.

CONCLUSION

The methods, described herein, used by the papacy during the Middle Ages in order to attract pilgrims to the illustrious city of Rome do not detract from St. Paul's appeal to the devout. St. Paul was considered an exemplar of the Christian faith, which he demonstrated by his commitment to spreading the Gospel throughout the Mediterranean. Despite not receiving his divine calling until after the death of Jesus, St. Paul has long been considered one of the greatest apostles, paired as an equal to St. Peter. After converting to the faith that he had previously persecuted, he immediately began pursuing his apostolic mission. Attested to by the collection and circulation of his letters the devotion paid to St. Paul has been constant since no later than the beginning of the second century. His letters' official acceptance into canon, for instance, demonstrates the role that St. Paul played in the development of Rome in becoming the center of western Christendom.

The promotion of the cult of the saints and martyrs by the papacy and the veneration of saints' relics provides additional evidence of St. Paul's continued popularity during the Middle Ages. His relics, like those of St. Peter, were highly sought after. A saint's bodily remains were often moved in order to consecrate a newly constructed church. Frequently, the remains were divided up, traded, sold, or stolen. This was not the case in Rome. The bodies of Sts. Peter and Paul were cherished and preserved. Because of Rome's insistence on retaining their bodies, a new form of relic was developed. Strips of cloth were distributed that had been either placed near or lowered directly into the tomb. They were said to possess the same miracle working attributes as the bodies themselves.

After Constantine's Edict of Milan, and especially, Theodosius's banning of Paganism, pilgrims reverently traveled to Rome. They made the journey, originally, for the same reason

that pilgrims had previously gone to Jerusalem, namely in order to honor the place of the deceased. However, with the growth of saints' shrines and the stories of miraculous healings occurring at these sacred sites, pilgrims went seeking a saint's divine intercession or in hopes of procuring a miracle. By obtaining pilgrimage badges from the sites they had visited, pilgrims were able to publically display their act of devotion. This expression of piety was seized upon by the papacy who began marketing indulgences both as an incentive to visit one of Rome's sacred shrines and to promote Rome's overall significance. This is most clearly demonstrated by Boniface VIII's use of indulgences in endorsing his Holy Year.

The developments, described above, in the art and architecture of San Paolo fuori le mura likewise attest to the importance of St. Paul. High-ranking church officials and members of imperial families were most often the patrons of such large scale building projects as those that were carried out at St. Paul's basilica. The relationship between these two groups highlights the political support given to the church. Constantine initiated such political ties when he acknowledged Christianity and, according to legend, aligned himself with Sylvester, the bishop of Rome during his reign. These renovations were done, largely, in order to better accentuate a pilgrim's experience at the shrine.

Although the *Donation of Constantine* was discovered to be a forgery this does not lessen its importance in history, as it clearly demonstrates the papacy's attempts, during the Middle Ages, to control their image of authority, and reveals its political motives. There is an obvious, important link between the politics and piety of the city of Rome. Although I have here only given a brief description of their relationship and more research needs to be done, it is clear that this theme is pertinent to understanding the usefulness of pilgrimage to the economic and political history of the city.

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